

Israeli soldiers walk near the Israel-Gaza border, October 10, 2025.

# Genocide and Nothing Else

## 200,000 tons of explosives dropped on Gaza

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### Netanyahu's Putin-carried de-escalation message fails to sway Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has touched upon Tel Aviv's message to Iran sent via Russia, warning of possible deception by Tel Aviv.

“This development did not change our field assessments. Our armed forces have remained on full alert and are boosting their capabilities day by day. The odds of the Israeli regime getting engaged in deception are very high, and there is every chance that such announcements are aimed at deception,” he said in a televised interview. ► Page 3

### Iran's non-oil exports steady at \$25.9b in H1, trade deficit narrows

TEHRAN – Iran's non-oil exports reached \$25.94 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21– September 22), nearly unchanged from the \$25.92 billion recorded in the same period last year, according to Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

As IRNA reported, during the mentioned period, the export volume rose by six percent, indicating stronger trade activity despite global and domestic challenges.

Speaking ahead of the 29th National Export Day ceremony, Dehnavi said last year marked a record-breaking performance for Iran's non-oil exports, which climbed to \$57 billion, a 15.8 percent year-on-year increase, the highest figure in the country's history. ► Page 4

### Trump and Rubio gunning for regime change in Venezuela

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN – At the request of the Venezuelan government, the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on Friday after U.S. military strikes on speed boats that have killed at least 21 people off Venezuela's coast in a span of one month. Members of the UNSC voiced concern over escalating tensions between the United States and Venezuela, calling for dialogue to settle disputes.

Venezuela's request for the emergency UNSC meeting came a day after Republicans in the U.S. Senate voted down legislation that would have put a check on Trump's ability to use deadly military force against Venezuela under the pretext of the so-called drug trafficking.

Venezuela's Ambassador to the UN, Samuel Moncada, called the U.S.'s “belligerent action and rhetoric” will lead to “an armed attack to be perpetrated against Venezuela.”

Islamic Republic's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei issued a statement on Friday condemning U.S. military attacks on fishing boats in the region. He called such actions “provocative and destabilizing,” warning of the consequences of Washington's lawlessness. ► Page 5

### Echoes of the Durand Line: Afghanistan and Pakistan at a crossroads

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – On the night of October 9, explosions in Kabul — widely reported as strikes aimed at Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) figures — triggered a rapid chain of violence that by 11–12 October had become the sharpest Afghanistan–Pakistan confrontation in years.

Artillery and small-arms exchanges roared along multiple frontier sectors, major crossings closed, and both capitals traded magnified casualty and territorial claims that independent observers cannot yet reconcile. The immediate facts are stark; their meaning is perilous.

The proximate sequence is straightforward: Pakistani strikes in Afghan territory, a TTP strike inside Pakistan, Afghan operations along the Durand Line, and a Pakistani counter-offensive.

Each move fed the next, producing a classic escalation spiral. Kabul's spokesmen said Afghan forces had killed dozens of Pakistani soldiers and captured posts; Islamabad acknowledged soldiers lost but claimed far higher militant casualties and the seizure or destruction of Afghan positions. ► Page 5

### Hadi Choopan comes second at 2025 Mr. Olympia

TEHRAN – Hadi Choopan of Iran finished in runner-up at the 2025 Mr. Olympia Men's Open Bodybuilding.

Choopan was chosen as 2025 Mr. Olympia People's Champion Winner.

Derek Lunsford defeated Choopan and Andrew Jacked to win his second Mr. Olympia title of his career, coming after victories at the Arnold Classic and Pittsburgh Pro this year.

It was the 61st edition of the Mr. Olympia concluded at Resorts World Theater in Las Vegas, NV.

2025 Mr. Olympia Results and Payout:

Derek Lunsford (First Place, \$600,000)

Hadi Choopan (Second Place, \$200,000)

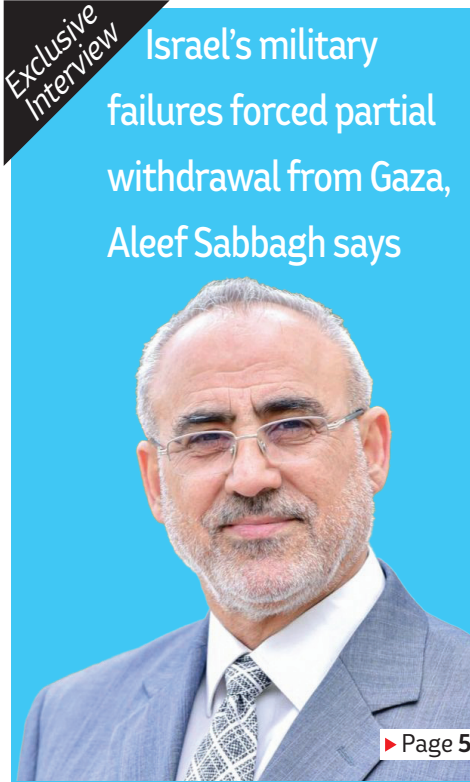
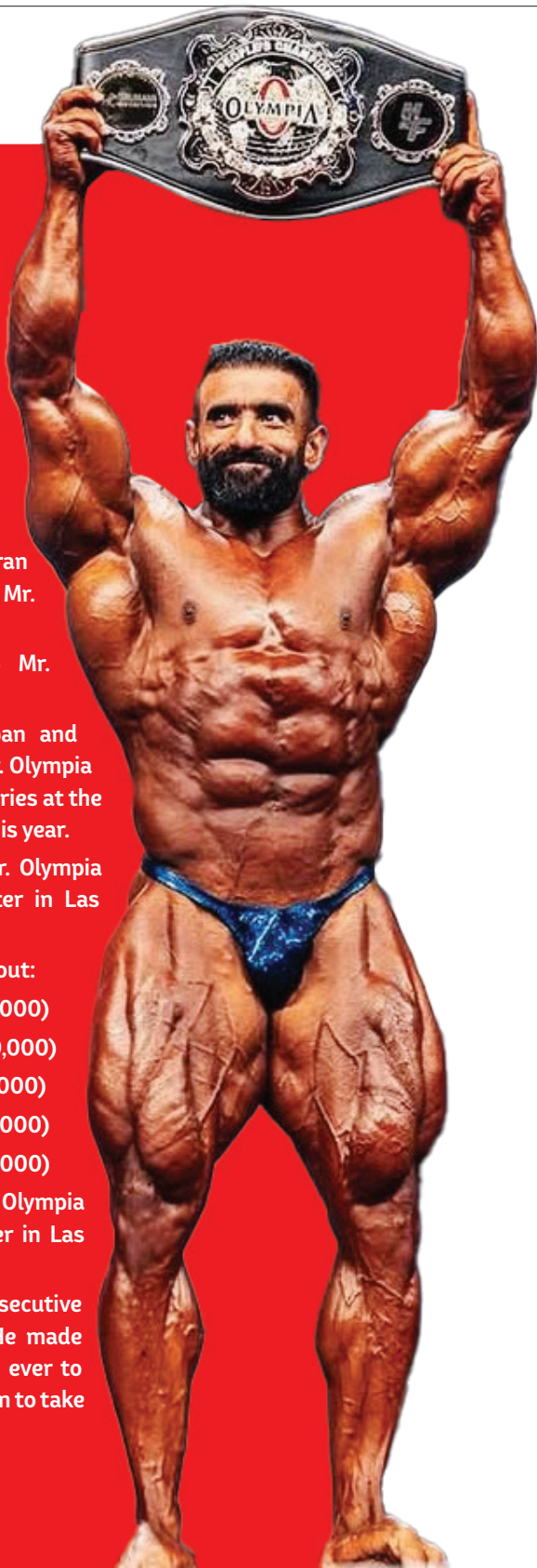
Andrew Jacked (Third Place, \$100,000)

Samson Dauda (Fourth Place, \$40,000)

Martin Fitzwater (Fifth Place, \$30,000)

It was the 61st edition of the Mr. Olympia concluded at Resorts World Theater in Las Vegas, NV.

This marks Choopan's third consecutive runner-up finish at Mr. Olympia. He made history in 2022 as the first Iranian ever to win the Mr. Olympia title, and went on to take second place in both 2023 and 2024.



Exclusive Interview  
Israel's military failures forced partial withdrawal from Gaza, Aleef Sabbagh says

► Page 5



### Hezbollah organizes a massive scout gathering

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Hezbollah commemorated on Sunday the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Imam Mahdi Scouts at the Camille Chamoun Sports City. ► Page 5



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Trump's Gaza plan and Iran's strategy

Shargh devoted its editorial to Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza and the strategy of the Islamic Republic toward it. It wrote: Although Hamas' acceptance of all the articles of Trump's plan is still pending, if it is realized, it could justify rethinking the strategy of the Islamic Republic. Trump's plan contains ambiguities, positive and negative points that deserve attention. The Palestinian cause is the right of the people of that land, and it is their right more than anyone else to make decisions about this plan. The plan actually determines the operational context for the new position of the Islamic Republic. Although Iran cannot agree with the details of this plan, it practically cannot ignore a force that has been at the forefront of the Palestinian resistance and has sacrificed nearly 70,000 people in this way. Such conditions demand a theoretical rethinking of the political strategy and operational tactics of the Islamic Republic in supporting the Palestinian forces. The burden of this rethinking is not on the shoulders of the Islamic Republic, and it is justified by supporters of the resistance in Iran and the region.

### Ham Mihan: Will Iran change position towards the new Syrian government?

In an interview with Dr. Hadi Borhani, an analyst of Middle East issues, Ham Mihan examined Iran's relations with the new Syrian government. The analyst believes that Iran is willing to start new relations with Syria, but two problems have prevented this from happening: first, Iran is not yet making enough efforts to repair relations with Syria, and second, we missed the good opportunity that was available when al-Sharaa came to power. At that time, al-Sharaa sent positive impulses to communicate with Iran, but we did not accept it, and now he is announcing that he caused Iran's hand to be cut off from Syria. Therefore, the conditions for restoring Iran-Syria relations have become more difficult now, but ultimately Iran must take this path and, with the help of countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar that influence the Syrian government, reach a win-win formula for reconciliation with the Syrian authorities and end the current conflict. Especially since it does not look good at all that Iran is the only country, alongside Israel, that has taken a negative stance towards the Syrian government and, like

the Zionist regime, calls the Syrian leaders "terrorists."

### Ettelaat: Behind the scenes of US military presence in West Asia

In an interview with international affairs analyst Seyyed Jalal Sadatian, Ettelaat analyzed the U.S. military presence in the region. Sadatian said: When the Americans are after Bagram and are already present in Azerbaijan and Al-Udeid (Qatar), it can be said that they have plans for Iran, especially when they shape the global atmosphere against Iran and say that the Iranians do not obey international rules and regulations, and therefore we are allowed to attack this country. Of course, it is well understood that the United States is aware any proposed UN Security Council resolution under Chapter VII to authorize a military invasion of Iran would be vetoed by Russia or China. The country's conditions are truly special and consultative committees must be formed so that we can safely leave behind this situation, using all our energy. The enemy is pursuing Iranophobia with all their capabilities, while unfortunately, we have not benefited much from the existing capabilities.

### Iran: A normal and stable Iran is desirable for China and Russia

In an article, the Iran newspaper discussed China and Russia's views on Iran in the current situation and said: Actually, Russia and China benefit more than anything else from a stable and normal Iran in the international system. An Iran that enjoys domestic and international stability while maintaining its independent approach and strategic view of the world, the region, the East, Asia, and its neighbors can be a more reliable and effective partner for Moscow and Beijing. Therefore, contrary to the ideas of some analysts, Russia and China prefer a normal and stable Iran. They don't want Iran caught in an ambiguous or critical situation. Of course, at certain points, some actors in these two countries may benefit from the continuation of Iran's semi-critical situation based on tactical considerations; but from a strategic point of view, Iran's stability and tranquility are more desirable for them, because a stable Iran can establish broader and more sustainable relations with the world, including with Russia and China.

## PMU chief praises Iran's lasting solidarity with Iraqi people

TEHRAN – Commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), Falih al-Fayyadh, has praised Iran as a brotherly nation that has always stood in solidarity with the people of Iraq.

"The friendly and brotherly nation of Iran has always stood by the people of Iraq," Al-Fayyadh said during a meeting with Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan, the Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Law Enforcement Force.

