

How US Blackmail Scuttled Iran's Generous Offer on 60% Enriched Uranium

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Steve Witkoff, U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, speaks during a Bloomberg Television interview outside the White House on March 19, 2025.

West Bank annexation theater: How Israel's Knesset plays good cop, bad cop

By Shahab Sarmadi

TEHRAN – The recent votes in Israel's Knesset on bills to annex parts of the West Bank have drawn worldwide attention. At first glance, they appear to be a major political confrontation. Far-right politicians like Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, who live in illegal settlements, pushed strongly for the bills. Avi Maoz of the Noam party declared that "the time has come to apply sovereignty," invoking biblical claims to the Palestinian land.

The U.S. reacted immediately. Vice President JD Vance called the vote an "insult," while Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned it could threaten the fragile Gaza ceasefire. President Donald Trump previously told Israel it could lose U.S. support if it moved forward with annexation.

How Nawaf Salam's cabinet is handing maritime resources to Israel!

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — On October 23, 2025, Lebanon crossed a perilous threshold under Nawaf Salam's leadership, with his cabinet appearing almost dedicated to national self-sabotage.

After failing to contain Lebanon's financial collapse or social despair, Salam's cabinet has now inflicted a strategic disaster — one signed not in error, but in submission — by recklessly managing maritime demarcation with Cyprus and southern oil exploration.

This blunder is not administrative; it is political servitude as it serves, in every practical sense, the interests of the Israeli enemy and the dictates of Washington, which has long sought to impose a fait accompli in the Eastern Mediterranean — confining Lebanon and expanding Israel's room to plunder regional gas fields with a "legal" smile.

Maritime strikes, mainland threats: U.S. military shadows Venezuela amid regime change whispers

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – A concentrated U.S. military presence in the Caribbean — warships, patrol planes, MQ-9 drones, an F-35 squadron, and bomber flights — has sharply narrowed the political and diplomatic space around Venezuela.

Supersonic B-1 Lancer flights near the Venezuelan coast on October 23, following B-52 missions joined by Marine F-35s, read less like routine training to many observers than like a calibrated show of force designed to pressure Caracas.

Cruel blockade worsens Gaza crisis

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Israel's ongoing blockade of Gaza flagrantly violates international law and amounts to continuous collective punishment of Palestinians.

Even amid a fragile ceasefire, the Israeli occupation regime is intentionally restricting aid to Gaza, keeping the Rafah border crossing closed, and deliberately subjecting the civilian population to extreme deprivation.

United Nations officials warn that this deliberate strategy is not only violating the truce but also international law, creating a humanitarian catastrophe that affects every aspect of life in the territory after two years of U.S.-backed genocidal war.

Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, told AL Jazeera that Israel has not permitted 600 UN aid trucks to enter Gaza on any single day since the ceasefire began.

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Larijani says missile range reduction will undermine national security

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council has rejected outright Western demands for the country to reduce the range of its missiles.

"Calls to reduce the range of missiles amounts to demand for submission and stripping the country of national security," said Ali Larijani during a local event in Tehran on Thursday.

"The reduction of the range of missiles is tantamount to the undermining of the country's most important defensive tool," he said.

Iran has made tremendous breakthroughs in its missile industry over the past decades. The country has managed to develop a whole range of state-of-the-art missiles domestically. ▶ Page 2

Iranian national Mahdieh Esfandiari freed from French prison on parole

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has announced that Iranian academic Mahdieh Esfandiari, behind bars in France, has been released on parole. She spent a total 237 days in prison.

Esfandiari went missing in early March 2025, and her family informed Iranian officials of her disappearance after not hearing from her for an extended period. After remaining tight-lipped for nearly a month, French judicial officials finally broke their silence in early April 2025, confirming her detention.

The Paris Prosecutor's Office accused her of "glorifying terrorism" and social media-related offenses. In her posts, she condemned the genocide in Gaza and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. ▶ Page 2

Iran calls for unity in reviving water resources at OIC water ministers' meeting in Jeddah

TEHRAN – Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said it is time for Muslim countries to restore their shared heritage of water management through collective action, noting that cooperation rather than rivalry is essential for protecting vital water resources.

Speaking at the 5th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Aliabadi described water as both the "source of life and a manifestation of divine order," stressing that its fair and wise management is a moral and religious obligation.

He said the Islamic world's long history of innovative water systems such as qanats and reservoirs reflects the collective wisdom and social participation of Muslim societies, built on faith, justice and knowledge. ▶ Page 4

U23 Greco-Roman team crowned 2025 world champions

TEHRAN – Iran's Greco-Roman team claimed the title of the 2025 U23 Wrestling World Championships held in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers won three gold medals, one silver and two bronzes.

Iman Mohammadi claimed the title in the 72kg class, as well as two gold medals by Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg) and Fardin Hedayati (130kg).

Sajjad Abbaspour seized a silver in 60kg and Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg) and Abolfazl Mohmedi (82kg) snatched two bronze medals.

Ukraine came second with 96 points (two golds, two silvers) and Azerbaijan finished in third place with 93 points (two golds, one bronze).



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Leader: Naeini was a magnificent jurist and towering pillar in the old Najaf seminary

TEHRAN – The remarks of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, made during his meeting with the organizers of the International Commemoration of Allameh Mirza Muhammad Hussain Naeini (ra), were released Thursday morning at the event's venue in Qom.

During the meeting, which took place on Wednesday, October 22, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution hailed Allameh Naeini as one of the most distinguished scholarly and spiritual pillars of the ancient Hawza [Seminary] in Najaf. He further noted that from a professional perspective, ▶ Page 3

Exclusive Interview

"No Kings" protests are reaction to Trump's authoritarian drift: ex-CIA official



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A small step towards frozen ties between Tehran and Europe

In a note, Shargh discussed the consular humanitarian prisoner swap between Iran and France. It wrote: Vahid Jalalzadeh, the Deputy Minister for Consular Affairs at the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had announced that Mahdiah Esfandari, an Iranian citizen detained in France, had been involved in a prisoner swap and said that we had put in place a political and consular package that both countries must implement. If the exchange between Tehran and Paris takes place, this event could be the first sign of breaking the silence and ice in relations between Iran and the European Union after a period of tension and distrust. A humanitarian or consular exchange could be considered a “confidence-building gesture.” However, the realization of such a starting point depends on the initiative of both sides. Iran has always emphasized that it follows the principle of mutual respect and balanced action in its foreign relations. If Paris also distances itself from the policy of pressure and complete cooperation with Washington and returns to the path of balanced dialogue, there is a possibility of reviving interaction.

Etemad: Why snapback failed to disrupt Iran's oil exports?

In an analysis, Etemad examined the reason why Iran's oil exports were not disrupted. It wrote: The reason why the snapback failed to disrupt Iran's oil exports was the clear stance of China and Russia against the new sanctions. Beijing and Moscow have previously stated explicitly that they will not accept unilateral sanctions against Iran and do not support the return of UN restrictions. China's high volume of purchases from Iran is due to China's opposition to unilateral U.S. sanctions. This has led analysts to say that Beijing is the largest consumer of Iranian oil and has probably distance itself from the West's new sanctions policy in favor of its own interests. As a result, Iran's oil industry has been able to largely escape U.S. maritime and banking restrictions thanks to the significant support of these Eastern customers. Relations with Russia and the Euro-Asia Economic Union (EAEU) have also given Iran an advantage. Tehran has also strengthened its traditional relations with its eastern neighbors to take advantage of new routes for energy exports and financial transactions. Overall, in recent months, the country's authorities have tried to minimize the impact of international sanctions by diversifying its trading partners.

