

Iran's Israel Documents a Damning Expose of IAEA

Confidential Iranian letters to IAEA found in occupied territories, laying bare extent of agency's coziness with Israel

SECRET



Next round of indirect talks with U.S. to be held Sunday in Muscat: Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry announced Monday that the next round of indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington over the revival of the nuclear deal will take place on Sunday, June 15, in Muscat, the capital of Oman.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei Asl confirmed that following a series of consultations, preparations are underway for the upcoming diplomatic engagement. The negotiations will be mediated by Oman, which has played a long-standing role in facilitating dialogue between the two sides.

Since April, Iran and the United States have held five rounds of indirect talks, with three sessions hosted in Muscat and the other two in Rome. The goal of the discussions is to reach a framework agreement that could replace the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which collapsed after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 under the Trump administration. ▶ Page 2

Iran, Japan FMs highlight need for diplomatic solutions on nuclear issue

TEHRAN – In a phone conversation on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Japanese counterpart Takeo Iwaya discussed a range of bilateral, regional, and international issues, with a strong focus on nuclear diplomacy and developments at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Araghchi criticized the "provocative and ill-judged" move by the United States and three European countries to submit an anti-Iran resolution to the IAEA Board of Governors. He said the effort comes at a sensitive moment, as Tehran and Washington continue indirect negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, mediated by Oman.

"Any uncalculated and destructive decision taken by the Board against Iran will elicit a proportionate response from Tehran," Araghchi warned, adding that those who use the Agency for political leverage would bear full responsibility for the consequences.

Reaffirming Iran's longstanding position, Araghchi stated that while Iran has no intention of pursuing nuclear weapons—citing Islamic principles as the foundation of this policy—it will not relinquish its right to peaceful nuclear energy, including uranium enrichment, which is a fundamental national right. ▶ Page 2

Secrecy behind GHF: Ethnic cleansing

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – Since March 2, 2025, Gaza has been under a stringent Israeli siege, halting crucial humanitarian items like food, water, and medical supplies. This blockade has triggered a severe crisis for Gaza's 2.3 million residents, with nearly half a million facing acute malnutrition and potential death.

The WHO highlights the dire situation, noting that people are starving while aid is blocked nearby, emphasizing the blockade's deliberate nature.

The IPC reports that 75% of Gaza's population faces "emergency" or "catastrophic" food insecurity, indicating an escalating hunger crisis. UNRWA has denounced the use of aid as a weapon, with Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini suggesting these actions could be war crimes or genocide. The destruction of civilian infrastructure further worsens the crisis, increasing the population's vulnerability and undermining resilience.

Is Israel seeking to embroil Aoun in an unforeseen Lebanese-Palestinian conflict?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON — The process of handing over Palestinian weapons in Lebanon's camps is set to begin in mid-June, following an agreement reached between Lebanese officials and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during his recent visit to Beirut.

Reportedly, the disarmament process will begin in the Beirut camps, but it is clear that most Palestinian resistance factions, including leaders in the Fatah movement, are not yet ready to give up their weapons.

For nearly a decade, after the Palestinian Authority focused its attention on coordination with the occupation forces, the Fatah movement has witnessed successive divisions that have affected Palestinians both inside Lebanon and outside.

Raids on Yemen won't deter missile attacks on Israel

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli occupation regime launches strikes on Yemen in a bid to end attacks in solidarity with Gaza.

According to officials in Yemen, the Israeli regime has launched a series of strikes on Hodeidah on the western coast. Reports have also confirmed that the Israeli assault targeted the docks of Hodeidah Port.

The Israeli military announced that it had struck "targets at Hodeidah Port" using naval missile ships.

Israeli media noted that this marked the first time the Israeli Navy had attacked Yemeni ports. They added that "the operation in Yemen is different from what we've seen in the past"

This assault is the tenth Israeli attack on Yemen since the beginning of the U.S.-backed genocide on the Gaza Strip.

The previous nine attacks were carried out by the Israeli occupation regime's Air Force.

Iran, Venezuela to finalize FTA in coming days

TEHRAN – Iran and Venezuela are set to finalize the text and annexes of their long-anticipated free trade agreement within the next two days, a senior Iranian official announced following a meeting in Tehran.

Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), met with Venezuela's Deputy Minister of Commerce Johann Alvarez, to discuss expanding bilateral trade and finalizing the free trade deal. ▶ Page 4

'She is a hostage,' Iranian academic faces solitary confinement in France for Palestine advocacy

TEHRAN – Mahdieh Esfandiari, a 39-year-old Iranian translator and academic at Lyon's Lumiere University, has been detained in France since February 28, over social media posts supporting Palestine.

Her sister, Mohaddeseh Esfandiari, called the arrest a "hostage-taking" during an interview with Iran's state television on Tuesday. ▶ Page 3



Fake ICE agents, real rapes: LA crisis

By Jae Marie

LOS ANGELES – I've lived in California for my whole life, I'm a citizen and both my parents are citizens. For many years, I have loved and cherished my immigrant friends from different countries, especially the Hispanic community. ▶ Page 5

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Europe seeks to revive its role in the nuclear dispute

Etemad discussed the European position on the Iran nuclear issue in an interview with Ramin Mehmanparast, the former Foreign Ministry spokesman.

He said: Today, Europeans are faced with a series of challenges in their relations with the United States; challenges that have emerged on issues such as the war in Ukraine, the status of NATO, and trade tariffs.

Europeans were one of the main parties to the nuclear agreement with Iran in the past, but in recent years, they have become somewhat sidelined in the decision-making process.

In these circumstances, Europe is striving to revive its role and position. The efforts to issue a resolution against Iran at the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency are part of this strategy.

Although the U.S. has announced that it will not support the tension-causing resolutions in the Board of Governors as long as its negotiations with Iran continue, it appears that these European actions are not only being taken with Washington's tacit consent but can also be interpreted as aligning with the United States' policy of applying maximum pressure against Iran.

Javan: Grossi is a lever for issuing a resolution

In a note, Javan discussed the different approaches of Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It wrote: After the Board of Governors meeting, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, with a different approach that could be considered a green light for issuing a resolution (snapback mechanism) against Iran, made a series of claims about Iran's nuclear program, which included issues such as not confirming that the Iranian nuclear program is peaceful, dissatisfaction with Tehran's position in criticizing the Agency's report, and implicit bias towards the Zionist regime.

These statements practically pave the way for issuing a strong resolution and referring it to the UN Security Council.

Of course, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei has stated that the snapback mechanism should not be exaggerated as our nuclear work is peaceful and there is no legal excuse, reason, or basis for not removing the Iran nuclear issue from the agenda of the Security Council in October 2025, and any action taken to the contrary would be a political and politicized view of the opposing parties.

Iran seizes four tankers in anti-smuggling operation



TEHRAN – Iranian naval forces have seized four tankers in the Persian Gulf, thwarting an attempt to smuggle thousands of liters of oil.

Ebrahim Taheri, a prosecutor in Hormozgan Province, announced the operation on Tuesday, detailing how naval patrols, backed by a marine commando unit, successfully intercepted the vessels.

The operation led to the discovery and confiscation of significant quantities of fuel found both within the tankers and in accompanying large fuel containers.

The seized vessels have been turned over to the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPODC).

Sobh-e-No: The enemy's strategy for social engineering

In a commentary, Sobh-e-No dealt with the murder of a young girl in Tehran and the opposition's abuse of the incident.

The paper said: In the era of hybrid warfare and complex psychological operations, the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran are exploiting the cultural sensitivities of our society to create chaos and instability.

The key point here is that the opposition is exploiting the issue of women in Iranian-Islamic culture for influence.

The hostile media is trying to turn individual cases into a public crisis, as they know that the issue of women is a red line for Iranians. They are trying to turn the murder into a lever of pressure, while dozens of women in America and Europe are becoming victims of violence, but do not get media attention. The political exploitation of the murder of a young girl is not a new act. However, the dimensions of the issue must be explained well, and the different views of women in Iranian society must be explained to everyone so that the enemies do not entertain the idea of hitting the Iranian nation by taking advantage of such mishaps.

Ettelaat: Perhaps the sixth round will be the last Iran-US dialogue!

Ettelaat talked to Hassan Hanizadeh, an international affairs analyst, about Trump's shaky behavior during the nuclear negotiations. He said: Donald Trump's dual behavior towards the Iranian nuclear file shows that the United States is not seeking to reach a fair and win-win agreement with Iran.

For this reason, Trump tried to make public opinion skeptical about Iran's activities. Five rounds of talks have been held between the two countries, with the Americans insisting on stopping the enrichment cycle.

We are ready to negotiate about 3.67 percent enrichment under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, but the Americans' obstruction continues; therefore, perhaps the sixth round will be the last round of talks between the Iranians and the Americans.

It must be admitted that the influential lobby of the Zionist regime does not allow the White House to accept the continuation of Iran's enrichment. Of course, we should not ignore the fact that the military option has generally been removed from the U.S. agenda. Therefore, perhaps Iran's 3.67% enrichment under the supervision of the Agency could lead to interaction and, as a result, an end to the dispute.

This recent action echoes a prior incident on March 31, where the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy apprehended two foreign tankers transporting over three million liters of smuggled diesel fuel, resulting in the arrest of all 25 crew members.

Iran grapples with rampant fuel smuggling activities, both by land and sea. This is driven by the country's heavily subsidized fuel prices, which are among the lowest globally, creating a large price difference with neighboring countries.

The ongoing smuggling operations are a persistent challenge for Iranian authorities seeking to control the illegal outflow of the country's subsidized resources.

Nine ISIS terrorists executed for 2017 attack, Iran judiciary declares

TEHRAN – The Iranian Judiciary has executed nine members of the ISIS terrorist group following the Supreme Court's confirmation of their death sentences for a foiled 2017 plot targeting civilians and security forces.

According to a Tuesday statement released by the Iranian Judiciary's Media Center, the sentences were carried out after exhaustive legal proceedings.

The case traces back to February 2017, when Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces, announced the dismantling of an ISIS terrorist cell in western Iran.

General Pakpour revealed that "ISIS aimed to deploy operatives inside Iran to conduct terrorist attacks against civilians in border and central cities," but the vigilance of intelligence and security forces thwarted the plot.

The Judiciary statement outlined how IRGC forces collaborating with the Ministry of Intelligence units first identified the terrorists' hideout in rugged western terrain.

After comprehensive surveillance confirmed their identities and precise location, security forces surrounded and engaged the cell.

During the operation, several terrorists were killed, including some who detonated suicide vests, while others were captured. Tragically, three IRGC fighters were martyred during the confrontation.

The security forces recovered a significant arsenal from the terrorists, including machine guns,



Three of the nine recently executed ISIS members during a 2018 court session in Tehran

thermal cameras, handguns, 50 grenades, and large quantities of ammunition.

The Judiciary emphasized that these weapons evidenced plans for mass-casualty attacks on Iranian soil.

Legal proceedings saw the case referred to Tehran's General and Revolutionary Court Prosecutor's Office, where the defendants faced charges of Moharebeh (waging war against God) through armed rebellion and possessing illegal weapons.

