

Two years on
How ‘Al-Aqsa Storm’
Redefined
Palestinian Cause



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators pass in front of Rome's Colosseum, Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025, during a march calling for an end to the war in Gaza.

Humiliation after two years of
futile war on Palestinians fighters

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN - Today marks the second year that Israel is fighting Palestinian rebels in Gaza. The war began as Hamas launched a surprise attack on southern Israel. Israel's response to the attack has been unimaginable disproportionate.

Now the warring sides - Israel and Hamas - are working on a peace plan proposed by American President Donald Trump and the entire world is wishing this mad war against the Palestinian citizens in Gaza comes to an end.

However, one thing in the Gaza war is extremely surprising. Military and political analysts are amazed that Israel's two-year barbaric war on the totally besieged Gaza has failed to defeat a few thousand Palestinian fighters.

Israel has not avoided any imaginable crime to defeat Palestinian fighters, or force them to surrender. To the surprise of Israel and its Western allies, every Palestinian that is killed in the war he is replaced by another. In fact, they are fighting for their stolen rights whole-heartedly.

Rubble's grim ledger: Two years of
devastation and reckoning in Gaza

By Garsha Vazirian

THERAN - On October 7, 2023, Hamas and allied Palestinian groups launched an unprecedented multi-directional operation - known as the Al-Aqsa Storm - breaching the Gaza-Israel boundary, killing roughly 1,200 people in Israel, and carrying about 251 captives into Gaza.

The operation struck towns, military outposts, and the Nova music festival, plunging southern Israel into chaos and prompting an immediate, expansive Israeli military aggression.

Investigative reporting and UN fact-finding later documented that the Israeli military repeatedly invoked emergency protocols such as the Hannibal Directive, unleashing indiscriminate fire from helicopters and tanks even at the risk of killing its own citizens.

These measures may account for a significant share of Israeli deaths on October 7-while setting the tone for an aggressive campaign that international investigators now condemn as indiscriminate, disproportionate, and genocidal.

Europe turns against Israeli
occupation regime

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Mass pro-Palestine protests across Europe reflect Israel's deepening isolation in Western public opinion.

Europe witnessed a massive wave of pro-Palestine protests over the weekend, with hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets to denounce the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the continued support by their own governments to the Tel Aviv regime.

These protests, some of the largest seen since the genocidal war began exactly two years ago --October 7, 2023 --, reflect not only outrage at the scale of devastation in Gaza, but also a growing rift between European citizens and their political leaders.

In Amsterdam, 250,000 people joined the "Red Line March" organized by PAX Netherlands, demanding an end to arms sales to the Israeli occupation regime.

In Italy, over 2 million people participated in a general strike, with around 300,000 marching in Rome. In Spain, the cities of Madrid and Barcelona drew crowds of 90,000 and 70,000 respectively.

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IRGC chief inspects
Persian Gulf units
ahead of potential new
war with Israel

TEHRAN - The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corp (IRGC) says the IRGC's naval troops will respond, with full force, to any move by the enemies in the Persian Gulf.

Major General Mohammad Pakpour made the comment while inspecting the IRGC's operational units in the Persian Gulf waters.

"As the [Iranian] Armed Forces brought the Israeli regime and the United States to their knees in the 12-day imposed war, the IRGC's Naval Force will respond to any move by the enemies in the sea or on the [Persian Gulf] islands with full preparedness," said the top general. ► Page 2

Industrial goods share
of Iran's exports to
Russia increased
significantly in 3 years

TEHRAN- As announced by an official with Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, the share of industrial goods of Iran's exports to Russia has increased significantly over the past three years, and Iran's exports to this destination have almost doubled.

Akbar Godari, the head of TPO's Central Asia, Caucasus, and Russia Office reported a significant growth in trade exchanges between Iran and Russia, stating: "Given the current trend and predicted trade plans, it is expected that Iran's exports to Russia will reach approximately \$1.4 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 20, 2026)." ► Page 4

Syria: Fake democracy on the
ruins of a divided nation

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT--Syria witnessed elections to elect two-thirds of the members of the new People's Assembly in a celebratory media spectacle.

The so-called transitional authority, led by de facto president Ahmed al-Sharaa (formerly known as Abu Muhammad al-Julani), attempted to promote a supposed democratic illusion at a time when the most basic elements of legitimacy and popular participation were absent.

The elections, held in 50 constituencies within a few hours, were nothing more than a closed-door political show, limited to pre-appointed "electoral bodies," without the genuine participation of the Syrian people, who live in a state of geographic and political division, amid a tragic humanitarian landscape across vast swathes of the country.

This political beautification of the upper hand coincided with profound transformations in the symbolic structure of the state and the undeclared rush toward normalization with the Zionist enemy, amidst the absence of unifying national values. ► Page 5

Iran comes third at 2025
World Para Athletics
Championships

TEHRAN - Iran finished in third place at the 12th edition of the World Para Athletics Championships.

The event, which began on September 26 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at New Delhi, India came to a conclusion on Sunday, October 5. It was the first-ever World Para Athletics Championships hosted by any South Asian country.

Brazil, who finished second in the 2024 edition of the World Para Athletics Championships, improved its standings in 2025 and finished at the top of the medal tally with 44 medals, including 15 gold, 20 silver and 9 bronze. China, with 13 gold, 22 silver and 17 bronze medals, was the team with the most medals (52) but finished in second place due to winning two fewer golds than Brazil.

Iran, with 9 gold, 2 silver and 5 bronze medals, finished at the number three spot.

The hosts India finished at number 10 with 6 gold, 9 silver and 7 bronze medals.



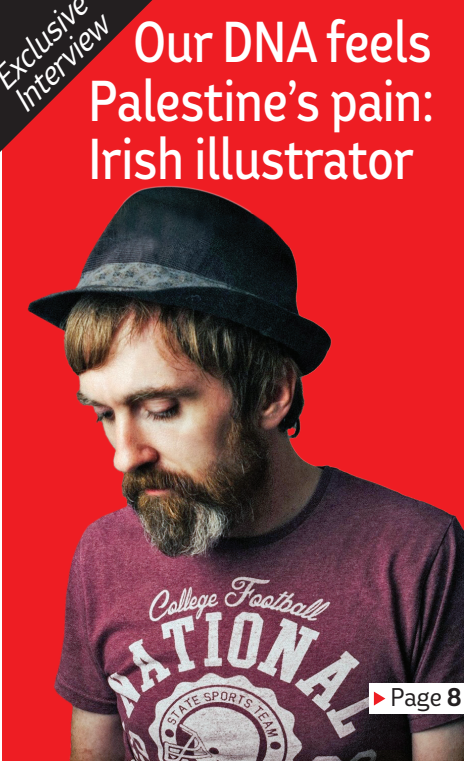
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‘We will not beg for
talks’, says Iran’s
foreign ministry
spokesperson

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Iran "never begs for negotiations," emphasizing that any dialogue must serve the country's national interests and preserve its dignity.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday, Baqaei addressed a wide range of issues, from the latest developments surrounding the JCPOA and Iran's diplomatic efforts in New York to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and regional relations.

Responding to reports about events in New York, Baqaei said talks "are a two-way process that must be based on assessing mutual interests," adding that "protecting national interests is just as important as safeguarding national authority." ► Page 3



Our DNA feels
Palestine's pain:
Irish illustrator

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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.

The complex puzzle of Iran's exit from the FATF black list

In an analysis, Shargh discussed how Iran would exit the FATF black list. It said: To exit the FATF black list, Iran must go through a multi-stage process. First, it must make extensive structural reforms in its domestic laws and regulations to align with FATF standards. After that, FATF's periodic reports on the country's progress will be reviewed and, if approved, Iran will be transferred to the gray list. At the same time, FATF inspection teams will be dispatched to the country, and field assessments will be conducted. Ultimately, by continuing to fully implement its commitments, Iran can exit the gray list and return to normal. This is a difficult path that requires strong political will, deep reforms, and comprehensive domestic and international cooperation. To achieve this goal, we must wait for FATF assessments and political and economic reactions at the global level. However, any progress in this area can draw a new prospect for Iran's economy and its international standing.

Iran: America not serious about negotiations

The Iran newspaper spoke with Hossein Gharibi, an expert on international affairs, about the process of Iran-U.S. negotiations. He said: In a situation where Iran's foreign policy is under the shadow of rapid nuclear developments and the consequences of the activation of the snapback sanctions, Tehran is trying to put strategic patience on the agenda. Tehran is redefining its position in new global equations. On the other hand, the Trump administration has adopted a policy of silence towards Tehran, which is still unclear as a result of the erosion of American diplomacy in the simultaneous crises in Ukraine, Gaza, and East Asia, or as part of a tactic to test Iran's response. It is necessary to prioritize resolving issues related to sanctions and to be in contact with all actors who have the capacity to play a role in this field to the maximum extent possible. The scope of interaction and diplomacy should not be limited, and all capacities should be used appropriately. Each additional step taken increases the likelihood of achieving the intended goals.

Ham Mihan: Iran's role in the future equations of Palestine

In an interview with Ham Mihan, Sabah Zangeneh, an expert on regional issues, analyzed Hamas's reaction to Trump's peace

plan to end the Israeli war on Gaza. He said: The end of the Gaza war will mark a new chapter in the equations of the region. These initial steps can be considered positive, and it was hoped that the war would finally end. But immediately, the Yemenis announced that they would continue to be defenders and supporters of Palestine and the Palestinian cause. This means that if Palestine encounters problems in the future, it can hope for the reaction and response of the Houthis. This shows that part of the regional atmosphere is changing. Now we must observe the reaction of Iran, other countries in the region, and other Palestinian groups. Also, neighboring countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and even Saudi Arabia, must be taken into account. Iran must weigh all these dimensions and not make itself a target of Netanyahu and Trump. Just as Hamas acted carefully and vigilantly, Iran must also prepare a precise response with vigilance while preserving its principles of values.

Khorasan: Snapback is activated but still no policy how to counter it

In an article, Khorasan addressed the lack of an appropriate policy by the Iranian government on how to confront the activation of snapback sanctions. It wrote: A week has passed since snapback was activated. A mechanism whose psychological effect on the Iranian market and economy has so far exceeded its actual size. However, what is felt and understood so far from the country's policymaking bodies is a response that is not very proportionate to this economic attack, that the main root of which is not in the American Department of War, but in the Department of Treasury. The experience of past years has shown that sanctions not only put pressure on the economy, but also test decision-making and policy-making. Countries that have been able to overcome sanctions usually have clarified their alternative path in the very first weeks. In Iran, however, a clear plan is still not visible. If the government wants to contain the psychological pressure of the snapback, it must speak to the people and the market very quickly and unambiguously, not with slogans, but with a real, transparent program based on structural reform. Today's market, more than ever, needs a sign of cohesion and courageous decision-making.

Top Iraqi cleric calls for closer Tehran-Baghdad ties



Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Mohammadkazem al-Sadeq (L) meets with Seyyed Ammar Hakim, leader of Iraq's National Wisdom Movement

TEHRAN – Seyyed Ammar Hakim, leader of Iraq's National Wisdom Movement, sat down with Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Mohammadkazem al-Sadeq in Baghdad on Monday.

In the meeting, the two sides discussed ways of boosting ties in political, economic, cultural and Islamic areas as well as the promotion of mutual cooperation in order to secure the common interests of both nations.

Hakim touched upon the current political

situation in Iraq, describing the upcoming elections as significant.

He said the vote can move the country from fragile stability to lasting stability.