Farhikhtegan: Table of surrender, not negotiation

In a commentary on the current state of negotiations between Iran and the United States, Farhikhtegan wrote: Neither since the negotiations between Iran and the United States began with the mediation of Oman and were stopped by war, nor after that, has there been any sign of America's seriousness in reaching an agreement or negotiating within the framework of diplomatic rules. The Americans see the negotiating table with Iran as a table for winning one-sided concessions in their favor. With the idea that Iran has become weak and is under economic pressure, they believe that Iran must accept whatever they put on the table, and from their perspective, this is a desirable agreement with Iran. On the other hand, their negotiation strategy with Iran has been structured in such a way that it will gradually force Iran to change its approach in the nuclear, defense, and military fields, and its realization would also mean Iran's soft surrender to these threats. Accepting these conditions and sitting at the negotiating table with the United States is neither related to the principles of negotiation nor to Iran's approaches and negotiating frameworks.

Iran: Turkmenistan, a focal point in the northeast

Ali Mojtaba Roozbahani, the Iranian ambassador to Ashgabat, reviewed the relations between Iran and Turkmenistan in an interview with the Iran newspaper. The ambassador says that Turkmenistan, given its geographical location in the northeast of Iran, plays an important role in the equations of provincial diplomacy, because its long common border and access to transit routes and energy resources have made this country a focal point of regional economic and security interactions. The four active border crossings between Iran and Turkmenistan have provided a unique capacity for the development of economic cooperation. The solid infrastructure of these crossings has enabled the exchange of goods, transit, and the development of common markets and has paved the way for the growth and deepening of economic relations. Turkmenistan is one of the most demanding markets for Iranian goods and products, and our goal for the next three years is to reach a volume of 3 billion dollars in bilateral trade, the bulk of which should be achieved by the private sector.

Larijani says missile range reduction will undermine national security

From page 1 ► Iran's Armed Forces used locally-developed missiles to respond to the Israeli regime's act of aggression against the country.

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

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

During Israel's 12-day aggression against Iran in June, the United States reportedly expended a significant portion – approximately a quarter – of its advanced THAAD missile interceptor supply. American forces fired over 100 THAADs, possibly as many as 150, to counter Iran's barrage of ballistic missiles, U.S.



Ali Larijani, Secretary of Supreme National Security Council, addresses a ceremony to commemorate Martyr Hossein Hamedani in Tehran on October 23, 2025.

media claims. The U.S. has deployed two of its seven THAAD systems to defend Israel in the conflict. This rapid expenditure of THAAD interceptors reportedly revealed a vulnerability in the U.S. missile defense capabilities and depleted a valuable resource amidst declining American public support for Israeli defense.

Despite the extensive efforts by the U.S., Israel, and a number of European and regional countries to intercept the Iranian missiles, Iran still managed to strike its targets, destroying important military and strategic sites across the occupied territories. It is believed that this unprecedented damage was what compelled Israel and Washington to

ask for a ceasefire.

The last round of nuclear negotiations between Iran and the U.S. came to a halt when the war broke out. The U.S. now wants Iran to also negotiate the range of its missiles, which officials in Tehran say is a nonstarter. Larijani previously stated that Washington wants Iranian missiles to have a range of no more than 500km, meaning the country would be unable to retaliate against Israel if attacked again.

Elsewhere in his Thursday remarks, Larijani said external economic pressure will fail to erode Iran's resilience. “The West imagines that with economic pressure it can reduce Iran's resilience,” the security chief said, adding that “the nation of Iran, with resistance and faith, will pass through this stage as well.”

Larijani noted that if “we want national resistance to continue, we must stand united and speak with one voice,” emphasizing that “national security belongs to all people and defending it is a collective duty.”

Tehran, Minsk vow to deepen defense cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran and Belarus have pledged to deepen their defense and industrial cooperation, citing a shared vision and common interests on the global stage.

The announcement came during a meeting in Tehran between Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh and Dmitry Pantus, Chairman of the Belarusian State Military-Industrial Committee. Minister Nasirzadeh stated that Tehran welcomes

expanded cooperation with friendly and independent nations like Belarus, which holds a “special position” in Iran's foreign relations.

Pantus acknowledged Iran's extensive technological and industrial capabilities and expressed Minsk's eagerness to boost collaboration in research, development, and the production of defense equipment. Both officials agreed that the two countries see eye-to-eye on numerous international issues

and are ready to create a roadmap for future partnership.

The talks also stressed the need to accelerate joint projects, potentially leveraging the capacities of regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The growing ties between the two nations have been previously described as a response to shared challenges, having both been subjected to oppressive Western sanctions.

Iranian national Mahdiah Esfandari freed from French prison on parole



Demonstrators hold portraits of Mahdiah Esfandari during a protest in front of the French Embassy in Tehran on October 21, 2025.

From page 1 ► No evidence of wrongdoing has been presented, and the accusations against her lack any factual or legal basis, making the case highly suspicious and suggesting it was neither a standard criminal case nor a genuine civil rights issue.

Iran's Judiciary spokesperson Asqar Jahangiri stated recently that the French government had failed to fulfill its promise to set Esfandari free. “They had, at one point, stated that if a suitable location were designated, she would be released to be held

there. The Iranian Embassy in France complied, but France refused to honor its commitment,” Jahangiri added.

“In our opinion, supporting the Palestinian people and expressing opposition to genocide in Gaza are legitimate moves in line with safeguarding human rights and cannot be considered an offense,” the spokesperson noted.

France's incarceration of Esfandari is believed to have been part of a broader campaign to crack down on pro-Palestine and anti-genocide activists. The arbitrary and illegal detention of Iranian academic Esfandari in France has revealed new dimensions of “double standards” and “political hypocrisy” in the so-called homeland of human rights and freedom of expression.

This particular case transcends an individual matter and has become a global symbol exposing

the deceit of Western powers. Before her release on parole, the Iranian national had been detained for several months in a Paris suburb prison without any legal basis.

This news emerged as Paris and Tehran engaged in negotiations for the release of Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris —imprisoned in Iran on espionage charges — in exchange for freeing Esfandari, the Iranian national falsely accused of “glorifying terrorism.”

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi recently stated in a televised interview that an agreement to exchange French prisoners for an Iranian academic was nearing its “final stage.” He reiterated this in a phone call with Esfandari after her release on parole.

Top Iranian MP calls for practical mechanisms to deal with Israeli war criminals

TEHRAN – The deputy speaker of the Iranian Parliament has underscored the necessity of putting forward practical solutions to counter war criminals.

“The Israeli regime and its main backer, the United States, are directly responsible for humanitarian crimes in Gaza and Palestine, and these actions are regarded as blatant violation of human rights and international law,” said Hamidreza Hajibabai at the 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva in reaction to a report by a committee tasked with reviewing the Middle East issues.

“In this report, two key points should have been emphasized more; first, singling out the Israeli regime and the US as the main perpetrators of the humanitarian crimes in Gaza; and second, the need to incorporate into the final report specific operational suggestions to deal with these criminals,” he added.

Gaza remains in ruins after two years of relentless Israeli bombardment that began on October 7, 2023. Despite repeated calls for

calm and a ceasefire in place, sporadic air and drone attacks continue to claim lives, further complicating reconstruction efforts and the return of displaced civilians to their homes in Gaza City and Khan Younis.

“It would not be enough to simply pinpoint the crimes. Practical and effective mechanism should be formulated and implemented to respond to the perpetrators of these crimes,” he explained.

The IPU event focused on safeguarding human norms and supporting humanitarian moves at times of crises as well as achieving all-encompassing democracy to have a sustainable world.

A United Nations commission of inquiry says said last month that Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

The commission's report said there were reasonable grounds to conclude that four of the five genocidal acts defined under international law have been carried out since the start of Israel's latest war against Gaza:

killing members of a group, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions calculated to destroy the group, and preventing births.

Last year, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former War Minister Yoav Gallant, accusing them of war crimes in the Palestinian enclave. The court said it had “reasonable grounds” to believe Netanyahu bears criminal responsibility for war crimes including “starvation as a method of warfare” and “the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.”

Gaza's health ministry states that at least 70,000 Palestinians have been killed in the past two years. Some estimates, however, suggest the number could be as high as 350,000. Furthermore, disease and famine have spread across the enclave due to a lasting siege the regime imposed since the early days of the war.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited the childhood home of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on October 24, 2025. The Leader spent his early life in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad. His old home has been turned into a museum.