After multiple trial sessions attended by the defendants and their lawyers, the court reviewed confessions, evidence of weapon possession, and the terrorists' role in killing the three IRGC members.

All nine were sentenced to death—a ruling recently upheld by the Supreme Court.

The relentless battle against ISIS

Iran has spent more than a decade leading a determined and sacrificial campaign against ISIS, persistently countering the

group's repeated attacks on the nation.

In 2017, the terror group launched deadly attacks on the Iranian Parliament and Imam Khomeini Mausoleum in Tehran, killing 17 civilians and wounding dozens.

The group later struck the revered Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz in 2022 and 2023, murdering 15 pilgrims and drawing global condemnation.

Iran's judiciary responded decisively, sentencing perpetrators to death in May and affirming its policy of zero tolerance for terrorism.

Last January, ISIS claimed responsibility for two bombings targeting a memorial honoring the revered General Soleimani in Kerman, murdering 89 innocent lives and injuring hundreds.

Iran's Ministry of Intelligence later announced that 12 individuals involved in the bombings had been arrested across six provinces in Iran. Beyond its borders, Iran has been instrumental in crippling ISIS.

Tehran provided critical train-

ing, intelligence, and ground support to Iraqi forces and Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), helping liberate key cities like Mosul.

Legendary IRGC Major General Qasem Soleimani—later martyred by the U.S. in 2020—spearheaded coordination with Iraqi militias, earning deep respect for his tactical brilliance.

In addition to its decisive actions in Iraq, Iran has played a vital role in Syria by dismantling key ISIS strongholds in collaboration with the Resistance Axis.

Their sustained, coordinated campaign significantly diminished the terrorist group that once controlled vast areas of Iraq and Syria.

Internally, Iran's multi-agency counter-terrorism framework—encompassing its Police Command, the IRGC, the Army (Artesh), and intelligence services—has disrupted numerous ISIS plots.

In a recent large-scale operation last week, the Islamic Republic's Police Command dismantled a suicide terrorist network linked to ISIS that had planned to carry out bombings during the anniversary commemorations of Imam Khomeini's death.

According to Police Spokesperson Saeed Montazeralmahdi, the operation—conducted in coordination with Tehran's Metropolitan Police and forces in Isfahan, Qom, and Alborz provinces—resulted in the arrest of 13 foreign nationals, including the group's leader, operational coordinators, and suicide bombers, alongside the seizure of explosive vests and backpacks.

Iran, Japan FMs highlight need for diplomatic solutions on nuclear issue



From page 1 ▶ The Iranian diplomat also praised Japan's historically balanced foreign policy and expressed hope that Tokyo, along with other IAEA Board members, would act in support of diplomacy and dialogue rather than escalation.

Japanese Foreign Minister Takeo Iwaya welcomed the ongoing indirect talks between Iran and the United States, and reaffirmed Japan's support for Iran's right to the peace-

ful use of nuclear technology under international law.

Both sides voiced satisfaction with the continuing dialogue and regular diplomatic consultations between Tehran and Tokyo.

They expressed hope that such close communication would deepen further and contribute to the expansion of bilateral cooperation across all levels.

Next round of indirect talks with U.S. to be held Sunday in Muscat: Tehran

From page 1 ▶ While the two countries have shown cautious willingness to engage diplomatically, the process has been marred by significant obstacles.

Iranian officials have repeatedly criticized Washington's shifting positions during the talks, noting them as contradictory and undermining progress.

A major sticking point in the negotiations remains the U.S. demand that Iran cease all uranium enrichment activities under any new agreement.

Iran has firmly rejected this condition, stating that its right to enrich uranium is enshrined under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Tehran has maintained that its nuclear program remains peaceful and that its activities are within the bounds of international law.

Tensions escalated further following the release of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) latest quarterly report. The UN nuclear watchdog claimed that Iran had significantly expanded its stockpile of highly enriched uranium.

In a joint statement issued last week, Iran's Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) rejected the IAEA report as "politically motivated

and unbalanced."

They argued that the document had been drafted under pressure from European countries and did not reflect technical realities on the ground.

Amid these developments, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi offered more details on Tehran's position moving forward.

In a televised interview on Monday, he stated that Iran's forthcoming response to the latest U.S. proposal would be "logical and well-considered," adding that it could serve as a viable basis for continued negotiations.

"Our response is being prepared and is not finalized yet, but considerable progress has been made," Takht-Ravanchi said. "We believe the proposal we will put forward is a reasonable one.

We hope it will be completed within the coming days and submitted to the Omani Foreign Minister, who will then convey it to the American side."

He stressed that Iran's proposal is far from a simplistic statement. "This is not a one-liner or a short paragraph that can be brushed aside.

It includes elements that demonstrate our seriousness and reflect a structured, principled approach.



Members of the Iranian delegation leave the Omani embassy where the fifth round of Iran-U.S. talks took place in Rome on May 23, 2025.

Any credible proposal must have internal coherence—a logical beginning and end—with no contradictions between its parts." Takht-Ravanchi went on to note that the document Iran is drafting is not intended as a comprehensive agreement or a lengthy memorandum, but rather as a framework that could pave the way for more detailed negotiations.

"We are not looking to submit a long, complex agreement that would take months to prepare," he said.

"What we are proposing is a structured framework for reaching consensus.

If both sides can agree on the basic outline, then more in-depth negotiations can begin on the de-

tails. We believe such a framework has the potential to produce an agreement that satisfies both parties."

The deputy minister acknowledged that negotiations are rarely straightforward.

"In any international negotiation, the initial text is only the starting point.

We may be able to reach a quick consensus on some parts while other sections may require more time and discussion."

Still, he reiterated that Iran remains committed to diplomacy. "We believe that if there is genuine political will on the other side, there is room to move forward."

Iran's Israel documents a damning expose of IAEA

Confidential Iranian letters to IAEA found in occupied territories, laying bare extent of agency's coziness with Israel

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Israel has long boasted that intelligence advantage in the region is on its side, claiming its espionage and surveillance capabilities are too sophisticated to be rivaled by any other actor.

The validity of that assertion was first put to question on October 7, 2023, when Palestinian Resistance forces infiltrated the occupied territories, breaching the heavily fortified walls that have besieged Gaza for the past 18 years. Israel failed to anticipate the attack and struggled to respond effectively for several hours, allowing Palestinian fighters to take prisoners back to Gaza – individuals the regime has been unable to retrieve despite its extensive destruction of the enclave.

The regime's intelligence capabilities faced another test last week, after Iran's national television announced that the country had obtained a large trove of classified Israeli information. Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib stated that the successful operation had significantly enhanced Iran's "offensive" capabilities. He noted the ministry required considerable time to review the obtained documents, images, and videos. The Tehran Times understands that Iran obtained the secret data not only through direct access within the occupied territories but also through other operational methods.

What the data contains

The extracted information spans various sectors, but data related to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is especially relevant in light of the agency's recent increased pressure on Tehran.

According to sources speaking to the Tehran Times, Iran uncovered



IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi holds a news conference after the first day of the agency's quarterly Board of Governors meeting at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, Austria, June 9, 2025.

confidential letters it had sent to the IAEA within the occupied territories, along with other secret documents belonging to the UN nuclear watchdog concerning its nuclear program.

One source stated that Iran suspects Israel did not obtain the letters and documents through espionage but received them directly from the IAEA. "Of course, if proven to be true, this would not be too surprising," the source said. "We have long known that the IAEA functions as a political tool, rather than a technical body with legal obligations."

A report presented to IAEA member states last month by Director-General Rafael Grossi reiterated previously addressed and refuted allegations regarding Iran's nuclear activities. That was seen as setting the stage for a resolution, anticipated at the agency's annual board meeting currently in session, accusing Iran of non-compliance with its non-proliferation commitments. Such a resolution would then pave the way for the activation of the so-called snap-back mechanism, which would return anti-Iran UN sanctions lifted

under the JCPOA.

It is unclear whether the newly obtained information will prompt Iran to restrict IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites, which face more scrutiny than any other nuclear facility globally. But the spokesperson of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) stated Monday that Tehran would reduce its cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog to pre-JCPOA levels if the agency does not demonstrate "gratitude".

The IAEA's intensive inspections of Iranian nuclear sites began under the 2015 nuclear deal. Despite the West's failure to uphold its commitments and the reimposition of sanctions, Tehran has allowed IAEA inspectors to remain in the country and continue their work.

'More targets for Iranian missiles'

Apart from the cozy relationship between the IAEA and Israel, Iran's successful intelligence operation has led to the discovery of the locations of secret nuclear sites built by Israel in the occupied territories. In a statement published on Monday,

Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said it now possesses a "bank of Zionist targets".

"These [hidden] sites would be attacked in response to any Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear infrastructure," the statement read. Israeli officials have said they would attack Iran's nuclear sites if indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington fail to lead to their "dismantlement".

Also commenting on the significance of the newly-acquired information, the chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the Islamic Republic will be able to strike potential Israeli targets "more precisely" now.

"Undoubtedly, this sensitive intelligence will render the efforts that are aimed at accelerating the annihilation of the occupying Zionist regime more effective and increase the precision of [potential future] Iranian missile strikes," Major General Hossein Salami wrote in a message issued on Tuesday.

Iran attacked Israeli positions in the occupied territories twice in 2024 with missiles and drones. Operation True Promise II, the second attack, achieved a success rate of over 80%.

A lot more remains undisclosed

When breaking the news of the intelligence operation in remarks to national TV, Khatib said the volume of documents obtained was so immense that "thousands of documents" is a gross understatement compared to what has been acquired.

The Tehran Times understands that Iranian authorities have yet to publicly discuss the most significant content of the recovered documents and footage.

Iran beat 10-man DPR Korea in 2026 WCQ

TEHRAN – Iran football team defeated DPR Korea 3-0 in the 2026 World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Korea's midfielder Kye Tam was sent off in the 66th minute after receiving his second yellow card.

Mohammadmehdi Mohebi was on target for Iran in the 73rd minute and Mehdi Taremi made the scoreboard 2-0 four minutes later. Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh scored the third goal in the injury time.

Team Melli ended the campaign as the first team with 23 points, two points above Uzbekistan.

Iran have already confirmed their tickets to next year's FIFA World Cup to be hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Iran and Brazil tells a story of Brazilian dominance. In 22 official encounters, Iran have managed just three victories, with Brazil emerging victorious in 19 matches. Their most recent meeting in the preliminary round of the 2024 VNL saw Brazil secure a 3-1 win.

'Hopes for a dream start

This opening match in Rio de Janeiro, part of a challenging first week that also includes formidable opponents like the United States, Slovenia, and Ukraine, represents Piazza's first major test at the helm of Team Melli.

For Iran, this isn't just another VNL match; it's an opportunity to lay down a marker, to show the world that this "different" Iranian team, with their fresh faces and renewed tactical approach, is ready to compete with the very best.

Can Iran achieve a "dream start" against the reigning giants of volleyball and ignite their VNL campaign with an upset?