The two sides also discussed ways of expanding security and border cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

The Popular Mobilization Units have been an integral component of Iraq's national security apparatus since their pivotal role in defeating the Daesh terrorist group and liberating northern and western Iraq between 2014 and 2017.

Commander of Iraq's PMU further underlined the importance of deepening security and law enforcement collaboration, particularly in border regions, and highlighted the need for joint coordination and intelligence exchange between the two sides.

For his part, General Radan expressed appreciation for the PMU's efforts in ensuring security during the Arbreen pilgrimage, noting that Iranian and Iraqi security forces — including the PMU — achieved remarkable coordination this year in managing the event.

"Our law enforcement units and the Iraqi security forces, especially the Popular



*PMU Cmdr. Falih al-Fayyadh (L) met Iran's police chief Ahmad Reza Radan on Sunday*

Mobilization Units, maintained excellent cooperation in organizing the Arbreen pilgrimage," Radan said.

This year's Arbreen pilgrimage, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, drew over 21.1 million Muslim devotees to the holy city of Karbala. The General Secretariat of the Holy Shrine of Abbas ibn Ali (AS) reported an exact figure of 21,103,524 pilgrims.

Arbreen marks the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and his loyal companions. For more than 13 centuries, Karbala has served as a spiritual epicenter for millions who journey — often on foot — to honor the enduring legacy and sacrifice of third Shia Imam, Imam Hussain (AS).

# Iranians make plea for recapture of Persian Gulf islands of Aryana, Zarkooh

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian citizens have called for the liberation of the Iranian islands of Aryana and Zarkooh, which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) claims ownership of.

"We, a group of Iranian citizens, dedicated to national causes and protectors of the historical heritage of this land, while believing in the indisputable principle of Iran's territorial integrity, announced the beginning of a popular campaign to retake the Iranian islands of Aryana and Zarkooh," said the citizens in a petition addressed to the heads of the three branches of government, namely the executive branch, the Judiciary and the legislature.

As confirmed by reliable historical documents, the two islands have long been an integral part of the Iranian territory. Measuring 12 square kilometers, Aryana is located in the south of the Persian Gulf. In 2012, it was registered on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites as a natural habitat for rare animal species. Zarkooh, measuring 8 square kilometers, has large oil riches yielding more than 550,000 barrels per day.

During the Qajar era due to the incompetence of Iranian rulers and after the British naval forces' intrusion into the Persian Gulf waters, the two islands were gradually occupied by British troops and later on handed over to the UAE without any authentic legal document.

### The two islands were part of the Iranian territory for centuries before coming under British occupation

"Now, at a time when certain regional countries brazenly lay baseless claims on the Iranian islands, there is no room for silence and appeasement," read the petition. "We the signatories, call on high state institutions to take immediate and firm action."

The UAE has, time and again, claimed ownership of the two islands as well as the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu

Musa.

The five islands have all been historically part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world.

The three islands of the Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa islands fell under British control in 1921, but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

Iran has constantly rejected the UAE's claims of sovereignty over the three islands, reiterating Tehran's ownership of the islands.

At the same time as asserting its right to the islands, the Islamic Republic has constantly sought to lead a policy of amity with all of its neighbors, including the Emirates, and expressed a willingness to preserve and strengthen its relations with them.

## Araghchi discusses Afghanistan tensions with Pakistani counterpart

### Reports of dozens of casualties in border clashes



*A man sits next to trucks parked at the Torkham crossing after Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan following deadly clashes on October 12, 2025.*

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation to discuss major regional and international developments, underscoring the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation and expand regional engagement.

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, the two diplomats emphasized utilizing all available capacities in trade and transit sectors and reaffirmed the importance of enhancing both bilateral and multilateral coordination to promote stability and prosperity in the region.

They also highlighted the role of active diplomacy, information exchange, and regional coordination in advancing peace and stability across West and South Asia.

At the conclusion of the conversation, both sides welcomed the halt in the genocide in Gaza and exchanged views on potential joint efforts to support the Palestinian people and consolidate regional peace.

### Iran voices concern over Paki-

### stan-Afghanistan border clashes

The latest phone call between the Iranian and Pakistani foreign ministers came amid escalating tensions along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, where fierce overnight clashes have reportedly erupted between the two sides.

On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei expressed concern over the situation, urging both Afghanistan and Pakistan to exercise restraint and respect each other's territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

He reiterated that the Islamic Republic attaches great importance to preserving peace and stability in its surrounding region and stands ready to assist in reducing tensions between the two neighboring Muslim countries.

Kabul was shaken on Thursday by two explosions, while another blast struck a market in Afghanistan's border province of Paktika, further inflaming tensions between Kabul and Islamabad.

The Taliban government ac-

cused Pakistan of violating Afghanistan's sovereignty, condemning the cross-border attacks as a breach of international norms. Islamabad stopped short of denying involvement in the explosions but urged the Taliban to rein in the Pakistan Taliban (TTP), an armed group long blamed for deadly assaults inside Pakistan.

Once close allies sharing strategic interests, Pakistan and the Taliban government have seen their relations deteriorate sharply amid Islamabad's accusations that Kabul is harboring TTP militants responsible for years of cross-border attacks. According to data from the Centre for Research and Security Studies, an Islamabad-based think tank, at least 2,414 people have been killed in violent incidents during the first three quarters of this year alone.

Reports suggest that Islamabad has accused Kabul of allowing militant groups to launch attacks from Afghan soil, while the Taliban has blamed Pakistan for conducting airstrikes inside Afghanistan. Taliban sources claimed to have seized two Pakistani border posts in Helmand Province, while Pakistani officials described "heavy exchanges" of fire at several points along the frontier.

The two neighbors share a 2,600-kilometer (1,600-mile) rugged and mountainous frontier known as the Durand Line, a boundary drawn in 1893 under British rule. The border is officially recognized by Pakistan but rejected by Afghanistan, which insists that any activity along the line requires mutual consent.

The Durand Line, which runs through the historic tribal belt dividing ethnic Pashtun communities, has remained a source of

deep political tension for decades.

In February 2024, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai reiterated Kabul's stance, declaring: "We will never recognize the Durand Line. Today, half of Afghanistan is separated and lies on the other side of it."

The Taliban government has repeatedly referred to the boundary as a "hypothetical line," signaling that the dispute over its legitimacy continues to fuel the strained relationship between the two countries.

So far in the clashes, Pakistan claims to have killed over 200 Afghan fighters, while Afghanistan reports killing 58 Pakistani soldiers.

Given the deteriorating situation, Iran may once again offer to mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan, similar to its earlier proposal to help facilitate dialogue between India and Pakistan following the Kashmir crisis.

In previous statements back in May, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Araghchi emphasized Tehran's principled policy of de-escalation and regional peacebuilding, particularly among neighboring Muslim countries.

Earlier this year, amid rising tensions in Kashmir, Araghchi stated that "Tehran stands ready to use its good offices in Islamabad and New Delhi to foster greater understanding at this difficult time." President Pezeshkian likewise stressed that Iran "welcomes any effort aimed at achieving lasting peace between Pakistan and India," underscoring that Iran's foreign policy is anchored in dialogue, balance, and cooperation.

## Comprehensive border management plan reviewed in Iran's Parliament

TEHRAN – The National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament has reviewed a comprehensive border management plan aimed at strengthening coordination, security, and oversight across the country's borders.

Speaking about the session on Sunday, Ebrahim Rezaei, the committee's spokesperson, said the plan was examined with the participation of key authorities, including the armed forces, the Ministry of Interior, and representatives from other relevant government agencies involved in border affairs.

The plan, which consists of 22 articles and 17 notes, is divided into four main sections. The first section covers general provisions, an introduction, and definitions.

The second section establishes a Border Working Group, tasked with policy-making, setting guidelines, and strategic oversight



of border affairs. The working group will include representatives from military and government sectors, including the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, Roads and Urban Development, and Defense, as well as the Plan and Budget Organization and representatives from the legislative and judicial branches. The group's role is to coordinate policies and mobilize resources to enhance the country's border operations.



# Netanyahu's Putin-carried de-escalation message fails to sway Iran

Araghchi warns of Israel's possible deception as commanders prepare for 2nd war

From Page 1 ▶ A few days ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin said days ago that Israeli leaders had requested him to convey to Iran that they were not seeking further confrontation with Iran and wished to ease tensions.

Tensions between Iran and Israel soared after the occupation regime launched an unprovoked aggression on Iran on June 13, which triggered a 12-day war. The regime assassinated top commanders and nuclear scientists and also killed hundreds of civilians across the country. The United States also intervened, bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a breach of international law.

The 12-day war came to a stop on June 24, after crushing retaliatory Iranian strikes targeting both Israeli and U.S. positions forced Israel to halt its aggression and enter a unilateral ceasefire.

Addressing the Central Asia-Russia summit in Dushanbe on Thursday, Putin said that Israeli authorities had asked him to deliver a message to Iran.

"We continue confidence-based contacts with Israel and receive signals from Israeli leadership asking that this be conveyed to our Iranian friends that Israel intends and is deter-



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has waged war against six countries in the past two years

mined to further resolve the issue, and is not interested in any form of confrontation," he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks to national TV, Araghchi said the ceasefire agreement in Gaza does not strip the international community of its responsibility to bring the Israeli regime to justice.

"As stressed in a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry, this [truce] agreement and ceasefire, though agreed by resistance groups, do not relieve the international community of its responsibility to punish criminals in Gaza," said Abbas Araghchi in a

televised interview.

He said those who committed crimes in Gaza must be brought to justice and held accountable to the international community.

Meanwhile, he reiterated Iran's support for any move that would stop the killing of people.

"We have always backed any plan or action that would lead to a halt to crimes against the people of Gaza and stop this genocide," said the foreign minister.

"In all international circles, in our bilateral ties with other countries, in the talks we had, we always stressed that measures

should be adopted to stop these criminals," the top diplomat noted.

"For now, the first phase has been carried out so far, the military operation has stopped, the initial withdrawal has been done. Of course, still more than half of the Gaza territory is under the occupation of Israeli forces and there is doubt over whether or not the withdrawal will become complete in the future," he said.

Araghchi then referred to the issue of talks with the United States.

"[US envoy Steve] Witkoff specifically sent a message that he was prepared for direct talks with Iran. Our response was that, like in the past when talks were conducted within a multilateral framework in the presence of a number of countries, we were ready to hold negotiations within such a framework on the condition that the three European countries be present in the meeting, too, and that Mr. Grossi take part in the talks as well due to the technical nature of the talks and the issue of nuclear materials, but Mr. Witkoff rejected the condition and refused to take part in such a meeting," said the top diplomat.

## Sanctions have limits; Iran is demonstrating that

By Fatemeh Kavand

In a recent article titled "Four Keys for Iran Snapback Implementation," the Washington Institute once again prescribes an outdated formula for pressuring Iran: reimposing sanctions, intensifying intelligence coordination against Tehran, and restricting Iran's access to advanced technology.

It is the same worn-out script that has been on Washington's table for over forty years, yielding nothing but the strengthening of Iran's self-reliance and the erosion of America's credibility on the world stage. The author, ignoring decades of historical experience, presents "snapback" as a tool of deterrence, yet forgets that Iran is no longer a country that can be restrained by economic threats or diplomatic isolation.

For more than four decades, U.S. policy toward Iran has never deviated from a pattern of pressure, sanctions, and threats. From the 1953 coup to Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, from the oil embargoes of the 1990s to today's secondary banking sanctions, the objective has always been the same: to halt Iran's rise. Yet the reality today shows that all these policies have produced the opposite effect. Iran has transformed itself into a nation that, instead of depending on the West, relies on its own domestic strength and indigenous capacity. Each time Washington tightened its grip, Tehran found a new path forward.

**A nation under sanctions but moving toward progress**

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, sanctions have been the twin of U.S. policy against Iran. Every American president, from Carter to Biden, from Obama to Trump, entered the scene with a different face but the same outdated mindset — restraining an independent Iran and preventing it from becoming a regional power. Yet the outcome of this policy has been nothing short of remarkable growth in Iran's domestic capabilities.

In the years when even the import of medicine for critical-

ly ill patients was obstructed by Washington, Iran achieved self-sufficiency in pharmaceuticals. At a time when even airplane parts were banned, Iranian scientists built advanced drones that are now central to regional security equations. From missile technology to nanoscience, from nuclear engineering to medical innovation, all of these were accomplished not under comfort or cooperation with the West but through adversity and pressure.

