

Prepared for Battle

Army commander tells Tehran Times that any source of aggression will be 'razed to the ground'

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Iran's resolve unshaken by enemy's pressure: IRGC chief

TEHRAN – The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned of a Western-led cultural offensive aimed at eroding the country's identity and values, vowing that the Islamic Republic will stand firm against external pressure in all its forms.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the 18th Resistance Film Festival in Tehran on Saturday, Major General Hossein Salami said Iran continues to face mounting military, political, and media pressure from foreign adversaries, but remains resolute.

"We see the enemy clearly—we hear its threats and witness its military deployments. Yet the more pressure it applies, the stronger and more united our people become," Salami said.

He described the confrontation not only as a geo-political struggle but a civilizational one—a battle between "light and darkness," where the West seeks to impose ignorance, cultural blindness, and dependency on other nations.

"Our enemies admit that their goal is to disconnect thought from action, to separate people from their identities and shape them according to their will," he noted. "They want us to follow their political agendas, worldviews, and fabricated ideals." ▶ Page 2

Decisions will be made on national interests, not foreign pressure: Iran nuclear chief

TEHRAN — Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Mohammad Eslami, has reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's unwavering commitment to charting its own independent course in the face of foreign pressures, asserting that Iran's nuclear and scientific trajectory will always be dictated by its national interests—not external dictates.

Speaking on Saturday, Eslami stated, "We move forward based on our own objectives and national interests. No one can impose their will on the Islamic Republic." He underscored that the identity and foundational values of the Islamic Republic serve as guiding principles for the country's decision-making processes, particularly in strategic sectors like nuclear energy and advanced technology.

"One of the most significant outcomes of the Islamic Revolution has been Iran's ability to make sovereign decisions and pursue its development without bowing to external demands," Eslami added.

The Iranian nuclear chief went on to highlight the country's growing capabilities in industrial science and technology, saying Iran now stands shoulder-to-shoulder with technologically advanced nations, despite their enormous financial investments. "We've achieved these milestones by prioritizing self-reliance and innovation," he said. ▶ Page 2

Regular testing essential to diagnose thyroid dysfunctions

TEHRAN – Regular thyroid function testing is essential for detecting and managing thyroid diseases.

The thyroid is a vital organ that regulates metabolism, growth, and development.

According to national studies, a significant portion of the population of the country, particularly women, are at risk of developing thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) and hyperthyroidism (Overactive Thyroid), IRNA reported.

Hypothyroidism leads to fatigue, depression, weight gain, difficulty concentrating, it can also affect mental growth and development in children. Therefore, screening is especially important in high-risk groups such as pregnant women and people with a family history of thyroid disease.

Nervousness, sweating, irregular heart-beat, weight loss, and protruding eyes are symptoms of hyperthyroidism. ▶ Page 7

Netanyahu defies law, appoints Shin Bet chief in face of national outrage

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – The Israeli regime is now engulfed in one of its most severe internal crises in recent memory, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brazen appointment of Major General David Zini as the new Shin Bet chief has brought the country's deep divisions to the surface. The action, which was taken in direct defiance of the attorney general and the Supreme Court, has exacerbated the already intense power struggles tearing through the Israeli establishment in addition to exposing the regime's contempt for the rule of law.

Netanyahu made the announcement a day after the High Court of Justice declared that his firing of departing Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar was "illegal" and "improperly" carried out, pointing to Netanyahu's obvious conflict of interest as a result of the ongoing "Qatargate" scandal involving his closest associates.

A pro-Resistance electoral tsunami across Lebanon

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON — The fourth and final round of municipal and mayoral elections in Lebanon's governorates concluded, with voter turnout standing at 36.65% in Nabatieh and 43.17% in South Lebanon, according to the Ministry of Interior.

The votes were a practical referendum on the absolute popular legitimacy of the Resistance, both popularly and constitutionally, as the people in Lebanon are the source of power.

While inspecting the electoral process, Interior Minister Ahmad Hajar said, "The south enjoys a special status in light of the territory still occupied and the ongoing Israeli attacks."

Hajar noted, "The Lebanese state is engaged in diplomatic contacts around the clock to implement the ceasefire agreement, and efforts are being made to ensure the smooth running of the electoral process." The minister also expressed hope for "lasting peace in Lebanon."

Yemen fires hypersonic ballistic missile at Tel Aviv Airport

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemen announces an operation against Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv with a hypersonic ballistic missile.

The Yemen Armed Forces have reaffirmed their commitment to imposing an aerial blockade on the Israeli airport in solidarity with Gaza and in opposition to the Israeli genocide.

According to Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces, the operation was a precision strike on Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport.

He stated that the missile strike resulted in a complete halt of air traffic at the airport.

Saree emphasized that the operation successfully achieved its objectives, noting that it caused air traffic disruptions and prompted millions of settlers to flee to shelters.

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China: Afghanistan's top investor

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN -- Years of wars, occupation, and anarchy have left Afghanistan's natural resources unexploited due to a lack of investment and the transfer of technology. According to the U.S. and UN assessments, minerals buried across Afghanistan's rocky landscape are estimated to be worth a trillion dollars. Today, emeralds, rubies, marble, gold, lithium, and other mineral resources remain unexploited. "We have no exports, no infrastructure, no knowledge", said Homayoun Afghan, the spokesman of the Ministry of Mines.

The Taliban fought a two-decade insurgency against the U.S. and NATO-backed Afghan government in Kabul, seizing power in a military campaign in 2021 after foreign forces withdrew. ▶ Page 5



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18th Resistance International Film Festival wraps up, celebrating resistance, artistic excellence

TEHRAN – The closing ceremony of the 18th Resistance International Film Festival was held at Vahdat Hall on Saturday night, honoring the winners in various categories.

Speaking at the ceremony, the festival's secretary Jalal Ghaffari opened the event by stating: "Tonight marks the conclusion of the 18th edition of the festival. Thanks to the efforts of the people who organized it over seventeen editions, the festival has reached this stage." ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Challenging negotiations under shadow of deep differences and new US pressures

Sobh-e-No called the fifth round of talks between Iran and the U.S. held in Rome on Friday challenging. It wrote: The fifth round of talks was held while serious differences and unilateral U.S. statements about a complete stop to Iran's enrichment program had made the atmosphere of the talks challenging and greatly weakened the possibility of holding this round. However, the Omani Foreign Minister pushed the two sides to return to the negotiating table and continue their indirect talks. This round of talks once again showed that the path to reaching a final agreement is still challenging and long, and the role of mediators, especially Oman, is key in maintaining communication channels between Tehran and Washington. An important point to note is the published reports about Witkoff's long meeting with the head of the Mossad, Israel's spy agency. This meeting indicates coordination and consultation between the U.S. and Israel regarding the nuclear negotiations. Given the prominent role of the Zionist lobby and the Netanyahu government in pressuring Washington, such meetings could affect the U.S. policies in the negotiations.

Resalat: Enrichment is Iran's inherent right

In an analysis, Resalat addressed the precondition for the negotiations, namely "zero percent enrichment", which was raised by the American side. The paper said: It is obvious that the U.S. side's insistence on crossing this red line will lead to the failure of the negotiations and the agreement in principle. In this regard, there is an important legal and technical point that cannot be ignored. Uranium enrichment on an industrial scale is considered an "inherent right" of NPT members, not a "privilege." Western politicians and media are trying to present a false and incomplete interpretation of this right and, at best, consider it "acquired and waived." Therefore, American officials shouldn't waste the time of the Iranian nuclear negotiating team at the negotiating table if they are not willing to understand this legal and fundamental right. The roadmap for a real agreement was drawn by our country's diplomats in the Muscat and Rome talks, and Washington has no choice but to adhere to the bold and unwavering principles and lines drawn by the Iranian nation.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Prominent role of Oman in negotiations

Arman-e-Emrooz commented on Oman's key role in keeping the door open for nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

It wrote: It seems that the turning point of the fifth round of negotiations is the solution proposed by Oman for the enrichment issue. The proposal that Oman put forward is likely related to the signal that Russian officials had sent the day before the negotiations.

Alexander Venediktov, Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council, has announced that Moscow is ready to play a role in the negotiations between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear program. This stance brings the speculation closer to the reality that Iran's highly enriched uranium will probably be transferred to Russia and that Iran will probably continue enriching uranium at a low level inside the country with the participation of Russia or another country under the supervision of the Americans.

The actors in this process are undoubtedly Russia, Oman, Qatar, and possibly Japan, who are trying to finalize an agreement between Iran and the United States with a middle solution and take collective action to resolve the enrichment issue. Meanwhile, there is also the possibility that Iran will temporarily stop enrichment within the country, simply to build confidence, and then resume it with the participation of some reliable partners.

Ham Mihan: Healthy competition

In an explanation, Ham Mihan dealt with the improving relations between Tehran and Riyadh and their healthy competition. It wrote: It seems that the geopolitical imperatives and political situation in both countries in recent years have made Iran and Saudi Arabia determined to reduce tensions. It does not seem that the geopolitical differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been resolved in any of the regions or countries in which they compete. The allied groups of Iran and Saudi Arabia are still competing with each other in sensitive areas of the region.

However, it seems that by reducing tensions, competitions have taken a healthier course and become less tense. Evidence shows that the leaders of the two countries have asked their allied groups in the region to avoid violent confrontations with each other.

At the same time, some other developments in the region have caused some contentious points between Iran and Saudi Arabia to stay temporarily silent due to the collateral damage of the Gaza war.

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The IRGC chief called on Iranian artists to remain vigilant and use their craft to resist this pressure. He described resistance art



as a form of national and cultural self-defense—art that preserves Iranian and Islamic values in the face of foreign influence.

"True art is born from the heart—it expands the human spirit and reflects the infinite depth of our identity.

Resistance art protects us from being buried under the cultural rubble of our enemies," Salami said.

He stressed that the "culture of resistance" is a source of honor and dignity for the Iranian nation, one that empowers people to stand firm and reject humiliation, subjugation, and defeat.

"The enemy tries to make us ashamed of defending our beliefs. If we speak up for our values, we're mocked; if we protect our sanctities, we're accused," he said.

"But we stand our ground. We know what truths we must defend to ensure our nation's survival."

'Harsh and decisive response' will follow 'snapback' imposition, Iran says

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has cautioned that any attempt to trigger the so-called "snapback mechanism" to reimpose United Nations sanctions on Iran will be met with a "harsh and decisive" response from Tehran, signaling a firm line as indirect nuclear talks with the United States continue.

Araghchi delivered the warning during a closed-door briefing to the Iranian Parliament's Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy on Sunday. The session came just two days after the fifth round of indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington was held in Rome, with mediation once again provided by Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi.