Persepolis forward Sadeghi joins Foolad

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team winger Saeid Sadeghi joined Foolad club on Monday.

Sadeghi joined Persepolis in June 22 from Gol Gohar but failed to meet expectations.

The 31-year-old player has penned a two-year deal with the Ahvaz-based club.

Persepolis forward and defender Isa Alekasir and Giorgi Gvelesiani, who are deemed surplus to requirements, have been linked with a move to Foolad. Foolad are headed by former Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi.

Iran too strong for Japan in 2025 PVAO Sitting Volleyball Championships

TEHRAN – Iran eased past Japan 3-0 (25-8, 25-17, 25-22) in the 2025 PVAO Sitting Volleyball Championships on Tuesday.

Iran, who had defeated Australia 3-0 in their opening match, will face Mongolia in Pool B on Wednesday.

The competition takes place in Hangzhou, China, from June 9 to 19.

The 2025 PVAO feature both women's and men's sections, but Iran only compete in the women's category.

Korea, Thailand and hosts China are in Pool A.

Ousseynou César Gueye joins Kheybar: IPL

TEHRAN – Senegalese forward Ousseynou César Gueye joined Iranian football club Kheybar.

The 30-year-old has most recently played in Jordan's Al Wehdat. Ousseynou César Gueye has penned a two-year deal with the Iranian team.

Kheybar finished 11th in 2024-25 Iran Professional League (IPL) under guidance of Saeid Daghighi.

The Khoramabad-based team will be headed by Mohammad Rabiei in the upcoming season.

Iran's women's football team rout Iraq in friendly

TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team defeated Iraq 8-0 here in a friendly match on Tuesday.

Zahra Ghanbari and Afsaneh Chatreanor made hat-tricks as well as a brace from Neghin Zandi.

Team Melli will also face Iraq on Thursday.

In late April, Marziyeh Jafari was appointed as the new head coach of Iran's women's national team.

Team Melli prepare for the upcoming 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers, which begin on June 26.

Iran are pitted against Jordan, Bhutan, Singapore, and Lebanon in Group A.

Iran will meet Singapore in their opener.

'She is a hostage;' Iranian academic faces solitary confinement in France for Palestine advocacy



Mahdieh Esfandiari, a 39-year-old Iranian translator and academic, has been detained in France for over three months due to her pro-Palestine social media posts.

From Page 1 ▶ revealing that Mahdieh remains in solitary confinement under deteriorating physical and psychological conditions.

"After 55 days, they finally granted consular access," she stated, emphasizing that her sister is denied the right to wear her hijab and faces severe nutritional and emotional distress.

Vahid Jalalzadeh, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Consular, Parliamentary, and Iranian Expatriates Affairs, echoed the family's outrage, asserting that Esfandiari's detention constitutes "hostage-taking by a nation claiming to champion free expression."

He confirmed that French authorities have presented no credible legal evidence to justify charging her with "apologie du terrorisme (incitement to terrorism)."

"Her only crime was publishing content in solidarity with Gaza's oppressed people," Jalalzadeh stressed, noting that Iran initiated 42 diplomatic and legal actions since March 4, including formal notes, summoning French envoys, and securing legal representation.

Despite three consular meetings with the detained academic—the latest on May 28 with Iran's Ambassador to Paris—family visits remain prohibited.

Jalalzadeh also verified that French prison officials are coercing Esfandiari to remove her hijab, a violation of her fundamental religious rights.

Esfandiari's arrest followed a violent police

raid on her home in Lyon, where masked officers broke down her door and took her away without explanation.

For weeks, her family and Iranian diplomats received no information about her whereabouts until French magazine Le Point revealed she was held in Fresnes Prison near Paris.

Prosecutors tied her case to a 2023 report by France's National Online Hate Crime Center (PNLH), accusing her social media posts about Palestinian fighters' Al-Aqsa Storm Operation in October 2023 of "inciting terrorism."

Notably, the PNLH has faced scrutiny for systematically suppressing pro-Palestine voices, including banning the activist group Collectif Palestine Vaincre and prosecuting trade unionist Anasse Kazib for similar social media activity.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Asghar Jahangir, Spokesperson for Iran's Judiciary, condemned the detention as "illegal and a blatant breach of freedom of expression and personal security," citing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—both ratified by France.

France's crackdown on pro-Palestine voices contradicts its claims of pressuring Israel over Gaza's humanitarian crisis

"Prosecutors allege terrorism charges, yet her posts solely defended Gaza's oppressed population. In France, supporting oppressed nations is criminalized," he stated.

Jahangir confirmed Iran's High Council for Human Rights is pursuing Esfandiari's unconditional release through diplomatic channels.

Silencing pro-Palestine voices while fueling genocide

Esfandiari's case mirrors Paris's escalating crackdown on Iranian activists and journalists.

One case involves the Iranian-French journalist Shahin Hazamy, who was arrested on April 22 when 10 masked officers stormed his Paris

home, causing significant distress to his wife and young children.

Charged with "apologie du terrorisme," Hazamy had previously criticized Esfandiari's detention and shared a viral video of a Palestinian mother at a Paris rally that garnered 50 million views just days before his arrest.

In another instance, Bashir Biazar—previously associated with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting—was deported in June 2024 after spending 28 days in administrative detention for Instagram posts condemning the Israeli regime's genocidal war on Gaza.

Paris accused him of "anti-French remarks," a measure that Iran's Judiciary condemned as a human rights violation.

Biazar, now freed, contends that these arrests reflect France's "medieval tactics" to align with Israeli interests.

"While France defended Charlie Hebdo's anti-Islam cartoons as free speech, it prosecutes Muslims for supporting Palestine," he stated in a recent interview with an Iranian TV channel, adding that "this hypocrisy exposes a campaign to criminalize anti-Zionism under the guise of combating terrorism."

France's ongoing repression of pro-Palestine voices stands in sharp contrast to President Macron's claims of pressuring the Israeli regime over Gaza's humanitarian crisis.

While French authorities have recently issued tepid threats of sanctions against Israeli officials, critics argue that these measures are both too little and too late.

For decades, Paris has maintained an uneasy military connection with Tel Aviv. Despite public posturing, French companies have supplied crucial components to the Israeli arms industry.

Recent revelations show shipments—including a 14-tonne consignment of machine gun spare parts from the port of Fos-sur-Mer—further entrench this complicity.

French dockworkers have even taken to blocking these shipments, condemning their role in facilitating an ongoing campaign against Palestinian civilians.

This dual strategy exemplifies France's dangerous complicity, silencing pro-Palestine voices while bolstering Israel's war machine.

Daily gas output from South Pars Phase 11 rises by 60%



TEHRAN - Iran has increased daily natural gas production from Phase 11 of the South Pars gas field by 60 percent over the past 10 months, raising output from 12 million cubic meters to 20 million cubic meters per day under the current administration.

According to state broadcaster IRIB, Hamidreza Saghafi, head of Petropars, provided an update on the progress of Phase 11 development in its first and second stages, including the drilling of the ninth well at platform SPD11B, the scheduled loading and in-

stallation of the SPD11A jacket, procurement of drilling rigs and essential equipment, and construction of the second deck at SPD11A.

He also discussed the outlook for the project's final completion phase.

In this regard, Touraj Dehghani, head of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), emphasized the need for regular coordination meetings between Petropars, the project's general contractor, and subcontractors, particularly offshore facility manufacturers. He said identifying and resolving implementation bottlenecks through timely financial injections is essential for strengthening subcontractor performance.

Phase 11 of South Pars, Iran's largest and most challenging offshore gas project, has long faced delays due to technical and geopolitical complications. Its full development is key to boosting Iran's domestic gas supply and export potential.

Industries ready to add 895MW of thermal power to national grid in summer

TEHRAN - Iran's aluminum producer Almahdi connected the second 183-megawatt unit of its thermal power plant to the national electricity grid on Monday, a senior official said, as part of a broader push by energy-intensive industries to boost self-supplied power generation.

According to Mehdi Moghimzadeh, project manager for industrial self-supply power plants at Tavanir, a total of 895 megawatts of new thermal capacity from industrial plants is expected to be operational and connected to the grid during this summer's peak consumption period.

sumption period.

Speaking to IRIB, Moghimzadeh said that of the 10,000 megawatts mandated for industrial development, 2,300 megawatts have so far come online. The new capacity anticipated for summer includes the second 183-megawatt unit at Almahdi, a 183-megawatt unit at Makran, a 144-megawatt steam unit at the Botia power plant, a 160-megawatt steam unit at Hera Qeshm, a 183-megawatt unit at Block 2 of Khorramabad, and a 42-megawatt unit at Khatunabad in Kerman Province.

SEO to revive intl. stock exchange project in FTZs



SEO Head Hojjatollah Seyedi (L) and Free and Special Economic Zones High Council Secretary Reza Masrou

TEHRAN - Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) is moving to revive its long-delayed international stock exchange project in the country's free trade zones (FTZs) through renewed collaboration with the Free and Special Economic Zones High Council.

In a joint meeting held in Tehran, top officials from the SEO, the council's secretariat, and various economic and investment institutions discussed extending the operational license for the international exchange, reviewing domestic and foreign shareholder structures, and evaluating the required trading infrastructure. The meeting concluded with a consensus on accelerating the re-launch of the initiative.

According to the SEO Head Hojjatollah Seyedi, the groundwork for launching the international exchange is largely complete, with the necessary trading and settlement infrastructure already in place. "The remaining task is to create the right conditions for market operations and formal listings in accordance with the approved regulatory framework," he said.

Seyedi stressed three key aspects of the project—licensing, shareholder composition, and infrastructure—none of which he sees as obstacles.

He underscored the need for a professional

shareholder base, favoring financial institutions over commercial or industrial companies. "Long-term experience shows that non-financial entities can disrupt the stability of exchange operations," he noted.

He also warned against concentrated ownership, saying that no single person or institution should hold a dominant stake. "Successful models are built on widely distributed ownership among credible financial institutions," he added.

Seyedi welcomed foreign investors, provided they are qualified financial entities and adhere to Iran's legal and financial framework.

"We are ready to vet proposed domestic and foreign shareholders to ensure a stable, professional, and scalable governance structure," he said.

Reza Masrou, Secretary of the High Council of Free and Special Economic Zones, called for prompt resolution of remaining administrative hurdles.

"This is a national-level project, not just limited to free zones. Despite persistent efforts in recent years, progress was stalled. With renewed coordination from the SEO, we are committed to pushing it forward," he said.

Masrou noted that the original regulations for establishing the exchange were approved in 2018, and its preliminary license was issued in 2023. However, the nine-month validity period for the license has expired.

"We propose extending it to two or three years to ensure enough time for full-scale implementation," he added.

The meeting included representatives from Iran's Foreign Investment Company (IFIC), Iran Currency and Gold Exchange, Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance, and other private investment advisory firms.

The revival of the international stock exchange is part of Iran's broader strategy to attract foreign capital, deepen financial markets, and enhance the global competitiveness of its free trade zones.

Iran, Venezuela to finalize FTA in coming days

From Page 1 ▶ Dehnavi described relations between the two countries as "historic and friendly," emphasizing the importance of leveraging these ties to enhance economic cooperation.