Sanctions were meant to isolate Iran, but the opposite occurred. As Washington sought to cut Tehran off from the world, those very pressures pushed Iran to open new paths of cooperation with the East, neighboring nations, and the Global South. Today, Iran is not only at the heart of the Middle East's energy network but also a pivotal player in the political dynamics of Asia, the Caucasus, and the Persian Gulf.

The West still refuses to acknowledge that when sanctions become chronic, they cease to be instruments of coercion and evolve into mechanisms of adaptation and resilience. Over the years, Iran learned how to align its economic structure with the realities of sanctions — creating non-Western financial channels, expanding regional trade using local currencies, developing a "resistance economy," and launching indigenous industries. Tehran today is no longer an isolated capital; it is a dynamic economy helping reshape the patterns of global trade.

The recent 12-day war waged by Israel against Iran marked a turning point in the regional balance. With the green light from certain Western powers, Tel Aviv attempted to deliver a military blow, but Iran's precise missile and drone response not only neutralized the attack but also made one fact clear: the military option against Iran no longer exists. Iran's defensive and deterrent capabilities — the result of years of sanctions and threats — have ensured that its security can never be outsourced but must be built from within.

When adversaries realized



they could not defeat Iran militarily, they quickly reverted to their old playbook: economic warfare. Yet once again, they miscalculated. Iranian society has learned to innovate under pressure. The experience of past sanctions has shaped a collective culture of endurance — a national habit of transforming every economic shock into an opportunity for renewal.

**Why 'snapback' no longer works**

The "snapback" mechanism in UN Security Council Resolution 2231 was designed for a situation in which all JCPOA parties remained committed. The U.S. withdrawal from the deal in 2018 automatically stripped Washington of any legal right to invoke that mechanism. In 2020, the Security Council formally rejected America's attempt to reactivate it. Therefore, no legal or political foundation remains for its implementation.

Now, in 2025, Washington once again attempts to trigger it — but in practice, it exerts little economic pressure on Iran beyond symbolic political posturing. When the Washington Institute calls for "more sanctions" against Tehran, it is effectively admitting that snapback is nothing but a political charade.

Moreover, years of experience prove that sanctions cannot stifle Iran's economic growth. By deepening its economic ties with the East, joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, entering the BRICS bloc, and strengthening trade with neighbors, Tehran has discovered new routes for commerce and investment. Ironically, the very sanctions meant to isolate Iran have detached its

economy from the Western orbit and aligned it more closely with the East.

If, as the Washington Institute suggests, the West launches a full-scale economic war against Iran once again, Tehran's response will not come from the financial realm but from the geography of power: the Strait of Hormuz.

Roughly one-third of the world's oil and over one-quarter of its liquefied natural gas pass through this narrow chokepoint — the vital artery of global energy trade. Should Iran decide to restrict the passage of European and American vessels or impose stricter security inspections, the consequences would ripple instantly across the globe.

In the first few days of such a move, oil prices could surge beyond \$150 a barrel. The world economy would face an energy shock; fuel costs in Europe and the United States would soar, supply chains would stall, and global inflation would spiral. National budgets in Western capitals would be shaken, and governments would confront waves of social unrest.

Under these conditions, international insurance firms in London and New York would declare the Strait of Hormuz a "war-risk zone." The cost of insuring a single oil tanker would multiply many times over. Many shipping companies would reroute vessels along longer, costlier paths or abandon Gulf ports altogether, dramatically increasing transportation costs worldwide and placing new burdens on Western economies.

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



# IRAN IN FOCUS

OCTOBER 13, 2025

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

3

## SPORTS

### Iran vs Russia: A tactical test that exposes gaps in creativity

TEHRAN - Iran's 2-1 defeat to Russia should be seen less as a result and more as a tactical lesson. Facing a disciplined European side, Team Melli had the chance to measure themselves against World Cup-level opposition.

What emerged was a clear picture: defensive concentration can hold, resilience is present, but creativity in midfield remains the missing link.

**Shape and Phases of Play**

The defensive block functioned reasonably well in the first and second phases, keeping Russia's possession in front of them. However, in transition and in Zone 14 — the central area just outside the penalty box — Iran's pressing intensity dropped, allowing Russia to dictate rhythm and threaten with shots from distance.

In build-up, Iran often progressed through the full-backs, but the lack of a central playmaker meant circulation was slow. Without disguised passes or vertical penetration, the forwards — especially Mehdi Taremi — were too isolated, receiving the ball either with their back to goal or in wide channels rather than in true scoring positions.

**Positives to Build On**

Saman Ghoddos as advanced connector: His positioning between the lines was Iran's main source of chance creation. When he received with space, Iran could accelerate.

Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh's timing: His late runs from midfield into the box provided unpredictability, a quality Iran need more of.

Set-piece competitiveness: Corner routines showed potential, and in a World Cup environment, dead-ball efficiency can decide matches.

**Weaknesses Exposed**

Lack of third-man runs: The midfield offered little depth behind Taremi. Without coordinated underlaps or rotations, Russia's defensive line was rarely stretched.

Zone 14 pressing: Too often, Russian midfielders were able to receive, turn, and strike from central positions without immediate pressure.

Predictable build-up: With Saeid Ezatolahi and Omid Noorafkan focused on ball recovery, there was no midfield profile capable of breaking lines through dribbling or incisive passing.

**Why This Test Matters**

Russia's compactness, physical duels, and European tempo are exactly what Iran will encounter at the World Cup. By contrast, facing Tanzania will not replicate those conditions. These friendlies only have value if they expose weaknesses — and Russia did just that.

**The Path Forward**

If Iran are serious about competing on the world stage, preparation must include matches against South American opponents in the U.S. Adapting to American conditions early, and experiencing the intensity of sides like Uruguay or Colombia, would give Team Melli the tactical variety and resilience it currently lacks.

**Conclusion**

Iran remains competitive and resilient, but the tactical blueprint is incomplete. Without solving the creativity gap in midfield and finding ways to activate the forwards more effectively, Team Melli risk entering the World Cup with strength in structure but weakness in imagination. Nights like Volgograd are reminders: the result matters less than the lessons learned.

### Iran clinch historic 2025 World Weightlifting Championship title

TEHRAN - In a thrilling display of power and precision, Iran's men's team emerged as the dominant force at the 2025 World Weightlifting Championships, held in Førde, Norway, from Oct. 2 to 11.

With a final tally of 387 points, Iran claimed the title for the first time since their breakout year in Anaheim 2017. The victory marked a watershed moment for Iranian weightlifting, signaling a resurgence of their program on the

global stage.

Alireza Moeini in 94kg weight class and Alireza Nasiri in 110kg won two silvers in total for Iran. Moeini also won a gold medal in the stanch as well as two silvers won by Nasiri (110kg), Ali Alipour (94kg) in clean and jerk, and a bronze medal by Ali Davoudi (+110kg).

The 2025 World Weightlifting Championships were held in Førde, Norway from Oct. 2 to 11.

### Iran to play Iraq at neutral venue in 2027 FIBA World Cup qualifiers

TEHRAN - Iran's national basketball team will face Iraq in the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup qualification (Asia) at a neutral venue.

The match is set for Nov. 27 as part of Group C, and will be held in Beirut, Lebanon. The return leg is scheduled for Feb. 27 in the Lebanese capital.

Jordan and Syria are also in the same group.

The Asia-Oceania qualification begins in November 2025 and ends in March 2027. The tournament will determine the seven teams that join automatically qualified hosts Qatar at the 2027 FIBA World Cup.

### Ex- Mourinho's assistant Foti close to Iran football team

TEHRAN - Salvatore Foti, formerly José Mourinho's assistant at Fenerbahce, is close to joining Iran's national team staff.

He has traveled to Dubai to finalize his deal with Iran Football Federation.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, are scheduled to face Tanzania in a friendly match on Tuesday.

Team Melli lost to Russia 2-1 Friday night and is under pressure ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

### 2025 Cairo: Iran's Rostami claims silver

TEHRAN - Roohallah Rostami of Iran won a silver medal at the 2025 World Para Powerlifting Championship on Sunday in Cairo, Egypt.

In the men's up to 88kg category, Rostami lifted 243kg to secure silver.

Panpan Yan of China lifted 244kg to claim his second consecutive world title — this time in a different category from Dubai 2023 (men's up to 97kg).

The bronze went to Mohamed Elelfat of Egypt with a 227kg lift.

The event has gathered athletes from 70 nations in the pursuit of medals and LA28 qualification as Egypt hosts the inaugural Para Powerlifting Worlds.

### Karimi named 2025 Asian Aquatics Championships best goalkeeper

TEHRAN - Iran's men's water polo team goalkeeper Hamed Karimi was chosen as the best goalkeeper of the 2025 Asian Aquatics Championships.

He helped Iran wins a silver medal in the tournament held in Ahmedabad, India.

The match against China went to a penalty shootout after an 11-11 tie and Team Melli lost 5-4.

Iran had earlier defeated China (14-9), Hong Kong (22-10), Uzbekistan (28-7), Thailand (21-6) and Japan (19-18) in the competition.

The 11th Asian Aquatics Championships were held from September 28 to October 10 in Ahmedabad.



## Iran invites Malaysian investors to tap into mining sector opportunities

TEHRAN – Iran is ready to welcome Malaysian investors into its mining industry, with the necessary infrastructure already in place to support joint projects and foreign participation, a senior industry official said during a meeting with Malaysia's ambassador in Tehran.

Mohammadreza Bahraman, deputy head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and head of the Iran Mine House, met with Malaysian Ambassador Khairi Omar and a delegation of Malaysian investors at the Iran Mine House headquarters.

In this meeting, Bahraman highlighted Iran's vast mineral reserves and advanced capabilities in extraction, processing, and value-added production, saying the path for Iran–Malaysia cooperation in mining is open and promising.

“Just as investors from countries like Russia and Georgia have already entered Iran's mining market, Malaysian investors can also seize this opportunity,” Bahraman said, emphasizing Iran's dual position as both a major exporter of mineral products and a strong domestic market for processed materials.

He noted that raising awareness among Malaysian investors about Iran's mining potential and legal frameworks is a key priority.

The Iran Mine House, he said, plays an active role in introducing Iran's capabilities to foreign



investors by providing information on regulations, procedures, and business conditions essential for entering the Iranian market.

Bahraman also encouraged Malaysian delegates to visit Iranian mines to gain first-hand knowledge of available opportunities, underlining that the required infrastructure for investment is fully prepared.

### Malaysia eyes gold and copper ventures in Iran's growing mining market

On the sidelines of the meeting, Bahraman revealed that Malaysia's private sector has expressed interest in investing specifically in Iran's gold and copper mines.

He said a Malaysian delegation had already toured several mining sites to assess their potential and plans to participate in the upcoming Iran Mining Exhibition (Iran CONMIN 2025), where they will meet Iranian companies to explore further cooperation.

## Iranian automakers produce over 404,000 vehicles in H1



TEHRAN – Iran's three major carmakers — Iran Khodro, SAIPA, and Pars Khodro — produced a total of 404,461 vehicles in the first six months of the current Iranian year (March 21–September 22), according to data from the Codal website.

The combined figure represents a 12 percent decline compared to the same period last year, when output reached 460,763 vehicles, marking a shortfall of 56,122 units.

Despite the overall drop, Iran Khodro maintained positive momentum, producing 263,468 vehicles, an 8.8 percent increase from the 241,957 units manufactured in the same period a year earlier.

By contrast, both SAIPA and Pars Khodro experienced lower production levels, contributing to the industry's overall contraction in the first half of the year.

Industry analysts attribute the mixed performance to supply chain disruptions, market adjustments, and ongoing reforms within the domestic automotive sector, while highlighting Iran Khodro's resilience as a sign of gradual stabilization in parts of the industry.

## ‘Interest in developing solar power plants to accelerate’

TEHRAN– The Executive Secretary of Iran's 7th Solar Power Plants Conference stated that the development of solar power plants has accelerated and this trend will continue for the coming years. He predicted that the trend of interest in developing solar power plants will continue to accelerate over the next four years.

In an interview with IRNA's economic reporter, Mehdi Goodarzi noted that, in addition to major investors, the number of applicants for installing solar and renewable power plants is also increasing.

He added that the development of these types of power plants gained more momentum last year due to the electricity imbalance and has continued this year in line with adopted policies.