How US blackmail scuttled Iran’s generous offer on 60% enriched uranium

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – A recurring lesson for Iranians has been that no matter their actions or offers, the West, particularly the United States, is loath to pursue a path of de-escalation. This was most recently exemplified during Iran’s efforts to block the “snapback”—a JCPOA mechanism that was supposed to reimpose anti-Iran UN sanctions this month but failed to fully materialize due to significant international opposition.

The snapback mechanism was officially invoked by the European signatories to the JCPOA (Britain, Germany, and France) in late August. On September 19th, the United Nations Security Council voted not to permanently lift pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran. On September 27, the UNSC also rejected a resolution brought forth by Russia and China, the remaining signatories to the JCPOA alongside Iran (the U.S. having withdrawn in 2018), to delay the snapback of sanctions. A day later, the E3 declared that UN sanctions against Iran had officially been reimposed.

According to information obtained by the Tehran Times, Iran went to significant lengths to prevent the reimposition of UN sanctions. Officials in the country believed that every diplomatic tool should be utilized, as any further escalation of tensions would serve no one’s interests.

The Cairo deal, and an unprecedented offer on enriched uranium

The Europeans had stated they



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) met with IAEA Chief Rafael Grossi (R) in New York after the summit was called off

invoked the snapback due to “concerns” that included: the suspension of Tehran’s cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after the June war, and the whereabouts of Iran’s enriched uranium, specifically its 60% enriched stockpile, reportedly located at nuclear sites Israel and Washington illegally struck.

In November, Iran sent Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to Cairo to sign a new cooperation agreement with the IAEA. This deal, which has since become null, drew significant criticism within Iran. The public’s long-standing belief that the UN nuclear watchdog serves as a tool of the West, rather than a technical and neutral body, was significantly exacerbated during the 12-day U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran, when the agency refused to condemn the illegal attacks on Iranian nuclear, civilian, and military infrastructure.

Between late August and late September, Iran also expressed its readiness to address Western concerns about its enriched uranium stockpile, according to information obtained by the Tehran Times. Tehran initially planned to send its 60% enriched uranium to Russia. However, it later informed Europeans and the United States that it was willing to transfer the uranium directly to the West if the snapback mechanism was scrapped. Both Europe and Washington welcomed this offer.

The U.S. later requested a trilateral summit in New York to publicly announce the breakthrough, involving a representative from Iran, IAEA Chief Rafael Grossi, and U.S. Presidential Envoy Steve Witkoff. This meeting was planned to coincide with the Iranian delegation’s visit for the annual UN General Assembly. Tehran agreed, and the summit was subsequently expanded to include the E3.

Things go south, yet again

Just as Iranians were preparing to depart for New York, Witkoff notified Araghchi that Washington had unilaterally changed the terms of the agreement. The new condition was that the United States would only ask the Europeans to extend the snapback if Iran surrendered its uranium. Araghchi rejected this outright, stating that Iran would never allow another party to “dictate” an agreement and that the country would rather call off the scheduled summit entirely. Despite European efforts at persuasion, the Trump administration did not budge.

Although the pre-JCPOA UN sanctions have officially been reimposed, their implementation has not occurred. Russia and China, deeming these sanctions illegal, have declared they will not comply. Furthermore, at a recent summit in Uganda, at least 120 other countries assured Iran they would also refrain from implementing the sanctions. The saga did, however, cause Iran’s Rial to fall to a new low, although the decline has significantly subsided in the past two weeks.

Iran continues to retain its 60% enriched uranium, and cooperation with the IAEA remains suspended. It is unclear if another round of talks could take place in the near future. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, stated this week that his country’s nuclear industry “has nothing to do with America,” a remark suggesting the West may have squandered all its opportunities at diplomacy.

program have reached the same conclusion as we have,” Grossi said, “Iran’s activities remain stable, traceable and not directed toward weaponization.”

Striking a conciliatory note, Grossi commended Iran for its diplomatic posture in the wake of the intense 12-day conflict that followed the strikes, which saw Iranian retaliatory attacks on Israeli-occupied territories and a U.S. base. He suggested that Iran’s current limitations on inspector access are a product of legitimate security anxieties.

“After the twelve-day war, Iran could have chosen isolation—cut off dialogue, withdrawn from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and taken a more confrontational path. But it did not,” Grossi observed. “Instead, Tehran opted to remain engaged. It shows a willingness to preserve diplomacy even under intense pressure. Given the recent attacks on its sovereign sites, that caution is understandable.”

Emphasizing the path forward, the IAEA chief highlighted ongoing communication. “I remain in regular contact with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and our focus is on maintaining diplomatic momentum,” Grossi concluded. “If diplomacy continues, there is no reason for force to return to the equation.”



Leader meets with organizers of the International Commemoration of Allameh Mirza Naeini

ment of “establishing a just government and ending tyranny.” This was, he stressed, distinct from the version of constitutionalism the British created in Iran, which led to disputes and tragic outcomes such as the execution of

Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri. During the meeting, Ayatollah Alireza Araf, director of the seminaries, provided a report on the programs and activities of the International Commemoration of Allameh Naeini.

Persepolis beat Zob Ahan in 2025/26 PGPL

TEHRAN – Persepolis Football Club registered their second win of eight matches in the 2025/26 Iran’s Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) on Friday.

In the match at Tehran’s Shahr-e Qods Stadium, Persepolis defeated Zob Ahan thanks to goals from Mohammad Omri and Ali Alipour, one in each half. Persepolis had previously defeated Sepahan and had not won another match until the Zob Ahan victory.

Elsewhere in the league, Malavan defeated Esteghlal Khuzestan 2-1 in Bandar Anzali, Aluminum and Mes played to a goalless draw in Arak and Chadormalou beat Kheybar 2-1 in Yazd.

On Saturday, PGPL leader Gol Gohar will host Tractor, and Fajr Sepasi will face Esteghlal. Sepahan will host Paykan on Sunday.

Women’s futsal team aim to make history at World Cup: Tavassoli

TEHRAN – Farzaneh Tavassoli, goalkeeper of Iran’s women’s futsal team, says they intend to make history at the 2025 FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup.

The 2025 edition is scheduled to be hosted in the Philippines from Nov. 21 to Dec. 7. Iran, in Group D, will face Brazil, Panama, and Italy. The team recently played two friendly matches with Russia in Tula.

“Two friendlies against Russia were essential and highly beneficial for the team’s preparation. The first match ended in a 2-2 draw, and we won the second 4-3. These friendlies were aimed at boosting the team’s readiness for the World Cup,” Tavassoli told Tehran Times.

“For years, Iran had no chance to play against a strong, stylish European side, and it was a milestone to win the first-ever match against Russia on their soil. The two matches will significantly aid the team’s preparation. European playing styles differ from Asian styles, and more friendlies with European teams will help us further,” she added.

Tavassoli believes that with hard work and strategic leadership, Iran can achieve notable results and even pursue “historic” outcomes at the 2025 World Cup, despite a tough group.

“Team Melli are a blend of young and experienced players across all positions. There is a mix of seasoned veterans and promising younger talent, with several players who have real match experience,” she concluded.

Futsal team learn rivals at 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s futsal team discovered its opponents in the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games.

The Games are scheduled to be held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

Iran is in Group B along with Morocco, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan.

Azerbaijan is drawn in Group A along with Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Libya.

The group stage matches will be held on November 4, 6 and 8. The top two teams will qualify for the semi-finals. The stage will be held on November 9.

The gold and bronze medal matches are scheduled for November 11.

Girls’ handball team earn third win: 2025 AYG

TEHRAN – Iran’s girls’ handball team de-

feated Kazakhstan 27-23 in the 2025 Asian Youth Games (AYG) on Friday.

Iran, who had defeated China 30-25 and Uzbekistan 27-24, in its two opening matches, will face Thailand on Monday.

The 3rd Asian Youth Games are taking place in Bahrain from October 22 to 31.

The Games serve as qualifiers for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar.

Iran has sent 236 athletes to the Games.