Leading Iran's delegation, Araghchi described the latest round as "one of the most professional" sessions the two sides have held so far. He stressed that the Islamic Republic remains firm in defending its national interests and that its positions have been "fully and clearly" communicated to the American side.

"Our stance in the talks is rooted in principles that are not subject to change," Araghchi told reporters following the meeting. "We reaffirmed our positions during this



round with clarity and resolve. Iran will not negotiate under pressure."

According to Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesperson for the parliamentary committee, Araghchi told lawmakers that Iran's nuclear policy remains "wise, transparent, and immune to pressure, threats, or inducements." Rezaei also cited the foreign minister's remarks about the Israeli regime's continued opposition to Iran's uranium enrichment program, warning that "any conflict in the region will affect all countries and destabilize the entire Middle East."

Addressing one of the proposals discussed in the Rome negotiations, Araghchi noted that Iran is open to the idea of a regional urani-

um enrichment center but emphasized that such cooperation would not come at the cost of halting domestic enrichment. "Iran's right to carry out enrichment activities within its borders is non-negotiable," Rezaei quoted him as saying.

The foreign minister also stressed that Iran has never abandoned diplomatic engagement. "We remain committed to diplomacy and continue negotiations with seriousness and determination," he said.

Since April, Tehran and Washington have held five rounds of indirect negotiations—three in the Omani capital of Muscat and two in Rome—focused on resolving outstanding differences over

Iran's nuclear program. However, Iranian officials have voiced frustration with the U.S.'s inconsistent and shifting positions, warning that such behavior undermines the trust required for meaningful progress.

"The Americans' contradictory statements are unhelpful and detrimental to the negotiation process," Araghchi warned during his briefing.

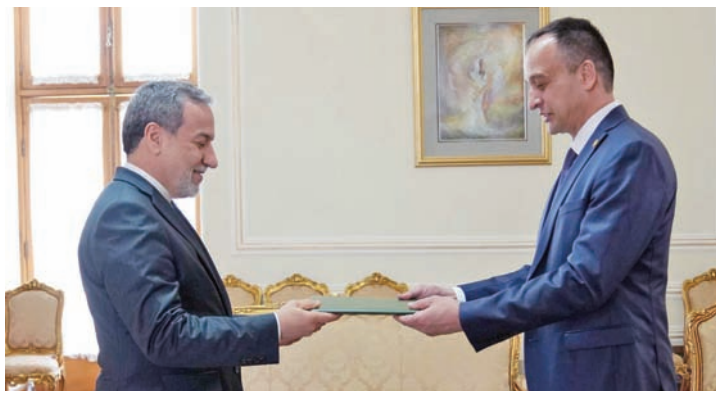
During his first term in office, Trump withdrew the United States in 2018 from the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and launched a maximum pressure campaign against the country.

Trump restored that policy after returning to the White House for a second term in January, but he has since signaled a willingness to make a new deal to replace the deal.

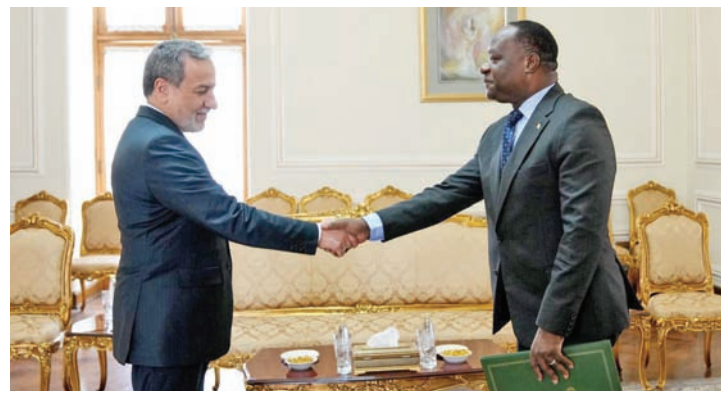
On March 12, Trump sent a letter to Iran's leadership, asking for negotiations to reach a new deal.

Despite the ongoing challenges, Iran insists it remains committed to its internationally recognized rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and will continue to push forward its peaceful nuclear program on its own terms.

Iran steps up African outreach on Africa Day as new envoys begin postings



FM Araghchi accepting the credentials of Ivory Coast's new ambassador (R) as well as the new representative of FAO on May 25, 2025



TEHRAN - Tehran has signaled a major shift in its Africa policy, moving beyond decades of symbolic ties toward concrete economic partnerships—a change underscored by recent high-profile diplomatic exchanges and the recent Africa Summit and Expo 2025.

The trend was visible this week as Ivory Coast's new ambassador, Tamakolo Watara, presented his credentials to Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Africa Day—a deliberate nod to Iran's renewed focus on the continent.

While Iran's push to strengthen ties with Africa has only become noticeable in recent years—part of a broader effort to deepen relationships with friendly nations—its leaders have long held a favorable view of the continent.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, African

nations and their struggles have resonated with Tehran. Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, was a vocal backer of anti-colonial and liberation movements across Africa.

He also emphasized the importance of solidarity between African Muslims and their counterparts in West Asia, believing stronger religious and cultural bonds should be nurtured.

This sentiment has carried through to his successor, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who has repeatedly praised Africa in his speeches. Like Imam Khomeini, he admires the continent's history of resistance against oppression and sees its growing geopolitical significance as an opportunity.

Now, with major African economies rising and global trade dynamics shifting, Tehran ap-

pears serious about turning old connections into real opportunities.

The recent Africa Summit and Expo 2025, where several African ministers, diplomats, and business delegations were among the participants, was seen as a turning point.

Iranian officials hinted at major trade and investment announcements, particularly in agriculture, mining, and energy technology—sectors where African demand meets Iranian expertise.

Even the arrival of Farukh Turayev, the new Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Iran, could fit into this strategy.

With food security becoming a priority for both Iran and Africa, FAO-backed projects on water management and sustainable farming could serve as a bridge for broader cooperation.

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The Iranian nuclear chief went on to highlight the country's growing capabilities in industrial science and technology, saying Iran now stands shoulder-to-shoulder with technologically advanced nations, despite their

enormous financial investments.

"We've achieved these milestones by prioritizing self-reliance and innovation," he said.

The remarks come amid ongoing indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear program. Since April, five rounds of talks have been held in Rome and Muscat.

Iranian negotiators have repeatedly criticized the U.S. for shifting its stance during the talks, arguing that such inconsistency undermines trust and complicates the diplomatic process.

"Contradictory statements are not conducive to diplomacy," Iranian officials have said in recent briefings.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also weighed in earlier this week, dismissing Washington's demands that Iran cease its peaceful uranium enrichment activities.

"It is utterly wrong for the United States to expect Iran to stop what is legally our right.

No one in the Islamic Republic is waiting for permission from anyone," Ayatollah Khamenei said, reiterating that Iran's policies and methods are rooted in its sovereign agenda.



Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami speaks during a memorial ceremony in capital Tehran on May 24, 2025.

Tehran maintains that its uranium enrichment activities fall well within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which it is a signatory.

Iranian officials insist that the country will not relinquish its right to peaceful nuclear technology, despite mounting Western pressure.

As diplomatic efforts continue, Iran remains steadfast in its position: national sovereignty, strategic independence, and scientific progress are not up for negotiation.

Prepared for battle

Army commander tells Tehran Times that any source of aggression will be ‘razed to the ground’

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The Army (Artesh) Ground Force held a ceremony on Sunday to mark the conference on the founding and achievements of its Evaluation and Growth Centre for Human Capital.

During the event, officials delivered speeches highlighting how the centre established in 2019, has been helping the Ground Force to adapt to modern warfare’s demands, where cognitive skills and adaptability are becoming as crucial as physical prowess and the collections of weapons.

Among the speakers was a prominent Iranian psychologist, a full-time professor at the prestigious University of Tehran, who discussed the creativity classes she has been teaching to Army commanders. She also shared her surprise when first approached by the military for this role. “This collaboration signals a cultural shift,” she noted.

The ceremony also included insights from other leading Iranian professors and military analysts, who spoke about the critical thinking and specialized training programs they have conducted for Army personnel.

After the event, the Tehran Times had the opportunity to speak with Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, Commander of the Army Ground Force, about more pressing national issues. The general discussed the weapons status, operational readiness, and mindset of his forces.

Below is the full text of the interview:

What are the latest military and technological advancements in the Army Ground Forces?

We have made significant progress in the field of micro-drones, with ongoing efforts in production, procurement, deployment, and organization. Our achievements in this area have been highly successful.

The Army Ground Forces consist of 23 weapon groups that complete its defensive cycle. With a firm and decisive commitment to prepare for



Army Ground Force Commander, Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, answering questions by the Tehran Times

future battlefields, we have received approval from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to equip our forces with advanced weapons featuring four key capabilities: evasion, precision, intelligence, and networking. This initiative is being pursued with full determination.

Drones and unmanned vehicles—including strategic, operational, and tactical models—are now widely used for intelligence gathering, operations, and precision strikes across all levels. Recently, we have achieved major breakthroughs in micro-drone technology, including the development of systems to counter enemy micro-drones. These efforts have been met with great success.

In the past, we have conducted numerous unveilings and presentations, many of which took place in Tehran and Sistan and Baluchestan, where we introduced these advancements to our personnel and commanders.

Israel has recently issued new threats against Iran through Western media, suggesting that the U.S. would support the Zionist regime in a potential attack. How do you respond to these threats?

We, the armed forces—especially the ground forces of the Army—are vigilantly monitoring potential threats. Our fingers are truly on the trigger, and our ears are attuned to the commands of the esteemed Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Our great nation should feel com-

pletely at ease. If any threat is acted upon, those responsible should know that the source of that threat will be swiftly reduced to dust.

Our honorable citizens can have full confidence that our armed forces will respond decisively to any threat and to anyone who seeks to create threats, regardless of the level or scale.

What are the core principles guiding the Army Ground Forces, and what is their origin?



Army commanders during a festival marking the establishment of Evaluation and Growth Centre for Human Capital on May 25, 2025.

The clear direction provided by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khamenei, is the cornerstone of our every move.

There are three key principles guiding the command of the Ground Forces: leadership based on guardianship, justice, and meritocracy. These principles are fundamental

for us.

Meritocracy and justice in particular, are crucial principles that our organizations strive to uphold. Meritocracy consists of assigning responsibilities to capable individuals. When this principle is implemented, justice naturally follows.

Under the leadership of the esteemed Leader, the Army Ground Force has established itself as a knowledgeable and virtuous force, dedicated to fulfilling the commands of Imam Khamenei and mobilizing all its resources to achieve those goals.

The Army has been assigned to construct border walls in eastern Iran to counter terrorist infiltration, smuggling, and illegal migration. What is the current status of this project?