The top cleric highlighted the need to tap into the existing potential while describing the current phase as a turning point in Iraq's contemporary history, calling for national unity and vigilance to successfully pass this sensitive juncture.

IRGC chief inspects Persian Gulf units ahead of potential new war with Israel

From page 1 ► General Pakpour's inspection of the IRGC's naval forces comes ahead of a potential second war with Israel and the United States.

In the event of another war, Iran could block and mine the strategic Hormuz Strait through which more than 20% of the world's oil and natural gas pass. The blockage of the Hormuz Strait could deal a serious blow to the economies of world countries, namely the Western nations and the United States.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists and ordinary people. The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in gross violation of international law.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.



IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour watches the activities of an American military craft during a visit to Iran's Persian Gulf units on October 5, 2025.

Iran's three highest-ranking military commanders have reaffirmed the country's full preparedness to counter any aggression, stressing that unity among the Armed Forces is the cornerstone of safeguarding national security, independence, and the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.

In late September, Chief of

Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, said in meeting with Major General Pakpour that the Armed Forces are "fully prepared to decisively confront any threat or possible aggression."

"The great victories and remarkable achievements of the Armed Forces, particularly the IRGC and the Basij, prove that the

strategy of active deterrence and delivering powerful, brave, and crushing responses to threats is effective," he said.

General Mousavi said that the unity of the Army and the IRGC remains "the factor behind the enemy's defeat and the guarantor of Iran's independence, national security, territorial integrity, and the protection of the ideals of the Islamic Revolution."

For his part, General Pakpour emphasized that the IRGC stands at the forefront of implementing the Islamic Republic's defensive doctrine.

He underlined that the force is ready for a "swift, decisive, and instructive" response to any adventurism by the enemy, pointing to the June aggression against Iran, in which "the Zionist enemy and the United States suffered defeat."

A week ago, General Mousavi paid his own visit to naval bases in the Persian Gulf and spoke with IRGC navy commanders about the country's plans and preparations.

Exclusive: Sanctions deepen Iran's economic pressure but strengthen its strategic independence, says Prof. Farzanegan

Economist sees renewed focus on national innovation, eastern alignment, and reform-minded governance



Photo shows Prof. Dr. Mohammad Reza Farzanegan

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – This is the second part of Tehran Times' exclusive interview with Prof. Dr. Mohammad Reza Farzanegan on the activation of the snapback mechanism and the broader impact of renewed UN sanctions on Iran.

Farzanegan turns his focus to Iran's capacity for resilience and reform in the face of renewed sanctions. While acknowledging the multifaceted challenges—ranging from pressure on the middle class to growing corruption and social strain—he also highlights the country's untapped potential to turn crisis into opportunity.

He underscores that external pressure, though damaging in the short term, can act as a catalyst for long-delayed structural reforms. He points to the growing role of digitalization, tax and subsidy reforms, and the empowerment of women in the workforce as key levers for sustainable development. Moreover, he suggests that Iran's diplomatic pragmatism, particularly its efforts to maintain dialogue within the NPT framework while deepening eastern partnerships, reflects a strategic adaptation rather than isolation.

Below is the full text of the interview:

Based on what you just explained, what implications will these sanctions have on Iran's social stability, especially considering their impact on the middle class?

The Iranian middle class has clearly declined under sanctions. In our analysis up to 2019, before the pandemic, we estimated that the share of the middle class was around 50 percent of the population, whereas in the absence of sanctions it could have been

closer to 80 percent. That represents a gap of about 30 percentage points.

Your question, however, is about the effect on social stability. Here the picture is complex. Sanctions generate several negative externalities. They increase corruption, especially political and administrative corruption, not just petty forms. Rent-seeking behavior rises, while transparency falls, since governments under sanctions often restrict the publication of information to avoid external exposure. This lack of transparency creates fertile ground for further corruption.

Corruption undermines social trust. It reduces trust in institutions but also weakens trust between individuals, which is damaging for the stability of the social system. Empirically, higher corruption is associated with greater risks of conflict, protest, and violence. In our research on sanctions and conflict in Iran, we find that rising sanction intensity is linked to more civil disorder and terrorism. Interestingly, the risk of large-scale conflict, such as civil war, actually declines. This is partly due to a "rally around the flag" effect: when the integrity of the country is perceived to be at stake, even opposition groups tend to unite against the threat of fragmentation or separatism.

Still, the broader mechanism is clear. Sanctions generate economic pain through inflation, currency depreciation, unemployment, capital flight, and rising poverty. These pressures lower the opportunity cost of joining radical groups or engaging in violent protest. In a growing economy, individuals have more to lose and are less likely to take such risks. Under sanctions, the reverse holds. This helps ex-

plain the growing signs of radical behavior and declining social cohesion.

In short, sanctions erode the middle class, fuel corruption, and weaken social trust. Together, these dynamics make Iranian society more vulnerable to instability, even if the forms of instability vary across different types of conflict.

How might continued sanctions shape Iran's foreign policy and especially its approach to nuclear negotiation and its cooperation with the agency?

Iran's foreign policy under the new round of UN sanctions will likely shift further east. This trend is not new. In recent years, China has already become Iran's main trade partner, purchasing more than 95 percent of Iran's oil exports. Europe and the West have been reduced to a marginal role. Since trade and foreign policy are closely linked, this dependence has reinforced Iran's political and economic alignment with China, and to some extent with Russia. The reactivation of UN sanctions will deepen this shift.

At the same time, Iranian authorities are aware of the importance of keeping diplomatic channels open. If diplomacy is completely closed, it strengthens those who advocate more radical and confrontational strategies, including military options against Iran. The leadership has learned from experience: the UN sanctions of 2006–2015 created strong domestic pressure for negotiation, which ultimately helped bring Rouhani to power with the promise of lifting sanctions. That diplomatic track led to the JCPOA. I would therefore expect that, even under the current sanctions, there will be continued efforts to maintain some form of dialogue.

The challenge, however, lies in the deep mistrust between Iran and the West, which has only worsened after the recent 12-day war between Iran and Israel and direct U.S. military intervention in Iran. This makes negotiations far more difficult than a decade ago. Nevertheless, I believe that Iran will try to remain within the NPT, despite calls from some domestic factions to leave. The administration understands the risks of more radical moves and the value of preserving at least

minimal cooperation with international institutions.

Still, the situation is much more dangerous than it was ten years ago. The sanctions issue is now compounded by the real risk of direct military confrontation with Israel and the United States. My concern is that reactivating UN sanctions could not only deepen Iran's eastern orientation but also unintentionally pave the way for a new round of military escalation.

What strategies can Iran adopt to mitigate the effects of sanctions and rebuild its economy and society in this situation?

Well, strategies are, of course, more difficult under sanctions. When under sanctions, domestic capacity and resources must be mobilized for production and investment, and the sanctioning environment further complicates matters. Transparency declines, rent-seeking and corruption increase. Society becomes more short-term oriented because inflation makes the future value of money uncertain. From the private sector perspective, this discourages investment in long-term projects.

The government also faces limited resources under sanctions. Oil exports are constrained, and even when possible, financial sanctions complicate repatriation of funds. Buyers demand higher discounts, intermediaries emerge, and transaction costs rise. UN sanctions add inspections, increasing delays and insurance costs. Even regional partners, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan, can create compliance issues, further complicating trade.

In this sense, strategies are constrained. Reducing the cost of doing business and encouraging domestic entrepreneurs is crucial. Tax reforms and formalizing the informal economy could help, as could rationalizing energy subsidies to reduce government spending and improve efficiency. Digitalization, including AI and digital banking, offers additional pathways to enhance productivity and reduce waste. Iran has made notable progress in digitalization over the past year.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Araghchi assures MPs Iran will push on with efforts to protect nuclear know-how

TEHRAN – Iran’s foreign minister says the ministry will press ahead with efforts to safeguard the country’s right to enjoy peaceful nuclear technology in consultation with like-minded nations.

Abbas Araghchi made the comment in a meeting with members of Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee on Monday.

In the meeting held at the Foreign Ministry, the top Iranian diplomat also elaborated on the latest developments pertaining to the country’s foreign policy and briefed the MPs on the attempts made and initiatives taken by the diplomacy apparatus to protect the country’s national interests.

He expounded on the measures adopted by the ministry over the past year, namely in the domain of nuclear energy, enhancement of relations with neighboring countries, promotion of South-South cooperation, utilization of potential at multi-



Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (Second from the Left) briefed lawmakers on his nuclear-related meetings with European and IAEA officials during a Sunday gathering

lateral organizations, including BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopting active diplomacy to counter the Israeli regime’s warmongering and genocide, and supporting Iranians and economic diplomacy.

Araghchi also elaborated on Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s itinerary during his trip to New York to attend the 80th plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The top diploma further pre-

sented a report on his meetings and talks on the fringes of the UN General Assembly’s session as well as the latest diplomatic efforts to counter the destructive approach adopted by the three European countries as well as the United States to abuse the mechanism designed to settle differences over the 2015 Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in order to reinstate lifted UN sanctions against Iran.

Araghchi’s meeting with lawmakers seems to have been aimed at allaying their concerns over recent developments pertaining to Iran’s nuclear programs. Some MPs had proposed Iran withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

A number of Iranian legislators do not see eye to eye with other branches of the Iranian government when it comes to the measures which should be adopted in the face of sanctions re-imposed on Iran over its nuclear program.

‘We will not beg for talks’, says Iran’s foreign ministry spokesperson

From Page 1 ► He explained that before Iran’s delegation left for New York, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi had proposed joint meetings involving the United States to prevent further escalation over sanctions. “We did not oppose the idea and showed goodwill,” Baqaei said, “but the other parties were not ready. On three separate occasions, when such a meeting was proposed, it was they who avoided holding it. We only held bilateral meetings with the Europeans—and that is the reality.”

Commenting on Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi’s remarks about Iran’s proposals in New York, Baqaei said the Iranian delegation made every effort to stop the illegal move by the three European countries.

“Iran went to New York with an initiative. The Europeans accepted our proposals three times but apparently failed to persuade the American side,” he said.

“This proves that the new U.S. administration’s announcement on restoring sanctions became the directive guiding the Europeans, who ignored all of our proposals.”

He added that while Iran made every reasonable effort toward a logical solution, “the other sides either lacked the will or the ability

to reach one.”

‘Nations should refrain from aligning with sanctions’

Baqaei described Turkey’s reported alignment with the snapback sanctions as “unnecessary and unlawful.”

“Our request to friendly nations is to refrain from contributing to the effects of an illegal decision,” he said, noting that none of the entities named under the sanctions held assets in Turkey.

He also confirmed that Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization stated that “no accounts have been frozen.”

‘Europe abused the JCPOA mechanism’

Baqaei accused the three European countries of “irresponsible and destructive behavior,” saying they “abused the so-called snapback mechanism” under the JCPOA.

He said the Europeans misused the dispute resolution process “to impose U.S. demands,” setting “three illogical conditions.”

Despite this, Iran decided to cooperate with the IAEA “within the framework of safeguard obligations.”

He explained that Tehran and the IAEA had reached an understanding to establish a new

framework for cooperation, which was initially welcomed by both the Agency and the Europeans, “but later, they backtracked.”

He added that the Europeans eventually demanded Iran engage in direct dialogue with the U.S.—a condition Tehran rejected.

‘IAEA report opened the way for Western misuse’

Baqaei said Iran holds the United States and the Zionist regime responsible for attacks on its nuclear facilities but criticized the IAEA for “creating an opening” that allowed Western powers to misuse the situation.