He further stated that, given the country's approach to renewable development and the policies of the Seventh National Development Plan in this area, it was essential to examine the technical and economic dimensions of these power plants in the country. Therefore, the 7th Solar Power Plants Conference is being held, considering the role of renewable development in addressing the imbalance.

The Executive Secretary of Iran's 7th Solar Power Plants Conference recalled that since last year, with the advent of the 14th



administration and the emergence of energy imbalance in the country, the development of renewables has received more attention than before with the aim of compensating for part of this imbalance. According to the latest statistics, the capacity of the country's renewable power plants has unprecedentedly increased to 2,550 megawatts.

Referring to the themes of the 7th Solar Power Plants Conference, he said that in economic discussions, various models of guaranteed electricity purchase, sales on the green board of the stock exchange, and the energy exchange will be examined. This is so that the path becomes transparent and clear for applicants, and they fully understand its costs and revenues.

# Iran's non-oil exports steady at \$25.9b in H1, trade deficit narrows

From Page 1 ► He noted that exports had slowed earlier this year due to temporary setbacks — including the 12-day conflict in the region, an explosion at Shahid Rajaee Port, and energy shortages — but these were later offset by a recovery in subsequent months.

Iran's imports during the first half of the current year totaled \$28.37 billion, down 15 percent from \$33.46 billion in the same period last year.

The TPO chief said the decline partly reflected tighter import controls aimed at balancing trade and reducing reliance on foreign goods.

“Eighty-five percent of imports consist of raw materials and capital goods,” Dehnavi said, cautioning that a fall in imports is not necessarily a positive sign, as it may affect domestic production.



The total trade volume for the first six months stood at \$54 billion, down nine percent year-on-year. Despite this, Dehnavi said Iran's trade balance has improved significantly, narrowing the previous \$7.5 billion deficit recorded in the same period last year.

He added that under Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, the government is targeting a 23 percent increase in exports, emphasizing that with ongoing reforms, problem-solving initiatives, and active engagement with the private sector, positive export growth remains

achievable.

Dehnavi also announced that the 29th National Export Day ceremony will be held later this month to recognize top national exporters under the theme “Smart trade, export-driven production.”

On the issue of the “snapback” mechanism and its potential impact on trade, Dehnavi said such restrictions could raise transaction costs, especially in the oil and financial sectors. However, he noted that Iran's long experience with sanctions has made its private sector more resilient, developing practical workarounds to sustain trade despite external pressures.

“The private sector has learned to adapt,” he said. “Through domestic initiatives and compensatory policies, we can minimize external costs and strengthen the foundations of Iran's trade system.”

## Iran, China ink cooperation deal on wastewater projects

TEHRAN – Iran's National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company has signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Economic and Trade Exchange Center of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to advance cooperation in wastewater management and technology transfer, the company's head said.

Hashem Amini, the managing director of the company, said the agreement aligns with the long-term Iran–China economic cooperation framework and leverages the SCO's institutional capacities.

He described it as “a major step toward attracting foreign investment and introducing advanced technologies to Iran's water and wastewater industry.”

Under the terms of the memorandum, wastewater projects will be launched in selected provinces — including Khuzestan, Golestan, Mazandaran, Gilan, and Isfahan — pending approval from the Iran-China joint credit committee.

Once ratified, design, construction, and operational stages of wastewater treatment plants will begin with the participation of Chinese companies under the technical supervision of Iranian experts.

Amini emphasized that technology transfer and human capital development are key features of the agreement. Beyond financial investment, the deal focuses on training Iranian professionals, localizing smart technologies, and enhancing the skills of managers and engineers across the sector — measures he said will strengthen efficiency and long-term sustainability in the country's water infrastructure.

He described the signing as “a symbol of Iran's successful economic diplomacy in the water sector,” adding that the partnership could serve as a model for broader infrastructure cooperation at national and international levels.

The agreement, he noted, reflects “mutual trust and a shared commitment between Iran and China to pursue sustainable development in vital public utilities.”

On October 4, Majid-Reza Hariri, the chairman of the Iran–China Joint Chamber of Commerce, commented on the extent to which the UN Security Council sanctions would affect Iran-China relations, and stated: “Given that none of the UN sanctions are trade-related and instead pertain to the nuclear industry and some sectors of the country's missile industries, consequently, they should not impact our normal trade with China.”

He added: “Although the U.S. sanctions have completely prohibited oil sales, we see that the Chinese are currently buying nearly over 90 percent of the country's oil. Therefore, UN sanctions are not related to the commercial sphere and logically should not affect these types of relations either.”

Hariri further added: “The UN sanctions will have psychological and secondary effects which must be examined.”

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) for planning and international affairs, the value of non-oil trade between Iran and China stood at \$34.1 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

He said that importing non-oil goods worth \$14.8 billion from Iran, China was the

first destination of Iranian products in the past year.

He also announced that by exporting non-oil products valued at \$19.3 billion to Iran, China was the second source of import for Iran in that year.

On May 4, Iran-China Business Development Forum convened at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), with the participation of China's ambassador to Iran, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the chair of the Iran-China Parliamentary Friendship Group, and senior officials from the Tehran Chamber.

A large number of business leaders from both countries attended the event, where state, legislative, and private-sector strategies for deepening bilateral trade ties were outlined, the TCCIMA portal reported.

Opening the event, TCCIMA Head Mahmoud Najafi Arab welcomed Chinese delegates who traveled to Iran for the Iran Expo. He expressed gratitude for the Chinese ambassador's continued efforts to expand economic ties between the two nations.

Najafi Arab said Iran and China share thousands of years of cultural and commercial relations, which have entered a new phase in recent decades, marked by growing partnerships across multiple sectors. He said the two countries could serve as a model for sustainable cooperation based on mutual respect in today's increasingly interdependent world.

He also highlighted recent visits of Iranian private sector delegations to various Chinese provinces and exhibitions, emphasizing the need to identify investment opportunities and facilitate financial exchanges. The Chamber, with over 140 years of history, is prepared to host expert meetings, present economic opportunities, support joint ventures, and activate professional networks between Iranian and Chinese businesses, he said.

China's Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu, thanked Iranian participants and the Tehran Chamber for organizing the event. He expressed hope that the forum would help strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Referencing the recent meeting between the two presidents at the BRICS summit in Russia, Cong said China is fully committed to enhancing cooperation across all sectors in ways that benefit both peoples.

Also speaking at the forum, Ruhollah Nejabat, chair of the Iran-China Parliamentary Friendship Group, said Iran's non-oil exports to China surpassed \$14.8 billion last year, making China the largest destination for Iranian goods and accounting for about one-quarter of Iran's total non-oil exports. Imports from China reached approximately \$19.3 billion, or 27 percent of Iran's total imports, making China Iran's second-largest import partner after the United Arab Emirates.

These figures, he said, demonstrate the resilience and strategic importance of Iran-China trade, even amid global economic slowdown, with both countries supplying a significant portion of each other's needs.

Nejabat noted that Iran's Seventh National Development Plan emphasizes industrial modernization and attracting foreign capital and technology. He said Iran aims to upgrade

its industries—from automotive and textiles to pharmaceuticals and medical equipment—and that this will be achieved more quickly with partners like China, now a global industrial superpower.

He added that technology transfer and joint investment are two strategic priorities for Iran. Chinese firms, he said, could take advantage of Iran's market size and skilled labor to establish production lines and access broader regional markets.

Conversely, Iran could supply intermediary goods and industrial components needed by Chinese industries. Nejabat said Iran will offer special incentives for foreign industrial investment and provide a secure legal environment for Chinese companies. Infrastructure development—including rail networks, highways, and ports—is also a priority, and many of these projects will require Chinese expertise and participation.

He also pointed to Iran's largely untapped mining sector, including vast reserves of iron, copper, aluminum, and rare earth elements, as an area ripe for development and export growth.

Speaking at the forum, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), outlined four key strategies for expanding trade with China. The first is technology transfer. He said Chinese companies have made major investments in research and development, much of which has not yet been fully commercialized. Iran, as a long-time partner, seeks deeper collaboration in these cutting-edge sectors.

The second strategy, he said, is increasing trade in high value-added goods. Currently, much of the bilateral trade consists of raw or semi-processed materials. The average value of Iran's exports stands at less than \$400 per ton. “We want to change that,” he said, calling on Chinese importers to prioritize Iranian products with higher added value. He welcomed the Chinese ambassador's praise for the competitiveness of Iranian nanotechnology and biotechnology products.

The third strategy is joint production through co-investment. Dehnavi said Iran offers a secure investment climate, with legal guarantees allowing foreign investors to repatriate both capital and profits. “There are many documented cases of investors successfully exiting after profitable ventures,” he said.

Iran offers highly competitive costs, a wide range of investment opportunities, and strong security for foreign capital, he added, expressing hope for increased joint ventures with Chinese firms.

The fourth strategy is mutual market access. Dehnavi said Iran produces many goods that are well-suited for the Chinese market and that joint production could also help both countries expand into third-country markets. “This kind of cooperation can make our trade ties deeper and more sustainable,” he said.

Fereydoon Vardinejad, secretary general of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, said China had stood by Iran during both stable and turbulent times, and that the two peoples share a strong emotional bond.

However, he warned that a lack of information exchange and mutual understanding of economic capacities had led to a wide gap between political relations and economic realities. “Our ties are excellent in potential but need significant work in practice,” he said.



TEHRAN- Over two years since the start of the brutal Israeli military campaign in the Gaza Strip, a comprehensive report from the Government Media Office in Gaza has laid bare the devastating human, social, and infrastructural toll inflicted upon the enclave's population.

This report, covering 735 days of relentless bombardment, starvation, and deprivation, declares the conflict one of the most horrific genocidal campaigns in modern history. Yet, despite the catastrophic destruction and loss of life, Israel neither succeeded to eradicate Hamas nor secured the unconditional release of hostages, while facing unprecedented international isolation. This outcome, marked by immense human suffering and diplomatic fallout, underscores a profound strategic miscalculation.

Escalation and military campaign

The conflict escalated rapidly following the October 7 attack, prompting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to declare war aims centered on dismantling Hamas's military and governing capabilities, recovering all captives, and ensuring Israel's long-term security.



The operation, dubbed "Iron Swords," involved extensive aerial bombardments, ground invasions, and the imposition of severe restrictions on aid and movement. By mid-2024, Israel had gained control of significant portions of Gaza, including the Philadelphia Corridor along the Egyptian border. Major events included the invasion of Gaza City in late 2023, the bombardment of designated safe zones like al-Mawasi over 150 times, and the closure of crossings for more than 600 days, exacerbating humanitarian crises. The war endured for 735 days until a ceasefire agreement was approved on October 9, 2025, facilitating partial

Israeli withdrawals and hostage releases.

Human and infrastructural toll

The Gaza Media Office report details the extreme human and infrastructural toll of the Israeli campaign, noting that over 200,000 tons of explosives were dropped on Gaza's 2.3 million residents, with the al-Mawasi area — officially labeled a "safe humanitarian zone" — bombed more than 150 times. The report describes this as a systematic targeting of civilians, not accidental, resulting in roughly 77,000 killed or missing, including over 20,000 children, 12,500 women, and 1,000 infants, among them

450 newborns. More than 39,000 families were devastated, many entirely wiped out.

The assault claimed the lives of 1,670 medical workers, 254 journalists, 140 civil defense personnel, as well as over 1,000 police, municipal, and humanitarian workers, while leaving 170,000 injured, including thousands critically wounded or amputees. Infrastructure was devastated, with the destruction of 38 hospitals, 670 schools, 165 universities, dozens of health centers, and 835 mosques, alongside repeated attacks on ambulances. The office emphasized that these attacks aimed to eradicate Palestinian awareness by denying access to education and healthcare, underscoring the broader systematic nature of the campaign's impact.

Civilian infrastructure suffered extensively, with 90% destruction, including hospitals, schools, and mosques. While these figures require independent verification from organizations such as the United Nations or humanitarian agencies, they align with assessments by Amnesty International and UN commissions concluding that Israel committed genocide in Gaza.

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

Israel's military failures forced partial withdrawal from Gaza, Aleef Sabbagh says

Senior Palestinian analyst highlights Netanyahu's inability to defeat Hamas or relocate Gaza's population

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Following two years of devastating war and unprecedented human suffering in Gaza, Hamas and Israel accepted a U.S.-brokered ceasefire on October 9 under Donald Trump's controversial 20-point plan. While the agreement temporarily halts Israel's military operations and paves the way for prisoner exchange and phased withdrawals, analysts warn that it leaves unresolved the root causes of the conflict and may only postpone another round of violence.