The Army is pursuing border closures in the northeast and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) in the southeast of the country. We have installed 103 kilometers of wall and prepared the foundation for 140 kilometers; we hope that based on the commitment we made to the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, by

the end of this year, the border closure will reach 400 kilometers.

Also, with sensors that are at the cutting edge of technology, most of which have been produced by the Ground Forces, this wall and this border closure system will become intelligent.

Shehbaz Sharif’s upcoming visit to Tehran: A step toward regional stability

Islamabad and Tehran strengthen ties amid regional diplomacy push

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to visit Tehran in the coming days at the invitation of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, marking another milestone in the two neighbors’ efforts to deepen bilateral relations and promote regional stability.

The trip underscores Iran’s “neighborhood diplomacy” strategy—a cornerstone of its foreign policy aimed at fostering cooperation with neighboring nations through dialogue and economic engagement.

A diplomatic continuity

The upcoming visit follows a recent phone conversation between Sharif and Pezeshkian, where both leaders emphasized the need to expand economic, trade, and security cooperation.

Islamabad’s Prime Minister’s Office released a statement praising Iran’s “goodwill, brotherly efforts” in defusing tensions between Pakistan and India, particularly Tehran’s role in facilitating a path towards ceasefire.

Sharif also expressed gratitude for Iran’s diplomatic initiatives, including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi’s recent visit to Islamabad, which he described as a constructive step toward regional peace.

The visit signals a shared commitment to reducing hostilities in South Asia, where Iran has positioned itself as a neutral actor. Following recent flare-ups between India and Pakistan, Araghchi engaged with both sides, and President Pezeshkian

held separate calls with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sharif—moves that were seen as testaments to Tehran’s growing influence as a regional peacemaker.

Beyond bilateralism: A regional vision

Iran and Pakistan share more than a border; their ties are rooted in historical, cultural, and linguistic affinities.

Furthermore, mutual respect has always been a pillar of the two countries’ relations, which have maintained a cordial atmosphere over the years despite pressure from external forces.

It appears that the Pezeshkian administration seeks to leverage this relationship to not only strengthen bilateral cooperation but also to play a stabilizing role in South Asia.

By facilitating dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi, Iran aims to position itself as a credible mediator, a role both Pakistan and India seem to have increasingly acknowledged.

The visit is also expected to focus on cross-border trade and provincial-level collaboration, particularly between Iran’s western provinces and Pakistan’s bordering regions.

During a recent meeting with governors from Iran’s Kurdistan, Kermanshah, and West Azerbaijan provinces—alongside officials from Iraq’s Kurdistan Region—Pezeshkian stressed the importance of transforming border areas into economic hubs. “When trade thrives, security



President Pezeshkian (R) and Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif meet on the sidelines of a UNGA session in New York in September of 2024

concerns diminish,” he remarked, echoing a policy that prioritizes economic integration over militarization.

Security and counterterrorism: A shared challenge

Another critical agenda item will be security cooperation, specifically counterterrorism. Both nations have suffered from terrorist attacks and recognize the need for joint action.

In their recent call, Pezeshkian and Sharif agreed on the urgency of dismantling terrorist networks and cutting off their financial and logistical support.

“Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism and fully understands the necessity of a firm response,” Sharif said, condemning recent attacks. The two leaders affirmed their commitment to a stable, secure region, free from external interference.

A new chapter in neighborhood

diplomacy

Shehbaz Sharif’s visit highlights a key change in Iran’s foreign policy—one that juggles global relationships while focusing on stronger ties with its neighbors.

By welcoming the Pakistani leader, Tehran is making its priorities clear: regional stability depends on open dialogue, economic cooperation, and mutual trust.

With South Asia facing growing geopolitical tensions, Iran’s potential as a facilitator of dialogue—and Pakistan’s long-lasting openness to it—could help shape a more united future.

The question now is whether this meeting will lead to real progress—not just for these two countries, but for a region desperate for lasting peace.

Tehran to host Iran, N. Korea match in 2026 WC qualifier

TEHRAN –The match between Iran and North Korea football teams in the third round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification (AFC) will be held in Tehran.

Team Melli are scheduled to host North Korea on June 10. Before that, Amir Ghalenoei’s Iran will face Qatar at Lusail Stadium in Doha on June 5.

The match was originally set to be held in Mashhad’s Imam Reza Stadium, but the football federation confirmed that the venue has been changed to Tehran.

Iran have already secured their place in the 2026 World Cup.

Azmoun to extend deal with Shabab

TEHRAN – Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun is set to sign a contract extension with Shabab Al Ahli Dubai.

The 30-year-old striker joined the Emirati club last season and played a key role in helping them win the UAE Pro League.

Azmoun emphasized that the desire to win has always been the main motivation for Al Shabab in every match.

“This is an incredible achievement, and we are satisfied and happy with our performance this season,” Azmoun said.

“The team had an outstanding season, losing only two matches in the league, which reflects how well we have performed. We aim to secure victory in our final game as well. I hope to perform even better next season and succeed in the Asian Champions League Elite,” he added.

Golshadnezhad takes gold in 2025 AKF Championships

TEHRAN – Atousa Golshadnezhad of Iran claimed a gold medal in the 2025 AKF Senior Championships on Saturday.

She beat Sevinch Otaboyeva of Uzbekistan 5-1 in the Female Kumite -61kg Final.

Golshadnezhad had secured her final spot with an 8-1 win over Sarara Shimada of Japan.

Additionally, Iran’s Fatemeh Saadati fell short to her Vietnamese opponent Thi My Tam Hoang 5-0 in the Female Kumite -55 kg final.

Male Team Kata, Female Team Kumite, and Sara Bahmanyar had won three bronze medals in the event.

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.

Iran lose to Rwanda in FIBA 3x3 World Cup Qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Rwanda 21-18 in the FIBA 3x3 World Cup Qualifier 2025 on Saturday.

Team Melli had also lost to Montenegro 21-14 in Pool A.

Pool B consists of Latvia, Azerbaijan, and Egypt.

The FIBA 3x3 World Cup Qualifier 2025 is being held in Baku, Azerbaijan on May 24-25.

Gholizadeh’s Lech Poznan win Ekstraklasa

TEHRAN – Lech Poznan edged past Piast Gliwice 1-0 Saturday night and won the 2024-25 Ekstraklasa. Alfonso Sousa scored the winner in the 39th minute. Lech Poznan won the title with 70 points, one point ahead of Raków Czestochowa.

Iranian winger Ali Gholizadeh played a key role in helping Lech Poznan win the title.

Ekstraklasa, officially known as PKO Bank Polski Ekstraklasa due to its sponsorship by PKO Bank Polski, is a professional association football league in Poland and the highest level of the Polish football league system.

Esteghlal defeat Sanat Naft to advance final

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team beat Sanat Naft 2-0 on Saturday to secure their place in the final of the 2024/25 Iran Hazfi Cup.

Alireza Koushki opened the scoring in the 44th minute for the hosts in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium and Masoud Juma made it 2-0 in the 57th minute.

On Friday, Malavan edged past Gol Gohar 1-0 and qualified for the final.

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.

Iran learn rivals in 2025 AVC Women’s Volleyball Nations Cup

TEHRAN – Iran learned their opponents for the 2025 AVC Women’s Volleyball Nations Cup.

Team Melli have been drawn into Pool B, alongside the Philippines, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Indonesia, and New Zealand.

Hosts Vietnam, Australia, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, and India are placed in Pool A.

The competition format and regulations will follow the same principles as last year. Since the AVC Nations Cup is open only to teams not participating in the Volleyball Nations League (VNL), the tournament is limited to a maximum of 12 teams per gender.

The 2025 AVC Women’s Volleyball Nations Cup marks the first edition under its new branding and is the sixth overall, formerly known as the AVC Women’s Challenge Cup. This annual international tournament is organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) in collaboration with the Volleyball Federation of Vietnam (VfV).

The event is scheduled to take place from June 7 to June 14 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Esteghlal not to extend Juma’s deal

TEHRAN – Esteghlal will part ways with Kenyan forward Masoud Juma Choka.

The 28-year-old player joined Esteghlal from Saudi Arabian club Al-Jabalain in December on a six-month deal.

Masoud Juma has been a member of Kenya’s national football team since 2017.

Juma scored Esteghlal’s second goal against Sanat Naft in Iran’s Hazfi Cup semifinals.

He will play against Malavan in the Hazfi Cup final on Thursday and it will be his last match for the Blues.

Iran learn fate in 2025 Asian Men’s U16 Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran discovered their fate in the 2025 Asian Men’s U16 Volleyball Championship to be held in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

The competition will be held from July 12 to 19.

Iran are drawn in Pool B alongside Kazakhstan, Hong Kong, and southeaster zone’s representative.

Pool A consists of hosts Thailand, Australia, China, and India. Uzbekistan, Japan, Mongolia, and western zone’s representative are in Pool C.

And, Chinese Taipei, Pakistan, South Korea, and western zone’s representative are drawn in Pool D.

‘Algeria offers strategic gateway for expanding Iran’s trade with Africa, Europe’



TEHRAN - Algeria's strategic position as a gateway to both Europe and Central Africa makes it an ideal platform for expanding Iran's trade ties, said Saeed Zare' Haghighi, head of Iran's Trade Office in Algeria.

Speaking at a conference on Algeria's economic potential, Zare' Haghighi emphasized that trade offices typically operate under the mandate of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), with the goal of facilitating bilateral commerce.

"We had a highly productive session today with strong interest from Iranian businesses in entering the Algerian market and launching trade operations," he said.

He noted that Algeria, as a relatively new player in global trade, is actively working to develop domestic markets and attract foreign partners. "As a member of the Arab League and a bridge to both Europe and Central Africa, Algeria offers multiple strategic advantages for deepening trade with Iran," he said.

Algerian representatives at the meeting also welcomed greater cooperation and expressed readiness to support Iranian traders.

Highlighting upcoming opportunities, Zare' Haghighi announced that the next major trade exhibition in Algiers will host 176 companies from 32 countries. "We have already informed relevant Iranian firms of the importance of attending this event, as it represents a valuable platform for building commercial presence in Algeria," he said.

He added that Algeria's role as a major oil and gas supplier—accounting for 20 percent of Europe's energy imports—has boosted the country's revenues and created a strong need for reliable trade partners.

"This is an excellent time for Iranian businesses to access this large and growing market," he said.

On April 8, Abbas Arachchi, Iran's Foreign Minister, arrived in the early hours at Houari Boumediene International Airport in Algiers at the head of a political delegation. This visit is part of Tehran's efforts to strengthen its diplomatic presence in key regions, with the central goal of consolidating bilateral ties with Algeria.

In the context of growing geopolitical competition, the Islamic Republic seeks to solidify its relations with strategic partners in the Maghreb, with Algeria emerging as a key ally in this endeavor.