Iranian kabaddi teams win two silvers at 2025 AYG

TEHRAN – Iran’s girls’ and boys’ kabaddi teams lost to India in the final of the 2025 Asian Youth Games (AYG) on Thursday.

Iranian girls were outclassed by India 75-21 in the final.

Iran had defeated Sri Lanka 54-26, Bangladesh 33-19, Thailand 61-35, and lost to India 59-26 in the preliminary round.

Iran boys also lost to India 35-32 in the final.

Iran had defeated Thailand 72-29, Pakistan 74-21, Bahrain 92-17, and lost to Bangladesh 55-48 and India 46-29 in the preliminary round.

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Iran has sent 236 athletes to the Games.

NOC chief Khosravi Vafa attends OCA’s Executive Board meeting

TEHRAN – Head of Iran’s National Olympic Committee (NOC) Mahmoud Khosravi Vafa attended the 101st Executive Board Meeting of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) in Bahrain.

The OCA has pledged its full support to the Bahrain Olympic Committee and the organizing committee of the 3rd Asian Youth Games (AYG).

The 2025 AYG in Bahrain officially opened on Wednesday evening, marking the start of the major youth sporting spectacle featuring over 4,300 athletes competing across 253 events in 24 sports

The Philippines is seeking hosting rights for the Asian Youth Games (AYG), with the next taking place in 2029.

Nazemi, Fathi to officiate at 2025 FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup

TEHRAN – Gelareh Nazemi and Zari Fathi have been chosen by FIFA to officiate at the 2025 FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup.

Both referees have prior experience at major events, including the AFC Women’s Futsal Championship and the UEFA Women’s Futsal Euro 2019 semi-final between Spain and Russia in Portugal.

Additional Asian referees named for the tournament include Liang Qingyun and Zhu Xin (China), Kana Saito and Mari Yamamoto (Japan), Reem Albishi (Saudi Arabia), Nurul Atikah Janah (Malaysia), and Panadda Khotsenaphattrat (Thailand).

The 2025 FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup is the planned inaugural edition of the FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup, an international futsal competition organized by FIFA.

The tournament is scheduled to be hosted in the Philippines from November 21 to December 7.

Leader: Naeini was a magnificent jurist and towering pillar in the old Najaf seminary

From Page 1 ▶ Allameh Naeini’s most prominent feature was the way he structured his classes in the science of Islamic jurisprudence principles [Usul al-Fiqh]. This framework, the Leader noted, was firmly “grounded in intellectual and scientific order” and marked by his “numerous and robust innovations.”

Ayatollah Khamenei went on to highlight another outstanding quality that set Allameh Naeini apart among the grand religious authorities: his political thought. This vision, he pointed out, is reflected in Allameh Naeini’s “valuable and little-known book, Tanbih al-Ummah.”

The Leader asserted that Allameh Naeini’s political thought is anchored in the principle of establishing an Islamic government based on divine guardianship [wilayah] as a counter to tyrann-

ny. He underscored that according to Allameh Naeini’s political thought, the government and all its officials must be subject to national oversight and accountability. This, he added, requires the formation of a “parliament of representatives” through elections for supervision and legislation, with the validity of its laws contingent upon the approval of eminent jurists and scholars.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described Allameh Naeini’s envisioned framework of an Islamic and popular government as what would today be understood as the “Islamic Republic.” Regarding the reason Allameh Naeini personally collected his book Tanbih al-Ummah, Imam Khamenei explained that the Constitutional Movement supported by Allameh Naeini and the scholars of Najaf was fundamentally an endorse-

Iran elected as chair of GECF executive board

TEHRAN – Iran has been elected as chair of the executive board of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), and its proposal to transform the forum into an “Organization of Gas Exporting Countries” received broad support, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Thursday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 27th GECF Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Paknejad said the gathering — the forum’s highest decision-making body — discussed administrative, structural, and budgetary matters for the coming year.

“Iran was elected to chair the GECF executive board, and our proposal to elevate the forum into an organization was positively received,” he said. “This transformation would enhance the body’s effectiveness within the global energy landscape, particularly among major gas producers and exporters.”

The minister noted that the meeting also addressed the selection of a new GECF secretary-general, as the incumbent’s term had ended.



“There was a general inclination among ministers to elect a candidate from a member country that has not previously held the post, though no final decision has been reached yet,” he added.

Iran strengthens rail diplomacy at “Middle East Railway Forum”

TEHRAN – Iran’s rail diplomacy gained momentum at the 36th Regional Assembly of Middle East Railways (UIC RAME), attended by senior representatives from Turkey, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, alongside officials from the International Union of Railways (UIC).

According to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, delegates from Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia’s public transport authority also joined the meeting virtually.

At the opening session, Jabar Ali Zakari, Iran’s deputy transport minister and head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), highlighted Iran’s dynamic and purposeful approach to regional rail diplomacy, particularly with neighboring countries.

He said recent memorandums with Central Asian states, Russia, and China have led to continuous growth in international freight and transit volumes through Iran in 2025.

Zakari noted that efforts to complete rail infrastructure, link networks, reduce cargo transit times, and expand passenger services with neighboring states — especially Turkey, Afghanistan, and Iraq — were accelerating, describing such initiatives as vital for regional integration and sustainable development.

The RAME vice chair said expanding rail and multimodal transit is a key priority for Iran Railways, adding that Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates offer major opportunities for cooperation.

He also described reconnecting rail links between Iran and Saudi Arabia as a “historic opportunity” to boost economic growth and religious tourism across Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, home to key Islamic pilgrimage centers.

Zakari said Iran was ready to launch new joint working groups with regional countries to complete border projects, align operational standards, strengthen rail–port connections in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman



— especially via Chabahar Port — and develop data-sharing systems.

During the meeting, Zakari and Saudi Railways CEO Bashar al-Malik exchanged experiences in managing and maintaining rail lines in sandy environments to improve network safety.

Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan sign MOU to expand rail cooperation

On the sidelines of the forum, the rail authorities of Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan signed a memorandum of understanding to deepen cooperation in the rail sector.

The five-year MOU — signed by Zakari, Turkish State Railways (TCDD) director-general Veysi Kurt, and Mohammad Ishaq Saheb-zada, head of Afghanistan’s Railway Authority — aims to boost efficiency along existing routes, streamline cross-border procedures, expand capacity, and build a sustainable regional rail corridor.

It also covers human resource development, maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, digitalization, capacity allocation, traffic management, and mutual technical visits by senior managers and staff.

The three sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing collaboration in rail maintenance, infrastructure development, traffic control, and training.

He described the association as a vital link between producers and consumers and called for stronger government support to ensure high-quality products reach the market.

Jalalipour noted that advances in technology have significantly boosted efficiency in the sector, adding that modern systems such as PVC and thermal break aluminum frames, along with double-glazed windows, can reduce gas and electricity consumption by at least 40 percent — a major contribution to balancing the country’s energy use.

Iran self-sufficient in door, window production

TEHRAN – Iran has reached near self-sufficiency in door and window manufacturing, with only additive materials still imported, the secretary of the Iranian Association of Door and Window Manufacturers said.

Vahid Jalalipour, speaking Thursday at the opening of the 17th edition of Doors and Windows Technology International Exhibition of Iran (Do-Win Tech 2025), said the main challenge facing producers lies in fragmented decision-making in the construction industry, underscoring the need for better coordination among relevant organizations.

Iran calls for unity in reviving water resources at OIC water ministers’ meeting in Jeddah

TEHRAN – Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said it is time for Muslim countries to restore their shared heritage of water management through collective action, noting that cooperation rather than rivalry is essential for protecting vital water resources.

Speaking at the 5th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Aliabadi described water as both the “source of life and a manifestation of divine order,” stressing that its fair and wise management is a moral and religious obligation.

He said the Islamic world’s long history of innovative water systems such as qanats and reservoirs reflects the collective wisdom and social participation of Muslim societies, built on faith, justice and knowledge.

“It is time to revive this civilizational legacy with shared modern policies,” he said.