“The Agency should have condemned the Zionist regime and the United States for such actions,” he said. “We hope recent developments will serve as a lesson for all parties, including the IAEA, to exercise greater precision.”

Referring to Araghchi’s meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Baqaei said Tehran presented detailed legal arguments proving the illegality of the Europeans’ move.

“At least two permanent Security Council members have objected,” he said, “showing there is no consensus.”

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From Tehran to New York; Ayatollah Khamenei’s flag in the hands of Gen Z

By Fatemeh Kavand

TEHRAN – The Hoover Institution, affiliated with Stanford University in the United States, has been one of the main centers of anti-Iranian discourse production in recent decades.

Since the Cold War, this think tank has had the mission of shaping U.S. policy toward independent countries through its analyses and recommendations. Its recent report on the cultural revolution and the leadership of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also falls exactly within this framework: portraying the ideology of the Islamic Revolution as ineffective and attempting to depict the thoughts of Iran’s Leader as irrelevant.

Yet, this report is less a scientific analysis than it is an unintended admission of the West’s fear of the Islamic Republic’s soft power. The authors try to depict a crisis-stricken image of Iran, while developments inside the country, in the region, and even in the West itself show another reality: the Islamic Revolution and its leadership remain inspirational and the standard-bearers of resistance against domination and Zionism.

The redefining of independence

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 was not merely a governmental change; it was the rebirth of an Iranian-Islamic identity that had

been marginalized for decades under Western dependency. The Shah’s blind imitation of the West dragged national culture into decadence and consumerism. With Imam Khomeini’s leadership, the Iranian people broke these chains and redefined independence not only in politics but also in culture and thought.

Imam Khomeini warned from the very beginning that if culture did not achieve independence, political and economic independence would not endure either. For this reason, he placed cultural revolution at the forefront of priorities. Ayatollah Khamenei has continued this path, repeatedly stressing that “culture is the foundation of everything” and that if society’s culture is not reformed, politics and the economy will also be damaged.

Contrary to Western propaganda, this outlook is not about suppressing culture but about liberation from intellectual and cultural colonialism—the same colonialism that through media, universities, entertainment industries, and consumerism has captured the lifestyles of nations.

The Hoover analysis is filled with contradictions. In one section, it claims that the ideology of the Islamic Republic holds no appeal for the majority of the people, yet it simultaneously warns that Iran’s Leader, through vast cultural institutions and “hidden” budgets,



is exporting this ideology to the West. If the ideology of the Islamic Republic has truly failed and is ineffective, then why such significant concern and warning?

Another example involves the distortion of the Leader’s metaphor about “weeding out.” In reality, this expression refers to cultural purification and safeguarding values, a process undertaken by every political system. In the U.S. and Europe, the slightest criticism of Zionism or opposition to global capitalism is quickly censored. When French police attack anti-war demonstrations or American media suppresses news of Israeli crimes, is this not also a form of “cultural weeding”? The Hoover Institution’s contradictions reveal that its real problem lies not with the method but with the very

principle of Iran’s cultural independence.

What cultural revolution has got Iran

Over the past four and a half decades, Iran’s cultural revolution has yielded significant achievements and milestones across various sectors.

1. Science and technology: Iran today ranks among the top 15 countries in global scientific production. In fields such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, stem cells, nuclear medicine, and defense industries, it is among the leaders in the region and the world. These achievements are not the result of imports but of nurturing a young, committed, and self-confident generation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran’s Khalili selected 2025 CAVA MVP

TEHRAN – Fatemeh Khalili Chermahini was chosen as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the CAVA Women’s Volleyball Championship 2025.

Two more Iranian players Reyhane Karimi and Aytak Salamat were selected among the Dream Team.

Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan competed in a round-robin preliminary stage. The top two teams advanced to the gold medal final, while the remaining two contested the bronze-medal encounter.

Iran swept hosts Uzbekistan 3–0 (25-14, 25-14, 25-19) in front of over 700 fans, claiming the gold medal and becoming the CAVA women’s champions under the FIVB ranking system.

The competition ran from October 1-5 at the Olympic City Volleyball Hall in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The event was jointly organized by the Uzbekistan Volleyball Federation (UVF) and CAVA, made history in Tashkent, as the first-ever women’s competition of the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) to be recognized with FIVB world ranking status.

DREAM TEAM

MVP & Outside Hitter (1): Fatemeh Khalili Chermahini (Iran)

Outside Hitter (2): Tursunpulatova Malika-khon (Uzbekistan)

Middle Blocker (1): Reyhane Karimi (Iran)

Middle Blocker (2): Amirakulova Saikal (Kyrgyzstan)

Opposite Spiker: Aytak Salamat Gharamaleki (Iran)

Setter: Jalolova Mukhlisakhon (Uzbekistan)

Libero: Ikromova Sevinchkhon (Uzbekistan)

Iran water polo team earn third successive win at Asian Aquatics Championships

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s water polo team defeated Uzbekistan 28–7 at the 11th Asian Aquatics Championships on Monday.

Team Melli had defeated China 14–9 and Hong Kong 22–10 in Group A.

Japan, Kazakhstan, India, Thailand, and Singapore are in Group B.

Iran will play Group B’s fourth team in quarterfinals on Thursday.

The 11th Asian Aquatics Championships take place from Sept. 28 to Oct. 10 in Ahmedabad, India.

Iran steals the show at the 2025 New Delhi, official says

TEHRAN – Aliasghar Hadizadeh, head of Iran’s para-athlete association, praised the performance of Iranian competitors at the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships.

Iran finished third at the 12th edition, claiming nine gold, two silver, and five bronze medals.

The event ran from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi, India.

Brazil topped the medal table with 44 medals (15 gold, 20 silver, 9 bronze). China earned 13 golds, 22 silvers, and 17 bronzes (total 52 medals) but finished second due to having two fewer golds than Brazil.

“Our athletes’ performance marked a historic achievement for the competition. We had not previously reached such a scale. Our best prior results were four gold medals in a single campaign, and in Paris, Kobe, Dubai, and London, we could only achieve three golds at

most,” Hadizadeh told Tehran Times.

“I hope our athletes can continue this momentum and perform strongly at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya and the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles. I thank all athletes, coaches, and supporters who stood by the team in Delhi and wished continued victories,” he added.

Iran squad named for friendlies against Russia and Tanzania

TEHRAN – Iran football team head coach Amir Ghalenoei has called up 26 players to the national Team for two friendly matches against Russia and Tanzania.

Team Melli are scheduled to face Russia and Tanzania on Oct. 10 and 14, respectively.

Iran will first play Russia in Volgograd, Russia and then travel to Dubai to meet Tanzania four days later.

Squad:

Goalkeepers:

Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Nia-zmand (Persepolis), Mohammareza Akhbari (Sepahan), Mohammad Khalifeh (Aluminum)

Defenders:

Mohammadamin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Ali Nemati (Foolad), Aria Yousefi (Sepahan), Ramin Rezaeian (Esteghlal), Danial Esmaeili-far (Tractor), Mohammadmehdi Zare (Akhmat Grozny), Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Hossein Abarghouei (Persepolis)

Midfielders:

Saeid Ezatollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Mohammad Ghorbani (Al Wahda), Saman Ghoddos (Kalba), Mohammad Khodabandelou (Persepolis), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (?), Mohammad Mohebbi (Rostov), Mehdi Hashemnejad (Tractor), Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor), Mohammadjavad Hosseinnejad (Dynamo Makhachkala), Omid Noorafkan (Sepahan)

Forwards:

Mehdi Taremi (Olympicos), Allahyar Sayyadmanesh (Westerlo), Ali Alipour (Persepolis), Kasra Taheri (Paykan)

Esteghlal reluctant to continue with Ricardo Sa Pinto

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club are likely to part ways with their Portuguese coach, Ricardo Sa Pinto.

Sa Pinto was appointed at the start of the 2025–26 Iran Professional League (IPL) season but has failed to meet expectations.

Esteghlal have suffered two losses—against Al Wasl of the UAE and Bahrain’s Al-Muharraq in the 2025–26 AFC Champions League Two.

The Blues have also shown poor form in the IPL, winning only one of six matches. Sa Pinto had replaced Mojtaba Jabbari but has not delivered the desired results.

Now, Esteghlal appear to be moving toward parting ways with Sa Pinto, with Farhad Majidi and Mojtaba Jabbari among the candidates for the job.

Shahdab complete signing of Vuk Ivankovic

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball club Shahdab Yazd have completed the signing of Serbian outside hitter Vuk Ivankovic.

The 26-year-old player was a member of Turkish side Gaziantep Gençlik Spor last season. He has also played at Radni?ki Kragujevac, PAOK Thessaloniki and OK Metalac Takovo.

Ivankovic has represented Serbia U-21 volleyball team.

Shahdab Yazd finished runners-up last season at the Iranian Volleyball Super League and are going to strengthen for the 2025–26 season.

Samieinejad appointed as new head of IMIDRO



TEHRAN- Mohammad Masoud Samieinejad was appointed as the new head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) in a ceremony attended by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak.

Atabak introduced Samieinejad as the head of IMIDRO on Monday during a visit to the organization.

During the ceremony, the minister appreciated the services of Mohammad Aghajanolou, the former head of the organization, over the past year.

Samieinejad holds a Ph.D. in Mining and is a prominent figure in this field.

In his career portfolio, Samieinejad has served as the CEO of the Persian Investment Group and the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company.

New railway financing models to be unveiled in presence of transport, economy ministers

TEHRAN- The head of Iranian Railways stated: "In order to provide financial resources for companies active in the railway sector, new financing models will soon be unveiled at an event attended by the Ministers of Transport and Economy."

Jabbar Ali Zakeri said on Sunday, on the sidelines of the ceremony for the inauguration and operation of 17 rail projects and the entry of 283 domestically produced and rebuilt rail fleets into the country's railway network, to reporters: "The quantitative target of the Seventh National Development Plan is to increase the current approximate nine percent share of rail freight to 30 percent by the end of the plan."

He stated: "We hope that the required investment will be largely provided by the private sector."

The official, who is also the deputy minister of transport, further noted: The memoranda of understanding signed so far between the Railway and the private sector is certainly not enough", and continued: "In the near future, we plan to hold two investment events. The first one involves using Article 12 of the Law on Removing Production Barriers."

Explaining the second event, Zakeri noted: "We are seeking to facilitate resource provision for companies, and in this regard, various models have been envisaged. For this purpose, another event will be held in Aban (the eighth month of the Iranian calendar, approximately October-November) with the presence of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, the Minister of Economy, and the members of the Economic Committee of the Parliament, during which financing models will be unveiled."

He said: So far, two phases of fuel consumption saving subsidies from the Oil Ministry have been implemented, and the third payment phase from this source will be unveiled with the participation of companies in about two to three weeks.

The Railway head also stated: "Currently, facility payments are planned from three sources: Note 18 of the Budget Law, Article 12 of the Law on Removing Production Barriers, and also the National Development Fund. New financing methods will be announced within the next month."

Iran inaugurated 17 rail infrastructure projects and added 283 domestically manufactured and rebuilt rolling stock units to its railway fleet in a ceremony held via video conference with President Masoud Pezeshkian and Transport Minister Farzaneh Sadegh.

The projects, valued at 90 trillion rials (about \$180 million), were unveiled in the presence of the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and industry operators.

The new additions include 224 freight wagons built domestically, 14 new and rebuilt locomotives, and 45 new and rebuilt passenger coaches.