Iran and Algeria, two countries with converging political visions on key aspects, seek to strengthen their relations through multiple avenues. Both nations share a common strategic approach regarding the preservation of their sovereignty, resistance to external influences, and the defense of a multipolar international order.

The secretary of the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit said commercial and investment contracts were signed between African traders and Iranian business leaders in four key sectors—mining, agriculture, petrochemicals, and medical equipment—at the conclusion of

the third Iran-Africa summit.

Seyed Mehdi Hosseini said African delegations left Iran with substantial results, noting that foreign businesspeople and Iranian economic operators both benefited from the international gathering.

According to Hosseini, the third summit was distinguished by its focus on specialized, results-oriented activity, which led to greater coordination, satisfaction among participants, and significant achievements.

He noted that the summit witnessed several key developments, including the signing of commercial and investment agreements in the mining, agriculture, petrochemical, and medical equipment sectors.

Hosseini explained that unlike the two previous summits, which were general in nature, this edition was structured around four economic sectors: oil and petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and medical equipment. Accordingly, the invited foreign delegations had relevant experience and expertise. This specialization, he said, helped ensure the summit remained outcome-driven.

He added that these four sectors were chosen due to their interrelated nature, with complementary operations and aligned objectives. The structure of the summit helped produce substantial results, the details of which would be disclosed in the coming days.

Hosseini said a major feature of this year's event was the shift away from centralization in Tehran. After initial visits and consultations in the capital, delegations were divided into 15 groups based on their sectoral focus and flown to Isfahan for field visits.

This targeted approach allowed each group to visit companies and institutions aligned with their interests. African delegates specializing in mining, for instance, met directly with Iranian miners and entered negotiations or agreements.

According to the summit secretariat, a major memorandum of understanding was signed between an African trading company and an Iranian firm in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment sector, described as significant in scope.

On Friday, May 2, coinciding with the final day of Iran Expo 2025, several African delegates departed Iran after concluding purchase agreements and visiting pavilions representing the four main sectors.

Long-term impact and increased engagement expected

Hosseini emphasized that the positive experience of the attendees would turn them into "ambassadors" for Iran's capabilities, increasing the likelihood of higher foreign participation in future events. He highlighted that 20 percent of the summit's participants extended their stay to explore more economic opportunities in Iran.

Describing the summit's outcomes as positive, Hosseini said approximately 600 African traders, officials, and economic experts participated, underscoring Iran's strong capacity across various economic and commercial sectors.

He stressed that while this year's summit focused on a few sectors, showcasing Iran's full capabilities would likely attract more foreign participation in the future.

More than 1,000 Iranian companies displayed their achievements in petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and medical equipment during the summit. Choosing Isfahan as a co-host reflected the broader geographical potential of the country, he said.

The five-day summit includes several high-level gatherings, such as the Fourth Parliamentary Forum of EAG Member States, a joint conference between regulatory officials and the private sector—supported by EAG and the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF)—under the theme "Risk Management in the Age of New Technologies."

Transport minister visits Iraq to advance Shalamcheh-Basra railway

TEHRAN - Iran's minister of transport and urban development has arrived in Iraq to strengthen bilateral transport cooperation, follow up on the Shalamcheh-Basra railway project, and coordinate maximum facilitation for Arbaeen pilgrims.

According to IRNA, Farzaneh Sadegh was welcomed on Saturday night, May 24, by Iraq's Deputy Transport Minister Seyyed Hazem Razi and Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad-Kazem Al-e Sadegh upon her arrival.

In her first stop, the Iranian minister paid tribute at the site of the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and their companions.

Planned meetings during the visit include talks with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Minister of Transport, and Minister of Interior, aimed at enhancing collaboration, particularly in the transport sector.

The discussions are set to cover the current status of bilateral transportation ties, progress on the strategic Shalamcheh-Basra railway link, and preparations for the large-scale Arbaeen pilgrimage, with a focus on maximizing logistical and infrastructural support for Iranian pilgrims.

Sadegh had previously visited Iraq in September of last year alongside President Masoud Pezeshkian to push forward the Shalamcheh-Basra railway initiative. That three-day visit resulted in the signing of 14 cooperation documents across various sectors, including transport.

According to data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$401 million to Iraq in the



first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 21).

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

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

Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, said that Iraq was Iran's second top non-oil export destination in the previous year.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges.

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target.

In late May 2024, the head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said that Iran

exports some 2,200 products, valued at \$12 billion, to neighboring Iraq annually.

Speaking in a meeting entitled "Reviewing opportunities and challenges of attracting Iraqi investors and strengthening trade relations between the two countries in line with demarcating Iran in the regional value chain", Jafar Hosseini said that Iraq, benefiting from \$85 billion foreign currency reserves, 130 tons of gold reserves, and 147 billion barrels of proven reserves of crude oil, is among the richest countries in West Asia.

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

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

In an interview in mid-December

last year, the ambassador of Iran in Iraq praised the economic relations between the two sides and expressed hope that these relations will be more and better.

Mohammad Kazem Ale-Sadeq announced the value of commercial exchanges between the two countries, and stated that economic relations between Iran and Iraq are very good, and expressed hope that these relations will improve.

The envoy further noted: "Iraq is an important country in the region, and we have very important economic, political, and social relations with this neighbor."

In early May 2024, Tehran hosted the 6th meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee.

The two-day event was co-chaired by the former Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Iraqi Minister of Commerce Atheer Daoud Al-Ghurairi.

On the first day of the meeting, specialized committees including commercial, industrial, agricultural, standardization and quality control, energy, finance, banking, investment and Insurance, shipping, transport, and Customs, scientific, educational, tourism, health, as well as sports consulate held meetings to discuss areas for cooperation.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Train carrying solar panels from China arrives at Iran’s Aprin dry port

TEHRAN - The first train carrying solar panels from China arrived at Iran's Aprin rail dry port on Saturday, marking a new phase in bilateral trade and renewable energy cooperation.

According to IRNA, the train originated from Yiwu, China, and reached Iran via the Incheh Borun border crossing after a 15-day journey. The cargo will be cleared through the Aprin customs office using a dedicated cus-

toms code.

Speaking at the arrival ceremony, Mir-Hasan Mousavi Dizaji, Deputy Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, said the launch of Aprin customs is a key step toward facilitating international trade for the country.

He also announced that two more trains carrying solar panels from China entered Iran on the same day and expressed optimism that, thanks to the infrastructure at Aprin

and ongoing talks with Chinese partners, Iran could soon receive daily rail shipments from China for imports, exports, and transit operations.

Mousavi emphasized that, under the terms agreed with China, all solar panel imports will be conducted via rail. He noted the urgency of timely imports to address Iran's energy imbalance, especially as the country pushes forward with its renewable energy agenda.

Iran-South Korea trade reaches \$56m in early 2025

TEHRAN - Trade between Iran and South Korea reached nearly \$56 million in the first four months of 2025, highlighting ongoing commercial ties despite external challenges and a decline in Iran's exports.

According to a report by the Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce, citing data from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA), South Korea exported approximately \$55.7 million worth of goods to

Iran between January and April 2025. Imports from Iran stood at \$505,000 during the same period.

While Iran's non-oil exports to South Korea fell 84 percent compared to the same period in 2024, the overall trade volume reflects continued engagement between the two economies.

The drop comes after a strong performance in 2024, when Iran's non-oil exports to South Korea surged by 180 percent to

\$8.6 million. The growth was largely fueled by sales of copper concentrate, polyethylene, dried fruits, and saffron. Copper concentrate alone made up more than 90 percent of Iran's exports to South Korea, underlining its strategic importance to South Korea's electronics and technology sectors.

The report also noted a downward trend in South Korea's imports from Iran during 2024. In February, imports declined to

about \$426,000 from \$757,000 in January. Meanwhile, South Korea's exports to Iran dropped 11 percent in 2024 to \$142.6 million, amid global sanctions, banking restrictions, economic conditions in Iran, and shifts in South Korea's export priorities.

Despite the recent decline in trade, the nearly \$56 million exchanged in the first months of 2025 signals room for recovery and sustained interest in bilateral commerce.

Over 6.2m tons of iron ore pellet produced in a month

TEHRAN - Production of iron ore pellet in Iran stood at 6.248 million tons in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year, Farvardin (March 21-April 21), down 1.4 percent from the figure in the first month of the past year, which was 6.339 million tons.

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

The association's monthly report, which analyzes global steel production trends, shows that worldwide crude steel output reached 166.1 million tons in March 2025—up 2.9 percent from March 2024. However, cumulative global production for the first quar-

ter of 2025 fell slightly by 0.4 percent year-on-year to 468 million tons.

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

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

Iran, along with Germany, registered the steepest quarterly declines in steel pro-

duction among the top 10 global producers. Nonetheless, Iran retained its position as the world's 10th largest steelmaker.

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

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

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

Iran attends 42nd Eurasia regional meeting on anti-money laundering, counter-terrorist financing

TEHRAN - A delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, led by the Deputy Minister of Economy and Head of the Financial Intelligence Unit, has departed for Russia to participate in the 42nd meeting of the Eurasian Group (EAG) on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism.

According to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the event will be held from May 26 to 30 in Moscow.

China: Afghanistan's top investor

West's failure opens doors for East

From page 1 ► Pundits say that China has used the void left by the withdrawal of Western foreign troops to become Afghanistan's number-one foreign direct investment (FDI) partner.

The Taliban first took control of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, they were overthrown by American-backed Western forces. However, the group returned to power following a vacuum left by the 2021 withdrawal of Western troops. The country was named the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. So far, no international government has recognized the Taliban as Afghanistan's legitimate government.

The cash-strapped Afghan government has been eager to exploit the country's vast and lucrative mineral deposits. Lucrative contracts to tap gold, gemstones, and minerals such as chromite, which is used in steelmaking, have gone to local Afghans as well as investors from China.

Although China has yet to recognize the Taliban-led Afghan government, Beijing has called for economic sanctions on Afghanistan to be lifted and the Taliban given access to nearly \$9bn in reserves held in international accounts. Access to the central bank reserves held in U.S. banks was frozen during former President Joe Biden's administration.

Afghanistan also sits in a region important for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Promoting trade with neighboring Afghanistan is a priority for China. According to media reports, Beijing's envoy in Kabul Zhao Xing wrote last October on his official X-account: "China will offer Afghanistan zero-tariff treatment for 100% tariff lines." During the time of tariff wars, which U.S. President Donald Trump started recently, the Chinese envoy's statement would provide the Taliban government



Afghan workers standing beside excavators at a Nephrite mine in the mountains of Goshta district, Nangarhar province. Photo: AFP

with tariff-free access to Chinese markets, including the construction and energy sectors.