To better understand the political dynamics behind the ceasefire and its broader implications, Tehran Times spoke with Aleef Sabbagh, a Palestinian political analyst specialized in the Zionist regime's strategic behavior and colonial policies. In this exclusive interview, Sabbagh, who is based in Quds (Jerusalem), analyzes the internal and external pressures that compelled both sides to accept the deal, the role of Washington and regional mediators, and the future of Gaza's political and humanitarian landscape under Trump's "peace" framework.

Below is the full text of the interview:

In your view, what were the main political and diplomatic factors that led Hamas and Israel to agree to Trump's 20-point plan?

A number of significant pressures on both Israel and Hamas brought them to this partial agreement. First, this is a partial deal that deliberately avoids the deep, strategic points of contention and serves each side's short-term objectives. For example, it meets Hamas's demand to halt the extermination campaign and to block plans for destruction and forced displacement. For Israel, it satisfies the demands of the families of the hostages and the majority of Israeli society calling for the release of their loved ones at almost any cost. Those demands were presented to Trump by influential American figures who support the Israeli hostages' families, including Mrs. Adelson, who is very close to Trump.

“Trump came to the conclusion that Hamas could not be militarily eliminated and that the plan to transfer Gaza's population to Sinai had also failed.”

With regard to Israel specifically: 1) Israel faced massive international pressure, including political isolation at the United Nations and real threats of economic sanctions from countries considered friendly to Israel. Some of those consequences were already implemented, such as canceled arms contracts and expulsions of Israeli diplomats — developments that the Trump administration noticed. It reached the point where, in his last conversation with Netanyahu before the deal was accepted, Trump is reported to have told him, "You cannot fight the whole world." 2) Trump had given Netanyahu sufficient time to carry out all possible military measures to defeat Hamas, but those attempts failed; Trump came to the conclusion that Hamas could not be militarily eliminated and that the plan to transfer Gaza's population to Sinai had also failed. He was convinced that Egypt, Jordan or any other state would not accept the forced relocation of Palestinians. 3) The Israeli military also applied pressure on the political leadership: the Chief of Staff repeatedly expressed fear that the army would be forced to remain in Gaza — especially in populated areas — for a long time and would suffer heavy casualties from ambushes and military actions. There were many other contributing reasons as well.

As for Hamas: 1) in addition to the factors mentioned above, Arab and Muslim leaders exerted heavy pressure on the movement and offered written Arab, Islamic and U.S. political guarantees if Hamas accepted the proposal. Those guarantees promised the release of the largest possible number of Palestinian detainees — especially Gazans detained after October 7, including some elite figures. 2) Guarantees that Trump would announce the end of the war before implementing the first phase. 3) Arab and Islamic assurances that the Arab-Islamic interpretation of Trump's plan would be the one implemented — and even amended where

necessary — in order to ensure that Gaza would not fall under Western international trusteeship and that its reconstruction would be supervised by Arab and Palestinian parties. Political and security administration would remain in Palestinian hands even if Hamas were not a partner in that administration. The guarantees also included that the Palestinians' resistance weapons would not be handed over to Israel but would instead be frozen and monitored by Palestinian and Arab authorities. These promises

“The U.S. seeks to act as the power capable of imposing solutions in Israel's favor as an alternative to the UN, absolving Israel from the need to implement relevant UN resolutions and shield Israeli war criminals from prosecution at the ICC.”

may evolve in the coming days or months.

What effect will the withdrawal of Israeli forces, alongside the prisoner exchange, have on the regional balance of power? Could it lead to a redefinition of force between the two sides?

The withdrawal of occupation forces from populated areas does not in itself change the balance of power. Rather, it is in Israel's interest to pull away from dangerous positions such as ambush-prone locations, and it is also in the Palestinians' interest that Israel accepts the principle of withdrawal, even if that withdrawal is partial. At the same time, withdrawal is a logistical necessity: it creates the conditions needed to search for deceased captives and to facilitate the delivery of aid to civilians without obstruction from occupying forces.

Given the role of regional

mediators (Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey) and the United States in negotiations, how do you assess the future of regional relations and the roles of these actors?

Each mediator wants to prove to the world that it holds the decisive leverage and that it has the greatest credit for securing the agreement. Egypt in particular seeks — even more so than Qatar — to highlight this role. Turkey entered the mediation at the United States' request to act both as pressure on Hamas and as a guarantor of some of Hamas's demands. As for the United States, it was never a neutral mediator between Israel and Hamas; rather, it was a full partner in the aggression and the campaign of extermination. The U.S. now seeks to act as the power capable of imposing solutions in Israel's favor as an alternative to the United Nations, absolving Israel from the need to implement relevant UN resolutions. It may also be aiming to shield Israeli war criminals from prosecution at the International Criminal Court.

How do you see the prospects for reconstruction and meeting Gaza's humanitarian needs after two years of brutal war and destruction?

Reconstructing Gaza will be a complex political battle among regional and international actors. On one side is an American plan to seize parts of Gaza — especially the coastline, the sea, and gas and oil wells in Gaza's economic waters — for international investors, including Trump's associates; on the other side are Palestinian interests in using their land and sea for the benefit of the Palestinian people. This struggle will require a unified Palestinian stance, official Arab and Islamic political support, and international law protections for Palestinian land and maritime rights. Above all, the reconstruction process will be conditioned by Israel and the United States on issues such as the status of Gaza's weaponry and possibly the displacement of resistance leaders from the Strip. These political battles could delay reconstruction for many years.

Echoes of the Durand Line: Afghanistan and Pakistan at a crossroads

Old borders, new battles, and escalating mistrust

From page 1 ► In the absence of independent verification, numbers became tools of pressure rather than shared reality, while a flood of videos and claims across social media—many later flagged as misattributed or unverifiable—amplified the danger and uncertainty.

This confrontation cannot be reduced to a single tactical choice. It rests on several interlocking realities.

First, the Durand Line—among the world's most disputed frontiers—remains a lived boundary, slicing through Pashtun communities while sustaining cross-border commerce, kinship networks, and porous governance.

Second, the TTP's reported resurgence has hardened Islamabad's appetite for kinetic measures; a year of alleged deadly attacks inside Pakistan has narrowed political patience and raised the domestic cost of inaction.

Third, the regional strategic environment has

become increasingly complex. After the brief India-Pakistan clash in May, Islamabad leaned closer to Washington, with Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir building ties with President Donald Trump—going so far as to propose him for a Nobel Peace Prize.

In July, Pakistan honored then-CENTCOM chief Gen. Michael E. Kurilla for his "exemplary service" in advancing military cooperation with the U.S.

Washington, meanwhile, seeks to drive wedges between China and its regional partners, including Pakistan, leveraging security and economic engagements.

Pakistan reportedly pitched U.S. officials a new Arabian Sea port near the Afghan-Iran border, in Pasni, with U.S. investors envisioned to construct and manage the terminal, highlighting how economic projects are now entwined with strategic calculations.

Who benefits when Kabul and Islamabad clash? In the short term, hardline security establishments on both sides can harvest nationalist legitimacy from robust responses; mediators such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia gain diplomatic capital by stepping in; terrorist groups may exploit chaos to recruit and reposition unless truly degraded.

Geopolitically, a prolonged crisis hands leverage to external powers prepared to offer security guarantees or economic carrots — yet chronic instability ultimately corrodes every actor's agenda, from trade corridors to regional investments.

The plausible trajectories are narrow. The most credible short-term path is mediated cooling: Persian Gulf interlocutors press for a halt, crossings reopen, and urgent economic pain is eased.

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

Hezbollah organizes a massive scout gathering

From page 1 ► The great event entitled "Gathering of Sayyed Nasrallah's Generations" was attended by more than 70,000 members from across Lebanon.

At the conclusion of the event, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem delivered a speech telling members: "You are the bright future and the pioneers of integrity and justice... You are the generations of Sayyed Nasrallah, following the path of Wilayat-el-Fakih, under the leadership of Imam Khamenei."

The Hezbollah chief emphasized that "Sayyed Nasrallah is the master of the nation's martyrs, who has been watching over you for your sake, building the covenant, determination, and hope."

Qassem added: "You are on the

path of resistance, and by resistance we mean the most comprehensive and broadest. It is an educational, cultural, moral, and political choice. Resistance is a struggle against oneself and the enemy, a struggle of faith, will, stance, steadfastness, pride, and independence."

He also pointed out that "resistance is the choice of young men and women, men and women, and it is an education based on authenticity, love of country, and defense of family and loved ones."

Nazih Fayyad, Imam Mahdi Scouts' Commissioner General, also addressed the event, saying, "We did not come to challenge anyone or set records, but rather to challenge the enemy and show it the generations of Sayyed who

follow his path."

Fayyad added, "You are the future of tomorrow and the bearers of the banner, and that Lebanon is not built on grudges and sectarian strife."

The gathering coincided with the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Hezbollah Secretary-Generals Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyed Hashem Safieddine.

Contrary to custom, Sayyed Nasrallah did not attend the association's annual gatherings, though he held them dearest to his heart. He used to say, "I look forward to it and enjoy it."

The scouts' members awaited him with great anticipation and eagerness, listening for more than an hour-and-a-half to his speeches, getting moral and emotional support that motivated them to volun-

teer and serve their community.

Collective pledge of loyalty

Scout members renewed a collective pledge of loyalty and allegiance to the two martyrs, promising to follow their footsteps.

"Gathering of Sayyed Nasrallah's Generations" is not bidding farewell to him on the anniversary of his martyrdom, as his spirit is strongly present in every detail of their scouting activities.

The gathering was held at the Sports City not only because of its capacity to accommodate tens of thousands of participants, but also because of the moral and emotional significance of the place where Sayyed Nasrallah bade farewell to his people.

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

Trump and Rubio gunning for regime change in Venezuela

Tehran, Beijing, Moscow slam U.S. military escalation

From page 1 ► At the UNSC meeting, Russia and China also denounced the growing military presence in the southern Caribbean.

The Russian UN envoy Vassily Nebenzia said that Venezuela "for several months now has been subjected to unprecedented pressure and threats of military invasion."

China's UN envoy Fu Cong called the U.S. military venture "unilateral and excessive," calling on the U.S. to immediately cease relevant acts to avoid escalation.

Trump halts negotiations

Richard Grenell, a special presidential envoy, has been leading ne-

gotiations with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and other top Venezuelan officials.

Grenell has tried to fashion a deal that would avoid a larger conflict and give American companies access to Venezuelan oil, reports The New York Times.

During a meeting with senior military leaders on October 6, Trump instructed Grenell to halt all diplomatic outreach with Venezuela.

Pundits think the decision to call off diplomacy signals that the United States has plans to escalate military options for some kind of

regime change operations.

Trump has ordered a major naval buildup off Venezuela's Caribbean coast in recent weeks. He has put three U.S. destroyers, an amphibious assault ship, a guided-missile cruiser, a nuclear-powered attack submarine, and a squadron of F-35s under Venezuela's nose. With such a massive military buildup, the question is whether Trump is planning to overthrow Venezuela's regime. No drug seizure operation needs such backup.

In America's urban "warzones," Trump has deployed troops in Memphis, Chicago and Portland (following Los Angeles and Wash-

ington, DC). The military raid on a Chicago apartment block last week targeted Tren de Aragua, the Venezuelan gang that Trump claims is run by Maduro.

Venezuela is nowhere close to being America's leading narcotics supplier. Yet Trump and his "secretary of war," Pete Hegseth, insist that America's opioid epidemic is fueled by Venezuela.

None of America's fentanyl has been found to originate from Venezuela. Almost all of it comes from Mexico. America's largest source of cocaine is Colombia.

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



## Golestan Palace's library equipped with advanced fire protection system

TEHRAN – The manuscript library and album house of the UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace has been equipped with a state-of-the-art automatic fire detection and suppression system using FM-200 gas.

Afrin Emami who presides over the UNESCO site on Sunday stated that last year a specialized project was launched to equip the manuscript library with this advanced fire protection system under the direct supervision of Tehran Fire Department.

The system has received the first official certification from the Fire Department for the use of FM-200 gas-based automatic fire detection and suppression in a manuscript repository.

Emami further explained that, due to the critical importance of preventive protection for historical artifacts and past experiences with emergencies, the album house, housing a valuable collection of rare and historical documents—has also been equipped with the same fire safety system, making it the second section of the complex to benefit from these measures.