"The agreement reflects a balanced and friendly approach. We want to see Venezuelan exports to Iran grow. Both countries have the potential to serve as trade gateways for one another in their respective continents," Dehnavi said.

The finalized agreement will cover rules of origin, sanitary and safety requirements, and lists of goods in agriculture, fisheries, and industry. It is expected to be signed by the countries' trade ministers once the final text is agreed upon.

Dehnavi linked the success of the trade deal to broader goals, such as developing transport and logistics chains, attracting mutual investments, and initiating joint production. He noted that the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union has already brought bilateral trade to \$4 billion, with short-term goals aiming for \$10 billion. A similar trajectory, he said, could be pursued with Venezuela.

Calling Venezuela a market rich in new opportunities, Dehnavi suggested the organization of trade missions and expos to



deepen commercial engagement.

Alvarez agreed, stating that current trade volumes between the two nations do not reflect the strength of their political relationship. "This agreement is just the first step. Iranian and Venezuelan business communities need to engage directly to increase trade," he said, adding that joint trade exhibitions and forums will be crucial in achieving this goal.

He also invited Iranian investors to participate in projects across Venezuela, pointing to the country's abundant natural resources and readiness to attract foreign investment.

The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing to continue consultations to identify and advance shared economic opportunities.

The 10th meeting of the

Iran-Venezuela Joint Economic Committee opened was held in Caracas in last November, with representatives of dozens of public and private companies and institutions, along with government officials from both countries in attendance.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the economic meeting, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil emphasized the historic cooperation between the two countries and noted that thanks to the strong political relations, about 300 agreements have been finalized between the two countries.

"In the past two years, we have signed about 80 contracts, we witnessed the visit of President Nicolás Maduro to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2022 and the visit of late President Ebrahim Raisi to Caracas in 2023, and now we

continue making progress in this joint committee meeting," the official said.

Transportation Minister Ramon Blazquez, the Venezuelan head of the joint committee, also said both sides reaffirmed their commitment to previous agreements and seek to increase cooperation in all areas.

He emphasized the commitment of the two sides to find mechanisms that would allow the improvement of economic cooperation and announced that Iran and Venezuela are planning to reactivate commercial flights between Caracas and Tehran.

The official also announced plans to restart the assembly plant of Iranian cars in the South American country.

Elsewhere in the meeting, Iranian Ambassador to Venezuela Hojatollah Soltani said Venezuela is a "land of opportunities," a new phase of cooperation has begun, and both governments strongly support expanding relations.

Oil, finance, insurance and banking, foreign trade, science and technology, industry, agriculture, fisheries, mining, transportation, and tourism are among the areas of cooperation between Iran and Venezuela to be discussed over four days in specialized committees of the 10th Joint Committee meeting.

Iran's agriculture minister left Tehran for Astana leading a trade-agriculture delegation

TEHRAN- Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholam-Reza Nouri, leading a trade-agriculture delegation, left Tehran for Astana, on Tuesday, to attend the meeting of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee.

In an interview conducted by IRIB, the minister, before leaving the country, called the main goal of this trip to activate Iran's joint economic committees with other countries, especially neighboring and target countries, and said: "A group of 120 managers and entrepreneurs from Iran will be present at the 20th Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee meeting, which will be held today and tomorrow in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan."

Regarding the importance of this trip, he said: "Given the position that Kazakhstan has in Central Asia and is one of the most important countries in this region, and also, given the volume of trade of about five hundred million dollars that we currently have with this country, we are trying to increase this figure to at least three billion dollars."

He assessed the communication capacities of the two countries as high and added: "The good grounds and good cultural, religious, and economic commonalities between the two countries will improve the promotion of interactions, and there are very favorable grounds for increasing cooperation, including in the fields of transportation, industry, mining, and agriculture."

Attending an exhibition with the participation of Iranian economic units and visiting Iranian agricultural farms overseas are among the plans for this trip, the minister added.

In late April, Iran and Kazakhstan signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to invest in and develop a dedicated terminal and logistics center at Shahid Rajaei Port, the country's largest commercial port on the Persian Gulf.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, senior officials from Kazakhstan's Export Development Fund, and Saeed Rasouli, acting head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), along with members of the organization's executive board.

Rasouli stated that Iran is prepared to review Kazakhstan's business plan within a month of receiving it and will finalize a model contract following approval. Under the terms of the MOU, the Kazakh government is expected to submit its investment plan within three months.

"Iran serves as Kazakhstan's gateway to open waters," Rasouli said, emphasizing Iran's support for foreign investment, including Kazakhstan's, as part of efforts to enhance trade and transit cooperation between the two countries. He noted that with 1,800 kilometers of coastline and access to international waters, Iran has substantial potential for logistics and transit development with neigh-



boring nations.

He also reassured stakeholders that despite a recent fire incident at Shahid Rajaei Port in Hormozgan Province, port operations continue at full capacity. "Currently, 35 vessels carrying oil, mineral, and containerized cargo are docked and being serviced without disruption," Rasouli said, assuring shipping companies and traders of uninterrupted access to maritime and port services.

Hormozgan Governor Mohammad Ashouri echoed the government's commitment to expanding and equipping Iran's commercial ports and said the Kazakh investment would directly enhance bilateral trade and economic relations between Tehran and Astana.

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Iran, Ontalap Onalbayev, expressed condolences over the recent incident at the port and described the investment as a strategic opportunity for Kazakhstan. He thanked Iranian authorities for their cooperation in facilitating the joint project and said the development of a logistics hub in Bandar Abbas would strengthen bilateral ties.

Kazakhstan's Export Development Fund chairman Mohammad Kaldybayev called Shahid Rajaei Port a key gateway for Kazakh exports and imports and praised Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization for its support.

Iran signals readiness to export engineering services to Kazakhstan

In a related development, Iran's Vice President and head of the Planning and Budget Organization Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi met with Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister Galymjan Koishibaev on the sidelines of the first ECO Sustainable Development Forum in Arkadag, Turkmenistan.

Pourmohammadi conveyed Iranian firms' readiness to export technical and engineering services to Kazakhstan. He proposed establishing a barter settlement system for goods and services and recommended that the Kazakh ambassador in Tehran be tasked with deepening bilateral relations.

"I propose that one Iranian and one Kazakh company be designated to open new avenues of cooperation between the two countries," he said.

Koishibaev confirmed that strengthening ties with Iran is a priority of Kazakhstan's for-

igning policy and said Kazakhstan is interested in importing dates, fruits, and vegetables from Iran. He also stressed the need to enhance transport links, revive trade corridors, develop port infrastructure, and strengthen railway connectivity between the two countries.

Iran's non-oil export to Kazakhstan increases 38.5% in a year

The value of Iran's non-oil export to Kazakhstan increased by 38.5 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year, Trend News Agency reported.

As reported, Iran exported about 360,000 tons of non-oil goods worth \$203 million to Kazakhstan in the previous year, indicating also two percent growth in terms of weight, year on year.

Iran had exported 353,000 tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$146 million to Kazakhstan in the Iranian year 1402.

Iran-Kazakhstan non-oil trade stood at 470,000 tons worth \$244 million in the previous Iranian year.

Agricultural products and foodstuffs, tobacco products and petrochemicals were the major non-oil goods exported from Iran to Kazakhstan in the past year.

The growth in export volume reflects the expansion of economic cooperation between the two countries and the increasing interest of the Kazakh market in Iranian products.

In mid-February, Iran and Kazakhstan reaffirmed their commitment to expanding economic and trade relations, with both countries aiming to increase bilateral trade to \$3.0 billion.

During a business forum in Tehran attended by Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleh and Kazakh Trade and Integration Minister Arman Shakkaliyev, officials and private sector representatives discussed economic cooperation.

Nouri emphasized that while Iran and Kazakhstan have made continuous efforts to enhance political, economic, and cultural ties, their collaboration still falls short of its full potential.

He highlighted the importance of bilateral trade in sectors such as agriculture, mining, tourism, and industry, noting that Iran's strategic position in West Asia and Kazakhstan's role in Central Asia create exceptional opportunities for businesses.

He also stressed the need for stronger trade infrastructure, enhanced transport links, and supportive policies to facilitate sustainable economic growth.

Nouri pointed to the roadmap agreement signed between the two governments, which sets a \$3.0 billion trade target, as a sign of their serious commitment to expanding ties.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Is Israel seeking to embroil Aoun in an unforeseen Lebanese-Palestinian conflict?

From page 1 ▶ A Fatah figure opposed to the plan confirmed to Tehran Times that it is illogical to hand over weapons without reaching an understanding with the Lebanese authorities regarding the future of the camps on several levels.

The private source confirmed to the Tehran Times that it would have been more appropriate for Abbas to talk about regulating weapons, not handing them over, and to coordinate in advance with other factions, rather than imposing a fait accompli that only serves the interests of the Israeli enemy.

The source did not hide the Palestinian factions' concern about a pre-planned sedition between the Palestinian factions and the Lebanese Army, as had happened in previous instances, seriously warning that this was inevitably a prelude to settling the refugees in Lebanon.

In his interview with the Tehran Times, the source warned that



there were no guarantees that suspects or those paid to do so would not drag the army into a bloodbath inside the camps, just as had previously happened in Nahr al-Bared in northern Lebanon.

President Joseph Aoun had confirmed to Abbas that the army had no intention of entering the camps and did not want to clash with anyone. Instead, another means of resolving the issue should be

sought.

In the early 1990s, after the end of the Lebanese civil war, the Palestinian issue entered a new phase. Fatah was no longer the sole faction controlling Palestinian decision-making, especially in light of the rise of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which were supported by Hezbollah, in addition to the sponsorship of the Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat Islamiya.

The source pointed out that the

war is not over yet, and that both the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance fronts have not surrendered, therefore, the Palestinians refuse to be treated as Germany was after World War II.

In light of the Palestinian division, the refugees in the camps suffer from a two-edged dilemma: (1) their unrecognized civil rights in Lebanon; (2) the shaky security situation within their camps.

Since 1948, Christian right-wing forces have deprived the camps of the most basic human rights and services, forcing a large portion of the Palestinian refugees to emigrate to the West.

Some of the wealthy were able to live outside the camps. Consequently, only the abjectly poor remain victims of misery, unemployment, and sectarian fanaticism fuelled by well-known external parties, for which some of these weapons are used to settle.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Raids on Yemen won't deter missile attacks on Israel

From page 1 ▶ On May 28, the occupation regime also launched airstrikes on Sanaa International Airport, roughly ten days after it resumed operations with four flights between the Yemeni capital and Amman, Jordan.

That attack followed another Israeli strike on the airport earlier in May.

Despite the Israeli assaults, Yemeni armed forces continue to carry out operations deep inside Israeli territory using ballistic missiles and drones in solidarity with the people of Gaza and its resistance forces.

These attacks have targeted Ben Gurion Airport and other critical Israeli sites.

The operations have achieved their objectives by sending millions of Israelis into bunkers, disrupting air traffic at Ben Gurion Airport, and forcing international airlines to cancel or suspend commercial flights.