Aliabadi highlighted Iran’s successful experience in achieving self-sufficiency and sustainable development in the water sector through projects including the design and construction of major dams, urban water transfer and



distribution networks, wastewater treatment plants, and modern irrigation systems — all developed domestically despite tough sanctions.

He emphasized Iran’s readiness to share technical expertise with neighboring countries, noting that regional water challenges such as drought, declining rainfall and population growth require collective management rather than competition.

“Water is a shared resource, and its sustainable management demands regional solidarity,” he said.

The minister also reaffirmed Iran’s long-standing commitment to cooperative management of transboundary rivers and shared water resources, adding that Tehran has consistently sought to resolve environmental and

water-related issues through dialogue rather than political confrontation.

Bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the OIC conference

On the sidelines of the event, Aliabadi met with Tajikistan’s Minister of Water and Energy, Daler Juma, to discuss cooperation on hydropower generation using spillway water, strengthening dam structures, and supporting Iranian companies involved in Tajikistan’s Rogun Dam project.

The two sides agreed to have experts from both countries finalize technical frameworks for collaboration within ten days.

In a separate meeting, Aliabadi held talks with Indonesia’s Minister of Manpower and Housing, Dody Hanggodo, focusing on Iran’s experience in hydropower

‘TCCIMA ready to become national hub for Iran-Eurasia relations’

Tehran- At the fourth Iran-Eurasia Strategic Forum, Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), announced the Chamber’s readiness to become the national center for monitoring, evaluating, and planning Iran’s interactions with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

The forum was held on Wednesday, October 22, at the IRIB International Conference Center, hosted by the capital’s private sector parliament.

The event featured government officials, private sector representatives from Iran, and delegates from EAEU member states.

The agenda included three specialized panels addressing key challenges in trade development, focusing on customs and transportation, banking and finance, and standards and inspection.

A trilateral cooperation MOU was also signed between the joint chambers of commerce of Iran-Armenia, Iran-Russia, and Iran-Kazakhstan.

A strategic pivot in a multipolar world

In his address, Najafi-Arab stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Eurasian partners are at a critical juncture. “On one hand, the world faces the consequences of a multipolar international system and increasing geo-economic competition, which unfortunately is still based on unilateralism and sanctions,” he said. “On the other hand, countries in our region have reached a common understanding that the only path to sustainable development is relying on internal capacities, strengthening regional ties, and moving towards genuine economic integration.”

He highlighted the formal implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Iran and the EAEU, starting in April 2024, as a milestone in the country’s economic diplomacy.

Najafi-Arab described the EAEU, with a population of nearly 200 million and a GDP exceeding \$2 trillion, as a strategic bridge connecting the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. He emphasized that success hinges on national synergy and the active participation of provincial chambers and trade associations, and that the Tehran Chamber is prepared to act as a national coordinator.

Call for indigenous mechanisms amid sanctions

The chamber head further stressed that with several EAEU members, including Iran, Russia, and Belarus, under illegal unilateral sanctions, strengthening intra-regional cooperation is paramount. “Cooperation among countries enduring similar pressures can pave the way for creating indigenous and innovative mechanisms in trade, finance,



and technology,” he noted, adding that such mechanisms enhance not only economic resilience but also the capacity for growth under difficult conditions.

He committed the Tehran Chamber to acting as a bridge between the private sector, the government, and international institutions. Najafi-Arab outlined three pillars for Eurasia’s economic future: mutual trust and respect for balanced interests, development of shared communication and financial infrastructure, and strengthened regional institutions to manage global economic challenges.

Efforts to remove non-tariff barriers

Addressing the same gathering, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade and Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), commended the Tehran Chamber for hosting the event.

He revealed that following the implementation of the EAEU preferential trade agreement in 2019, trade between Iran and the bloc doubled within four years.

“Currently, with the signing and implementation of the Iran-Eurasia trade agreement, tariffs on 87% of mutually agreed goods have been reduced to zero,” Dehghan Dehnavi said. “The tariff barriers between Iran and the EAEU have been resolved, and the next step is to remove non-tariff barriers,” he added, specifically pointing to differing standardization systems. He urged the private sectors of both sides to advocate for facilitation in this area.

Common language of trade in Eurasia

Mahdi Sanai, Political Advisor to the President, for his part, described Eurasia as a region of heightened importance in the new global order, highlighting its vast energy reserves and transit capacity. He noted that Iran’s membership in four key organizations—the EAEU, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)—provides significant platforms for cooperation.

Sanai revealed that nearly 90% of Iranian

goods are now traded within the EAEU at zero or preferential tariffs. However, he acknowledged a “bitter reality,” stating that trade volumes with EAEU countries do not match the existing potential. “It is not fitting for Iran’s trade with Caucasus or Central Asian countries to be at the level of a few hundred million dollars,” he said, calling for structural economic reforms and greater government support for the private sector to resolve bottlenecks.

Practicing free trade

Hervik Yarianian, Head of the Tehran Chamber’s Industry and Mining Committee, referred to the implemented FTA as a “new-born baby” with significant growth potential.

He described it as an opportunity for the private sector to “practice competitive trade,” which, despite potential difficulties, would force businesses to increase quality and innovation, ultimately benefiting the people.

Private sector is eager to connect with the world

Amir Abedi, Head of the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber, reported that Iran accounts for less than half a percent of Kazakhstan’s \$130 billion foreign trade. He identified the main prerequisite for increasing trade with EAEU countries as “reforming the domestic trade structure.” While acknowledging the Iranian private sector’s high capabilities, Abedi stressed that businesses need a more favorable environment to interact with the world and create constructive engagements, including better utilization of the Caspian Sea’s potential.

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

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

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

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

“No Kings” protests are reaction to Trump’s authoritarian drift: Ex-CIA official

Paul Pillar says public demonstrations are the last line of defense against erosion of democratic norms

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Paul R. Pillar, a veteran intelligence analyst and former senior CIA official, examined the emergence of the “No Kings” movement in the United States as a grassroots reaction to what many see as Donald Trump’s authoritarian drift during his second term.

Pillar described the protests as a manifestation of citizens’ alarm over the weakening of institutional checks and balances and the erosion of democratic norms.

The following is the text of the interview:

How might Trump’s second-term policies reshape the social fabric of the United States, particularly regarding polarization, race relations, and public trust in institutions?

Trump’s second term has been more extreme than his first term in every respect and is inflicting severe damage on liberal democracy. Divisiveness has been a major part of Trump’s political approach, and his role has increased political polarization. The racial dimension is part of this, in that Trump has increasingly applied white nationalist, and outright racist, themes, such as by virtually eliminating



asylum for foreigners except for white South Africans. Public trust in governmental institutions unfortunately is apt to suffer, if the public fails to distinguish clearly between the institutions themselves and how Trump has corrupted and misused them.

To what degree have economic inequality and disillusionment with political elites contributed to both Trump’s support base and the protest movements against him?

Much of Trump’s support has come from white men with relatively low education, who feel left behind by economic advances in a globalized world. Such individuals find it easy to blame elites for their situation. Although Trump’s ill-advised economic policies may eventually generate economically based

protests against him, the current anti-Trump protests are motivated mainly by concern over Trump’s disdain for the rule of law and his moves toward authoritarian rule and curbs on individual freedom.

From your perspective, what do the “No Kings” protests reveal about the current state of American democracy and the balance of power between institutions?

The Republican majority in Congress, and the Republican-appointed majority on the Supreme Court, have failed to stand up to Trump and his illegal behavior. In that sense, the balance of power among federal institutions has failed. In response, citizens have felt it necessary to take matters into their own hands by demonstrating in the street.

Some critics argue that Trump’s approach marks a transition from populism to outright authoritarianism. Do you agree with this assessment?

Trump is not a true populist. He uses populist language, and he has succeeded in fooling much of the electorate, but the policies of him and his party, as exemplified by the one big piece of legislation the Republicans have passed this year, are not populist.

They are policies favoring crony capitalism. Trump has, in less than a year into his second term, moved significantly toward authoritarianism. He wants to be a dictator. It remains to be seen whether he will encounter enough resistance to stop him from becoming one.