Golestan Palace, located in the historic center of Tehran, is one of the oldest palace complexes in the Iranian capital, originally constructed during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736). The palace's most distinctive features date from the 19th century when it served as the royal residence of the Qajar dynasty (1789–1925). Today, the complex includes eight main palace buildings, mainly used as museums, surrounded by gardens and outer walls.

## Lorestan Archaeology Museum reopens after precautionary war closure



TEHRAN – The Lorestan Archaeology Museum, housed within the historic Falak-ol-Aflak Castle in Khorramabad, officially reopened to the public on Thursday, October 9, following a three-month closure.

The temporary shutdown was a precautionary measure to safeguard its invaluable collections during the recent 12-day imposed conflict.

The reopening ceremony was attended by several prominent figures, including Fereidoun Biglari, the Cultural Deputy of the National Museum of Iran; Ata Hassanpour, the Director-General of Lorestan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department; and a delegation of academic staff from the Archaeology Department of Razi University in Kermanshah.

In a statement at the event, Ata Hassanpour elaborated on the reason for the closure. "Following the 12-day imposed war in June of this year, and to ensure the protection of valuable cultural and historical artifacts, museums across the country, including the Lorestan Archaeology Museum at Falak-

ol-Aflak Castle, were temporarily closed by direct order of the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts," he said.

Hassanpour added that the closure period provided an opportune window to make necessary improvements to the newly established museum. "One of its galleries, previously equipped to showcase finds from the caves and prehistoric sites of the Khorramabad Valley for a World Heritage nomination dossier, was further enhanced and prepared for its reopening," he explained.

Concluding his remarks, the Director-General emphasized, "The protection of historical objects and securing the legacy of our ancestors during the crisis of the 12-day war was our top priority. Fortunately, by adhering to all necessary standards, the required protective measures were implemented in the shortest time possible."

The Lorestan Archaeology Museum features two main galleries dedicated to the Prehistoric and Historic eras. Its collection showcases artifacts from various archaeological periods, representing over one hundred thousand years of human settlement in the region.

On display are nearly 390 archaeological pieces from the Paleolithic, Epipaleolithic, Neolithic, and Chalcolithic ages, through the Bronze and Iron Ages, and into the Seleucid, Parthian, Sasanian, and Islamic periods. The collection also includes recent finds from archaeological excavations conducted on the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle mound.

Complementing the archaeological finds, the museum also exhibits a collection of fossils from the Dimeh site, with some specimens dating back over seven million years.

travel, and creating new platforms for interaction in the fields of motoring and mobility.

Other provisions of this agreement include organizing joint tourism and automobile rallies, providing mutual roadside assistance services, cooperating in the field of road safety training, exchanging specialized experiences, and facilitating the process of issuing and accepting international documents such as Carnet de Passage (customs clearance permit).

In part of this ceremony, which was held in Kuwait, the managing directors of the two automobile clubs of Iran and Kuwait evaluated the signing of this cooperation document as an effective step towards developing land tourism, expanding cultural relations, and strengthening friendly relations between the two countries, and emphasized its precise implementation.

# Minister urges overhaul of transport, preservation of historical districts to strengthen tourism

TEHRAN – Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh has called for stronger collaboration between the transport and tourism sectors to revitalize historical urban areas and upgrade public transport infrastructure in a bid to support the country's tourism industry.

Speaking during a joint meeting with the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Sadegh emphasized the intertwined missions of the two ministries and stressed the need to make the best use of legal frameworks to promote sustainable tourism.

"Cultural heritage belongs to every citizen of this land. It is the identity of our nation, and the preservation of historical neighborhoods should be on the agenda," Sadegh said, adding that efforts must be intensified to breathe life back into historical areas, which account for less than five percent of urban spaces but are often cited as urban challenges.

She then repeated the importance of distinguishing historical districts from dilapidated areas, noting that these neighborhoods represent Iran's cultural essence and should be revitalized, not abandoned. "We must not wait for disasters to erase our historical texture, building by building," she said.



Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh (left) speaks at a meeting with tourism and cultural heritage officials and experts in Tehran, Oct. 11, 2025. Tourism Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri is also pictured.

Elsewhere in her remarks, Sadegh pledged to cooperate in drafting specialized plans and regulations aligned with the objectives of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, urging faster implementation of joint projects, increased funding, and stronger support for the private sector.

Highlighting the role of rural tourism and the significance of accommodations in historic areas, the minister also pointed to recent progress in tourism, cul-

tural heritage, and handicrafts during the current administration.

Turning to international connectivity, Sadegh announced a rise in direct flights to and from Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Armenia over the past four months, with further expansions under discussion, including potential cooperation with foreign airlines.

She also noted the recent launch of a trial maritime tourism route between Muscat and

Iran's Chabahar, and a doubling of Arbaeen pilgrimage traffic from Khorramshahr to Basra by sea this year.

Sadegh added that current regulations allow for the import of passenger buses and cruise ships to ease road congestion, particularly along the northern coastal corridor. "The Ports and Maritime Organization stands ready to fully support these initiatives," she added.

Emphasizing growing interest from domestic and international investors in Iran's tourism potential, the minister proposed the establishment of a joint task force across road, rail, and aviation sectors to mirror progress made in cultural heritage and tourism.

Referring to a request to have displays of handicrafts and tourism attractions, Sadegh said: "Our airports, terminals, train stations, and border crossings can serve as gateways to Iran's beauty and culture... like living museums." She then called for joint meetings to accelerate such a coordination.

She concluded by expressing hope that ongoing cooperation and comprehensive support would help transform Iran into a leading global destination for both domestic and international travelers.

## Iran, Iraq launch new phase of tourism cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran and Iraq have opened a new chapter in tourism cooperation with the launch of Iran's first tourism roadshow in the country, featuring an 80-member delegation.

The roadshow, which includes tourism officials and industry representatives from Iran, is taking place in the Iraqi cities of Basra, Baghdad, and Karbala. The initiative aims to promote tourism exchanges, strengthen bilateral ties, and explore new opportunities for collaboration in the travel and hospitality sectors.

According to ILNA, based on sayings of officials from Iranian and Iraqi ministries of cultural heritage, 11.5 million tourists travel between Iran and Iraq annually, of whom eight million are Iranian tourists to Iraq and 3.5 million Iraqi tourists to Iran.

However, despite significant tourism exchanges between Iran and Iraq, and the fact that more than 50 percent of Iran's inbound tourism comes from Iraq, no tourism or cultural event had been held between the two countries to attract tourists.

Moslem Shojaei, the Tourism Ministry's director-general for marketing and foreign tourism development, in a meeting with Nasser Ghanem Murad, head of the Tourism Authority of Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, pointed to the submission of the

executive plan for development of tourism cooperation between Iran and Iraq by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

He asked Ghanem Murad to approve this program and facilitate the signing of an official agreement between the two governments to develop tourism cooperation.

Emphasizing the close ties between the private sectors of the two countries in developing tourism cooperation, he said that developing tourism relations between Iran and Iraq and introducing more tourism products in the fields of pilgrimage, health, history, and culture is dependent on the formation of two annual meetings of the Iran-Iraq Tourism Technical Committee.

Iraqi and Iranian tourists have diverse pilgrimage and recreational needs in the field of tourism, and if the two nations' understanding of the diverse tourism capacities of the two countries increases, the development of Iranian and Iraqi tourism will be achieved.

Shojaei emphasized that Iran and Iraq are each other's first tourism market, adding that tourism exchanges between the two countries should increase at the level of government officials and especially at the level of the private sector, and Iran and Iraq, should reach the highest level of interaction in tourism development.

Referring to the impact of tourism advertising in Iran and Iraq, he stated that two-way marketing and advertising of Iranian and Iraqi tourism in the two countries is the most important need in developing Iranian and Iraqi tourism relations.

During the meeting, Ghanem Murad agreed to the implementation of the Iran-Iraq tourism document and said that the final Iran-Iraq tourism document will be signed if Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts or other officials visit Baghdad or in the presence of Iraqi officials in Tehran.

He also approved the proposal for bilateral marketing and advertising of Iranian and Iraqi tourism in the two countries and emphasized the need for government and private sector cooperation in this area, saying that tourism marketing and advertising are the most important factors in recognizing the two nations' tourism capacities, apart from the issue of pilgrimage.

Tourism cooperation between Iran and Iraq was held for the first time in the form of Iranian tourism roadshow in Iraq with the efforts of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies and the cooperation of Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism for four days, leading to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the private sectors of the two countries.

## Restoration of historic Kahnuj Fortress begins

TEHRAN—Head of Kerman Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Morteza Nikrou announced the start of restoration of the centuries-old fortress in Kahnuj county, with allocation of more than seven billion rials (\$7,000).

Stressing on importance of protecting, restoring, reviving and organizing the ancient buildings of the province in line of sustainable development of tourism sector, he said that the restoration and reconstruction of the historic castle of Kahnuj county has begun with provincial funds, by appointing a contractor and signing a contract, ISNA reported.

He explained that restoration operations with bricks, traditional insulation, plastering, banding, strengthening and organization are among the restoration measures anticipated at this stage

for the historical castle of Kahnuj.

Nikrou continued: "The restoration and revitalization of historical buildings is not only a protective measure, but also a fundamental step towards the development of sustainable tourism in the province. Within the framework of 'The World's Smile to Kerman 1405' program, with the aim of introducing a dynamic and living face of historical Kerman, a series of restoration projects are being implemented in the cities and villages of the province."

He said: "With contribution of the private sector, local institutions, and using the potentials of Iranian specialized forces, we intend to transform the valuable historical buildings from inactive status into tourist, cultural, and residential spaces to both preserve the authenticity of Iranian architecture and provide em-

ployment opportunities and the presence of domestic and foreign tourists."

'The World's Smile to Kerman 1405' program is an opportunity for Kerman to shine in the global tourism arena, relying on its ancient heritage, and for the province's historical monuments to be brought back to the cultural and economic life once again, he added.

The ancient Kahnuj Castle is one of the few historical structures in the southern Kerman province. This historical site is situated on the heights of a hill in the northeastern to eastern part of the city of Kahnuj.

Archaeological documents date the history of the castle to the 4th century AH, contemporaneous with the Manujan Castle and the ancient city of Jiroft. There have been additions and

modifications in later periods, including the flourishing of the castle during the Qajar era and into the early Pahlavi period.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been deemed essential for cities to endure in an ever-evolving landscape marked by invasion and conquest.

Kerman province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites, including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais and ruins of ancient urban areas. Kerman is bounded by the provinces of Fars in the west, Yazd in the north, South Khorasan in the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan in the east, and Hormozgan in the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

## TACI, KIAC sign MoU on promoting road tourism, motor racing

TEHRAN—Heads of Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI) and Kuwait International Automobile Club (KIAC) signed a strategic memorandum of understanding in line of promoting regional collaborations in road tourism and promoting motor racing activities.

According to ILNA, the MoU was signed by TACI Head Mohammad-Hossein Soufi and KIAC President Essa Hamzah Al-Failakawin in an official ceremony with participation of Mohammad Toutouchi on Friday.

This cooperation document, which is based on the development of joint cooperation and strengthening international relations in the fields of tourism and motoring, emphasizes the expansion of cultural and people-to-people interactions, facilitating land travel between citizens of the two countries, improving travel safety, promoting responsible



# Iran garners two awards at IUCN World Conservation Congress

TEHRAN – The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has presented two awards, namely Reverse the Red and the International Ranger Awards 2025, to the country at the World Conservation Congress.

The congress is being held in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, from October 11 to 15.

Reverse the Red is a global movement that ignites strategic cooperation and action to ensure the survival of wild species and ecosystems and reverse the negative trend of biodiversity loss.

Through a strategic initiative, Reverse the Red brings together a diverse coalition of leading scientists, advocates, and partners committed to using a data-driven and science-based approach to assess, plan, and act for species conservation.

Reverse the Red provides the tools and expertise to empower governments, partners, and local communities to set and reach biodiversity conservation targets and celebrates and amplifies achievements for species.

This year, Reverse the Red has awarded medals to 26 Countries that have demonstrated excellence in the development and delivery of evidence-based National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

An expert panel, led by the IUCN Species Survival Commission, reviewed NBSAPs from all Convention on Biological Diversity Parties using a clear set of criteria, assessing both the process and content of each plan. Scoring was based on transparency, scientific rigor, stakehold-



er engagement, and alignment with global biodiversity targets, and medals were awarded to the highest-scoring NBSAPs from each IUCN statutory region.