The government in Sanaa recently revealed that its armed forces have been using hypersonic ballistic missiles against Israeli targets with a new warhead that explodes even when intercepted.

Yemen has effectively enforced a naval and air blockade on the Israeli regime.

Yemeni forces have stated that their strikes on the Israeli regime will continue as long as the genocidal war on Gaza persists and the blockade on the enclave remains in place.

Experts note that it would not be surprising if Yemen launches another hypersonic ballistic missile at Tel Aviv, rendering the regime's latest aggression ineffective.

Secrecy behind GHF: Ethnic cleansing



From page 1 ▶

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation

Amid this dire context, a controversial new actor has emerged: the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). Established in February 2025 in Switzerland, GHF claims to be a humanitarian aid distributor but operates under a veil of secrecy and military backing. Investigations reveal that GHF functions as a front for a network of private mercenary firms and receives heavy funding from Israeli military-intelligence agencies, including Mossad and the Ministry of War. This funding is reportedly funneled through opaque shell companies, with millions of dollars flowing from undisclosed sources.

Israeli opposition figures have openly accused the Netanyahu

government of using GHF to replace UNRWA, which Israel has designated a terrorist organization since 2024. The GHF model is integral to Israel's broader strategy of ethnic cleansing in northern Gaza, forcibly relocating Palestinians into tightly controlled "humanitarian islands" or concentration camp-like compounds monitored by biometric systems. Internal GHF documents acknowledge that their aid distribution centers could be perceived as "concentration camps with biometrics," revealing the dystopian and coercive nature of the operation.

Militarization and mercenary involvement

The GHF's operations are heavily militarized and guarded by private mercenary firms such as Safe

Reach Solutions and UG Solutions, staffed by former CIA operatives and special forces veterans. These mercenaries manage checkpoints and distribution centers, often resorting to violence against desperate Palestinians queuing for aid. On May 27, Israeli soldiers and American security contractors opened fire on crowds near GHF distribution points, killing over 130 Palestinians and wounding more than 150—a brutal repression that starkly contradicts humanitarian principles and exemplifies the weaponization of aid as a tool of control and terror.

Collapse of humanitarian principles and internal dissent

An internal crisis in GHF precipitated the departure of its leadership; even its CEO and COO resigned in protest against the organization's failure to respect neutrality, impartiality, and humanity. These resignations notwithstanding, GHF continues to function under Israeli military protection and with the tacit backing of the U.S. government, which has since endorsed the scheme, providing it with a semblance of legality. This militarized and opaque aid delivery apparatus substitutes for the UN, undermining decades of humanitarian work by UNRWA and other agencies.

UN and WHO statements exhorting the lifting of the blockade and the stopping of any humanitarian access obstruction have been dismissed or actively impeded by the Israeli authorities, hence spurring the crisis deeper.

Broader humanitarian impact

The intentional starvation and siege have precipitated the collapse of Gaza's health system. Over one-third of essential medical supplies are out of stock, whereas many health facilities have been damaged or destroyed due to the ongoing Israeli raids.

Deaths related to malnutrition, especially of children, are sharply rising; from the beginning of the siege, 57 children are reported to have died of malnutrition, with projections estimating that if the blockade continues, approximately 71,000 children under five will suffer from acute malnutrition within the next few months.

The psychological and social fabric of Gaza is in the process of unraveling, with families facing starvation, displacement, and the constant threat of violence. To use food as a weapon is not only a humanitarian catastrophe but also an outright breach of international law and human rights.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Fake ICE agents, real rapes: LA crisis

From page 1 ▶ What's happening: ICE is roaming all over Los Angeles, in unmarked vehicles, with officers in plainclothes, kidnapping anyone who they deem is not a citizen, even if that person is here legally or is actually a citizen. They are violent and they wear masks for anonymity. This has created a new problem – there's a recent news story where random men, pretending to be ICE officers, kidnapped and raped a woman. Who knows how often this has happened?

There are no "riots" – these are direct actions (by brave heroes) for revolutionary progress. I am so proud of everyone who has been out in the streets taking on the cops. Two Blackhawks were spotted over Los Angeles and 2 MQ9 Reapers. In the West, we call this the imperial boomerang, meaning that the violence the state inflicts on other countries will eventually be used on the state's own population.

Police have been firing so many "non-lethal" bullets—at reporters, at protestors, at everyone

who was there—that they had to reload. That's when the Blackhawk came with more bullets. These rounds are less lethal than real bullets, but still lethal. Also, the police have been using copious amounts of tear gas, which most countries have outlawed even in times of war.

There are multiple groups like People's City Council LA and Unity of Fields (anti-imperialist propaganda front for the international popular cradle of resistance) who help coordinate when someone gets arrested. They provide jail support, so they provide lawyers and bail support, and they always have people waiting outside the jail to take the jailed person home and make sure they're okay. They bring water and snacks, etc. That kind of community solidarity is what gives me hope.

The federal government sent in the National Guard—2,000 men—and they are planning to send in the Marines. The goal of the protestors is to save their comrades from being violently

kidnapped and deported to a torture prison in CECOT in El Salvador. The other goal is to overwhelm and scare the police and ICE and the National Guard so badly that our government realizes it cannot continue these deportations.

In terms of attending these protests, calls go out on Twitter or elsewhere and people will just show up. It's not about leadership or hierarchy—it's about shared purpose and instinct.

I should also mention that Gavin Newsom is a corrupt politician. He pretends to care about California, but he's going to use this moment to run for president in 2028 (in my opinion). But the reason we have so many fires here is in large part due to his refusal to prosecute the people who start the fires—energy companies like PG&E—and he doesn't allocate nearly enough money to the fire departments.

I hope that it starts a nationwide movement of Americans taking their country back from the corrupt politicians and corporations.

US holds deep doubts about Palestinian state, ambassador says

The U.S. no longer wholeheartedly endorses an independent state for Palestinians, Washington's ambassador to Israel said, adding that if one were to be formed it could be elsewhere in the region rather than the West Bank.

"Unless there are some significant things that happen that change the culture, there's no room for it," Mike Huckabee, an appointee of President Donald Trump, said in an interview with Bloomberg in al-Quds (Jerusalem). Those probably won't happen "in our lifetime," he added.

When asked if a Palestinian state remains a goal of U.S. policy, as it has been for the past two decades, he said: "I don't think so."

Regarding location, Huckabee suggested a piece of land could be carved out of a Muslim country rather than asking Israel to make room. "Does it have to be in Judea and Samaria?" Huckabee, 69, said, using the biblical name the Israeli government favors for the West Bank, where some 3 million Palestinians live under occupation.

Palestinians argue that Israel has made a formation of a state nearly impossible by building more and bigger Jewish settlements in the West Bank and undermining Palestinian authorities, while doing little to stop settler violence against Palestinians.

European and Arab countries have been working to promote the creation of a Palestinian state led by the Palestinian Authority, which controls parts of the West Bank, as part of a process to end the 20-month war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Woman who inspired Gaza flotilla says 'message of humanity' reached world

For the past week, Madleen Kulab, the 30-year-old fisherwoman and inspiration for the name of the Madleen aid ship, had followed the vessel's journey with a mixture of hope and anxiety as it sailed towards Gaza's shores in an attempt to break Israel's blockade.

Throughout its voyage, Kulab remained in close contact with organizers of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC), which launched the vessel.

But her guarded optimism gave way to heartbreak when she woke Monday to the news that Israeli forces had intercepted the ship in international waters and detained all 12 people on board, including the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

"I was deeply disheartened," Kulab told Al Jazeera. "I strongly anticipated this scenario, but I was truly hoping for a miracle that somehow the ship would break the blockade and reach Gaza."

The night before the ship was intercepted, Kulab had spoken to one of the 12 people on board, Rima Hassan, a member of the European Parliament from France. Hassan, who is of Palestinian origin, told Kulab over a video call that her biggest dream was to visit Gaza.

"Her words really moved me, the way she's devoted her life to the Palestinian cause," Kulab said.

"And yet, that simple dream [to visit Gaza] has been made impossible by Israel."

Marines arrive in LA under Trump orders as protests spread to other cities

Hundreds of U.S. Marines arrived in Los Angeles overnight and more were expected on Tuesday under orders from President Donald Trump, who has also activated 4,000 National Guard troops to quell protests despite objections from California Governor Gavin Newsom and other local leaders, Reuters reported.

The city has seen days of public outrage since the Trump administration launched a series of immigration raids on Friday, though local officials said the demonstrations on Monday were largely peaceful.

About half of the roughly 700 Marines that Trump ordered to Los Angeles arrived on Monday night, and the remaining troops will enter the city on Tuesday, a U.S. official told Reuters. The U.S. military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass told KABC that more than 100 people had been arrested on Monday but that the majority of protesters were nonviolent. Over the weekend, protesters threw rocks and other objects at officers and vehicles and set several cars ablaze. Police responded by firing projectiles like pepper balls as well as flash bang grenades and tear gas.

Trump has justified his decision to deploy active military troops to Los Angeles by describing the protests as a violent occupation of the city, a characterization that Newsom and Bass have said is grossly exaggerated.

Israel guilty of 'extermination' in attacks on schools, mosques: UN

Israel has committed the crime against humanity of "extermination" by attacking Palestinian civilians sheltering in schools and religious sites in Gaza, an independent United Nations commission report says, according to Al Jazeera.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, made the accusation in a report released on Tuesday.

The report also said Israeli forces have committed war crimes, "including directing attacks against civilians and willful killing, in their attacks on educational facilities that caused civilian casualties".

"We are seeing more and more indications that Israel is carrying out a concerted campaign to obliterate Palestinian life in Gaza," commission chair Navi Pillay, a former UN high commissioner for human rights, said in a statement.

The report said Israel has damaged or destroyed more than 90 percent of the school and university buildings in Gaza and destroyed more than half of all religious and cultural sites in the territory.

UK and allies to sanction Israeli ministers Ben Gvir and Smotrich

A number of countries, including the UK, are set to sanction far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich over their conduct during the war on Gaza, MEE reported.

In a significant break from Washington, London will join Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other nations in imposing asset freezes and travel bans on Israel's National Security Minister Ben Gvir – a West Bank settler – and Finance Minister Smotrich.

The two have fiercely opposed the entry of international aid into Gaza and advocated for the forced expulsion of Palestinians from the territory, with Smotrich pledging last month that "Gaza will be entirely destroyed" and that Palestinians will "leave in great numbers to third countries".

Meanwhile, Ben Gvir has called for Israel to "encourage the voluntary emigration of the residents of Gaza".

The announcement, reported in the Times, comes after UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy branded Smotrich's comments regarding the forced expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza as "monstrous".

"We must call this what it is. It is extremism. It is dangerous. It is repellent. It is monstrous and I condemn it in the strongest possible terms."

Smotrich has long advocated for extending Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and across the Middle East as part of his vision of a "Greater Israel".

ECO approves Iran's proposal to implement Carnet de Passages system

TEHRAN - The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has officially approved Iran's proposal for the implementation of the international Carnet de Passages en Douane (CPD) system among its member states.