Taliban-led Afghanistan's first significant foreign investment deal came in January 2023, when the Chinese company Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Co (CAPEIC) signed a contract to extract oil and develop an oil reserve in Afghanistan's northern province of Sar-e-Pul.

"CAPEIC will invest \$150m a year in Afghanistan under the contract," the spokesperson for the Taliban-run administration, Zabihullah Mujahid, said on Twitter.

Its investment would increase to \$540m in three years for the 25-year contract, he said.

The Taliban-run administration will have a 20 percent partnership in the project, which can be increased to 75 percent, Mujahid added.

So far, some 200 mining contracts have been signed between Afghanistan and various Chinese companies, creating some 150,000 jobs in the mining sector since 2021.

Although America is still the world's largest economy, China overtook US to become the world's top crude importer in 2015. Afghanistan's lithium, copper, and

iron exports to the world's largest commodity buyer will help the Taliban bolster its fragile economy with a much-needed revenue stream.

In another development in the mining sector, China-based scmp.com reported that after a 16-year delay, a groundbreaking ceremony was held last summer (July 2024) after the conclusion of talks between state-owned China Metallurgical Co. Ltd. (MCC) with the Taliban government, one of the world's largest copper mines in Logar Province. Afghanistan is home to the world's second biggest copper deposit, a crucial input in electric vehicle batteries and semiconductors. A \$3 billion deal was signed in 2008, giving the state-owned MCC a 30-year mining concession, but combat between NATO-led troops and Taliban insurgents put a 16-year delay into the project.

Afghanistan has significant crude reserves, and production has been primarily focused in the Amu Darya basin, an area covering 4,500 square kilometers collectively in northern Sar-e Pul, Jawzjan, and Faryab provinces. The amount of oil reserves is estimated to be 87 million barrels. In this case, the first major FDI deal for oil extraction since the Taliban's takeover was signed in January 2023. The contract was signed between former

Minister of Mines and Petroleum Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar and an official from CAPEIC.

"Over 3,000 people will get jobs in this project," Al Jazeera news agency quoted Delawar. He added that the condition of the deal was that the oil be processed in Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan and India have also reached out to the Taliban-led Afghanistan for investments in various projects, the Caspian News reported. Last September, Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister, Rashid Meredow, announced that Ashgabat had invested over \$1.5bn in joint projects with Afghanistan. Meredow invited India, Pakistan, international banks, and the Asian Development Bank to invest in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project. The pipeline will transport gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India, passing through several Afghan provinces.

India has invested more than \$3bn in Afghanistan over the past two decades, mainly in infrastructure projects. An example is the construction of Zaranj-Delaram highway in southwestern Afghanistan, which was completed in 2009, linking Afghanistan with Iran's Chabahar port.

The Iran-Afghanistan bilateral trade reached \$3.366bn at the end of the last Iranian year (ending March 21, 2025). Iran has already invested in Afghanistan's mining sector, particularly in the Ghorian mine in Herat.

On the table is the establishment of a special joint mineral economic zone between the two countries.

CONCLUSION

If the Taliban can kick-start Afghanistan's mining sector, they will succeed where two decades of Western-backed initiatives had flopped – one more testament to the failures of America's \$2 trillion war in the country.

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

5

Israel controls %77 of Gaza as 'genocide, ethnic cleansing' continues

The Israeli military is in effect controlling 77 percent of the Gaza Strip through "continued genocide, ethnic cleansing", the enclave's Government Media Office says, calling on the UN and the international community to take action to stop "blatant defiance of all international laws and norms".

Meanwhile, Ron Finer, a platoon commander in the Israeli military's Alon Brigade, has been sentenced to 20 days in prison for ignoring orders to report for duty, The Times of Israel reports.

Finer, 26, who said he has already served 270 days since October 7, 2023, stated he's "morally unable to continue".

Opposition leader calls Netanyahu 'corrupt, failed PM'

Yair Golan, leader of Israel's left-wing Democrats party and one of Netanyahu's fiercest domestic critics, has denounced the prime minister over a report that he is planning a budget proposal that is favourable to ultra-Orthodox parties to retain their support for his coalition government.

"While soldiers and reservists are being sent to Gaza, Netanyahu is looting their tax

money and using it to bribe the ultra-Orthodox who avoid service," Golan said in a post on X.

"Netanyahu is a negligent, corrupt and failed prime minister who sacrifices those who serve and work – just to cling to power," Golan said. "We will replace him."

Gaza doctor grieves her nine children killed in Israeli strike

A Palestinian pediatrician received the charred bodies of seven of her children while on duty after an Israeli strike hit her home in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Dr Alaa al-Najjar, a pediatric specialist at al-Tahrir hospital within the Nasser Medical Complex, was treating victims of ongoing Israeli attacks across the strip on Friday when she was shocked to find her own children and husband brought into the hospital.

The children – the eldest aged 13 and the youngest just six months – were severely burned in the bombing.

Shortly before the strike, Najjar had left for work with her husband, Dr Hamdi al-Najjar, who then returned home.

Not long after, an Israeli bombardment struck their house in the Qizan al-Najjar area in southern Khan Younis, killing nine of their 10 children and wounding the 10th.

Najjar's husband, who sustained serious injuries, remains in intensive care.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

A pro-Resistance electoral tsunami across Lebanon

From now on, eyes are on the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2026

From page 1 ► Regarding reconstruction of what has been demolished during the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli aggression, the minister stated that "the government is working diligently to secure the necessary funds, hoping that these efforts will bear fruit as soon as possible."

Obviously, the municipal elections have highlighted the strong coordination between Hezbollah and the Amal Movement.

In the city of Nabatieh, one of the candidates, who is frequently appeared on the anti-resistance channels and got the title of the spokesman of the anti-resistance Shiites, received just 20 votes, compared to 2,000 votes for the last winner on the list of the Shiite duo.

In their traditional strongholds, Lebanese Forces candidates, who during the intensive September-November aggression on Lebanon in 2024, were pushing for elections without Shiites made a terrible performance.

It clearly indicated their declining popularity in favour of a list supported by the Free Patriotic Movement and other Christian groups.

During the U.S.-led Israeli aggression,

Lebanese Forces MP Ghada Ayoub said that the heinous crimes committed against the pro-Resistance popular base were the fulfillment of "heavenly justice."

After the war, the forcibly displaced people returned to their homes and voted for the Resistance, while Ayoub failed even in the Christian villages affiliated with her racist right-wingers, whose political hatreds intersect with the cancerous Zionist project.

As for the Shiite duo, they strongly believe in the commandment of their first Imam, Imam Ali (as): "There are two types of people. Either a brother to you in faith or an equal to you in creation."

This duo never used the inflammatory sectarian rhetoric, which is a guarantee of Lebanon's sovereignty in general, and of the Shiite community in particular; a political resilience first founded by Martyr Sayyed Musa al-Sadr (ra), and perpetuated then by his successor Martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah (ra).

Given the performance of the Shiite duo in the municipal elections, now the eyes are on the parliamentary elections in Lebanon scheduled for May 2026.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Yemen fires hypersonic ballistic missile at Tel Aviv Airport

From page 1 ► He described the attack as a show of support for the Palestinian people and their resistance fighters, and a rejection of the "genocide being committed by the Zionist enemy in Gaza".

Saree added that the strike is part of a broader aerial blockade being enforced by the Yemeni Armed Forces against the Israeli regime.

He pointed out that many international airlines have recently complied with the imposed ban, which has significantly impacted airport operations.

The Yemeni Armed Forces stressed that the daily massacres being committed against the people of Gaza are pushing Yemen, its leader-

ship, people, and military, toward escalating military operations.

They affirmed that the escalation aims to end the Israeli genocide and lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Israeli media had earlier reported the launch of a missile from Yemen, followed by sirens sounding in western Jerusalem (Al-Quds) and surrounding areas.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Kan channel reported a suspension of takeoffs and landings at Ben Gurion Airport.

Flight tracking data from the time of the attack showed that four incoming flights were forced to circle above the coastline, waiting for

clearance to resume landing operations.

This attack is part of a series of aerial strikes carried out by the Yemeni Armed Forces as part of the air blockade on the Israeli regime.

These repeated missile attacks on Ben Gurion Airport have caused frequent paralysis in air traffic over recent weeks.

As a result, several international airlines have announced the suspension of flights to the Israeli airport.

Sana'a has repeatedly vowed to continue its military operations against Israeli targets in support of the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, asserting that such attacks will persist until the genocide ends and the blockade is lifted.

Netanyahu defies law, appoints Shin Bet chief in face of national outrage



From page 1 ► Netanyahu was expressly prohibited by Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara from appointing any new officials until the legal issues were settled. However, Netanyahu persisted in naming Zini in a show of blatant disrespect for the law, a move that has been denounced as an outright attack on Israel's institutional checks and balances.

Military outrage and the dismissal of Zini

The appointment process itself has further stoked tensions. There seems to have been no consultation with the IDF Chief of

Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, who was informed of the development only minutes before it was publicly announced. In a remarkable rebuke, Zamir dismissed Zini from the army for holding unauthorized talks with Netanyahu behind his back—a move that underscores the gravity of the breach and the unprecedented nature of the political interference.

A nation deeply divided

Many segments of Israeli society have expressed their disapproval of Netanyahu's move. Civil society organizations, opposition leaders, legal authorities, and

even top military officials have all condemned the action. Critics argue that the appointment is not only a violation of legal norms but also a dangerous politicization of the Shin Bet, Israel's most sensitive security institution. The fact that Zini, a decorated field commander but with no intelligence background, was chosen after a brief, informal conversation with Netanyahu further highlights the lack of transparency and merit in the process.

Divisions exist not just institutional but deeply societal. The opposition has urged Zini not to take up the post until a Supreme Court warning is given, whereas civil society groups have described the appointment as "brazen and defiant," accusing Netanyahu of putting private and political interests ahead of national security. Hostage families in Hamas' custody have also expressed outrage, with their argument being that Zini is inappropriate for such a significant role as he is reportedly opposed to ceasefire and hostage release deals.

Netanyahu's power grab

This latest episode is not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of executive overreach and erosion of democratic norms under Netanyahu's leadership. Netanyahu is strengthening his hold on power at the expense of Israel's already precarious institutional integrity by ignoring the military, the attorney general, and the judiciary. A scandal-plagued, infighting-paralyzed, and lawless regime is the end result.

The announcement of David Zini as Shin Bet chief is a clear example of the regime's disunity and fragmentation from within. As Netanyahu's cabinet faces rising condemnation, the very nature of Israel's security and governance has been undermined. The scandal has evolved into a standoff, not over this one appointment, but over whether or not the regime is viable at all. Its viability is now an open question, established upon a lack of trust, legal turmoil, and serious internal disunity.