Infrastructure projects inaugurated at the same ceremony include the construction of 50 kilometers of double track on the Bafq-

Zarrin Shahr line in central Iran, track and turnout rehabilitation on the Karun-Mian-dasht block in the south, and upgrades to signaling systems at several stations, including Rahgard in the Arak region.

Other initiatives involved fitting shunting locomotives with video monitoring systems, building a spur line for Shirin Asal Company in East Azarbaijan, and expanding capacity at Nezamieh station in Khuzestan Province.

The ceremony was held in conjunction with a broader set of Ministry of Transport inaugurations commemorating Iranian casualties of the recent 12-day Israeli attack. In total, the ministry inaugurated 57,226 housing units and 202 transport, urban development, and meteorology projects worth 1.640 quadrillion rials (\$32.8 billion) and \$125 million.

Also, two Iranian companies signed investment contracts worth 145 trillion rials (about \$290 million) to modernize and build railway rolling stock, in a deal signed in the presence of Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and the head of Iran Railways, Jabbar-Ali Zakari.

The investment aims to upgrade the country's rail transport capacity, support domestic manufacturing, and reduce reliance on imports.

Under the agreements, one company will allocate 120 trillion rials (\$240 million) to the construction and overhaul of 40 heavy locomotives, 37 passenger locomotives and four Siemens locomotive engines. The second company will invest 25 trillion rials (about \$50 million) to refurbish 50 passenger coaches.

Officials said the program is part of Iran Railways' broader strategy to increase rail's share in freight and passenger transport while strengthening local production capabilities.

The investment comes amid a wave of private-sector collaboration across the rail sector. In April 2025, Iran signed \$750 million in memoranda with private firms to expand both its passenger and freight capabilities. One deal targets 600 tank wagons, 300 DMU cars and 50 locomotives, while another involves 650 bulk wagons.

More recently, in July, Iran's Railways signed a \$176 million agreement to upgrade passenger rolling stock, including the purchase of new "five-star Royal" cars and refurbishment of existing wagons with Raja Rail and Rail Tarabar Saba.

These investments align with Iran's broader ambitions to scale up rail transit. The country aims to carry 8.0 million tons of goods via rail transit this year, up from 5.0 million tons last year, and ultimately boost annual transit capacity to 40 million tons.

If fully realized, the \$290 million investment will become a lynchpin in an emerging ecosystem of public-private synergy in Iran's rail sector — one that leverages indigenous manufacturing, reduces foreign dependencies, and helps meet the ambitious goals of the Seventh Development Plan.

Industrial goods share of Iran's exports to Russia increased significantly in 3 years

From Page 1 ▶ "This is while at the end of the year 1403 (March 2025), our country's exports to Russia were about \$1.1 billion", the official added.

He further explained that according to statistics, the majority of imports from Russia consist of grains and oilseeds, which make up over 70 percent, with the remainder being production line machinery. In contrast, Iran's exports to Russia include 45 percent agricultural products, 37 percent industrial goods, 10 percent petrochemical and polymer products, and approximately 7 to 8 percent minerals.

Referring to the change in the composition of Iran's exports in recent years, he said: "In the years 1399 and 1400 (2020-2022), the volume of Iran's exports to Russia was about \$500 million, over 90 percent of which consisted of fruits and vegetables. But today, while maintaining agricultural exports, the share of industrial goods has increased significantly, and Iran's exports to Russia have nearly doubled over the past three years."

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has, in a statement, announced that the Iranian-Russian Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is legally binding as of October 2, 2025.

"The conclusion of the treaty mirrors the willpower of leaders of the two countries to further deepen and enhance relations in all areas of mutual interest based on mutual respect, good neighborliness and common interests of the two nations," read the statement.

"The Iranian-Russian Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is a milestone in the history of relations between the two countries and envisions the upgrading of cordial ties between the two nations in various areas of mutual interest," the statement also read.

"By specifying areas and priorities of cooperation between the two countries, this significant document delineates a bright framework for the enhancement of relations in different diplomatic, economic, trade, scientific-technological, energy, investment, defense cultural and other areas and lays the groundwork for coordination and synergy to serve mutual interests and boost cooperation to safeguard international peace and security and face growing threats and challenges against the rule of law on the international stage as well as the principles and objectives of the UN Charter," said the statement.

"Being cognizant of the fundamental significance of safeguarding the principles and objectives of the UN Charter in order to protect international peace and security, Iran and Russia spare no effort to safeguard multilateral-



ism and respect for international law, including through the enhancement of cooperation within the framework of multilateral mechanisms and organizations such as the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," the statement added.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has also announced that the treaty has officially come into effect, marking a landmark in bilateral relations.

The Iranian-Russian Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, signed on 17 January 2025, by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, is a treaty for the improvement of ties between the two nations.

Under the deal, Iran and Russia aim to significantly enhance their collaboration across all sectors, including defense, energy, finance, transportation, industries, agriculture, culture, science, and technology. Th treaty marks a turning point, opening a new chapter in reciprocal ties between the two sides.

"This treaty reflects a strategic choice at the highest level of political leadership in Russia and Iran, aimed at strengthening comprehensive friendly relations and good neighborliness," the Russian Foreign Ministry has noted.

Moscow has also emphasized that the development is a key watershed in the history of relations between the two countries, upgrading their partnership to a new level.

The treaty is seen as a reflection of the strategic alignment between Russia and Iran. It aims to boost cooperation on all fronts, including economic and military.

On September 18, Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad met Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilyov and Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller in Tehran to review economic cooperation and preparations for the next meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, the Oil Ministry's news agency Shana reported.

Paknejad said the talks followed up on the outcomes of the 18th joint committee, which was held in Moscow, noting that "the results required further pursuit" and that the two sides reviewed them in detail during the meeting.

He added that some areas of

cooperation required revision and further dialogue, which were discussed and resolved.

On the 19th committee session, scheduled to be hosted by Iran, the minister said the timing and agenda were also discussed and would be announced "at the appropriate time."

On September 23, Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak met Russian Economic Development Minister Maxim Reshetnikov in Moscow during the first joint committee session on implementing the Iran-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) free trade agreement.

Reshetnikov said 2025 marked a turning point in bilateral economic relations, citing key developments such as the signing of a comprehensive strategic treaty between Moscow and Tehran, the enforcement of the free trade agreement with the EAEU, and Iran's admission as an observer in the bloc.

He noted that trade between Iran and Russia grew by 35 percent in May and June 2025 compared with the same period a year earlier, attributing the rise to the free trade agreement and the determination of both countries to expand commercial ties.

Reshetnikov reaffirmed Russia's commitment to the letter and spirit of the accord and voiced hope for faster progress.

Atabak, accompanied by Iranian Ambassador Kazem Jalali, emphasized the role of the private sector in deepening trade and called for removal of obstacles such as financial transaction restrictions and divergent product standards.

He also underlined Iran's commitment to completing the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), saying groundwork for the Rasht-Astara railway had been prepared and construction would start in the coming months.

Iran and the EAEU signed their free trade agreement in St. Petersburg in December 2023. After ratification by member states, it came into effect in May 2025, eliminating tariffs on about 87 percent of goods traded.

The EAEU groups Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, with Iran, Uzbekistan and Cuba holding observer

status.

According to the figures released by Iran's Customs Administration, Iran's exports to member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) rose by 20 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), reaching over \$2.0 billion.

The volume of exports to EAEU countries totaled 5.059 million metric tons—up 21 percent compared to the previous year.

Breakdown of exports includes \$1.121 billion to Russia, \$505 million to Armenia, \$278 million to Kazakhstan, \$111 million to Kyrgyzstan, and \$21 million to Belarus.

Iran also imported 2.174 million metric tons of goods worth \$151 billion from EAEU member states in the same period. This marks a 39 percent decline in import volume and a 20 percent drop in value compared to the previous year.

Iranian officials have said that steel and petrochemicals are expected to account for 50 percent of the objectives set under Iran's free trade agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), highlighting the sectors' pivotal role in boosting exports and activating trade opportunities in the region.

On August 15, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), said the FTA, which entered into force on May 15, 2025, is unprecedented for Iran, reducing tariffs on 87 percent of traded goods.

He noted that while previous preferential trade agreements with the EAEU had expanded trade volumes, this latest agreement presents a unique opportunity for deeper integration.

"Trade agreements create both opportunities and challenges. The overall outcome is positive for both sides if vulnerabilities are addressed and opportunities maximized," Dehnavi said. He emphasized that steel and petrochemical industries are major drivers of production and exports, and leveraging them effectively could achieve half of Iran's FTA objectives.

The official called on the private sector to actively engage in Eurasian markets, pointing to research identifying which Iranian products have the highest export potential. "Private companies should focus on maximizing profitability, while policymakers ensure collective benefits such as employment, economic growth, and foreign currency inflows," he said.

Dehnavi also noted that export opportunities vary across member states, highlighting Russia as one of the most lucrative markets for Iranian products and promising further studies to optimize engagement in the region.

Non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi province up 34% in H1

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 34 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the first half of the previous year, according to a provincial official.

Amir Reza Rajabi, the director-general of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, stated: "In the first six months of this year, the province's exports reached \$1.175 billion, a 34 percent growth compared to the same period last year, and the foreign trade balance also set a record of \$830 million."

He reiterated: "The province's foreign trade balance has reached a new record of \$830 million, indicating positive economic performance. Furthermore, the province's exports in the first six months of this year reached \$1.175 billion, a 34 percent growth compared to the same period last year."

The official further announced: "Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Pakistan, and China are the eight

main destinations for our products. Of course, the province's export destinations cover more than 60 countries, but these eight countries rank highest in terms of volume and value. Additionally, in some cases, we have experienced growth of over 100 percent in export volume and value, such as export shipments to Russia, India, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, and Syria."

He went on to say: "In the first six months of this year, 50 percent of the province's exports were concentrated in the industrial sector, 25 percent in mineral products, 20 percent in agriculture, and the remaining five percent were from the handicraft sector, such as carpets, and petrochemical products based on oil. In terms of the type of exported materials, polyethylene compound, saffron, pistachios, iron rods and re-bars, steel industry alloys such as ferrochrome, construction flooring, and edible bird eggs have the most foreign customers. We have also seen a significant increase in the volume and value of the province's exports in machinery, cement, and other construction materials."

The director-general of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department continued: "Given trade contracts and the facilitation of customs affairs, we believe this trend will continue in the second half of the year. New customers are now in negotiations with the province's industries, and it is predicted that by the end of the [Iranian calendar] year 1404 (March 20, 2026), the export basket of Khorasan Razavi province will be able to maintain this 34 percent growth record, both in terms of volume and value."

As previously announced by an official with the province's customs department, the value of non-oil export from Khorasan Razavi province increased by 34 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20).

Javad Jafari said that 3.463 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$2.251 billion were exported from the province in the past year, indicating also 18 percent rise in terms of weight, year on year.

The official further stated that 2.912 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$1.7 billion had been exported from the province in the year 1402.

Two years on How ‘Al-Aqsa Storm’ redefined Palestinian cause

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The second anniversary of Hamas’ surprise military operation in southern Israel has reignited global debate over its origins, consequences, and political meaning.

On one side, many analysts contend that the attack—dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm—served as a pretext for Israel’s full-scale war on Gaza, a campaign that has taken more than 67,000 Palestinian lives and left much of the enclave in ruins. According to this view, without the operation, Israel would not have been able to justify the deliberate starvation and humanitarian blockade that have plunged Gaza into famine.