The initiative aims to facilitate the temporary admission of private and commercial vehicles across borders within the ECO region, Mehr reported.

According to a statement by the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI), the proposal was initially introduced with the support of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran.

The plan of utilizing the capacity of the international customs transit permit (Carnet de Passages) to facilitate temporary vehicle entry among ECO member states, was reviewed during the ECO Experts Meeting held on April 30, in Turkey, with TACI representatives in attendance.

The proposal subsequently received final approval during the 10th Meeting of the Heads of Customs Authorities of ECO Member States, held in Tehran on May 28. It was also incorporated into the final declaration of the summit.

TACI's active role and technical presence in these negotiations marked a significant step in showcasing Iran's capabilities in international transport, cross-border automotive tourism, and road mobility facilitation, the report underlined.

Following this "success", the initiative was also discussed and endorsed at the 13th Meeting of ECO Ministers of Transport, hosted in Tehran on June 1-2. The summit was chaired by Iran and attended by ministers from Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan, as well as deputy ministers from Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Senior officials from Azerbaijan's Ministry of Transport, the ECO Bank president, and representatives from the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and TRACECA (short for Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia) also participated, Mehr added.

The initiative is expected to boost road tourism and cultural exchange across the region, while also enhancing Iran's strategic role in international automotive transport and tourism in Central and Western Asia.

The next ECO Transport Ministers' Meeting is scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan in 2026.

Craft school licenses are only given to top artisans



TEHRAN—The Deputy Minister of Handicrafts has said the training field in handicrafts has been handed over to the private sector and the permit for launching specialized handicraft schools are only issued for top artisans.

Maryam Jalali Dehkordi told IRNA that the process of issuing permit for top artisans has been conducted in licensing system and will be unveiled in Handicrafts Week.

She said transferring training to the private sector by granting licenses can be effective in promoting the training, which is considered the foundation of development.

Until now, technical and vocational centers or art schools did not consider educational standards based on cultural heritage and handicrafts, but by handing over the field of training to the private sector and artists, the

level of education will become standardized and of high quality, she added.

Jalali Dehkordi said there are 3,000 top artisans across the country, adding that the regulations for establishing handicraft schools are issued in the same way as the regulations for handicraft houses. All top artisans can establish handicraft school, she mentioned. If they don't have capital, someone can work with them as an investor and they can work as the technical director of the school, she added.

She explained that tariffs for handicrafts vary, and tariffs are part of the regulations.

Asked about whether training is still provided free of charge in technical and vocational centers, said: "There is still supportive training and technical and vocational education is subject to the law of supply and demand. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Technical and Vocational Center to recognize all handicraft training in the provinces. Handicraft training is free in some centers such as the Abkar House and the Carpet Museum."

She added that those interested in learning handicrafts fields in Tehran, can refer Tehran Cultural Heritage Department and become informed of the places in which handicrafts fields are trained free of charge.

Shandiz ancient tree registered on natural heritage list



TEHRAN—Mayor of Shandiz city in Khorasan Razavi province said an old plane tree located on Motahari Street in Shandiz has been registered with National Registration Council of Iran's natural heritage.

According to Mehr news agency, Seyyed Ahmad Baqeri noted that this tree is known as Plane of Imam Hossein (AS) Mosque since it is located next to the mosque. It is between 475 and 525 years old, he added. It enjoys great value and respect among locals particularly the elders, he pointed out.

He continued that one of the preliminary goals of identifying and nationally register-

ing this ancient tree is the legal obligation to preserve the natural heritage and provide conservation programs to ensure the continued survival and permanence of these valuable natural relics.

However, the implementation of protection regulations in line of preserving the valuable tree is of high importance, he said.

In addition to this tree, several other ancient plane trees of Shandiz are included in the protection and maintenance programs, which are considered a huge part of the region's valuable natural heritage, and their registration and preservation are on the agenda of urban area, he mentioned.

Baqeri added that once these trees are organized, they can play an important role in attracting the ecotourists.

Surrounded by picturesque mountains, Shandiz is famous for its cool climate and lush greenery, making it a perfect retreat during the summer months.

Visitors can feast on local delights in traditional restaurants and enjoy leisurely walks amid nature's embrace.

Where history meets healing: Hamedan welcomes ECO member states for major health tourism event

TEHRAN - Hamedan is fully prepared to host the 3rd ECO Confobition on Health Tourism, according to the province's Governor-General, Hamid Molanouri-Shamsi.

Highlighting Hamedan's rich cultural and natural heritage, the official emphasized that the event presents a major opportunity to showcase the region's unique health tourism capabilities to international delegates.

In a radio address on Monday, Molanouri-Shamsi stated that Hamedan is one of Iran's key tourism hubs, boasting over 1,900 natural and historical attractions.

Among these are world-renowned sites such as Ali Sadr Cave, the Hegmataneh (Ecbatana) Hills, and the Ganjnameh Inscriptions — all contributing to the province's status as a cultural and historical capital.

"The global registration of Lalejin as the World City of Pottery and the national recognition of Hamedan's furniture carving and inlaying industries further elevate the province's reputation in the handicrafts sector," the governor-general added.

"The upcoming health tourism



confobition is an excellent platform to present Hamedan's strengths in both traditional and modern medicine," he underlined. "Moreover, we have received confirmations of participation from countries including Oman, Russia, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq."

He added that Hamedan is equipped with robust transport and healthcare infrastructure, making it a viable destination for regional and international health tourists.

Hamedan province features strong road, rail, and air connectivity, along with ten active medical centers specializing in health tourism, which serve both domestic and foreign patients.

Governor-General Molanouri also underlined Hamedan's long-standing role in traditional medicine, citing its biodiversity, which includes over 1,300 species of medicinal herbs, and its historic association with the renowned Persian physician Ibn Sina (c. 980 - 1037), commonly known in the West as Avicenna.

He concluded by noting that hosting the ECO Confobition on Health Tourism will not only enhance the province's visibility and attract international investment but also contribute to improving local healthcare services.

"This event will reinforce Hamedan's position as a leading destination for both cultural and health

tourism at the national and international levels," he said.

Earlier this month, the Iranian tourism minister, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, announced plans to significantly boost the country's medical tourism sector, setting a target of attracting two million medical tourists annually within the next five years.

Salehi-Amiri highlighted the "advanced healthcare infrastructure" of the country, skilled medical professionals, and competitive treatment costs as key assets that make the country a strategic destination for medical travelers.

"Iran, with its network of well-equipped hospitals and specialized medical staff, offers affordable yet high-quality healthcare services. These strengths place us in a strong position to become one of the region's leading destinations for health tourism," the minister stated.

The capital city of Hamedan, also known as Ecbatana in classical times, was once one of the most important cities in the ancient world. Sprawling on a high plain, Hamedan was initially urbanized by the Medes, Assyrians, Persians, and Parthians.

Sang-e Chakhmaq's 8,000-year-old flute featured in museum's new video project

TEHRAN - The National Museum of Iran, in collaboration with the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, has begun producing a series of short videos to introduce its artifacts to the public.

One of the featured artifacts, which traces the history of music in Iran back nearly 8,000 years, is a bone flute discovered during archaeological excavations at the Sang-e Chakhmaq mounds near Shahrud in northeastern Iran in the 1970s.

Talking to the Tehran Times, Fereidoun Biglari, deputy director of the National Museum of Iran, said the flute is made from the bone of a large migratory bird and features four main holes and one hole near its end.

Biglari, who introduced the artifact in the museum's video, noted that stone tools were used to craft the long bone into a flute, and the cutting marks are still visible on the instrument's surface. He added that efforts are underway to reconstruct a replica of this instrument from bone with the help of a musician, allowing the sound it produced to be recreated.

According to Biglari, bone flutes found in Neolithic sites across Asia and other continents likely served multiple cultural and social purposes among early communities. These



flutes may have been used in rituals or ceremonies to communicate with the supernatural, mark important events, or accompany communal dances. Additionally, they could have played a role in hunting or herding by mimicking animal sounds or signaling across distances. The production and use of bone flutes also suggest the development of early musical traditions, reflecting the importance of sound and rhythm in Neolithic societies.

The Sang-e Chakhmaq mounds consist of two mounds, eastern and western, and the bone instrument was found in the eastern mound. Sang-e Chakhmaq (also Tepe Sang-i Chaxmaq, meaning "flint mound") is a Neo-

lithic archaeological site offering an uninterrupted cultural sequence from the 7th to the early 5th millennium BCE. The site consists of two mounds—Western and Eastern—documenting the transition from pre-pottery Neolithic to early Chalcolithic periods. The Western mound revealed ceramic Neolithic settlements with mud-brick houses, fireplaces, and flint tools, while the Eastern mound showed later ceramic phases, including clay and stone figurines, and pottery resembling Turkmenistan's Djeitun Culture and Iran's Sialk I and II styles. The site's upper layers also yielded early copper objects and architectural shifts toward rectangular mud-brick construction, marking the transition to Chalcolithic lifeways.

As one of the few sites in northeastern Iran with a complete Neolithic sequence, Sang-e Chakhmaq provides critical evidence for understanding the spread of agriculture, pottery, and early metallurgy in the region. Its material culture shows connections to both Central Asia and north-central Iran, suggesting a cultural crossroads. Several objects found at the site are on display in the Neolithic gallery of the Iran Bastan Museum at the National Museum of Iran.

Over the past few months, some of the cited videos have been shared on the museum's Instagram and Aparat pages.

Persian carpet: A mirror reflecting Iran's 2,500-year history



TEHRAN—Each Persian carpet is more than a textile; it's a vivid reflection of Iran's rich heritage, artistry, and cultural evolution spanning over two and a half millennia.

For centuries, Persian carpets have woven stories of artistry, heritage, and identity into every thread. More than just floor coverings, these masterpieces embody Iran's profound cultural tapestry — from ancient craftsmanship techniques passed down through generations to intricate designs that reflect myths, nature, and spirituality, Mehr news agency reported.

Each Persian carpet is a vibrant, living symbol of Iran's timeless elegance, resilience, and creative soul, connecting past and present in a colorful narrative of human expression.

Persian carpets are much more than exquisite textiles — they are a harmonious blend of artistic mastery, rich historical heritage, and deep

spiritual symbolism. Each intricate pattern and vibrant color reflects centuries of cultural storytelling, connecting the artisan's soul with Iran's timeless traditions. Woven with precision and passion, Persian carpets serve as a living bridge between past and present, art and faith, beauty and meaning.

Historians believe that the world's oldest carpet is considered to be made under Persian influence, perhaps in a region culturally linked to Persia—like Khorasan (northeastern Iran), or Central Asia, where Persian artistic traditions were dominant.

The tradition of carpet weaving in Iran dates back over 2,500 years, with roots tracing to the Achaemenid Empire and beyond. These carpets were originally created for practical use—providing warmth and comfort in homes—but evolved into masterpieces reflecting regional stories, beliefs, and artistic styles. Each Persian carpet carries a unique blend of motifs, colors, and weaving techniques that are often specific to the region where it was made, such as Tabriz, Isfahan, Kashan, Kerman and Qom.