The Iranian Ambassador to Abu Dhabi, Reza Ameri, has received the award on behalf of the country.

The IUCN WCPA has presented 13 rangers and ranger teams with the 2025 International Ranger Awards, recognising their incredible dedication to nature conservation.

The International Ranger Awards are intended to honour the courage, resilience, and perseverance of rangers across the world; displaying their achievements, raising public awareness about the importance of such professionals, and providing winners with funds to support the land they help protect.

This year, the WCPA – in collaboration with Conservation Allies, Universal Ranger Support Alliance, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature – has extended awards to six individuals and seven teams with prizes between 5,000 and 25,000 dollars.

Iran is the first country in West

Asia to have won this award. Saidvaa National Park and the southern Parvar Protected Area Ranger Team (nine members) in Semnan province are awarded for determinedly overcoming social and ecological challenges to advance conservation.

Azin Saeedi, as the representative of the rangers, has received the award, doe.ir reported.

WCPA is the world's premier network of protected and conserved areas expertise. The Commission has over 3200 members spanning 140 countries who provide strategic advice to policymakers and work to strengthen capacity and investment for protected areas establishment and management.

## strategic goals for long-term biodiversity preservation

The Department of Environment (DOE) has revised a comprehensive plan, setting its strategic goals for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by the Iranian calendar year 1430 (March 2051-March 2052).

In May, President Masoud Pezeshkian issued an order, obligating the DOE to prepare a comprehensive plan for the preservation of biodiversity in

the country, covering different environmental sectors.

In this line, several meetings have been convened with the participation of faculty members, environmental experts, and managers, as well as NGOs, IRNA reported.

During the meetings, the participants agreed on five main goals: promoting the integrity and resilience of biodiversity, conserving biodiversity for sustainable use, equitably sharing the benefits derived from genetic resources, raising public awareness, enhancing specialized knowledge, and modern technologies for effective biodiversity management, strengthening financial resources and national mechanisms for the implementation of the comprehensive strategic plan for biodiversity.

Finally, the national biodiversity conservation program will be revised based on the national biodiversity strategies and action plan (NBSAP) by relevant executive agencies, academic experts, and non-governmental organizations, to be approved by the DOE.

## ISC IWUR includes more Iranian universities

TEHRAN – The Islamic World University Rankings (IWUR) has included 84 Iranian universities among the top universities in Islamic countries, up from 80 in 2023, according to the latest report by the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC).

A total of 552 universities from 35 Islamic countries are listed in the ranking, where Turkey, with 138 universities and Iran, with 84 universities, and Pakistan, with 50 universities, are placed first to third, IRNA reported.

University of Tehran is placed among the top ten universities in Islamic nations, ranking sixth. The university ranks first in Iran.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (11), Sharif University of Technology (17), Tarbiat Modares University (21), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (31), Amirkabir University of Technology (37), Isfahan University of Technology (40), Iran University of Medical Sciences (47), Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (50), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (53), and University of Tabriz (54) are placed second to ten in the country.

### Iran ranks second in SCImago 2024

According to the recent ranking published



by SCImago 2024, Iran, with 75501 documents, ranks second among Islamic countries.

The country ranks 17 globally, dropping one position in the ranking compared to the past year. Turkey (with 82150 documents) and Saudi Arabia (with 72167 documents) rank first and third, respectively, Mehr news agency reported.

In 2022, the country published over 78,000 documents in Scopus, but in 2023, the number of documents declined, reaching 74,000. In 2024, the trend has increased but has not yet reached the figure published in 2022.

According to the report, in terms of citations (89,492), Iran ranks second and fif-

teenth in the region and the world, respectively. Over the past five years, the country's global ranking has improved from 19 to 15.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, with 121,838 and 81,106 citations, ranked first and third, respectively.

China (with 1215824 documents), the United States (with 743,884 documents), and India (with 351,928) are placed first to third in the SCImago ranking 2024.

Iran is planning to elevate the country's ranking for scientific productions from currently 17 to 12 by 2027.

Due to sanctions, economic restrictions, and the limitations on publishing papers by Iranian scholars, particularly during the last three years, Iran's ranking in scientific productions has lowered from 15 to 17, Shahin Akhoundzadeh, an official with the health ministry, has said.

The country's advancement in science production requires compensating for the regression in research and technology through providing funds, facilitating research, and promoting meritocracy, which will reduce young elites' migration, as well, the health ministry's website quoted Akhoundzadeh as saying.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## World's first 'subway library' to open in Tehran

For the first time in the underground transportation system worldwide, a public library will be opened in Tehran subway, Farnoush Nobakht, director of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company, said.

According to the memorandum signed between the Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company and the Tehran public libraries foundation, libraries will be launched in seven selected stations, first of which will be inaugurated on August 12, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The library, called "Metro Book", is in line with the cultural programs to promote the culture of reading and increase per capita reading among subway passengers during intra-city trips, the library with a capacity of more than 5,000 books provides services continuously from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., she explained.

## افتتاح کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران برای اولین بار در جهان

برای اولین بار در سامانه حمل و نقل متروهای جهان، کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران افتتاح می شود. به گزارش ایسنا، قرار است طبق تفاهم نامه منعقد شده بین شرکت بهره برداری متروی تهران و حومه و نهاد کتابخانه های عمومی استان تهران در هفت ایستگاه منتخب «مترو کتاب» راه اندازی شود. این کتابخانه در راستای برنامه های فرهنگی متروی تهران مبنی بر ترویج فرهنگ کتابخوانی و افزایش سرانه مطالعه در میان مسافران مترو هنگام سفرهای درون شهری این کتابخانه با ظرفیت بیش از ۵۰۰۰ عنوان کتاب به صورت فیزیکی از ساعت ۸ صبح تا ۲۰ به طور مستمر به ارایه خدمات می دهد.

## Iranian, Turkish universities ink MOU to boost scientific ties

TEHRAN – Shiraz University of Medical Sciences and Suleyman Demirel University of Turkey have signed a scientific, research, and educational memorandum of understanding.

The MOU was signed by Seyyed Basir Hashemi, Chancellor of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, and Alim Kosar, Vice Rector of Suleyman Demirel University.

According to the MOU, the two universities will develop their academic interactions through exchanging students and professors, implementing joint research projects, as well as holding international courses and Seminars, Mehr news agency reported.

The signed MOU will play a key role in promoting science diplomacy and expanding international collaborations. It will also lay the basis for sharing expertise, promoting modern technologies, and improving health indices, Hashemi noted.

For his part, Kosar said the MOU is a milestone in the development of scientific and research relations between the two countries. "Cooperating with Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, as one of the most reliable universities in Iran, will be a great opportunity to enhance our scientific, educational, and research activities," he added.

### Iran, Turkey to beef up scientific ties

Iranian and Turkish officials have conferred on ways to further scientific and technological collaborations, focusing on setting up a joint research center for the digital economy.

In a meeting held on April 26, Mohammad Nabi Shahiki, the deputy science minister of innovation and technology, and Mustafa Aydin, the president of the Eurasian Universities Union (EURAS), elaborated on the capacities of each country and explored the po-

tentials for expanding scientific cooperation, the science ministry's website reported.

The officials proposed the establishment of a technology transfer office, cooperation in the fields of water technology, energy, artificial intelligence, and the implementation of joint projects between the Scientific and Industrial Research Organizations of Iran and Turkey, with a priority on transferring technology to the industrial sector.

The two sides agreed on launching a joint digital economy research center. Partnership in holding start-up events, periodically, as well as defining collaborative postdoc projects in modern agriculture, biomaterials, and biotechnology sectors, were among the other agreed programs.

The officials also announced their readiness to foster ties among universities of the two countries to enhance scientific and technological collaborations.

In February, Mazandaran's science and technology park and Istanbul's Biruni Teknopark discussed ways to broaden their technological and scientific interactions.

During the online meeting, Karim Soleimani, head of Mazandaran's science and technology park, and Sezgin Erzan, general manager of Biruni Teknopark, stressed the significance of enhancing cooperation in the fields of technology, the science ministry reported.

The two sides agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding with a focus on establishing technology transfer offices, supporting the establishment of Iranian and Turkish companies in the two countries, as well as facilitating Iranian companies' entrance into new markets.

## Tehran to host 2nd Intl. Conference on AI

TEHRAN – The second International Conference on Artificial Intelligence (ICAI 2026) is scheduled to be held in Tehran on February 8-9, 2026.

With the theme 'AI for All', Shahid Beheshti University will play host to the event, Mehr news agency reported.

The conference will serve as a platform to share the latest innovations, research, and scientific achievements in the AI sector, bringing together domestic and foreign students, experts, and researchers.

It also aims to boost synergy among industry, universities, and decision-making organizations.

The conference will be centered around different topics including AI in wealth management, Natural language processing, Image processing and machine vision, Audio and signal processing, Knowledge engineering and basic knowledge systems, Robotics, Theoretical Topics in Machine Learning, Cognitive and computational neuroscience, AI in games, AI Hardware Platforms, Data mining and big data, Bioinformatics, Applications of AI in Humanities and Social Sciences, Health and Hygiene, Governance, and Engineering.

Pre-conference events include AI Game Jam, Intelligent Robots Challenge, and an AI-powered software development hackathon.

Moreover, a specialized AI exhibition is scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the conference, which will provide a unique opportunity for companies and startups to showcase their innovative products and services; it will also help develop relationships between academia and industry.

### Iran advances in AI

According to Nature Index, the country's ranking in scientific production in Artificial Intelligence (AI) has improved from 33 to 30, placing the country among the top 50 leaders, Hossein Afshin, an official with the vice-presidency of science and technology, has said.

Iran's ranking in the region fluctuates between 14 to 17, which is mainly due to focusing on quality, he said, adding, "We're optimistic to improve the country's scientific position within the next two years," IRNA reported.

The official went on to say that the country is following up on developing AI infrastruc-

ture, including the AI platform and the AI assistant, in the near future.

According to the latest report by Oxford Insights index, which measures government readiness for implementing AI in public services, Iran ranks 91st among 188 countries, moving up three positions compared to 94th in 2023.

AI has a key role to play –not just in governing the technology, but in helping governments perform better.

The Government AI Readiness Index has become a trusted resource for policymakers, adopted as an official benchmark by national governments.

In this year's edition, the AI readiness of 188 countries is examined at a time of growing complexity, where governments face evolving citizen needs and challenges like economic uncertainty, climate risks, and rising inequalities.

The 2024 index examines 40 indicators across three pillars: Government, Technology Sector, and Data & Infrastructure. It highlights progress, identifies gaps, and provides actionable insights for policymakers working to integrate AI into public service delivery.

At its core, the index asks, 'How ready are governments to implement AI in the delivery of public services?' By answering this question, it aims to offer a practical tool that supports evidence-based decision-making and helps policymakers unlock AI's potential to serve citizens better worldwide.

According to the index, the country's best ranking is in the Data and Infrastructure pillar, 66.29, which has improved compared to 55.88 last year. It includes infrastructure (70), data availability (43), and data representativeness (121) indicators.

The country's score in the Technology pillar is 38.82; it was 38.77 in 2023. It includes human capital (54), innovation capacity (62), and maturity (82) indicators.

Iran's lowest score is in the Government pillar, 26.54, which has decreased compared to 31.56 in 2023. It includes vision (84), governance and ethics (145), digital capacity (92), and adaptability (177).

According to this year's report, Iran's ranking in the region has improved by one position, rising from 17 in 2023 to 16 in 2024.