On the other hand, a growing group of regional and international observers argues that the Hamas operation was not only inevitable but also historically transformative. They argue that the Palestinian cause, once fading from the global agenda, was revived by the October 7, 2023 events—forcing the world to confront decades of occupation, blockade, and systemic oppression.

While Western media have widely circulated the first narrative to frame Israel’s military campaign as defensive, the second view deserves equal attention for understanding the underlying dynamics that led to the eruption of the conflict.

The roots of inevitability

For decades, Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians have been defined by occupation, displacement, and economic strangulation. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip has been subjected to an all-encompassing land, air, and sea blockade—widely condemned as a form of collective punishment. The territory has often been described as the world’s



largest “open-air prison,” where more than two million people are denied freedom of movement and basic rights.

The October 2023 operation must be understood against this backdrop. Two days after the Hamas attack, Israel announced a “total blockade” on Gaza, cutting off food, water, fuel, and electricity. This policy has led to widespread starvation and a humanitarian crisis unprecedented in recent memory. By August 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the world’s leading authority on food crises, confirmed that Gaza City was gripped by famine—an outcome many experts attribute to the deliberate weaponization of hunger.

While Palestinians had suffered under blockade for sixteen years, the operation exposed the full extent of their plight to a global audience. It catalyzed sustained international protests and grassroots movements demanding an end to Western complicity in Israel’s siege of Gaza.

A catalyst for global awareness

Before October 2023, the Palestinian cause was gradually re-

ceding from international focus, overshadowed by other regional and global crises. Operation Al-Aqsa Storm reversed that trend. The brutality of Israel’s response—aired in real time across global media—sparked a wave of solidarity movements, from Washington to Johannesburg, London to Kuala Lumpur.

Over the past two years, millions of people have marched in support of Palestinian self-determination, calling for an end to military and economic ties with Israel. This shift in global consciousness has begun to influence diplomatic postures. Several Western states long aligned with Israel—including France, the UK, and Canada—have moved toward recognizing Palestine as a state. Analysts argue that such developments might not have been materialized without the renewed urgency created by the October 7 events.

Exposing regional ambitions

The operation also laid bare Israel’s broader regional ambitions, particularly the “Greater Israel” vision long discussed within Zionist ideology. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly supported policies reflecting expansionist

tendencies, envisioning an Israel extending into parts of neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and even Saudi Arabia.

Operation Al-Aqsa Storm disrupted this narrative of unchecked Israeli dominance, revealing the strategic resistance that continues to challenge Israel’s plans for territorial expansion.

The geopolitical fallout

The ongoing conflict has also reshaped diplomatic initiatives. U.S. President Donald Trump’s proposed 20-point ceasefire plan for Gaza suggests that the resilience of Palestinian resistance has constrained Israel’s capacity to achieve total control over the enclave.

If implemented, the plan would compel Israel to withdraw from large areas of Gaza, reversing its post-war ambitions. Without the October 7 operation, Israel might have gradually tightened its grip over the territory under the guise of security. Instead, the operation underscored the enduring spirit of Palestinian resistance and its ability to alter regional power dynamics.

A defining moment in Palestinian history

Two years later, Operation Al-Aqsa Storm remains a watershed in the Palestinian struggle. Its human cost has been immense, yet it also transformed global awareness of Gaza’s suffering and reignited international discourse on justice, sovereignty, and resistance.

Whether viewed as a tragic catalyst or an inevitable uprising, the operation changed the trajectory of the conflict. It forced the world to confront the long-ignored realities of occupation and blockade, ensuring that the question of Palestine could no longer be silenced or forgotten.

For more than 640,000 people, with over a million more in emergency or crisis phases.

That formal classification reframes starvation from a risk into a documented, large-scale catastrophe and heightens obligations under international humanitarian law.

Individual operations have repeatedly illustrated the asymmetric bill exacted on civilians: the June 8, 2024, Nuseirat raid, which freed four captives, was followed by reports of extraordinarily high Palestinian fatalities — at least 274 killed, including dozens of women and children, according to Gaza health officials — intensifying debates about proportionality, rescue doctrine, and the acceptable risks of captive recovery.

Concurrently, senior Israeli officials made

in the Vatican instead of this respected Pope and his magnificent institution,

would you, like your successor, have written an ineffective message at nine o’clock at night on the Vatican sites through your advisors, and then content yourself with a prayer for these enraged people of Gaza, crucified by demons at the foot of this statue, and then sleep comfortably in a luxurious bed until morning? Or, according to these same Bible stories, would you now be on a ship heading to Gaza to bless the hungry children there?

Tell me, which is true, the writings of your Bible or the actions of your successor?

If your successor really believed in your Bible, he should be in the middle of the sea and on the ships of this caravan.

I say with courage that for me, these brave men and women in the Global Sumud Flotilla are your true successors. Just as I do not consider most of the leaders of Islamic countries to be followers of Muhammad and true Islam. Just as Netanyahu’s actions should not be linked to Moses and the Jewish religion. And just as Trump and Western leaders are not symbols of democracy and humanity.

So, Christ! return and board the ship with the followers of reality.

INTERNATIONAL

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Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

5

Humiliation after two years of futile war on Palestinians fighters

From page 1 ▶ The steadfast resistance of the Palestinian people has been so profound that it makes the Vietnamese struggle against American invaders appear to pale in comparison, especially in the face of the war crimes committed by the Israeli army.

Nothing, even famine, has been able to subdue the Palestinians fighters.

Netanyahu’s boastful promise to wipe out Palestinian fighters, above all Hamas, now lies in ruins—a failure he dares not confess.

Given these facts, a durable and lasting solution must be found for the decades-long Palestinian wound.

If Israel continues to deny the rights of the Palestinians, the world must wait for other surprises by the Palestinian youth in the future.

The genocidal war on Gaza has only brought shame and disgrace for Israel and made the most-equipped army in the Middle East look weak in the face of a few thousand fighters who are ready to die for their legitimate rights.

Europe turns against Israeli occupation regime

From page 1 ▶ Other cities across the continent, from Paris and Berlin to Lisbon and Athens, also saw major demonstrations calling for an immediate end to the genocide and sanctions against the Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

The sheer size and coordination of these protests strongly indicate a striking shift in public opinion. Anger is no longer only directed at the occupation regime’s genocidal campaign in Gaza, but increasingly at Western governments who continue backing illegal occupation politically and militarily.

Protesters carried banners reading “Our governments support genocide” and “End complicity now,” underscoring a widespread belief that European leaders have ignored public sentiment and international law.

This disconnect is particularly stark in countries like Germany, where a recent poll showed that 62% of citizens believe the Zionist regime’s actions in Gaza amount to genocide.

A majority support suspending trade agreements with the regime, and two-thirds want Berlin to increase diplomatic pressure on Tel Aviv.

Similar patterns are emerging across Europe, where public support for the occupation regime has eroded dramatically since the start of the genocidal war on Gaza. Despite this, Western governments have continued to sell arms, blocked calls for sanctions, and shielded the regime from international accountability.

The genocide in Gaza, entering its third year, has been marked by large-scale civilian casualties, the destruction of hospitals and schools,

Syria: Fake democracy on the ruins of a divided nation

From page 1 ▶ The final third of the new council’s members will not be elected, but will be directly appointed by Sharia law, a practice that reinforces the concept of authoritarian power under the guise of “national balances,” which the transitional administration seeks to establish in the post-Bashar al-Assad era.

What is clear, however, is that these “balances” merely reflect new centers of influence established by de facto arrangements, not a reflection of a national will or a new social contract.

The transitional administration effectively controls less than two-thirds of the country, while areas such as the Kurdish Autonomous Administration and Suwayda remain outside the political process, rendering the elections incomplete in terms of legitimacy and geographic and political representation.

The HTS-affiliated media’s promotion of a decorative electoral spectacle did not stop at the closed “ballot,” but extended to deliberate attempts at symbolic normalization, promoting the candidacy of Henry Hamra, a Syrian-American Jew, as the first Jew to run for parliament since 1967.

This suspicious move appears, in its temporal and political context, to be part of a process of beautifying an authoritarian regime.

It reflects less real openness than a blatant political exploitation of the issue of sects and minorities within an international context pushing for settlements and gradual normalization with the Zionist enemy.

It was no surprise that this move coincided with the cancellation of national occasions that had constituted the pillars of Syrian collective identity, such as Martyrs’ Day and the October War Anniversary, and their replacement with Revolution Day and Liberation Day, which coincide with the anniversary of Assad’s fall.

This indicates the transitional regime’s desire to write a new history tailored to the political moment and the current power centers.

Meanwhile, the emergence of extremist groups within the new governing structure is

becoming clear, with the creation of the position of “Chief Justice Officer”—also known as “Sheikh”—who oversees the judicial system without legal authority.

This so-called Chief Justice Officer is appointed based on loyalty to Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, even if he lacks legal qualifications. This move is nothing more than an attempt to give the justice system a religious-authoritarian character.

Further, it embodies the collapse of the concept of a civil state based on law, clearly reflecting the shift toward a project based on disguised sectarianism and fabricated legitimacy.

The elections were merely a smokescreen for a comprehensive restructuring of Syria’s national and constitutional identity, orchestrated behind the scenes by regional and international influences, while cities like Sweida in southern Syria are left to endure various crises.

While elections were being held in Damascus, bakeries in Sweida were shut down due to shortage of flour and the region was deprived of electricity and water.

Official silence suggests a premeditated intention to isolate and starve these areas, having been politically excluded from the post-Assad landscape.

On the other hand, the pace of courtship toward Moscow is accelerating in an attempt to find a regional balance against American and Israel.

The repeated visits of Sharaa and his military and diplomatic delegations to Russia, their photo-ops with Russian S-400 air defense systems, and their denial of their significance after sparking controversy, reveal a fragile strategy seeking to strike a balance through formalities.

The de facto regime has not expressed any real objection to the ongoing Israeli attacks on Syria. It has instead remained silent or issued formal condemnations, reinforcing suspicions about the existence of unannounced arrangements under the table to facilitate future political normalization projects.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Rubble’s grim ledger: Two years of devastation and reckoning in Gaza

From page 1 ▶ What followed was not a single campaign but a protracted strategy: sustained air and ground operations, repeated sieges, and temporary pauses for captive exchanges and faltering diplomacy.

Human toll and the collapse of services

Measured in concrete terms, the scale of human loss in Gaza is catastrophic. Gaza’s Ministry of Health figures place fatalities above 67,000 and injuries near 170,000 since October 2023; UNICEF and other child-protection agencies confirm tens of thousands of children are among the dead and injured and that malnutrition and pediatric trauma are rampant.

Mass displacement has been nearly universal: UNRWA and OCHA assessments indicate that

the overwhelming majority of Gaza’s roughly 2.1–2.3 million residents have been displaced at least once, and shelter-damage assessments show destruction or severe damage to well over half of the Strip’s housing stock.

The health system has been battered: hundreds of attacks on health facilities and health workers have been documented, leaving many hospitals nonfunctional at times when they were most needed.

Famine, contested operations and doctrine

Humanitarian metrics hardened into an official emergency in August 2025, when IPC analysis—endorsed by WHO, WFP, and FAO—confirmed famine (IPC Phase 5) in Gaza Governorate and projected catastrophic food insecurity

the multitude, and immediately he got into a boat with his disciples, and went into the region of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees seek a miracle

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus was coming, they gathered together to dispute with him. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven to prove his authority. And Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, “Why does this generation always seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, I will not give it a sign.”