A child cries as Palestinians gather to receive meals at a food distribution point in the Nuseirat camp on May 24, 2025 [Eyad Baba/AFP]

Symbolic Chogan match held in Naqsh-e Jahan Sq. to celebrate Cultural Heritage Week



TEHRAN – A symbolic match of Chogan, the ancient Iranian horse-riding game accompanied by music and storytelling, was held inside the gigantic UNESCO-listed Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan on Saturday.

It was part of a broad program organized by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Isfahan province to mark Iran's National Cultural Heritage Week that commenced on the International Museum Day on May 18.

Naqsh-e Jahan Square, recognized as the oldest known polo field in the world, provided a fitting setting for the ceremonial match.

Spectators, including both locals and international tourists, watched as two teams

from Isfahan province participated in the symbolic Chogan game. The program also featured Shahnameh-reading performances and other cultural and artistic presentations.

The event was attended by Secretary-General of the Chogan Federation, the Director General of Isfahan's Cultural Heritage Department, and the Director of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square World Heritage Base.

Chogan, which combines sport, music, and storytelling, was inscribed in 2017 on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the name of Iran. Historically played in royal courts and public squares, the game dates back more than two millennia and remains a symbol of Iran's rich intangible heritage.

Echoes of the past: The Book of Routes and Realms

The Book of Routes and Realms (Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik) by Ibrāhīm al-Iṣṭakhṛī is one of the most important and renowned works in the field of geography.

Al-Iṣṭakhṛī wrote this book in the 4th century AH (10th century CE) in Arabic. In this work, he describes the lands of the Islamic world, dividing them into twenty regions based on their size.

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhṛī, also known as al-Karkhī, was a famous geographer of the 4th century AH (10th century CE) and a native of Istakhr (Persepolis) in Fars province. He is considered one of the founders of geographical studies in the Islamic world.

The manuscript held at the National Museum of Iran is one of the oldest surviving texts from the Seljuk period and the most complete translated version of Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik. This book was most likely translated into Persian under the same title (Masālik va Mamālik) in the 5th or 6th century AH. Later, in 726 AH, Abū al-Maḥāsīn Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Muḥammad al-Nakhjawānī, known as Ibn Sāwīj, transcribed it in Isfahan in naskh script on government-issued paper (kāghaz-e Dowlatābādī), spanning 275 pages. The manuscript contains 13 gilded and ornamented headpieces, 20 colored maps,

and 2 black-and-white maps. Its binding is cardboard covered with timāj leather and has a flap. The front cover features a gilded embossed tarang (medallion) design.

The manuscript of the Persian translation of Masālik va Mamālik is preserved at the National Museum of Iran, Museum of Islamic Archaeology and Art, under inventory number 3515. This valuable work is noteworthy for its scholarly content, its significance in Persian prose, and its hand-drawn colored maps, making it an important reference for study. In 2008 CE (1387 SH), upon the recommendation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this precious work was registered under No. 1005 in the UNESCO Memory of the World Committee's national list.

In Masālik va Mamālik, al-Iṣṭakhṛī provides detailed descriptions of various countries and regions, including distances, boundaries, valuable commercial products, industries, the conditions of different peoples, and historical monuments such as fortresses and fire temples. The most extensive section of the book is dedicated to the land of Persia (Iran). In this manuscript, the map of the Persian Gulf is titled “Ṣūrat Baḥr Fārs” (Image of the Persian Sea), and the map of Iran is titled “Ṣūrat Bārs” (Image of Persia), both rendered in color. It is worth noting that the word “ṣūra” (image) in this book refers to a map.

Water history in Iran: Qanats behind expansion of the Achaemenid Empire

TEHRAN—An expert on qanat (an ancient underground water network) who has conducted extensive studies on the remaining qanats of Iran believes that the great emperors of Iran during Achaemenid and Sassanid eras were indebted to the Iranians' aqueducts and hydrological knowledge, ILNA wrote.

Mohammad Barshan says: “If someone irrigated a dry land through construction of qanat during Achaemenid era, he/she was exempt from paying tax for five years.”

The role of water in life and the way of suing it was very important for Iranians in the past.

The formation of qanats with a precise and engineered model is based on the attitudes of Iranians to the role of water in their livelihoods.

Iran has the longest and oldest qanats

of the world.

UNESCO registered 11 Iranian qanats in world heritage list as engineering masterpieces in management of water resources.

UNESCO has it that “The qanats provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.”

Generally, each qanat comprises an almost horizontal tunnel for collecting water from an underground water source, usually an alluvial fan, into which a mother well is sunk to the appropriate level of the aquifer.

Barshan, who is manager of Kerman Qanat Center, said stone inscriptions and tablets remaining from ancient Iran show that the people of that time brought groundwater to their villages and cities by digging long and very deep aqueducts.

Professor Henry Gubler, who has researched the aqueducts of Iran for more than 30 years, estimates the length of these aqueducts to be more than 400,000 kilometers, which is several times longer than the Great Wall of China.

Barshan said Gonabad Qanat is 35 kilometers long and more than 300 meters deep, with wells at regular intervals of 50 meters. It is one of the masterpieces left from Achaemenid era.

Nasser Khosrow Qobadiani in his trip to Gonabad calls Gonabad Qanat as a water-rich and profitable aqueduct.

Barshan continued that the splendor of Iran's aqueducts is such that international groundwater experts such as Batello, Avelman, and others believe that the aqueducts of Los Angeles and Pasadena, California, as well as the aqueducts of Chile and Mexico, were built by Iranian

Land subsidence threatens Achaemenid sites in southern Iran



A view of the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, once the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC) in Fars province, southern Iran.

to control unregulated groundwater extraction and to revise agricultural policies that are exacerbating the crisis. “Overdrawing groundwater beyond recharge levels is unsustainable and dangerous,” he emphasized.

Another speaker at the meeting, Hamid Fadaei, faculty member at the Conservation and Restoration Research Institute, echoed these concerns, stating that continued rice farming – a crop historically alien to the region – is now posing

ing a significant threat to both the province's natural resources and its ancient heritage.

“Rice cultivation has no historical precedent in Fars and contradicts the region's traditional agricultural practices,” Fadaei said. “During the Achaemenid era, this region was a major provider of grains, vegetables, and livestock, not rice.” He described the current agricultural approach as a modern misstep, urging authorities to shift focus toward sustainable practices

and heritage-based development.

Fadaei also underscored the potential of local cultural heritage and handicrafts as viable alternatives for economic growth. “We've ignored the region's heritage assets in favor of heavy industry, but these resources can and should be revitalized,” he stated.

Both Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis attract global attention for their historical significance and architectural grandeur.

Iran, Kuwait eye enhanced co-op in car racing, tourism

TEHRAN—Head of Kuwait International Automobile Club (KIAC) Essa Hamzah, during his trip to Iran, said his presence was a turning point in the mutual ties of Iran and Kuwait, adding that a new chapter of international co-operation will start.

Hamzah visited the Head of Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Hossein Soufi, in Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

Expressing satisfaction over his presence in Iran, Hamzah said “Soufi is not only the head of a successful club but also an honored friend and a real brother.”

Soufi presented a comprehensive report on the history, activities, and achievements of the Touring and Automobile Club in fields such as issuing documents and international certificates, car assistance, tourism, and promoting cultural rallies.

Congratulating Hamzah on his new appointment within the structure of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), he emphasized on using huge capacities for promoting bilateral ties.

Hamzah praised Iran's status in the FIA body, saying the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the most important and influential members of FIA.

He added, “I have been in charge of the Kuwait International Automobile Club (KIAC) for 30 years. I have come to Iran for the first time. I admit that my biggest mistake was not making this trip 20 years ago.”

He stated: “Now, under the leadership of Mohammad Hossein Soufi, we are witnessing the professional, progressive, and influential activities of the Iranian club in all fields.”

During the meeting, both sides emphasized on promoting cooperation in holding international rallies, exchanging knowhow on auto racing and tourism sectors as well as rendering special services to each other's tourists.

Pointing to the increasing interest of Kuwaiti citizens in traveling to Iran, Hamzah said: “Given our studies, Iran has turned into a more attractive destination for Kuwaiti tourists.”

He called cuisine, weather, nature and proximity as advantages of traveling to Iran for Kuwaiti people, predicting that many Kuwaitis

will choose Iran for spending holidays during upcoming summer.

Soufi emphasized on the role of media in introducing the operations of automobile clubs.

“We have established extensive connections with domestic media as well as the media of the International Automobile Federation, which has made the activities of the Iranian Association visible at global level. In this regard, we would like to have extensive media cooperation in this direction with your presence as the FIA's Vice President of Mobility.”

Hamzah welcomed this proposal, adding, “I frequently pursue the news of Iranian automobile club in FIA media. I know that Iranian people are interested in media and pursuing the activities.”

Expressing satisfaction over inking memorandum of understating with Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran in near future, he called it an effective measure in promoting future collaborations.

He warned about the use of fake carnets by some Kuwaiti car owners and called for cooperation to prevent this violation.

Sulaymaniyah hosts exhibit of Iranian handicrafts

event, which came to an end on Sunday.

Also, Caretaker of Fars Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department Mohsen Ziaei, said the Sulaymaniyah fair was a good opportunity for introduction of Fars handicrafts and finding new markets for Fars artisans.

He added that Fars artisans attended the event by launching six stalls and introducing the arts of seven-color tiles, painting, khatam, and Abadeh carving.

Meanwhile, Deputy Head of Lorestan Handicrafts Department Abbas Hamzeie announced the strong presence of Lorestan ar-

tisans at the Sulaymaniyah exhibition.

He said Qalb-e Zagros, a non-governmental organization representing Lorestan artisans, put on display the artworks of 20 artisans.

Hamzeie explained that the Lorestan pavilion with various collection of artistic achievements, including kilim weaving, turquoise carving, intricate works of enamel, traditional music instruments, leather products, and local attire was welcomed by visitors.

In addition, a cultural carnival introducing Iranian clans and artisans was held on the sidelines of the exhibition.

Sassanid era. Also, bridges can be seen throughout Iran, including Sarvestan and Mianeh, which are all signs of the knowledge of hydrology in ancient Iran.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed out to Iranian watermills which were considered another part of hydrology cycle of Iranians. Iranians had mills including wheel mill and floating mill in ancient Iran.

The remains of these mills can still be seen in Shushtar. The water purification device in Chogha Zanbil is also the first and oldest water purification device in the world, which, through related vessels, transformed the muddy water of the Karkheh River into healthy and refreshing water. The water reservoirs of the desert provinces were another example of the advanced water industry in ancient Iran.

Iran a regional leader in health system, universal health coverage: WHO official

TEHRAN –The World Health Organization's (WHO) director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) has said Iran is a leading country in expanding its healthcare system and providing access to universal health coverage.