Could the “No Kings” movement evolve into a significant force capable of reshaping U.S. political norms — or is it more symbolic than structural?

Trump himself is unlikely to back down on his own from his destruction of established U.S. political norms. What a growing protest movement might do is to demonstrate to Republicans that Trump is becoming sufficiently unpopular that it no longer is advantageous for them to slavishly follow Trump.

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

West Bank annexation theater: How Israel’s Knesset plays good cop, bad cop

From page 1 ► On the surface, Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump appear to oppose annexation. Netanyahu halted the bills, describing them as a “political provocation.”

Yet the reality on the ground tells a different story. Settlements continue to expand aggressively across the West Bank. In the sensitive E1 area near Jerusalem (al-Quds), Israel recently approved thousands of new homes, projects that threaten to bisect the West Bank and make a future Palestinian state virtually impossible. Settler violence has also risen sharply. Since the Gaza war began in October 2023, over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers in the West Bank, and thousands more displaced.

This is a textbook “good cop, bad cop” scenario. Netanyahu and Trump act as the good cops, presenting themselves as restraining annexation to appease international opinion and Arab states. The far-right politicians act as the bad cops, pushing annexation and creating pressure that forces the government to show restraint. Meanwhile, Israel consolidates territory and expands settlements while maintaining the appearance of following international norms.

Trump’s goals are clear. His Gaza ceasefire plan, which began on October 10, has been repeatedly violated, yet he wants to claim success in stabilizing the region. He also seeks to advance the Abraham Accords by bringing in more Arab countries. Annexation threatens both efforts by inflaming tensions and alienating potential partners. Netanyahu, meanwhile, needs to manage his far-right coalition. Publicly halting the bills satisfies U.S. and international expectations, while settlement expansion continues quietly.

The consequences for Palestinians are stark. The two-state solution continues to erode. Territories are fragmented, and Palestinian rights increasingly ignored. While international media focuses on U.S. opposition to annexation, Israel’s de facto annexation proceeds through settlement expansion and control of key areas.

The Gaza situation adds another layer. Trump and other U.S. officials are pushing reconstruction and stabilization plans. Civilians displaced during the war face immense challenges. According to the UN, over 90% of buildings in Gaza were damaged or destroyed. More than 15,000



patients still await medical treatment outside Gaza, and aid delivery remains slow. Annexation threatens to undermine U.S. narratives of progress in the region.

Ultimately, the Knesset votes reveal a coordinated strategy. The far-right agitates for annexation, creating a spectacle. Netanyahu and Trump step in as good cops, claiming to block it while, in practice, Israel consolidates control over the West Bank. Annexation is advancing, but the public narrative misleads the world about who is driving it.

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

Cruel blockade worsens Gaza crisis

From page 1 ► “We want the Israeli authorities to allow in more trucks at more crossing points; we’ve made that clear,” Haq said.

Yet the occupation regime continues to limit access, leaving more than 2.2 million Palestinians trapped in worsening conditions.

Video gathered by Reuters shows Israeli settlers blocking aid trucks near the Karem Abu Salem crossing, an Israeli military-controlled gateway where limited aid, described as “a drop in the ocean,” is allowed to enter.

Meanwhile, the Rafah crossing, Gaza’s main passage to Egypt and the outside world, remains closed by the Israeli regime. This is preventing essential medical equipment, food, and fuel from entering and stopping critically ill patients

from leaving. The truce agreement stipulated that the Rafah border crossing would fully open in the first phase.

Humanitarian organizations warn that these restrictions amount to collective punishment, violating international law. The consequences are severe. Hospitals operate with minimal power and dwindling supplies, forcing doctors to perform surgeries without anesthesia and sterilize instruments under unsafe conditions.

Overcrowded shelters and destroyed sanitation systems fuel outbreaks of diseases such as respiratory infections, worsened by the use of white phosphorus bombs by Israeli occupation forces during the genocide. The World Health Organization has previously warned that Gaza’s health system

is “on the verge of total collapse.”

In northern Gaza, famine conditions persist, and starvation has already claimed lives, with thousands more at risk as aid remains blocked. Limited deliveries prevent the transport of flour, infant formula, and other basic foodstuffs. Experts estimate that more than 1,000 trucks are now needed daily, well beyond the pre-genocide average, to meet urgent needs.

Beyond health and food, other sectors of Gaza society are similarly crippled. Schools and universities remain closed or damaged, depriving children of education and social development. Water and sanitation systems are failing due to blocked fuel and repair materials, worsening disease risks. Electricity shortages affect hospitals, water pumps, refrigeration, and

heating as winter approaches.

On Friday, at least two children were severely injured by unexploded munitions in northern Gaza City.

The blockade has also decimated the economy. Prices for basic food products are soaring, and families are struggling to survive. Agriculture and fishing, critical for food security in Gaza remain paralyzed.

Human rights advocates assert that the occupation regime’s measures are deliberate, violating both the truce and international law, including prohibitions against collective punishment. By controlling aid access, the Zionist regime is intentionally subjecting Gaza’s population to extreme deprivation and suffering, preventing recovery and survival.

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

Canada open to talks as Trump shuts them down

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said his country is prepared to resume trade talks with the US “when the Americans are ready.”

His remarks come after US President Donald Trump announced an immediate end to all trade negotiations with Canada over an advert critical of the tariffs he has imposed on the nation, the BBC reported.

The advert, sponsored by the Canadian province of Ontario, quotes former US President Ronald Reagan, a Republican and icon of US con-

servatism, saying tariffs “hurt every American.”

Trump wrote on social media that the advert was “FAKE” and “egregious”, adding that trade talks were “HEREBY TERMINATED”.

The Trump administration has imposed a 35% levy on many Canadian imports, as well as individual tariffs targeting particular industries like car and steel manufacturing. Ontario has been particularly hard-hit by these.

Trump has allowed exemptions for goods that

fall under a free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, negotiated during his first term.

But since his election earlier this year, Canada’s Carney has attempted to strike a deal that would ease the tariffs. Three-quarters of Canadian exports are sold to the US, making its economy particularly vulnerable.

This effort has been complicated by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who is one of the most vocal critics of the taxes levied on US firms buying Canadian products.

Maritime strikes, mainland threats: U.S. military shadows Venezuela amid regime change whispers

From page 1 ► Additionally, the U.S. announced the deployment of troops to Trinidad and Tobago for ‘military exercises,’ just across a channel less than 13 miles from Venezuela’s coast.

Washington says the deployments are aimed at transnational “drug cartels.” Critics, however, highlight the operation’s scale, the shift from law-enforcement language to wartime framing, and the combative rhetoric of the U.S. president and other senior officials.

They argue these elements suggest counternarcotics is serving as a pretext for broader objectives — including regime change and securing access to Venezuela’s hydrocarbons and mineral wealth.

The shift is particularly stark when U.S. officials have borrowed post-9/11 diction and operational logic, treating cartels as external “terrorist” networks to be hunted across maritime and sovereign boundaries.

Those shifts have already produced lethal outcomes. Since early September, U.S. strikes on vessels in international waters off Venezuela and in the eastern Pacific have killed dozens.

Public tallies put the toll at roughly 46 people across multiple incidents; the absence of transparent evidence and clear legal process has prompted accusations from regional governments and international rights experts that the strikes risk extrajudicial killings and erode established norms.

Rhetoric has matched force. President Trump’s recent declaration that the U.S. has “legal authority” to strike alleged drug transports — and his explicit warning that “we will hit them very hard when they come in by land” — escalates the danger by openly contemplating terrestrial operations that would cross a sovereign threshold. “We’re not happy with Venezuela for a lot of reasons,” Trump bluntly remarked.

Such public signaling compresses options for diplomacy and increases the chance of miscalculation.

Caracas has responded with a mixture of de-

fiance and public appeals for calm.

President Nicolás Maduro has accused Washington of an “open conspiracy” to unseat him, announced expanded coastal defenses, and notably claimed large deployments of Igla-S and other air-defense systems — a message aimed at deterring invasion while projecting unity between armed forces and popular militias.