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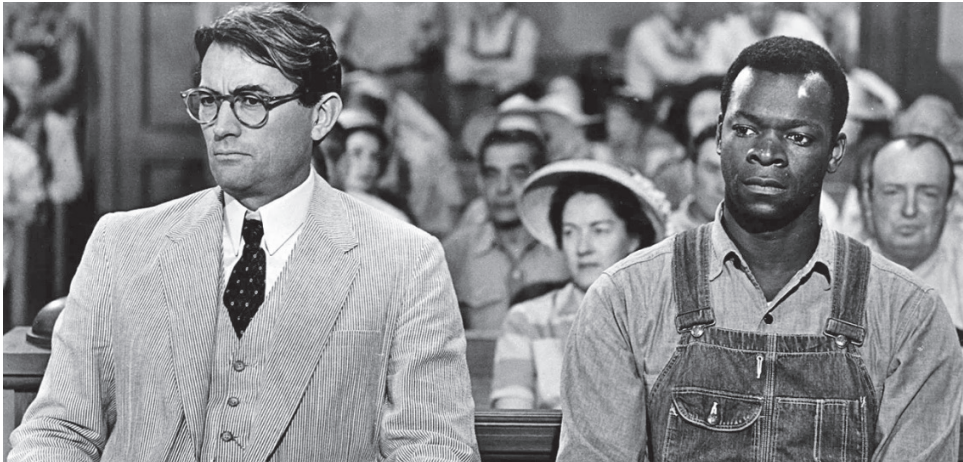
## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul. To fight the evil within yourself.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:11:51 Evening: 17:50 Dawn: 4:47 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:10 (tomorrow)

## TMoCA cinematheque screens “To Kill a Mockingbird”



TEHRAN – The cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA) screened the 1962 American legal drama crime film “To Kill a Mockingbird” directed by Robert Mulligan on Sunday.

The screening was a part of the “Law in Cinema” series on the theme of “Courthouse Dramas,” which was followed by a review session in the presence of Jahanbakhsh Nouraei, a lawyer and film critic, IRNA reported.

Starring Gregory Peck and Mary Badham, the film is adapted from Harper Lee’s 1960 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name.

The film follows lawyer Atticus Finch in Depression-era Alabama educating his children against prejudice while defending a black man who is falsely charged with the rape of a white woman. It is widely considered to be one of the greatest movies ever made.

The film won overwhelmingly positive reception from both the critics and the public; a box-office success, it earned more than six times its budget. The film was awarded three Academy Awards, including Best Actor and Best Adapted Screenplay, and was nominated for eight, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Supporting Actress.

In 1995, the film was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Film Registry as “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant”. In 2003, the American Film Institute named Atticus Finch the greatest movie hero of the 20th century.

In 2007, the film ranked twenty-fifth on the AFI’s 10th anniversary list of the greatest Amer-

ican movies of all time. In 2008, the film ranked first on the AFI’s list of the ten greatest courtroom dramas. In 2020, the British Film Institute included it in their list of the 50 films you should see by the age of 15.

Harper Lee’s novel became instantly successful after its release; in the United States, it is widely read in high schools and middle schools.

“To Kill a Mockingbird” won the Pulitzer Prize a year after its release, and it has become a classic of modern American literature. The plot and characters are loosely based on Lee’s observations of her family, her neighbors and an event that occurred near her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama, in 1936, when she was ten.

Despite dealing with the serious issues of rape and racial inequality, the novel is renowned for its warmth and humor. Atticus Finch, the narrator’s father, has served as a moral hero for many readers and as a model of integrity for lawyers.

As a Southern Gothic novel and Bildungsroman, the primary themes of “To Kill a Mockingbird” involve racial injustice and the destruction of innocence. Scholars have noted that Lee also addresses issues of class, courage, compassion, and gender roles in the Deep South.

Lessons from the book emphasize tolerance and decry prejudice. In 2006, British librarians ranked the book ahead of the Bible as one “every adult should read before they die”.

“To Kill a Mockingbird” was Lee’s only published book until “Go Set a Watchman” was published in 2015. Lee continued to respond to her work’s impact until her death in 2016.

## Cartoon of Day



Gaza

**Cartoonist:** Alaa Allagta from Palestine

# Five Iranian books selected for 2025 White Ravens list

TEHRAN- The 2025 White Ravens Catalogue, compiled by Munich’s International Youth Library (Internationale Jugendbibliothek, IJB), includes five notable works by authors from Iran.

The selection includes the books “The Marvelous Zippy Whiz Cub Academy,” “The Stars Laugh in Blue,” “A Sun in the Turkmen Sahra,” “The Wandering Coffin,” and “Siyagalesh, the Forest Guardian.”

In a preface to the catalogue, International Youth Library director Christiane Raabe expressed her enthusiasm for the 2025 edition of The White Ravens, an esteemed annual list highlighting outstanding children’s and young adult books from around the world.

Raabe emphasized the vital role of publishers, institutions, authors, and illustrators worldwide, whose generous support in providing review copies makes this publication possible.

The 2025 list includes 215 notable titles from 49 languages across 63 countries, reflecting diverse voices, themes, and innovative approaches. The selection process involves a dedicated team of experts who review thousands of donated books, focusing on literary quality, visual impact, and relevance.

The catalogue aims to promote international excellence in children’s literature, fostering cross-cultural understanding and inspiring young readers globally.

Written by Payam Ebrahimi and illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelou, “The Marvelous Zippy Whiz Cub Academy” is a vibrant tale set in a lively jungle where various animal parents are eager to secure certificates for their children. However, they all struggle to understand the true significance of these accolades. At the Zippy Whiz Cub Academy, the headmaster enforces a standard curriculum that encourages all students to acquire the same skills, regardless of their natural abilities. This raises the question: Can a fish truly learn to fly, or a turtle run quickly?

“The Stars Laugh in Blue” is a graceful and evocative poetry collec-



This combination photo shows the front covers of the Persian books picked for the White Ravens Catalogue 2025.

tion by Safoura Nayyeri that explores the inner worlds of teenagers—capturing their emotions, dreams, and the quiet beauty found in everyday moments. Each poem invites readers to slow down, reflect, and connect more deeply—with the world around them and the often-overlooked landscapes of their own thoughts and feelings.

Recurring symbols such as rain, birds, gardens, and stars evoke a sense of longing and curiosity, creating a tapestry that feels both intimately personal and universally relatable. Illustrated by Salimeh Babakhan, the book’s gentle, expressive illustrations beautifully complement the tone of the poems, adding visual warmth and subtlety to the reading experience.

“A Sun in the Turkmen Sahra,” written by Yousef Qoujaq and illustrated by Najla Mahdavi-Ashraf, draws readers into the simple, heartfelt world of Aylar, a young Turkmen girl, and her innocent childhood concerns. When she tells a small lie to an elderly neighbor, her peaceful life is disrupted. Overcome with guilt, she finds herself unable to weave carpets as she once did.

With the support of her mother

and the women of her village, Aylar learns valuable lessons about honesty and kindness. Set against the vibrant backdrop of Iran’s Turkmen Sahra, the story vividly portrays a world rich in color, tradition, and quiet resilience. Each page resembles a woven carpet—a beautiful tribute to the artistry and strength of the Turkmen people.

Written by Hamidreza Shahabadi, “The Wandering Coffin” is a richly layered, gripping novel that masterfully combines elements of fantasy, horror, and historical fiction, set against the backdrop of the Qajar dynasty. The story follows Samad, a medical student in Tehran, who embarks on a dangerous journey to deliver a mysterious corpse—concealed inside a chest—to the medical school in Tabriz, where it is needed for anatomy lessons.

As the journey unfolds, it takes a dark and perilous turn, plunging Samad into a series of tense and suspenseful events that captivate from the very first page. Along the way, he faces terrifying external threats, including supernatural entities such as demons and spirits, while also confronting his own buried fears and painful memories. These har-

rowing experiences lead him toward self-discovery and personal growth.

“Siyagalesh, the Forest Guardian,” written by Mohammadreza Shams and illustrated by Parvin Heidarizadeh, draws inspiration from northern Iranian folk tales about a legendary figure known as Siyagalesh, the guardian of herders’ cattle and sheep. Living deep within the forest, Siyagalesh also protects wildlife and punishes those who harm animals. This story reimagines the traditional character in a modern setting. Always ready to assist animals in need, Siyagalesh one day falls into a trap set by hunters. However, this time, it is the animals who come to his rescue.

The book also introduces readers to Iran’s rich biodiversity and the diverse range of native animal species, highlighting the importance of preserving the country’s natural ecosystems.

The White Ravens catalogue – a treasure trove for literary discoveries – serves as a compass through the vast children’s book market for publishers, libraries, literary festivals, international bookstores and agencies, as well as anyone interested in international children’s books.

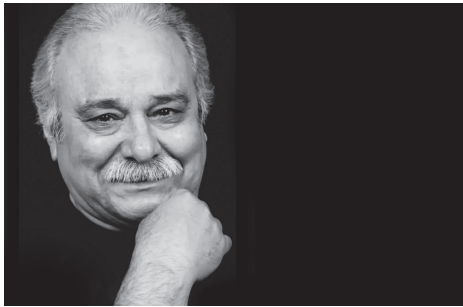
## Iranian actor Mohammad Kasbi passes away

TEHRAN – Iranian actor Mohammad Kasbi passed away at a hospital in Tehran on Saturday night at the age of 74.

The veteran actor died after being hospitalized in the intensive care unit of Khatam-ol-Anbia Hospital for days. He was in an unstable condition in recent days due to heart and respiratory problems and was connected to respiratory support devices, IRNA reported.

Born in Tehran, Kasbi graduated in Cinema Acting and Directing from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts at Tehran University.

In 1991, he was nominated for the Fajr International Film Festival’s Crystal Simorgh Best Male



Actor award for his role in “Badook”.

Four years later, he received a Crystal Simorgh and Malaysia’s East Asia Film and Television Festival Best Actor Award for his role in “Father” (1995).

## Acclaimed Gaza drama “The Voice of Hind Rajab” remains without U.S. distributor

A timely subject, rave reviews (97 percent on Rotten Tomatoes), festival accolades, an acclaimed director, the longest ever festival ovation, and a host of A-list supporters would normally all-but guarantee a movie U.S. distribution. Plenty of films this year have found a home with less in their corners.

And yet, “The Voice of Hind Rajab,” the Venice Film Festival Silver Lion winner directed by two-time Oscar nominee Kaouthar Ben Hania, remains without a U.S. home.

A quick U.S. sale was expected by sources at seller CAA Media Finance. This is a boom-time for foreign films. We understand there have been a couple of proposals but little so far that has approached the norm for a film of this status. The fact it hasn’t sold yet has left many surprised. “Has that movie really not sold yet?” one leading producer messaged.

The Arabic-language film, Tunisia’s Oscar entry, tells the story of six-year-old Palestinian girl Hind Rajab, who was killed by Israeli forces

last year. She and her family were fleeing Gaza City when their vehicle was shelled, also killing Rajab’s uncle, aunt, and three cousins. Rajab and another cousin initially survived the attack and contacted the Palestine Red Crescent Society by phone from their car seeking aid. But the car was later found with Rajab and the paramedics who had come to help her all dead.

The incident sparked global protests, including at Columbia University, where students renamed Hamilton Hall as Hind’s Hall. In her film, Tunisian filmmaker Ben Hania weaved in the original recording of Rajab’s final phone call to what critics described as devastating effect.

The killings took place some three months into Israel’s ongoing military operation in the Gaza Strip, sparked by the Hamas-led October 7, 2023 attacks. The Palestinian death toll now stands at 67,000 people, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, and Gaza is in ruins. The U.N. has denounced Israel’s actions

as genocide. There is renewed hope today of a ceasefire and return of remaining hostages.

“The Voice of Hind Rajab” isn’t a starry project, but Brad Pitt, Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Alfonso Cuarón and Jonathan Glazer are among heavyweights to get behind the feature as executive producers. Following a record 23-minute ovation at its emotionally charged Venice premiere, the film has gone on to play at festivals around the world, including in the U.S.

International buyers have flocked to it. Italian distributor I Wonder Pictures launched the film locally two weeks ago to a fourth-place opening and \$500,000 from 400 screens, a strong debut for a foreign-language film. It has now crossed \$1M and took a similar box office in its second frame to Margot Robbie and Colin Farrell new release A Big Bold Beautiful Journey and Neon’s horror breakout Together.

So why hasn’t The Voice of Hind Rajab been picked up stateside? All

three of Ben Hania’s previous films got U.S. distribution from established buyers. We spoke to a dozen U.S. and international distributors, financiers and producers to get their take. None wanted to speak on the record.

One leading U.S. buyer, who expressed strong interest in the film, claimed: “Buyers are passing out of fear and/or they disagree with the film’s politics. I am very surprised.”

This buyer cited “a full slate” as the reason they couldn’t take it on.

A key arthouse outfit explained: “We have been very interested in the movie, but it just got to the point where it seemed futile for us to make a thoughtful offer based on our calibration of what the potential was, with the expectation that a sale to a major pay-one streamer was unlikely...in addition to that, the awards season is already well underway. Trying to position this film properly in such a short amount of time is very difficult.”