Among various historical periods, the Safavid era (16th to 18th centuries) marks the golden age of Persian carpet weaving. During this time, under strong royal patronage, especially in cities like Isfahan, Tabriz, and Kashan, the art form reached its peak in quality, complexity, and aesthetic beauty. Iconic masterpieces such as the famous Ardabil Carpet were created in this

period, many of which are now housed in world-class museums.

Later periods like the Qajar dynasty (19th century) saw the expansion of Persian carpet production for international trade, with carpets becoming a major export product to Europe and beyond.

Situated in Tehran, the Carpet Museum of Iran is a prominent institution dedicated to preserving and showcasing Iran's rich legacy of handmade rugs.

Established in 1978, the museum's building was designed by Iranian architect Abdol-Aziz Mirza Farmanfarma. Its facade is inspired by the structure of a traditional carpet loom, symbolizing the deep connection between the museum and the art form it houses.

The museum features an exhibition hall covering over 3,000 square meters, displaying more than 150 carpets and rugs from across Iran, including pieces from Kerman, Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan, and other historic weaving centers.

These works span several centuries, providing visitors with a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of carpet designs, patterns, and techniques.

Additionally, the museum houses a specialized library with around 7,000 books in Persian and foreign languages, serving as a valuable resource for researchers, artists, and those interested in the technical and historical aspects of Persian carpets.

TEHRAN –Iranian and Iraqi officials have agreed on enhancing cooperation in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), via establishing a joint AI center in Iran.

During a meeting held on Monday, Hossein Afshin, the vice president for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, and Ali Razooqi Hussein, the deputy chief of staff of the Iraqi prime minister, discussed ways to foster relations between the two countries, IRIB reported.

The Iranian official proposed launching a joint AI center, which was well received by the Iraqi side.

Fostering cooperation in the field of science and technology is essential to move forward and build a shared future. Supporting innovation, technology, and knowledge-based companies is among the top priorities of the country. There are 10,000 knowledge-based companies manufacturing 18,000 knowledge-based products in the



medical, industrial, and military fields. There are also some 30 science and technology parks in the country, responsible for connecting universities and industries, IRIB quoted Afshin as saying.

The main goal of the proposed project is to boost ties between the two countries beyond academic cooperation. It also aims to expand collaborations with Persian Gulf states on joint projects. The center will provide services to the Persian Gulf states and will be developed as the AI hub in the region, the official noted.

Highlighting Iran's capacities in AI, Afshin said Iran has been training human resources for the technology sector since the 1970s at Sharif University of Technology. Apart from that, the country has started teaching AI to students. The official announced readiness to share expertise in the field and help Iraq start the same educational programs.

For his part, Razooqi said, "We are well-aware of the significance of artificial intelligence and have started teaching it in universities, as well. We are also fully aware of the capabilities

of the Iranian scientists. Sharif University of Technology and Baghdad University have already discussed establishing a joint center. So, it is essential to develop a shared infrastructure and agree on a common goal."

Underscoring that AI is not a goal by itself, but a means to achieve other objectives, the official said we can benefit from artificial intelligence in fields like water, energy, environment, and agriculture.

The official went on to say that military production, light and semi-heavy weapons, climate change, water scarcity, cloud seeding, sand and dust storms are among the other opportunities for cooperation, with AI playing a key role in all mentioned areas.

The two sides agree to form a joint working group with the first session to be held in Baghdad, focusing on kicking off joint technological cooperation between Iran and Iraq.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Preserving Zagros forests needs global cooperation: official

TEHRAN – Iran has called on international institutions and other countries to help preserve Zagros forests through a comprehensive cooperation program, the head of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization has said.

Zagros forests are among the most important natural resources of Iran, as they constitute 40 percent of the country's forests, and play an important role in the production of a large part of the country's freshwater.

Iran is famous for having one of the oldest forests in the world. 300,000 hectares of the forests in the country are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list, IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the international conference on the sustainable management of Zagros forests.

"Due to their geographical location, these forests have a high diversity of flora and fauna. Zagros forests are home to more than 2,500 plant and animal species that are not found in other parts of the country or even the world, which indicates their rich biological diversity.

These forests play vital economic and social functions, and contribute to local communities' livelihood. However, they are threatened by different factors such as climate change,

frequent wildfires, and illegal exploitation," he added.

To address environmental challenges and improve sustainability indicators, Iran needs to develop international collaborations that focus on providing technical support, exchanging experience, financing, as well as regional and scientific cooperation, Teymouri said.

The official went on to say that Iran is willing to benefit from other countries' expertise in designing and implementing sustainable management projects for the forests. As environmental challenges cross borders, the country seeks to utilize global environmental structures and facilities to restore the forests.

The forest area in Iran amounts to approximately 14 million hectares, which constitutes 7.5 percent of the country's total land area. The forests are scattered in different regions across the country. The current per capita forest area is around 1700 square meters, while the country's per capita forest area in the world is 5600 square meters, Teymouri said.

The sustainable management of the Zagros forests through participatory management or social forestry, incorporating economic, social, and environmental sustainability in-

dicators, and involving local communities, government bodies, and private sectors, are on the agenda of the Natural Resources Organization of the country, the official further noted.

UN ESCAP adopts Iran's proposal on protecting Zagros forests

With the approval of Iran's proposal on protecting Zagros forests at the eighty-first annual session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the issue is placed on the agenda of the Asia-Pacific Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM).

The eighty-first session of ESCAP was held from April 21 to 25 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, guided by the theme 'Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific'.

The country actively participated in the meeting, negotiating mainly on transportation, environment, disaster resilience, energy, poverty reduction, and development financing. They also submitted the report of the governing council along with the APDIM strategic plan.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ministry of Interior, UNICEF ink MOU on supporting Afghan refugee children, women

TEHRAN –The head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) ad interim Representative in Iran, Monika Oledzka Nielsen, have signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance support for vulnerable Afghan refugee children and women in the country.

Lauding UNICEF's efforts, Yar-Ahmadi said the signed MOU is an important step towards improving living conditions and

providing better opportunities for the vulnerable groups, ISNA reported.

Referring to the concerning situation of refugee children, the official said, "We are doing our best to address their problems using the country's resources. However, we may not be able to cover every single one of them."

The official went on to say that to support women, UNICEF and the Ministry of Interior have to do more since Afghan women

with big families undergo many troubles to raise their children, and they have been ignored in Afghanistan due to old misconceptions.

The cooperation between the two sides is not just built on financial factors, the country seeks to benefit from UNICEF's expertise, he added.

For her part, Oledzka Nielsen, commended the measures taken by the National Organization for Migration to meet the refugees'

needs, saying that as one of the largest refugee-hosting countries, Iran has shown unprecedented solidarity with refugees over the past decades.

The MOU will foster the two organizations' capacities in fields such as education, health promotion, child protection, and emergency preparedness to be able to respond to the growing needs of children and their families, she highlighted.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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Hospital beds capacity rises to improve medical system

Health Minister Saeed Namaki inaugurated 23 health centers, including 201 hospital beds, in Lorestan, Kermanshah, and Khuzestan provinces on Tuesday.

Built on 26,935 square meters area, the centers were constructed with a budget of 2.9 trillion rials (nearly \$70 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials).

The Ministry of Health is scheduled to add 10,600 hospital beds to the capacity of the country's medical system within the next 7 months.

افزایش ظرفیت تخت های بیمارستانی برای بهبود نظام درمانی

سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت امروز به صورت مجازی ۲۳ مرکز بهداشتی و درمانی را شامل ۲۰۱ تخت بیمارستانی در استان های لرستان، کرمانشاه و خوزستان افتتاح کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، این مراکز در زیربنای ۲۶ هزار و ۹۳۵ مترمربع و با اعتباری بالغ بر ۲۹۸۰ میلیارد ریال ساخته شده است. وزارت بهداشت قرار است تا ۱۲ فروردین سال ۱۴۰۰، ۱۰ هزار و ۶۰۰ تخت بیمارستانی به ظرفیت بیمارستان های کشور اضافه کند.

Iran's population growth rate plunges

Officials warn of the dire consequences

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN – Due to higher life expectancy and lower birthrate, government officials are warning that Iran's elderly population of senior citizens, aged 60 and over, will comprise a third of the population by 2050. Currently at 7.5 million, senior citizens account for less than 10 percent of the population.

Mehdi Malmir, the deputy head of Iran's National Population Headquarters, predicted that the country will enter a phase of population aging between 2041-46. Malmir was quoted by PressTV that around 62 percent of female seniors and some 39 percent of male seniors in Iran live below the poverty line.

According to IRNA, the National Population Research Institute has found the country's 86-million-strong population is aging five times faster than it is growing.

Pre-Revolution

Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, there was a large number of foreign workers in Tehran. The high number of foreign diasporas was mainly due to a lack of a domestic educated and skilled workforce. However, the post-revolution era witnessed a rise in numerous universities and colleges.

Another post-revolution trend was women's entry into the workforce in larger numbers during the post-revolution era. 2020 statistics show the overall literacy rate of women in Iran has surpassed that of men, standing at 85 and 80 percent, respectively. As of 2005, 65 percent of Iran's university students were women.

Today, Iran is not only self-sufficient in skilled manpower but has become an exporter of skilled workforce around the world. Despite the increase in the literacy rate, how will the Islamic Republic compensate for the lack of a young, skilled population when over thirty percent of the population would consist of senior citizens by 2050?

In 2023, some 70 percent of the population was aged 15-64, representing the working-age population. Approximately 23 percent of the population comprises children and adolescents under the age of 15. In Iran, the minimum working age is 15 years old, according to the Labor Code. Senior citizens comprise only eight percent of the population.

Today, even with plenty of vibrant young people in Iran, there's a lack of labor force, especially in the construction industry. In many cases, this shortage has been compensated for by millions of Afghans living in the country.

This brings another important factor contributing to lower birth rates: the cost of living. Indeed, due to the high inflation rate and the expensive real estate sector, many families are choosing to have a smaller family size. The current one-child trend is prevalent has many young Iranian families, many of whom also have to support their aging parents.

In 2013, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, announced his disagreement with the declining population rate. The leader pointed out that economic growth is a precondition for population growth, calling on the government to encourage people to have more children.

Many incentives have been introduced to encourage childbearing by the Iran Welfare Organization and the Ministry of Health.

First, health care and medical benefits which are offered to childbearing mothers include:

--Free or subsidized prenatal care. Public healthcare centers provide free or low-cost check-ups, lab tests, ultrasounds, and supplements (like folic acid and iron);

--Insurance coverage: Most health insurance plans cover the majority of pregnancy-related expenses, including delivery (normal and cesarean); and

--Maternal health programs: Government health centers offer maternal training and support (breastfeeding, infant care, etc.).

Secondly, maternity leave and workplace rights:

--Maternity leave: Women are entitled to 9 months (270 days) of paid maternity leave, fully covered by social security.