Still, his repeated, unmistakable plea — “No crazy war... peace, peace, peace” — underscores that Venezuela’s leadership wants to avoid an all-out conflict.

Diplomacy has faltered. Earlier engagement led by U.S. envoy Richard Grenell collapsed amid mutual distrust and Washington’s insistence that Maduro relinquish power, a condition Caracas treated as proof that talks were a prelude to regime change. Opposition leader María Corina Machado’s Nobel Prize has heightened her profile, providing outside powers with a new focal point for advancing interventionist narratives.

Concurrently, Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s entrenched hardline stance — branding Maduro illegitimate, driving sanctions, and endorsing coercive measures — has further constricted the political space for genuine dialogue.

Moreover, the sudden announcement of Admiral Alvin Holsey’s early retirement from U.S. Southern Command — two years ahead of schedule — has fueled speculation in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill about internal dissent over the legality of strikes near Venezuela and frictions with civilian leadership, according to The Intercept.

His departure underscores mounting strains in command cohesion and oversight amid the Caribbean military buildup.

In a nation already scarred by sanctions and economic siege, each new strike and threat heightens the risk of miscalculation.

The choice is stark: defuse the spiral of unilateral force and coercion, or allow the dangerous normalization of regime change by military means.

How Nawaf Salam’s cabinet is handing maritime resources to Israel!

From page 1 ► The government’s decision to adopt the 2007 maritime agreement with Cyprus “as is,” according to the so-called median line, effectively relinquishes nearly 5,000 square kilometers of Lebanese waters — territory confirmed by army and research studies as part of Lebanon’s natural continental shelf.

In plain terms, this means transferring potential gas fields to indirect Israeli control via the Cypriot-Israeli pact of 2010.

Incredibly, the Lebanese Army’s representative, naval officer Mazen Basbous, and legal consultant Najib Masihi justified this surrender by arguing that “international arbitration would change nothing” and that revising Decree 6433 was pointless.

The logic of Salam’s cabinet could only please Tel Aviv as it ignores the very spirit of international maritime law, which demands not arithmetic symmetry but equitable outcome.

Articles 74 and 83 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)— alongside a mountain of international precedents — affirm that fairness, not geometry, governs demarcation.

Equity considers coastlines, geography, and proportionality. Lebanon, with its modest coast, cannot be equated with an island like Cyprus encircled by open seas.

By treating the “median line” as divine scripture, the government has shrunk Lebanon’s maritime rights while inflating Cyprus’s share — and, conveniently, Israel’s reach.

Tel Aviv, through its 2010 agreement with Nicosia, had already bypassed Lebanese Point 1, carving a disputed triangle south of Point 23 — the very zone now teeming with Israeli energy ambitions.

The farce deepens when one recalls that Cyprus itself is a fractured entity: divided between Greek and Turkish administrations, dotted with two British sovereign bases, and stripped of full independence.

How does Lebanon justify a binding maritime accord with a state that cannot even control its own shores? But logic has little room in Salam’s cabinet, where the compass points only to the U.S. espionage den (the embassy).

In the October 23 session, Washington’s fin-

gerprints were everywhere. Lebanon’s “technical decision” was nothing but a political bow — a compliance act to secure Western nods while surrendering the nation’s maritime future.

The same pattern haunts the government’s approach to oil and gas exploration in Block 8. The French company Total, whose loyalty to Paris and Tel Aviv outweighs its interest in Beirut, was granted exploration rights — only to request a three-year postponement.

The government, ever eager to oblige, approved it, ignoring a free offer from the Norwegian-American firm TGS to conduct a 3D survey covering 1,200 square kilometers at no cost. It’s a case study in how to block your own economy to keep Israel drilling undisturbed.

This isn’t mere negligence; it’s policy. Lebanon’s rulers have mastered the art of surrender, disguising betrayal as diplomacy and labelling foreign pressure as “stability.” Yet that so-called stability is nothing but Israeli supremacy dressed in Western PR.

Salam’s government has acted less like a sovereign authority and more like a regional branch of the U.S. State Department. It disregarded the Army’s reservations, silenced national experts, and marketed its abdication as “routine housekeeping.”

What it really executed was a quiet liquidation of Lebanon’s maritime wealth — a sale conducted behind closed doors and paid for in silence.

If this trajectory persists, Lebanon will soon forfeit not just its gas fields but the last shreds of its sovereignty. Each concession at sea mirrors a concession in politics, both sailing under the same flag of dependency.

While neighboring states rush to safeguard their resources, Lebanon is perfecting the art of self-erasure — surrendering its treasures to its enemies, one decree at a time. Yet what was lost in ink can be reclaimed in will. Maps can be redrawn, but dignity must first be rediscovered.

When Lebanon decides that its sea is not for sale and that sovereignty is not drafted in embassies but defended in trenches — only then will the tide turn.

Until that day, Nawaf Salam’s cabinet will be remembered not as a government, but as a footnote in the long, shameful chronicle of national abandonment.

Cultural heritage ministry seeks to introduce Iranian cuisine to the world

TEHRAN--Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts' policy is to move towards modern and experience-oriented tourism, and tries to introduce the story of Iranian cuisine, table and tourism to the world.

Speaking at Iranian Table Competition in Urmia, West Azarbaijan province, on Thursday, Deputy Minister of Handicrafts Maryam Jalali-Dehkordi said: "Culture is our most important asset, and culture is the food, drinks, clothing, etc. that is connected to the ancient Iranian literature that has been preserved by our mothers," ISNA reported.

"Our mothers were loyal to culture and the environment in addition to cooking. In fact, they told stories and passed on the rich Iranian culture to the new generation through cooking."

She stated: "We have a slogan titled 'Bread, Onion, and Good Temper', with the theme that we turn available raw materials into medicine and an element for environmental protection and health."

She continued: "Our forgotten taste is the cultural heritage and intangible heritage of food that we have inherited from our mothers and Iranian women, and we must respect it."

Jalali said: "We (Iranians) are interconnected like the knots of a carpet and have formed a carpet design together. We have promoted wisdom, culture, and health, and how much better it is that this culture is introduced to the world through the Iranian table. The table is the meeting place of the Iranian family, where solidarity, health, love, and wealth are produced around that table."

Also, Director General of West Azarbaijan Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Morteza Safari said that tourism motivation should be created across the province and the tourism infrastructure of West Azerbaijan should



be strengthened for attracting the tourists.

He added that more than 11 festivals have been held this year which include Qushchi Almond Festival, Urmia Grape Festival, Sardasht and Mirabad Black Grape Festival, and Shams and Molana (Rumi) National Conference.

Safari continued that 55 investment projects, including 11 hotels, are being implemented by the private sector at the provincial level in order to strengthen the tourism infrastructure.

The first specialized tourism website of the country's provinces and the application of this website were designed and unveiled in West Azerbaijan with the aim of introducing the province, he added.

Safari said that there are 100 booths in the fourth edition of the Urmia International Festival and Exhibition of Traditional and Local Foods, which is a 60 percent increase compared to last year.

He added: "With proper planning, we are trying to continue this event in the coming years by strengthening its positives points and eliminating its weaknesses, because the events are also the tourism and cultural brand of every city and province, which play an important role in tourism development."

Iran becomes guest of honor of Antalya Tourism Fair

TEHRAN—Iran took part as a guest of honor at Antalya Tourism Fair (ATF) in Turkey which was held for the seventh time between October 22–24.

According to IRNA, the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies publicized that ATF25 began in Antalya with the widespread presence of Turkish tourism activists, and this time Iran is present as the guest of honor of the event.

Representing Iranian tourism activists, the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies is actively present at this exhibition.

Hormatollah Rafiei, head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies, said that the city of Antalya, as the heart of this country's tourism, provides 39 percent of Turkey's annual tourism income. It hosts many tourists from different countries around the world, he added.

Rafiei also said that the ATF25 featured 800 international exhibitors in an area of over 25,000 square meters.