Lauding the country's achievements in recent years, Hanan Balkhi said expanding primary health care services, increasing access to health coverage in rural areas, maintaining high vaccination rates, and reducing maternal and newborn mortality, Iran has managed to become a successful role model in the region, the health ministry's website reported.

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

The country's commitment to providing equal health services to millions of refugees makes its services even more commendable.

WHO EMRO is working closely with the Iranian regulatory institutions to achieve regulatory maturity level 3 in the pharmaceutical regulatory system to pave the way for broader exports of Iranian health-oriented products to global markets; it will also contribute to promoting global health security, Balkhi added.

An Iranian delegation headed by Zafarqandi is participating in the 78th WHA, which 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.

The country's commitment to providing equal health services to millions of refugees makes its services even more commendable.

In October 2024, Balkhi said WHO EMRO is interested in expanding cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Alireza Raeisi,

the Iranian deputy health minister, and Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, the deputy health minister for international affairs, on the sidelines of the Seventy-first session of the WHO EMRO.

A delegation led by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi participated in the seventy-first session of the WHO EMRO which was held in Doha, Qatar, from October 14 to 17.

"During my short visit to Iran a few months ago, I became familiar with the capabilities of Iran in the health sector; Iran is a role model in health in the region," Balkhi noted.

"Utilizing full potentials available in the [regional] countries is essential for us, and we will not hesitate to support the implementation of health programs," the official noted.

Iran's health system 'a role model' in world

In January, President Masoud Pezeshkian called the country's health system a role model in the region and even the world thanks to its unique, particularly primary healthcare, services.

The official made the remarks in a letter addressing a national seminar held in Mashhad to honor healthcare staff includ-

ing nursing aids, health ministry website reported.

Lauding the substantial progress made in the health sector, the president said these remarkable achievements are the results of health workers' ceaseless efforts, such as providing vaccination and prenatal care for pregnant mothers, controlling infectious diseases, promoting health education, sharing knowledge, and training new generations of health staff nationwide.

The notable increase in life expectancy, reduction in infant mortality rate, control of infectious diseases, and reduction in complications from chronic diseases are all due to health workers' dedication and commitment.

Pezeshkian also commended the ongoing health programs such as universal health coverage and family physician programs, which have made comprehensive and continuous healthcare accessible to millions.

The president went on to say that the administration recognizes the untiring efforts and services of all health workers, and is determined to elevate the country's health system to its rightful and deserving position, utilizing health workers' valuable capacities and potentials.

Regular testing essential to diagnose thyroid dysfunctions

TEHRAN – Regular thyroid function testing is essential for detecting and managing thyroid diseases.

The thyroid is a vital organ that regulates metabolism, growth, and development.

According to national studies, a significant portion of the population of the country, particularly women, are at risk of developing thyroid disorders, including hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) and hyperthyroidism (Overactive Thyroid), IRNA reported.

Hypothyroidism leads to fatigue, depression, weight gain, difficulty concentrating, it can also affect mental growth and development in children. Therefore, screening is especially important in high-risk groups such as pregnant women and people with a family history of thyroid disease.

Nervousness, sweating, irregular heart-beat, weight loss, and protruding eyes are symptoms of hyperthyroidism.



The most important principle in treatment is regular monitoring of the disease and taking medicine based on periodic tests. Especially in pregnancy, proper regulation of thyroid hormones plays a vital role in fetal health.

To raise awareness about the key role of the thyroid gland and promote early detec-

tion and treatment of thyroid-related disorders and symptoms, World Thyroid Day is observed on May 25 each year.

Blood test, Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone (TSH), is the most common way to detect the illness; T3 (Triiodothyronine), T4 (Thyroxine), imaging tests, and biopsy may also be used to diagnose thyroid disorders.

To maintain thyroid health, regularly check thyroid hormone levels, consume iodine-rich foods (such as seafood), avoid excessive consumption of soy and cruciferous vegetables if you have thyroid conditions, maintain an active lifestyle and balanced diet and consult an endocrinologist if symptoms appear.

The World Thyroid Day was established to be observed on May 25, 2007, during the annual general meeting of Thyroid Federation International (TFI). The date commemorates the founding of the European Thyroid Association (ETA) in 1965.

ENGLISH IN USE LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

‘Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average’

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

"The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C," ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province's condition has raised concern, he said, adding, the industries operating in the province must reduce their dependency on water, otherwise water scarcity might worsen in the region.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند آسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمای حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلیسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد. باید میزان وابستگی صنایع در یزد نسبت به آب کاهش پیدا کند چرا که در غیر این صورت می‌تواند شتاب خشک‌سالی‌ها را افزایش دهد.

Knowledge-based companies attend Hospitalar 2025

TEHRAN – Supported by the vice-presidency for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, nine Iranian knowledge-based firms participated in 30th edition of Hospitalar, the biggest health event in Latin America, held from May 19 to 22 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The four-day event offered unique opportunities for business, networking, congresses, and knowledge exchange.

The event brought together 1200 exhibitors from over 80 countries to showcase their latest achievements and products in various health sectors including medical and dental tools, diagnostic devices, laboratory equipment, rehabilitation facilities and home care equipment, as well as digital health and artificial intelligence.

Iranian knowledge-based companies displayed their latest products in different health fields such as dental implants, telemedicine, e-health software, artificial intelligence platform in healthcare, physiotherapy devices and equipment, knee prostheses and orthopedic implants, colposcope devices, exercise testing devices, and diagnostic kits.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, the Iranian delegation held meetings with Asian, European, and Latin American companies, as well as Brazilian medical equipment associations and the Health Ministry of Brazil to boost technological cooperation through sharing expertise and expanding product exports.

Self-sufficiency in medicine, medical equipment is a priority

The issue of medicine and medical equipment production and self-sufficiency in these areas is one of the government's priorities, Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has said.

Medicine and medical equipment are two important areas related to people's health, he said, adding: "We are trying to reach self-sufficiency for the supply of medicine and medi-



cal equipment," IRNA reported

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

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

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

Yaqoubzadeh went on to say that the country's need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported.

Some 600 medical equipment companies are active in the country, producing around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market.

Medical equipment manufacturers in the country produce and supply over 10,000 types of medical equipment to domestic and foreign markets. Now, various pieces of laboratory equipment are manufactured at prices much lower than the same foreign products.

Over 300 migrant families with ‘labour children’ deported

TEHRAN – Following the implementation of a national campaign to organize and support children engaged in child labour in Tehran, more than 300 children were identified and sent back to their home country along with their families, an official with the Welfare Organization has said.

Two months into the implementation of the campaign, the findings show that some 85 percent of the identified children were unauthorized migrants, IRNA quoted Mohammad Nasiri as saying.

The campaign aims to convey the message that child labour is a criminal offence, and that children are not responsible for supporting their families financially. Parents who are not really in need are responsible for the exploitation of their children in any form of work, he noted.

The official went on to say that a large proportion of these foreign refugee families were needy and vulnerable. So, a new support program is being developed in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to address child labour, which will be revealed on the World Day against Child Labour, June 12.

Under the initiative, families that withdraw their children from street labour and send them back to school would be eligible for conditional aid.

Over 6 million Afghan nationals residing in Iran

According to the head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, a total of 6.1 million authorized and unauthorized Afghan nationals are living in the country.

Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees.

Some 2.1 million of the immigrants are documented, the information of the two million others have been registered, and the rest have illegally entered the country, ISNA quoted Yar-Ahmadi as saying.

Over the past Iranian calendar year (March

2024 – March 2025), more than one million undocumented nationals were deported to their own country, of whom forty percent returned voluntarily, the official noted.

Women and children make up the majority of unauthorized foreign nationals, who may be even working in the country and pose no threat. However, due to high costs (of food, transportation, fuel, and so on), imposed by refugees on the country, and inadequate international aid, Iran wants them to return to their own home country, he added.

In a recent meeting between Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation and the Director General for South Asia at Iran's Foreign Ministry, the Taliban called for joint meetings with Tehran to address the situation of Afghan migrants.

According to reports on Saturday, Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Mohammad Reza Bahrami and his accompanying delegation in Kabul.

During the meeting, Abdul Kabir highlighted the deep historical ties between the two nations and expressed appreciation for Iran's decades-long hospitality toward Afghan migrants. He also called for continued Islamic compassion in Iran's treatment of these migrants.

The Taliban official noted that Kabul is implementing plans for the voluntary return of Afghan refugees and revealed that 46 residential townships are currently under construction to accommodate returnees.

In response, Bahrami acknowledged the presence of several million Afghan nationals in Iran, many of whom lack legal documentation. He emphasized the need for greater cooperation between the two countries to address ongoing challenges and extended an official invitation to the acting minister to visit Tehran.

The Iranian diplomat also welcomed Afghanistan's housing initiative, describing it as a positive step toward facilitating the voluntary return of migrants to their homeland.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The elderly are the sources of mercy and divine blessing.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:32 Dawn: 3:09 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:52 (tomorrow)

Online photo exhibition in commemoration of Liberation of Khorramshahr

TEHRAN – An online photo exhibition titled “14 Elegies” was launched on Friday, at Artibition website, marking the 43rd anniversary of the Liberation of Khorramshahr.

The exhibition features works by the war and documentary photographer Alfred Yaghobzadeh. It has been curated in collaboration with the photographer Ramesh Lahiji, ILNA reported.

“An elegy, in the dictionary, refers to a combination of lament and grandeur, and sometimes even carries a musical undertone – much like the Liberation of Khorramshahr and the images from that time that place us on a fine line between the glory of resistance and freedom, and the sorrow of destruction left behind,” the statement for the exhibition reads.

“At times, language fails to express the lived experiences of people during and after war, and in such moments, images carry the weight of documenting those experiences for history. That is why everything – rich in detail and carried along a silent rhythm – is captured in Alfred Yaghobzadeh’s works on the ‘Liberation of Khorramshahr,’ fulfilling the meaning of the word elegy,” it continued.

“Many unforgettable images have been formed during the difficult days and turning points of contemporary history in Iran and the world. However, the works stemming from the ‘Liberation of Khorramshahr,’ due to their timing and the significant role this event plays in our history, are featured in this exhibition.”

Born in Tehran, to an Armenian-Assyrian family, Alfred Yaghobzadeh, 67, is noted for his war photography. He has captured enduring images from some of the most significant political and historical moments in contemporary Iran and the world.

His photographs in Iran during the 1979 Islamic Revolution and during the Iran–Iraq War led to his work for the Associated Press, Gamma, and Sygma news agencies.

Since 1983, Yaghobzadeh has photographed for the Sipa Press. and his photos

have also appeared in Time, Newsweek, Stern, Paris Match, El País and GEO.