And he left them, got into a boat, and went across the lake.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

But the disciples had forgotten to take enough bread with them, and they had only one loaf in the boat.

As they were walking along the lake, Jesus warned them, “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

So the disciples began to argue with one another about the fact that they had brought no bread.

Jesus knew what they were discussing with each other. So he said, “Why are you discussing the matter of having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Is your heart so hardened that you cannot understand? You

Between the Vatican and Gaza: Where would Christ stand today?

By Habib Ahmadzadeh

TEHRAN – Inspired by the Gospel story of feeding the four thousand, an Iranian writer asks: if Christ were alive today, would he stay in the Vatican—or sail with the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza?

Feeding the four thousand

On one of those days, a large crowd gathered around him, and they were hungry again. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will faint on the way, for some of them have come from a long journey.”

His disciples were amazed and said, “Where can we get enough bread in this deserted place to satisfy these people?”

Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples. The disciples gave them to the people. They also found a few small fish. He blessed them and told them to set them before the people.

And they all ate and were satisfied. And the disciples took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces that were left. And there were about four thousands of them. Then Jesus dismissed

who have eyes, why do you not see?

Why do you not open your ears and hear? Do you remember how I fed the five thousand with the five loaves? How many baskets full of fragments did you take up?” They replied, “Twelve.”

He said, “When I fed the four thousand with the seven loaves, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?”

They said, “Seven baskets!”

He said, “Do you still not understand?”

I am a university professor and Muslim writer & Director, but as much as I respect my Prophet Muhammad, I also love other religious leaders and prophets, especially Moses and Jesus, and I read the books of the Old and New Testaments and quote them to my students.

It has been a long time since I saw the ceremonial ceremony of your successor as Pope in Rome. Those large tables, luxurious clothes, and the tranquility that begins in the secluded corners of the monasteries and ends in Rome. In the New Testament, I know you, O Christ, as a man who not only felt compassion for the hunger and thirst of the people, but also moved from city to city to save the people from hunger. And this question grew in my mind: if you were present today

Nablus Governorate's archaeological sites face Israeli expropriation plans

TEHRAN - In a move described by critics as a systematic effort to confiscate Palestinian heritage, the Israeli government has unilaterally declared 63 archaeological sites in the occupied West Bank as "Israeli historical and archaeological sites."

The decision, enacted through a military order, has drawn condemnation for violating international law and accelerating the erasure of Palestinian cultural identity.

The order was issued on August 10, 2025, by the head of the Israeli Civil Administration, Brigadier General Moti Almoz. Titled "Order Regarding the Antiquities Law (Judea and Samaria) (No. 6611-6891) of 1986," the directive leverages amended versions of old Jordanian laws to declare the sites as state-controlled antiquities zones.

The distribution of the targeted sites is heavily concentrated in the northern West Bank, with 59 of the 63 sites located within the Nablus Governorate alone. The Ramallah Governorate contains three sites, and the Salfit Governorate one.

This latest order is not an isolated incident but part of a long-term strategy by Israeli authorities to consolidate control over Palestinian cultural resources. Following the 1967 occupation, Israel vested authority over antiquities in the hands of its military governor.

Critics argue that this legal framework is designed to tighten Israel's grip on Palestinian archaeological resources, controlling and exploiting them as part of its "settlement project."

The military booklet also included orders

redefining the boundaries of 10 Israeli settlements in the West Bank, a move that facilitates their expansion. The close proximity of many newly declared "Israeli archaeological sites" to existing settlements and outposts, particularly in Nablus, suggests a coordinated policy.

This classification of Palestinian heritage sites as Israeli constitutes a clear violation of international law, including the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Geneva Conventions. These conventions explicitly prohibit an occupying power from altering the historical and cultural character of occupied territories or exploiting them for political purposes.

"This is extremely disappointing and worrying," the source text states, highlighting the failure of the international community to respond. "This should not be happening in front of our eyes as an international community with professional and ethical responsibility to respond to these violations and advocate for accountability to put a stop to these actions."

Instead of safeguarding Palestinian heritage, the Israeli occupation authorities have systematically classified over 2,400 Palestinian archaeological sites in the West Bank as "Israeli archaeological sites," using military orders to justify their control and legitimize their confiscation. This practice is widely seen as a direct threat to Palestinian national identity and a tool for legitimizing the ongoing settlement enterprise.

sector that had long been hampered by conflict and instability. Improved security conditions have encouraged more international visitors, particularly to religious and historic sites across the country, Iraqi News reported.

"Iraq's tourism sector is gradually recovering and gaining momentum," al-Marsoumi said, citing the increasing number of foreign pilgrims and ongoing cultural restoration initiatives.

Religious tourism remains a major contributor to Iraq's earnings, with millions of Shia pilgrims visiting the holy cities of Karbala, Najaf, and Samarra annually. Peak visitor numbers occur during events such as Ashura and Arbaeen, drawing travelers from Iran, India, Pakistan and other countries.

In addition to pilgrimage, Iraq's ancient heritage sites are attracting growing interest. Projects such as the restoration of Babylon and the Ishtar Gate have helped boost the country's cultural tourism profile.

President Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid said Iraq's improving stability was key to the tourism rebound. In late 2024, Rashid announced that Baghdad had been chosen as the 2025 Arab Tourism Capital, a designation he said would showcase the city's "rich history and cultural legacy."

Iraq's tourism revenues jump 25% to \$5.7 billion



The reconstructed Ishtar Gate, displayed at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, incorporates fragments from the gateway unearthed in Babylon in the early 1900s.

TEHRAN - Iraq's tourism revenues rose 25% to \$5.7 billion in 2024, up from \$4.6 billion the previous year, driven by a surge in religious tourism and cultural heritage visits.

According to data released on Saturday by economic analyst Nabil al-Marsoumi, figures place Iraq seventh among Arab countries in terms of tourism income, following the United Arab Emirates (\$57 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$41 billion), Egypt (\$15.3 billion), Morocco (\$11.3 billion), Qatar (\$8.4 billion), and Jordan (\$7.2 billion).

The growth highlights Iraq's efforts to revive a

Endowment Organization, Cultural Heritage Ministry form joint working group

TEHRAN — Mehdi Khamoushi, director of the State Endowment and Charity Affairs Organization, announced the establishment of a joint working group with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. He described the collaboration as a crucial step toward preserving and restoring Iran's sacred sites and historical monuments.

Addressing a gathering of the two entities on Sunday, Khamoushi said that the interaction of the two institutions can pave the way for preserving the Iranian-Islamic identity and revitalizing Iran's spiritual and cultural heritage, ISNA reported.

"One of the most important issues is the holy sites, of which there are more than 8,000 scattered throughout the country. Many of these sites are architecturally and historically valuable, and their restoration and reconstruction must be coordinated with the Cultural Heritage Ministry," he explained.

He added that he endowed buildings, such as caravanserais and tombs, which have historical value, need restoration and enhanced maintenance according to the cultural heritage criteria. The purpose of this meeting is to examine the challenges in this field and establish a joint secretariat to follow up on previous approvals and

agreements."

He said that part of the resources is provided by the government, but the income of the holy sites must be preserved and managed. "The volume of operations is very high and we need to prioritize and enhance cooperation between the agencies."

Referring to the high potential of the holy sites in eco-tourism and religious tourism, he also called for using the capacity of donors, popularizing the projects, and holding knowledge-based exhibitions near the holy sites.

Also, Deputy Cultural Heritage Minister Ali Darabi appreciated the cooperation of State Endowment and Charity Affairs Organization and said: "State Endowment and Charity Affairs Organization has a pivotal role in the administering and organizing the holy sites. Each shrine in any part of the country is the center of cultural, social, and religious development of that region and can make a significant contribution to the development of religious tourism."

Pointing to the high capacity of Iran's cultural heritage, he said

Commission established to engage expatriates in tourism and Iranology

TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced the formation of a new commission to engage the Iranian diaspora in promoting tourism and the study of Iranology

The commission operates under the supervision of the High Council of Iranian Affairs Abroad to identify experts and key figures in the tourism sector. Its goal is to highlight Iran's economic, cultural, and scientific capabilities on the international stage, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushiravan Mohseni-Bandpei said on Sunday.

"One priority of the commission is the active participation of expatriate Iranians in organizing exhibitions and international events to introduce Iran's tourist attractions and capacities to the world," he said.

The official added that the initiative also seeks to help the younger generation of Iranians abroad reconnect with their heritage through opportunities to experience their homeland's culture.

Mohseni-Bandpei further highlighted domestic tourism



Iran's deputy tourism minister Anoushiravan Mohseni-Bandpei in an undated photo

initiatives, noting that the ministry has organized more than 400 events and festivals across the country, including in Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and northern provinces, which have stimulated domestic tourism demand and increased satisfaction among tourists and hotel industry stakeholders.

Regarding medical tourism, Mohseni-Bandpei said Iran is recognized as a credible destina-

tion in this sector. A newly developed system registers services, standards, and prices accurately to enhance patient trust and improve the quality of medical services, optimizing Iran's potential in health and tourism.

He concluded that the commission's ultimate goal is to harness the tourism and Iranology potentials of the country through active participation of Iranians abroad to ensure sustainable

tourism development nationally and internationally.

Earlier in July, Seyyed Zia Hashemi, Cultural Deputy to the First Vice President of Iran, announced efforts by the government and parliament to ease travel procedures for millions of Iranians living abroad who wish to visit their homeland.

Available data suggests that some 7.3 million foreign tourists visited the Islamic Republic during the past Persian year 1403, which ended on March 20, 2025. As mentioned by, Mohseni-Bandpei, the data is based on internationally recognized definitions of tourism, which classify any individual who stays at least one night in a destination as a traveler, whether Iranian expatriates or foreign nationals.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots, such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 29 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Niavaran Complex to host 'Journey to the Past' educational event for children

TEHRAN - A special educational program titled "Journey to the Past" will be held at the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex in Tehran, aiming to introduce children and teenagers to Iran's rich history and cultural heritage.

The event coincides with National Children's Day and will take place over two days — Wednesday, October 8, and Saturday, October 11, 2025 — from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

at the southern porch of the palace complex, CHTN reported.

The program is set to welcome students from both boys' and girls' elementary schools. A child and adolescent facilitator will guide participants through a symbolic "Journey to the Past," using creative performances, group games, music, movement, and live piano to bring contemporary history and the palace's unique atmosphere to life.



Mehregan festival to be held in Karaftu cave



TEHRAN—Head of Kordestan Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department gave news of holding a ceremony in the historic area of Karaftu cave to mark the first anniversary of the inscription of the Celebration of Mehregan on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Hu-

manity.

Pouria Talebnia told ISNA on Monday that the ceremony will be held on Thursday with participation of artistic groups and a number of lovers of Iranian culture and ancient customs in the historic area of Karaftu cave in Divan-Darreh.

Holding this autumn festival in

one of the most outstanding sites of the province is a valuable opportunity to commemorate Iranian old traditions and introducing the cultural and historical capacities of the province, he said.

He added that this ritual, which is held on the occasion of the autumn equinox and in celebration of love and friendship, has its roots in Iranian history and beliefs, and this year it will be held in the Karaftu cave with cooperation of artistic and cultural groups and the support of the Divan-Darreh Governorate and the Kordestan Islamic Revolution Art Center.

Referring to the world registration of the Mehregan festival on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List jointly between Iran and Tajikistan, Talebnia stated: This world registration shows the high position of the Mehregan ritual in the common culture of Iranians, and the preservation of such rituals is the preser-

vation of the historical and cultural identity of the Iranian nation.