-- Job security: Iranian labor law ensures a woman's right to return to her job after maternity leave, and

-- Reduced working hours: In some sectors, pregnant women may receive reduced working



The young Afghan diaspora can also address Iran's aging population demographics.

hours or lighter duties.

Delayed marriage

Due to the financial constraints, late marriage is another new trend. Delayed marriage, along with extended intervals between childbirth, is another factor.

Significant strides have been made in infertility treatment. Today, 100 percent of infertility treatment costs are covered by health insurance, and Iran has emerged as a regional leader in this field. Under certain programs, especially for low-income families, a monthly allowance is provided for children.

The growing population of the elderly and declining birth rate is often considered a problem of the developed world, which compensates for the lack of a working population by an increasing number of migrants arriving from mainly third-world countries. However, Iran is a third-world country facing a similar scenario of an aging population.

Afghan population:

Afghan migrant workers, pilgrims, and merchants, who settled in Iran over the years, had by the early 20th century. However, the first large wave of Afghan citizens came as refugees or asylum seekers after the start of the Soviet-Afghan War in 1979.

According to UNHCR, some four million Afghans live in Iran. Figures cited by Iranian officials are much higher, with some estimates reaching eight million. Tehran has started the repatriation procedure for undocumented Afghan workers. In the past two years, Tehran has deported two million mainly undocumented Afghans. Such expulsion campaigns of primarily Afghan nationals should not threaten documented Afghan workers.

IRNA quoted Nader Yar-Ahmadi, the head of the National Organization of Migration, as saying, "Students whose parents do not have legal permission to reside, vulnerable women heads of households, children with an Iranian parent, and those who have a job code are allowed to live in the country." However, students whose parents do not have legal permission to reside in the country have to return to Afghanistan by July 6.

Last but not least, there should be special provisions of birthright for the Afghans who were born in Iran and know nothing about their homeland of Afghanistan. According to Iranian law, being born in Iran does not grant Iranian citizenship. Identity-wise, these children are more Iranian than Afghan. Such birthright provisions are prevalent in many parts of the world, including most Western countries, like Canada and Sweden.

To boost the declining birthrate, the government has set up policies to absorb some of the over one million new Afghans who entered Iran following the Taliban takeover in 2021. There needs to be a more transparent set of legal procedures that would absorb the documented skilled Afghan workers. It is estimated that some 2.6-3 million documented Afghans reside in Iran.

Workers from Afghanistan are a source of hardworking young laborers who are ready to work in conditions that Iranian laborers will not. Indeed, without their contribution in the construction industry, the price of real estate would be higher than today's already exorbitant rates.

The government should facilitate the stay of documented Afghan migrant workers and their families in order to address the aging population, and the society should be encouraged to welcome their contribution to the economy of the country and their assimilation into the society. For that to happen, the Afghan workers deserve fair wages, dignity, safety, and job security.

Complete absorption of documented and skilled Afghan laborers in the society will inevitably help with population growth in the short term and the aging population in the long run.



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JUNE 11, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 19:41 Dawn: 3:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

Commemoration of Alexander Pushkin held at Iran's National Library

TEHRAN – In an effort to strengthen cultural ties between Iran and Russia, a ceremony honoring the legendary poet and pioneer of modern Russian literature, Alexander Pushkin, was held on Tuesday at the International Conference Hall of the National Library and Archives of Iran.

The cultural event was attended both in person and online by distinguished Russian and Iranian figures, including diplomats, scholars, literary researchers, and enthusiasts of comparative literature and culture, ISNA reported.

The program included specialized lectures, presentations on Pushkin's works, and discussions on comparative literature, among other activities, the report added.

This event was initiated as part of the expanding cultural collaboration between Iran and Russia, following agreements signed by the heads of their national libraries at the BRICS Cultural Summit in 2024.

During that summit, the directors of Iran's National Library and Archives and the Russian State Library signed a memorandum of understanding, agreeing to hold reciprocal commemorations of prominent literary figures from both countries — notably Alexander Pushkin in Tehran and Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi in Russia.

Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) is widely regarded as one of Russia's greatest poets and a foundational figure in Russian literature. Often called the Sun of Russian Poetry, Pushkin's work has had a profound influence on the development of Russian language, culture, and literary tradition. Born into a noble family in Moscow, he displayed remarkable literary talent from a young age, producing poetry and stories in his

early years.

Pushkin's writing is celebrated for its lyrical beauty, innovative use of language, and deep exploration of human nature. His most famous works include the narrative poem "Ruslan and Ludmila", the novel in verse "Eugene Onegin", and numerous short stories and fairy tales. "Eugene Onegin", in particular, is considered a masterpiece of Russian literature, blending poetry with social commentary and character studies. Pushkin's style combined classical influences with Romanticism, emphasizing emotion, individualism, and national identity.

Aside from his literary achievements, Pushkin was also a keen observer of Russian society and culture, often reflecting on issues of identity, freedom, and social justice. His work challenged the conventions of his time and helped shape the modern Russian literary language, making literature more accessible to ordinary people.

His influence extended beyond poetry, inspiring countless writers, playwrights, and artists, and fostering a sense of national pride that persists to this day.

Despite his relatively short life—he died at the age of 37—Pushkin's influence endures. His innovative approach to storytelling and poetry set the stage for future generations of Russian writers, including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Today, Pushkin remains a national icon and a symbol of Russian literary excellence and cultural pride, with his legacy honored through numerous monuments, festivals, and educational institutions dedicated to his memory. His work continues to be studied and celebrated worldwide, cementing his place as a towering figure in world literature.

Cartoon of Day



Madleen Ship
Cartoonist: Osama Hajjaj from Jordan

Photo exhibition at Sa'dabad Complex bridging Iranian, Mexican cultures

By **Mohamadreza Seyedagha**

TEHRAN – A photo exhibition, showcasing the works of the late Mexican photographer Mariana Yampolski was launched at the Museum of Fine Arts at the Sa'dabad Cultural and Historical Complex in Tehran on Tuesday in the presence of the Ambassador of Mexico in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Guillermo Puente Ordorica.

Organized by the Embassy of Mexico in Iran, the exhibition shows the daily life of people who live primarily in rural areas of Mexico. The work of Mariana Yampolski presents anthropological perspectives that highlight the links between the individual and social life in various rural populations in Mexico.

In his opening remarks, the ambassador said: "The photographs presented in this exhibition reflect the diversity of cultural acts and productions resulting from everyday life, ritual and festive life, childhood development, the relationship between human beings and nature, work, and the contemplation of the landscape, revealing the different ways in which people experience and give meaning to the environments in which they live.



career in photography began as a sideline to document travels and work in the arts and politics, but she began showing her photography in the 1960s. From then until her death in 2002, her work was exhibited internationally receiving awards and other recognition both during her lifetime and posthumously.

Her work shows anthropological perspectives that highlight the links between the body and social life in various rural populations of Mexico.

Her work can be found in 15 monographic books and in numerous public and private collections in the world, including those of the Museo de Arte Moderno, Centro Cultural de Arte Contemporáneo, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Fototeca Nacional of INAH in Pachuca. It has been exhibited in over 50 one-woman exhibitions and approximately 150 group exhibitions internationally, in countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Italy.

As part of her focus on rural life, an important aspect of her work was the promotion of Mexican handicrafts and folk art, of which she amassed a collection of over 3,000 pieces over her lifetime and was featured in some of her work.

Speaking to the Tehran Times, the Ambassador of Mexico Guillermo Puente Ordorica shared his insights about the significance of Yampolski's work, which can attract the Iranian audience.

"She was born in the U.S. and then she went to study in Mexico. There she fell in love with that country—Mexico. That love was rooted in its people, its culture, and especially in its ancient civilizations. From that point, she began to develop what I believe became the most important part of her artistic journey," he noted.

The ambassador added that for many artists, including those from Iran, there are unexpected but strong cultural commonalities with Mexico and that connection is often rooted in shared emotional experiences.

"One of the most remarkable aspects of her work was how she photographed real people — those who carry within them the legacy of ancient civilizations. She had the ability to capture simple, everyday moments that reflected not just beauty or aesthetics, but cultural depth. Her subjects were often in natural, unembellished environments, which made her work even more profound," Ordorica underlined.



Ambassador of Mexico in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Guillermo Puente Ordorica, speaks at the opening of the exhibition at the Sa'dabad Cultural and Historical Complex, June 10, 2025.

They show us how life is in Mexico, and they also make us reflect about the fact that the life experiences of Iranians are like ours. We do have more things in common than we would think at first glance".

"We hope that through this exhibition, you will discover more and travel to the traditions of the working, rural, or indigenous populations of Mexico, which have a fundamental value for our society," he added.

Mariana Yampolski (1925–2002) was a Mexican-American photographer. A significant figure in 20th-century Mexican photography, she specialized in capturing photos of common people in everyday situations in the rural areas of the country.

She was born in the United States, but came to Mexico to study art and never left, becoming a Mexican citizen in 1958. Her

Projecting her gaze, Yampolski shares with the visitors scenes typical of social realism, amid a multicultural framework that invites us to access memory, promoting reflection and recognition of the varied cultural identities that are manifested in the Mexican territory, which is why her photographs have become an important documentary reference with historiographic value in Mexico.

Her visual metaphors on social or natural themes explore other meanings hidden in the literal images or play with composition to promote unusual, sensitive experiences.

Mariana Yampolski's work alludes to local cultural creations and how they represent environments and realities through allegorical, playful, or disobedient ways that postulate strange vital inquiries that open horizons for the visitors.

3rd Iranian Ethnic Music Festival kicks off in Shiraz

TEHRAN – The 3rd edition of the Iranian Ethnic Music Festival was inaugurated in Shiraz on Tuesday, following two successful previous editions held in Tehran.

This year's event takes place at the Sadi mausoleum, where eight music groups perform over five consecutive nights.

The first edition of the festival was held in 2019 with 16 groups, and the second edition featured 20 regional music ensembles in 2022. However, due to economic challenges, this year's festival is limited to performances by eight groups, IRNA quoted the executive secretary of the festival, Arash Safari, as saying.

He emphasized the diversity of musical ensembles represented, with prominent artists from regions across the country—rang-

ing from the east to the west and north to the south—set to perform. He also added that each performance has a capacity of 500 spectators.

Safari stressed that regional music remains an undervalued and often forgotten aspect of Iran's cultural heritage. He called for greater support and interest from cultural authorities to preserve these traditions, emphasizing that ethnomusicology is vital to national identity. Without active backing, the rich diversity of Iran's regional music risks fading into oblivion.

Iranian ethnic music is a rich tapestry reflecting the diverse cultures and regions within the country. It encompasses a wide range of traditional styles, instruments, and melodies unique



to each ethnic group, such as the Kurdish, Baluchi, Lur, and Qashqai communities. These musical traditions often feature distinctive instruments like the tanbur, kamancheh, and santur, and are deeply rooted in local customs, rituals, and storytelling.

Despite modernization, Iranian ethnic music remains a vital part of cultural identity, preserving the history and heritage of its diverse peoples. Efforts to promote and sustain these traditions are essential to keeping Iran's cultural mosaic vibrant and alive.