Yaghobzadeh has covered armed conflicts and wars in Cuba, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the Lebanese Civil War. In Lebanon, he was wounded and taken hostage, and in Chechnya he was wounded by a tank shell. He was also injured while covering the Egyptian Revolution of 2011.

He has also explored the release of repressed Christianity in Eastern Europe following the collapse of communism. Published as Christianity around the World, he documented religious rites and rituals in 24 countries over the course of a decade.

Yaghobzadeh has published three photo books: “War Iran–Iraq,” “Faces of War” and “Promised Peace”. He has also won several prestigious photograph awards including the World Press Photo Award, the American Overseas Press Club Award, three Angers awards in France, and serving twice as a judge at the World Press Photo contest.

The Liberation of Khorramshahr was the Iranian recapture of the city of Khorramshahr on May 24, 1982, during the Iran–Iraq War. The city had been captured by the Iraqis earlier in the war, on October 26, 1980, shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Iran. The successful retaking of the city was part of Iran’s Operation Beit ol-Moqaddas. It is perceived as a turning point in the war; and the liberation of the city is annually celebrated in Iran on May 24.

In retaking Khorramshahr, the Iranians captured approximately 19,000 soldiers from a now-demoralized Iraqi Army. Saddam Hussein was shocked and infuriated by the defeat and by the fact that the Iranians had pushed on despite sustaining heavy casualties. The Iranians had even committed their reserves in order to keep on driving back the Iraqis. After the defeat, Saddam Hussein executed several of his top generals

The “14 Elegies” online exhibition will run on the Artibition website until June 2.

18th Resistance International Film Festival wraps up, celebrating resistance, artistic excellence

TEHRAN – The closing ceremony of the 18th Resistance International Film Festival was held at Vahdat Hall on Saturday night, honoring the winners in various categories.

Speaking at the ceremony, the festival’s secretary Jalal Ghaffari opened the event by stating: “Tonight marks the conclusion of the 18th edition of the festival. Thanks to the efforts of the people who organized it over seventeen editions, the festival has reached this stage.”

“Throughout the festival, I kept pondering why the Resistance Festival’s awards are significant for artists. The value is not monetary; rather, it’s rooted in the goals and ideals it represents,” he added.

“In the international section, works from Tunisia, Argentina, Russia, Iraq, and others were submitted. Over 3,500 films were received in total. All registration and judging phases were smoothly managed through an organized system,” he explained.

“The number of submissions nearly doubled, inspired by the events following the Al-Aqsa Storm, which sensitized our artists to the power of resistance as a unifying force between people and art,” he mentioned.

Resistance is a voice heard by freedom-loving people worldwide, he noted.

Ghaffari also expressed hope that the festival’s closing would mark a bright beginning, emphasizing the importance of continuously speaking about and creating films on resistance.

In the main section of the festival, wartime drama “Majnoon,” which centers on Martyr Major General Mahdi Zeinoddin received multiple awards, including Best Directing for Mehdi Shamohammadi, Best Actor for Sajjad Babai, and Best Resistance Film for producer Abbas Naderan. In the Film Music category, the Best Music Award went to Majid Entezami for “Majnoon.” Additionally, “Majnoon” secured Best Set Design for Behzad Jafari and Best Cinematography for Saeid Barati.

“Majnoon” also received the Jury Special Award. Produced by Owj Arts and Media Organization, the film centers on the courageous actions of Mehdi Zeinoddin, one of the notable martyrs of Iran who rose to leadership at a young age during the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1989), par-



Iranian musician Majid Entezami (second from right) with his award for best music at the closing ceremony of the 18th Resistance International Film Festival in Tehran, May 24, 2025.

ticularly on Majnoon Island during the Khaybar operation.

The film “North by Southwest” by Hamid Zargarnejad was recognized with Best Editing awarded to Majid Taromi, along with the Best Screenplay shared by Zargarnejad, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, and Mohammad Javad Eslami. Behnaz Jafari earned an honorable mention for Best Actress for her role in the film.

Set against the backdrop of the Iran–Iraq War, “North by Southwest” follows Mahdi, a security officer tasked with solving the mysterious disappearance of a truck carrying explosives. His investigation leads him to Majid, an enigmatic and ambiguous figure, and a clandestine group led by Zohreh, operating deep within the northern forests. Despite their outward religious piety, the group is involved in destructive sabotage activities.

“Hoor’s Tears” by Mehdi Jafari saw Roya Afshar honored with the Best Actress Award, while “The Heart of Raqqah” by Kheirollah Taqianipour received an honorable mention for Best Actor for Shahram Haqiqatdoost.

“Kianoush’s Garden” earned Reza Keshavarz the Best First-Time Director award, while the Best Film Award was given to “North by Southwest.”

In the international section of the festival, the Best Long Documentary award was given to “From Balkhab’s Land” by Zohreh Fazeli from Afghanistan.

The Best Short Fiction Film award

was presented to “Al–Ahd” by Mor-teza Jassem from Iraq.

The festival’s badge was awarded to Seyyed Ahmad Mousavi, producer at Qaf Institute, Iraq.

The Best Medium–Length Documentary was awarded to “Thalalath Farshad” by Hassan Khalifa from Lebanon.

A certificate of appreciation went to the Syrian documentary “Mak-toub” by Fatemeh Ghorban.

The Best Long Documentary award went to “Artoum Sumo” from Russia.

The Best Short Fiction award was given to “Shared Sky” by Seyyed Fahim Haider from Pakistan.

In the national documentary section, “Bano” produced by Mohammad Habibi Mansour, received Martyr Avini badge. The badge is given to films that align with the perspective of Martyr Avini.

The best documentary director award went to Seyyed Mostafa Seyedalhosseini for “Seven Years Here.”

Ehsan Sabori received the best short documentary director award for “Last Farewell.”

The best research award was presented to Farshad Ektesabi for “The Bottom Line.”

A special jury prize was awarded to “One Square Meter of Soil,” directed by Nima Mahdian.

The award for best director of a feature documentary in the Without Israel section went to “The Man

of Victory” by Mojtaba Minavand.

The best short documentary director award in the same section was given to “Yahya’s Dream” by Hossein Elham.

In the main documentary category, the Best Feature Documentary award was given to “Before I Forget You” by Abdolreza Nematollahi.

The best director of a feature documentary went to “Bano” directed by Mohammad Habibi Mansour.

The Best Short Documentary award was given to “Angels” by Mehdi Zamanpour Kiasari.

The Best Research Award was presented to Hassan Naqashi for “Written.”

The Best Artistic Achievement awards were shared by Saeid Houshmand and Ali-Mohammad Khaniki for the documentary “The Rainy Story.”

The Best Editing Award went to Amir Chabahari for “Yahya’s Dream.”

The Jury Special Award for this section was granted to “I Love Muhammad Hossein,” directed by Seyyed Mohammad Mohammadi Seresht.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Cinema and the Revayat Foundation organize Resistance International Film Festival annually.

The festival is a vital platform for the promotion and dissemination of cinematic works that embody the spirit of resistance against injustice, oppression, and inequality.

A new museum exhibit in Washington wants to put Gaza’s humanity at the forefront

A new exhibit at the Washington’s Museum of the Palestinian People, “Gaza Remains the Story,” is an effort to create a fuller understanding of Gaza beyond the headlines, through the works of contemporary artists, historical photos and opportunities for contemplation.

The depictions of Gaza over the past 19 months of its war with Israel have been unrelentingly grim: aerial photographs of neighborhoods reduced to rubble, news reports warning of starvation, videos of lifeless bodies being pulled from bombed and still-burning buildings, and a death toll that staggers, The Washington Post reported.

The combined weight of those horrifying images and words and numbers has flattened the outside world’s understanding of Gazans and their history, says Wafa Ghnaim, curator at Washington’s Museum of the Palestinian People.

For most people in the Western world, Ghnaim said, when they see or hear about Gaza it is because of “our suffering and our death.” She hopes the new exhibit “gives us an opportunity to highlight and emphasize and build the discussion around who we are as people.”

The museum is tiny, just the first floor of a small office building. And the exhibit is smaller still, just half of that floor. But Ghnaim has made the most of the space, filling every inch of its walls with the historic photographs and work of Gazan artists, some who still live in Gaza and others who are part of the Palestinian diaspora.

Ghnaim, who was born in the United States to

Palestinian parents, stood in front of a wall filled with black-and-white photographs of Gazan families and friends taken over the past century. They are having dinner, playing flutes, posing on a beach, living normal lives. She doesn’t know the people in the photographs but she feels they are watching as she tells their story.

Mallah Maktar, one of the artists featured in the exhibit, is a Palestinian artist from Gaza now living in England. She has lost friends, family members and fellow artists in Gaza as a result of the Israel’s genocidal war since Oct. 7, 2023. The war has so far killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children.

Maktar, 25, left Gaza to continue her studies in England the day before the war began. Watching it unfold from afar has “changed me completely,” she said in a phone interview. Advocating on behalf of Gaza’s culture and its people has become even more important in her life.

“I’m a different person now,” said Maktar, who has two paintings in the exhibit, including one from 2021 entitled “Shelter,” which shows a woman and a young girl huddled together. “It’s a depiction of a family taking refuge within each other during a time of war,” she said. “Live together or die together.”

Making the work of Maktar and the other artists accessible to a wide audience is part of why the exhibit is unique.

The 33 paintings from 28 artists shown in the exhibit are not originals. They are downloadable and printable copies made available by the Pal-

estinian Museum in Birzeit in the West Bank to organizations and museums around the world. Individually curated versions of “Gaza Remains the Story” have been exhibited in 65 locations including Belfast; Berlin; Cape Town, South Africa; Prague; Tehran; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Ghnaim acknowledges that in larger and more established museums and galleries, there is a stigma attached to displaying copies rather than the original artwork. But her decision to do so was born of necessity. The goal of the exhibit is to reach as many people in as many places as possible. Using digital images and archived photos provided by the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit was the only way to make that happen.

“That’s why I think archives can be really powerful,” Ghnaim said. “It’s like, you can’t stop us. You can’t destroy us. We have a way, no matter what.”

Included in the exhibit are works by artists who have been killed in Gaza since the war began. Mohammed Sami Qariqa, 39, a visual artist and muralist, died in October 2023 when a missile hit al-Ahli Hospital, where he and other Palestinians were taking refuge. That month also saw the death of Heba Zagout, a 39-year-old acrylic artist who was killed along with two of her children during an Israeli airstrike. All of her original paintings were destroyed in the attack, according to the exhibit’s artist biography.

Launched on April 11, “Gaza Remains the Story” exhibition will be on view at the Museum of the Palestinian People in Washington DC until November 2.

Cartoon of Day

Israeli attack kills nine children of Gaza doctor



Gaza Genocide

Cartoonist: Naser Jafari from Jordan