He also emphasized the role of local artists in the revival of authentic Iranian rituals and added that Kurdish and indigenous music groups will perform at this ceremony.

Referring to the world registration of the Mehregan festival on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List jointly between Iran and Tajikistan, Talebnia stated that this world registration shows the high position of the Mehregan ritual in the common culture of Iranians, and the preservation of the historical and cultural identity of the Iranian nation.

The historical cave of Karaftu is one of the most important ancient sites in Iran and one of the prominent attractions of the Kordestan province, which hosts many tourists and researchers every year with its unique rock architecture.

AUCTION SJSCO.

B140403

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 10,000 tons **STEEL BILLET** (Size 150 x 150 mm) on basis of FOB Bandar Abbas according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjSCO.ir, through the Sales and customer portal, Tender and Foreign Tender section.

All documentation will be provided electronically.

All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, October 20, 2025.**

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(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Tehran hosting National Day of Villagers, Nomads

TEHRAN – The National Day of Villagers and Nomads is being held in Tehran on October 6 and 7, with a focus on integrated, participatory, and technological governance.

In 2013, October 7 was registered on the national calendar as the National Day of Villagers and Nomads to highlight the vital role of villagers and nomads in the country's political, economic, and social development.

This year, the event includes a series of conferences, exhibitions, as well as cultural and specialized festivals, ISNA reported.

Some 31 provinces are participating in the event, laying the ground for presenting development and empowerment projects, successful participatory models, investment capacities, modern ideas and technologies for villages and nomads, and deprivation alleviation.

On the sidelines of the event, an exhibition of provincial achievements, governance ecosystem, and rural innovation and technologies is being held.

Empowering rural communities 'essential'

In February, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, said empowering rural communities is a prerequisite



for the economic and cultural development of the country.

Referring to the difference between the concept of village and local community, the official said, "The rural areas' economic activities involve agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, and natural resources.

However, the local community has a broader concept and includes different groups of people, not only in rural areas, but also in urban neighborhoods, nomadic areas, and even digital communities. Local communities rely on social interactions, traditions, beliefs, and shared human relationships."

The official made the remarks via a video conference while addressing an event called "university, social responsibility, and empowering local areas", Mehr news

agency reported.

In villages, the development of agricultural infrastructure, animal husbandry, health, and education are basic needs, while in local communities, issues such as preserving culture, fostering social interactions, and strengthening support networks are significant.

Referring to the fact that only 30 percent of the country's population resides in villages, Behrouz-Azar said depopulation of rural areas will result in losing a significant proportion of cultural heritage, art, language, and lifestyle.

The official went on to urge universities and educational centers to utilize their knowledge and modern technologies to address current challenges in rural communities, help boost their productivity, and improve the quality of

life of farmers, particularly women farmers, since they play a key role in empowering rural communities.

World Rural Development Day

Declared by the UN General Assembly as World Rural Development Day, July 6 highlights the vital roles of rural communities in agricultural development, food security, and ecological stewardship, and calls for their empowerment through access to land, decent work, and inclusion in decision-making.

It reaffirms the General Assembly's unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This declaration, steeped in the spirit of international solidarity, acknowledges the deep-rooted challenge of rural poverty and the necessity of addressing it as a precondition for achieving the broader goals of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Drawing from a lineage of global declarations and resolutions—from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda—the resolution seeks to shine a sustained light on the lives and struggles of those who till the soil, harvest the seas, and nurture the land in rural corners of the world.

Iranian universities attend Edu TraC Oman expo

TEHRAN – Representatives of Sharif University of Technology, Shiraz University, and Tarbiat Modares University have participated in the 12th edition of Edu TraC Oman 2025.

The education and career expo was held from September 29 to October 1, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Held under the patronage of Oman's Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Education, and National Career Guidance Center, EduTraC Oman, it served as a multi-sector recruitment event for higher education, training and human resource development, providing a great opportunity for students, graduates and human resource professionals to connect with local and international universities, meet with admission officers, career counselors and personnel for academic opportunities and career guidance.

Over 60 universities from 19 countries, such as Iran, Oman, Spain, Russia, Qatar, Japan, America, Germany, France, England, India, and Saudi Arabia, participated in Edu TraC Oman 2025, Mehr news agency reported.

During the three-day event, Iranian universities showcased their capabilities, advantages, introduced their academic programs, courses, and university information to a large audience. This year, Sharif University of Technology also represented UT5 convention (founded in December 2009, the convention was signed by Sharif University of Technology, Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, and Khajeh Nasir Toosi University of Technology to promote collaboration between these universities, especially at the international level).

Foreign students in Iran almost doubled

Nearly 60,000 foreign students are currently studying in Iranian universities, compared with 35,000 students in the past Iranian academic year started on September 22, 2024.

Despite existing challenges, Iran has managed to attract students from 101 countries, IRNA quoted Saeed Habiba, the head of the Organization of Student Affairs, as saying.

The scientific capacity of the country's universities and their positive record in international cooperation are a valuable opportunity that must be seized to transform the presence of foreign students into a national discourse and strategic planning, the official said. These students are mainly from Afghanistan, India, Iraq, and Pakistan.

The country aims to increase the number of international students to some 320,000 by 2026.

World university rankings

The 2024 World University Rankings (WUR) report by the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) has included 72 Iranian universities, up from 69 in 2023.

A total of 426 universities from 31 Islamic countries are listed in the ranking, where Turkey, with 102 universities and Iran, with 72 universities, and Pakistan, with 39 universities, are placed first to third, IRNA reported.

Tehran University's ranking has changed from 501-600 in 2023 to 401-500 in 2024. The University is placed first in the country.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks second. The university's global ranking is 501-600, up from 601-700 in 2023.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences' ranking has also improved from 801-900 in 2023

to 601-700 in 2024, ranking third in the country.

Sharif University of Technology and Tarbiat Modares University are placed fourth and fifth, respectively.

Shanghai University ranking 2025 has placed six Iranian universities among the top 1,000 institutions worldwide, down from 9 in 2024.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran are among the top 500 universities in the world, ranking 401-500 globally. Tarbiat Modares University ranks 701-800.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Sharif University of Technology rank 801-900. Iran University of Medical Sciences ranks 901-1000.

The July edition of the Webometrics world ranking has included 64 medical universities from Iran, unchanged from January's edition, 11 of which have advanced in the ranking compared to the January edition.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (485) is the only university ranked among the top 500 institutions in the world, Mehr news agency reported.

Among Iranian universities, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and Yazd University of Medical Sciences have improved their rankings by 1002, 961, and 948 positions, respectively.

Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Ilam University of Medical Sciences, Kashan University of Medical Sciences, Alborz University of Medical Sciences, Kordestan University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, and Maraghe University of Medical Sciences are the other universities that have noticeably improved their rankings.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'Organ donation rate grows 60-fold in 18 years'

Organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years, though the growth is not considerable compared to the global scale, head of the transplantation and treatment of diseases department at the Ministry of Health has announced.

Some countries including China have grown 122-fold in terms of organ donation over the past 10 years, ISNA quoted Mehdi Shadnough as saying on Monday.

Although, Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world, it can claim better ranks given some plans being implemented in this regard, he highlighted, adding, we will achieve better results certainly by the next year (March 2019-March 2020), as many barriers have been removed last year.

روند رشد اهدای عضو در ۱۸ سال گذشته ، ۶۰ برابر شده است

رییس مرکز مدیریت پیوند و درمان بیماری‌ها وزارت بهداشت گفت: روند رشد اهدای عضو در ۱۸ سال گذشته در ایران ۶۰ برابر شده است البته در مقیاس جهانی شاخص قابل قبولی نیست. به گزارش ایسنا دکتر مهدی شادنوش اظهار کرد: کشوری مانند چین طی ۱۰ سال در زمینه اهدای عضو رشد ۱۲۲ برابری داشته است. وی خاطرنشان کرد: رتبه اهدای عضو ایران در رنکینگ جهانی ۲۶ است اما می تواند وضعیت بهتر داشته باشد و البته با توجه به فعالیت‌هایی که آغاز شده نتایج بهتری در انتظار خواهد بود و در سال ۹۸ نیز جهش خوبی را شاهد خواهیم بود چرا که چالش‌های موجود در سال ۹۷ رفع شده است.

SOCIETY

OCTOBER 7, 2025

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

7

UNICEF supports students with disabilities to continue education

TEHRAN –The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in cooperation with the Special Education Organization, is running a program to help children with disabilities from low-income families pay for their medical care and stay at school.

Currently, the program is being implemented in nine provinces, covering 1,554 children with disabilities, each of whom received cash support of about 50 million Rials (almost 44 dollars).

It helps families pay for medical care, rehabilitation, and school supplies, so their children can stay in school and continue learning. In the next phase, another 2,564 children in other provinces will also receive such support, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on October 5.

In addition to direct financial aid, UNICEF is working to improve how schools and health centers support these children.

Teacher Training: In Khorasan Razavi province, more than 300 teachers and specialists completed a training program focusing on early support, better student assessments, and creating personalized learning and rehabilitation plans. This ensures schools are better equipped to understand each child's needs and help them learn more effectively.

Accessible Equipment: To make essential services more accessible, UNICEF provided new occupational and speech therapy equipment to 53 rehabilitation centres in Khorasan Razavi, which helps specialists deliver better care.

Mobility and Hearing Aids: Across Khorasan Razavi and Sistan and Baluchestan, UNICEF has so far provided 36 hearing aids and 29 wheelchairs, ensuring more children can fully participate in school and daily life.

These comprehensive efforts show that by working with national partners, UNICEF is building a future where every child, no matter their ability, can learn, grow, and thrive, ultimately opening opportunities for all.

Other services

Enhancing emergency preparedness for children with disabilities is among other services provided by UNICEF and its partners.

The 26th national "Earthquake and Safety" drill, marked by the earthquake bell, has been simultaneously held in schools across the country with a distinctive focus on the safety and readiness of students with disabilities and special needs.

The objectives of earthquake drills in schools are to increase students' awareness of earthquakes, prepare them to respond correctly and quickly, and familiarize them with natural disasters, empowering them to face such events, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on May 8.

Additionally, these drills aim to enhance the community's safety culture, secure schools, and reduce earthquake casualties and damage. The drill at the special school,



specifically aimed at promoting earthquake preparedness for children with disabilities, also gathered valuable feedback on the training materials.

Held on November 27, 2024, the drill was conducted by UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in partnership with the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIIES) in line with the ongoing project 'Comprehensive Earthquake Preparedness Education Plan for Children with Special Needs and Disabilities'.

This initiative underscores the critical importance of preparing children with disabilities to face natural disasters and mitigate their impacts, representing a significant step towards inclusive disaster preparedness and fostering a safer and more resilient future for Iran's young generations.

Under a globally unique program called 'Earthquake Preparedness Education for Children with Disabilities', UNICEF and its partners have developed three books, each targeting different stakeholders, including parents/caregivers of children with disabilities, teachers, and policymakers.

Throughout the books, UNICEF and UNESCO, in collaboration with the IIIES, offer guidelines on disaster management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, focusing on children with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and autism spectrum disorder, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on January 19.

The development process of these books involved consultations with children with disabilities and their families, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), teachers from the Special Education Organization, social workers from the State Welfare Organization, and aid workers from the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

Furthermore, four consultative training workshops were held, where teachers, social workers, and aid workers learned and provided feedback on strategies for supporting children with disabilities before, during, and after earthquakes.

Looking ahead, UNICEF Iran plans to work with its partners to mainstream these resources in the annual earthquake and safety drill organized each year in schools and develop an inclusive guideline for the drill.

Intl. Police Exhibition to be held

TEHRAN –The 22nd International Exhibition of Police Security and Safety Supplies and Equipment (IPAS) is scheduled to kick off on October 13 and run till October 16.

Some 230 domestic and 21 foreign companies will participate in the exhibition, IRNA reported.

Over 50 percent of the participants are knowledge-based companies, showcasing their latest achievements in the fields of safety, security, and police equipment in the following fields: computer network, electrical and electronic hardware, intelligence system, as well as information and communication technology.

Computer software, light and image requirements, satellite-based systems, security and protection systems and equipment, traffic, traffic control and roadblocks, telecommunication systems, laser and photonic, safety and fire extinguishing equipment, weapons and ammunition, uniform and clothes, advanced material and products based on chemical technologies, land, sea, and air transportation advanced machinery and equipment, rescue, energy field, economic fields, banking and insurance are also

on display.

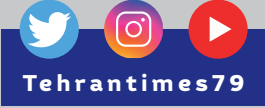
From this year on, the IPAS Exhibition will be held concurrently in other cities, including Kish.

A key focus of the exhibition will benefit from modern technologies and artificial intelligence in police equipment, especially in the crime detection sector.

In addition to displaying the latest security achievements, holding educational workshops and conferences, the exhibition will provide an opportunity to develop interactions between the police, industry, and academia to utilize indigenous technologies to improve the country's security.

The idea to hold the IPAS exhibition took shape in 2001 with the initiative of the then Commander of the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The first edition was held in the same year on police, security, and safety equipment at the venue of Conference Center of IRIB with the participation of 19 countries.

Subsequently, it was registered in the Calendar of Iran International Exhibitions Company.



OCTOBER 7, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*If you overpower your enemy, then pardon him by way of
thankfulness to Allah, for being able to subdue him.*
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times › Noon:11:53 Evening: 18:00 Dawn: 4:40 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:03 (tomorrow)

“National Theater Live: Yerma” to be shown at IAF cinematheque

TEHRAN – The cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will show the 2017 filmed theater “National Theater Live: Yerma” directed by Simon Stone and Tony Grech-Smith on Wednesday.

It will be screened at 5 p.m. as the 43rd program of the IAF cinematheque in the series of prominent filmed theater screenings, Honaronline reported.

The story happened in London, the present day. A woman is driven to the unthinkable by her desperate desire to have a child.

Written by Simon Stone, this radical new version of Federico García Lorca’s achingly powerful masterpiece of yearning and loss won universal critical acclaim when it premiered at the Young Vic in 2016. “Yerma” triumphed at the 2017 Olivier Awards, with the production winning Best Revival, and Piper winning Best Actress. She also won the Evening Standard Natasha Richardson Award for Best Actress. Maureen Beattie, Brendan Cowell, John MacMillan, and Charlotte Randle received unanimous praise for their performances.

“Yerma” by the Spanish dramatist Federico García Lorca was written in 1934 and first performed that same year. García Lorca describes the play as “a tragic poem”. The play tells the story of a childless woman living in rural Spain. Her desperate desire for motherhood becomes an obsession that eventually drives her to commit a horrific crime.

The original play was intended to be a story of the earth, nature, fertility and the impact that failed pregnancies have on a working-class, young Spanish couple in the 1930s. In the final moments of the play, the female lead named Yerma (the translation of barren)

kills her husband in a burst of frustration.

However, in Simon Stone’s 2017 adaptation, the play focuses on the story of a middle-class couple from the evening they move into their new house in London. The female lead that remains unnamed throughout the whole performance, played by Billie Piper, expresses to her boyfriend her desire to have a child. Both characters are in the middle of extremely successful and stable careers and John (played by Brenden Cowell) agrees.

Over the course of the next few months, John’s efforts to have a child become less committed. As a result of the travelling provided by his work and his girlfriend’s growing obsession to have a child, John turns to alcohol eventually contributing to him cheating on Billie Piper’s character. The years pass and the obsession becomes stronger and far more deeply rooted which the actress expresses in her character’s online blog, a forum attracting many readers each day.

The couple get married and turn to IVF which they eventually spend a quarter of a million pounds on, ruining both lead characters’ lives. The honesty with which the female lead writes creates a strain on their marriage and her relationship with her mother and sister.

Her blog reveals that she was satisfied when her sister had a miscarriage. In addition, she states that she had developed a loathing for other people’s children. Consequently, in the dying moments of Stone’s play, John informs her that they are sixty thousand pounds in debt and that he is leaving her. Billie Piper’s character finds a knife and threatens to stab him before he escapes and kills herself with a stab to the womb. A symbolic ending.

Cartoon of Day



Trump and Netenyahu
Cartoonist: Lutfu Cakin from Turkey

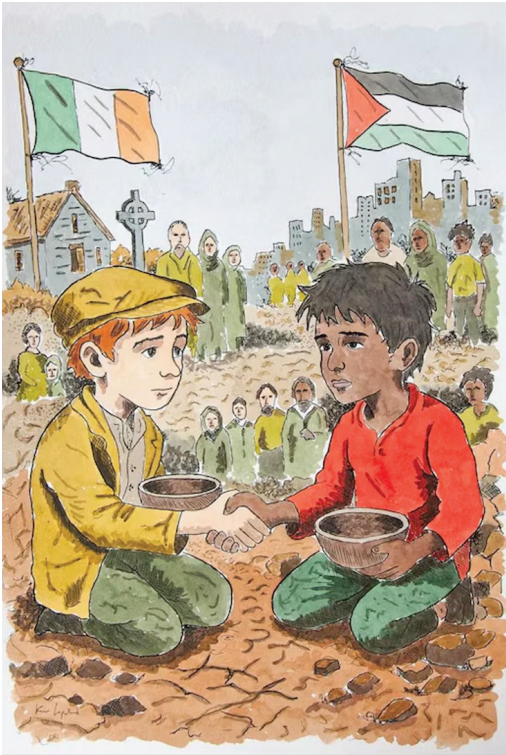
Our DNA feels Palestine’s pain: Irish illustrator

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN—For more than 700 days, a small strip of land has endured some of the most savage assaults in human history—attacks not waged against warriors, but against women and children who, even if left untouched by bombs, would slowly be claimed by the dagger of hunger, sacrificed to the true masters of a regime that proclaims itself “chosen by God.”

“Gaza”—a name that today resonates more than ever in the ears of humanity. For two years, the Zionist regime has continued to thirst for the blood of women, children, and civilians, saturating every canvas that seeks to depict Gaza’s reality with its favorite color: red.

In a world of darkness, where the principles of human rights seem obsolete and the United Nations offers little more than regret and concern, diverse groups of people have stepped forward to broadcast the truth of Gaza’s slaughterhouse and to break the Zionist media siege: from journalists reporting under fire, to painters thousands of miles away who turn their can-



This combination photo features the painting “What Links Ireland and Gaza?” (L) and the image of its creator, Irish political illustrator Kevin Copeland.

it simply holds up a mirror that forces us to see and feel.

What I try to do is create work that makes the viewer pause, even for a moment, and brings



“Hind Rajab” by Kevin Copeland

vases into mirrors reflecting the genocide.

Kevin Copeland, an Irish political illustrator, is among those artists who, throughout the genocide in Gaza, have brought forth unique frames of the Palestinian people’s suffering onto their canvases—works bound together by two elements: pain and perseverance.

One of his paintings, titled “What Links Ireland and Gaza?” which placed side by side the bitter experiences of colonialism for both Palestinians and the Irish, captured the attention of audiences worldwide.

The Tehran Times conducted an exclusive interview with Copeland, which is presented below:

In what ways can painting, as an artistic form, act as a channel for expressing the pain of oppressed Palestinians and for conveying their stories of suffering to the world?

To me, art has the ability to strip a subject back to its bare bones. It removes the noise of politics and media spin and brings the focus onto the raw pain of what’s going on in Palestine — the destruction of homes, the grief of families, the mass suffering of Gazans. A painting is a way of telling a story that speaks directly to our shared humanity. It doesn’t need translation; it doesn’t rely on statistics;

their own empathy into the picture. When someone looks at a child’s eyes filled with tears, or at a symbol of loss and resilience, it becomes harder to turn away. Art cannot solve a conflict, but it can keep the stories of the oppressed alive and remind the world that behind every headline are human beings whose pain deserves to be witnessed.

One of your paintings, named “What Links Ireland and Gaza,” has garnered significant attention. What do you believe is the reason for this?

I live in a town called Derry in the north of Ireland, a place whose history is marked by occupation and conflict. Growing up here, you couldn’t escape the sight of soldiers on the streets, the constant pressure on communities, and the weight of injustice carried by ordinary people. That experience shaped how I see the world and gave me a natural empathy for others living under similar conditions.

When I created “What Links Ireland and Gaza,” it came directly from that connection. People here do not need an explanation to understand the parallels — they feel them instinctively. I think that is why the painting resonated so strongly: it gave a visual language to a bond that already exists between Ireland and Palestine, born of shared experiences of loss, resilience, and the struggle for dignity.

What led you to focus on political themes in your art instead of social issues, nature, or other subjects?

I started out painting and drawing nature, and I still love that type of art, but I have always felt drawn toward creating work with more substance. Growing up in Derry, politics was not something distant — it was part of everyday life. So, when I began drawing seriously, it felt natural to use it as a way of exploring conflict, injustice, and the human cost of both.

Artists like Banksy have had a big influence on me. The way he uses sharp contrasts and strong symbolism to tell a story is something I really admire. His work does not just sit quietly; it sparks debate and challenges people. That approach pushed me to find my own way of using art as a voice — to create work that carries weight, provokes thought, and gives space to stories that might otherwise be silenced.

Have any reactions to your Palestine-related artworks inspired you to continue your artistic journey?

Yes, absolutely. I have received so many warm messages from the people of Gaza, thanking me for shining a light on their struggle. If I am honest, it has left me feeling a bit uncomfortable at times — because, like most people, I want to do more than just draw a few pictures. Sometimes it feels like we are helpless. But I

ing solidarity. I cannot change what is happening on the ground, but I can shine a light on people’s stories using my knowledge of design and communication. If one of my drawings helps even one person’s voice to be heard, then I’ll be happy. And that’s what keeps me going.

I once spoke with Irish documentarian, Garry Keane. He told me about the “Anti-colonial Irish DNA”, and it was truly fascinating. What are your thoughts on it?

Yeah, there is no doubt about our anti-colonial DNA. Growing up in Ireland, you are surrounded by history — stories of occupation, loss, and resilience are never far away. It has shaped how we see the world. We have developed an instinct to recognize injustice and to feel solidarity with people living under it elsewhere.

Our own experience was not just about conflict in the streets — it was also about our language being silenced, our GAA games (Irish sports) being shut down, and our culture being eroded. That leaves scars that are passed on from generation to generation.

For me, that does not mean Ireland is stuck in the past, but it does mean we carry a natural empathy. Our history has given us a real understanding of what it feels like to have your culture, land, and rights taken away, and I think that’s why so many Irish



“Sunrise” by Kevin Copeland

have also come to believe that if we all stand together, even small acts can add up to something bigger.

For me, art is my way of show-

people feel such a strong connection to Palestine. It is not something distant to us — it is something we understand in our bones.