He stated that 100 countries and regions around the world have participated and visited this fair, and Iran's tourism brand has been showcased at this exhibition.

Rafiei emphasized that the city of Antalya and

TACI joins Presiding Board of affiliate members of UNWTO

TEHRAN-- Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI) has been elected as a representative of the South Asia region to the Board of Directors of the United Nations World Tourism Organization for the four-year period from 2026 to 2029 by the members.

According to Mehr news agency, obtaining a seat on the Board of Directors of the Associate Members provides the basis for Iran's active participation in the decision-making and determining global tourism priorities, and strengthens the platform for exchanging views and transferring experiences between the countries and the influential institutions.

In addition, this position will provide a valuable opportunity to introduce Iran's diverse tourism potential, develop land tourism, strengthen multilateral cooperation, and directly interact with key players in the international tourism industry, including the International Air Transport Associ-

ation (IATA), Expedia Group, and the global platform Tripadvisor.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization consists of 160 countries around the world, and in addition to the government members, more than 500 affiliated members from the private sector, public institutions, and academic institutions from different countries cooperate with it.

This international network, in collaboration with UNWTO member states, facilitates knowledge exchange, strengthens cooperation between key tourism stakeholders, and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of UNWTO tourism missions.

The Governing Board of UNWTO affiliate members is elected every four years from among the active members in different regions of the world.

Minister urges ambassadors to help attract visitors from neighboring countries

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Wednesday that Iranian ambassadors in neighboring and friendly countries can play a role in attracting more tourists to the Islamic Republic.

Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri made the remarks at a regional meeting on provincial diplomacy held in Mashhad, saying tourists from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, Pakistan, and Persian Gulf littoral states from Iraq to Saudi Arabia are interested in visiting Iran.

He added that Iran is also focusing on attracting visitors from China, India and Russia as key target markets.

The minister said that under Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, parliament (Majlis) has approved five tourism incentives, and the related regulations have been prepared. He said the new incentives could bring significant changes to the sector.



To cite examples, Salehi-Amiri said investors across the country are now allowed to build mixed-use complexes that combine residential and hotel facilities. He added that the government has also authorized duty-free and tariff-free imports of 200 types of essential goods for hotels.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, the minister said Iran hosts about 1.2 million medical tourists annually, generating around \$2 billion in revenue. He said plans aim to

increase that number to 2 million visitors, with expected revenue of \$6 billion.

He said the government seeks to enhance tourism and economic cooperation through more active border crossings in (the border) provinces such as Kermanshah, Ilam and the three Khorasan provinces. He cited the example of a 400-bed hospital in Abadan that receives medical tourists daily from Iraq's Basra, with similar activity in Kerman-shah and Tabriz.

Home to over 1000 nationally-registered properties, Golestan eyes UNESCO status for its Great Wall

TEHRAN – The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Iran's Golestan province has so far registered more than 1,000 historical, cultural and natural sites on the country's national heritage list, the provincial director said on Thursday.

Fereydoun Fa'ali told ISNA news agency that 1,039 sites in Golestan have been nationally registered, including 654 archaeological areas, 170 historical buildings, 49 natural sites, 113 intangible cultural items, and 53 movable artifacts.

He said that national registration marks the start of a process for legal protection, restoration and sustainable use of heritage assets. "Once listed, sites are placed under legal protection, and any form of alteration or destruction is considered a criminal act," Fa'ali said.

The official said 16 additional sites are awaiting national registration. These include the historical fabric of Cheli village, several monuments within the old district of Gorgan (formerly Astarabad), and a number of archaeological sites across the province.

Fa'ali said the lack of a comprehensive map of historical site distribution remains a major



A view of Gonbad-e Qabus, a 53-meter-high brick tomb tower built in 1006 CE for Ziyarid ruler Qabus Ibn Voshmgir near the ruins of ancient Jorjan. The monument is located in Golestan province, northern Iran.

challenge. To address this, the department has launched the preparation of an archaeological atlas to document and map the province's cultural, historical and natural resources.

He noted that Golestan currently has one UNESCO World Heritage site, the Gonbad-e

Qabus, a 53-meter-high brick tomb tower built in 1006 CE for Ziyarid ruler Qabus Ibn Voshmgir near the ruins of ancient Jorjan. Sections of the Hyrcanian Forests and the Trans-Iranian Railway, both inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, also pass through the province.

Fa'ali said one of the department's new priorities is to seek UNESCO World Heritage recognition for the Great Wall of Gorgan, known locally as the "Red Snake." The ancient defensive wall, built between the 5th and 6th centuries CE under the Sassanian Empire, extends nearly 200 kilometers and is lined with 38 forts.

"The Great Wall of Gorgan has been placed on the priority list for submission to UNESCO," Fa'ali said, adding that although Iran's global nomination process is closed for the next three years, efforts to prepare and support the dossier are continuing with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

The wall, built during the Sassanian dynasty's northern frontier wars with the Hephthalites and later the Turks, is considered the longest fort-lined ancient barrier between Central Europe and China, surpassing Hadrian's and Antonine walls combined.

Hazaveh, a sweet destination for rural tourism

TEHRAN--Hazaveh village in Arak, Markazi province, is one of the most prominent destinations for rural tourism.

Hazaveh, with its grape orchards, unique grape syrup making, authentic historical texture, and cultural festivals, is on its way to becoming a global brand and is ready to attract the domestic and foreign tourists, ISNA reported.

Head of Markazi Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Mahmoud Moradi Naraqi said that Hazaveh village is considered one of the key tourist villages in Markazi province due to its unique combination of history, culture and nature.

Hazaveh village is the birthplace of Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani, who gained his nickname 'Amir Kabir' from his noticeable administrative, cultural, and economic reforms and served as the prime minister under Qajar King Naser al-Din Shah.

This capacity, along with the region's lush grape gardens, high-quality syrup production and valuable historical texture, has made it a unique destination for tourists. Many domestic and foreign tourists are interested in seeing the birthplace of a personality like Amir Kabir, just as Khomein has been noted for being the birthplace of the late Imam Khomeini.

Stating that visiting the birthplaces of prominent figures is common in global tourism, he

stated that Hazaveh has the potential to become an international destination with the historical house of Amir Kabir, a great and influential figure in Iranian history, pristine nature, and local rituals.

He considered Amir Kabir's birthplace the most important feature of this village, and stated that Amir Kabir's historical house is one of the most important attractions of Hazaveh, which is known as a symbol of the cultural identity of this village.

Moradi Naraqi advised families, especially parents, to take their teenagers to Hazaveh to familiarize them with the living atmosphere and thoughts of this great figure by visiting Amir Kabir's house in this village.

Despite his fame, Amir Kabir is still unknown to the younger generation in terms of his cultural depth and insight, while he can be an inspiring role model for them, he added.

He pointed to the historical texture and authentic architecture of this village as another feature and said: "Hazaveh has a valuable traditional texture and rural architecture that must be preserved. Unfortunately, the uniformity of facades and the use of gable roofs with inappropriate colors threaten the identity of the village. Tourists are looking for authenticity and expect a rural texture to maintain its unique color, smell, and even sound."

He listed the presence of vine-

yards and syrup making as other features of Hazaveh and added that Hazaveh's lush vineyards and the grape festival, which are registered in the National Festival Calendar of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, are key advantages of this village.

He stated that Hazaveh syrup, which is a by-product of grapes, has become a national brand due to its quality and special processing method, and has even surpassed provincial competitors.

"This product attracts tourists to Hazaveh as a cultural and economic attraction. The Grape and Syrup Festival, whose registration plaque was unveiled last year, is held every year to introduce Hazaveh as a destination for agricultural tourism."

Referring to the success of Hazaveh syrup in the market, Moradi Naraqi said: "Hazaveh syrup has become a reputable brand due to its distinctive quality and is even known in neighboring provinces. Markazi Cultural Heritage Department is working with responsible institutions to preserve the authenticity of Hazaveh syrup."

He added: "Although the production of agricultural products such as grapes is related to the Agriculture Ministry, when the production of these products is transformed into tourism events, Cultural Heritage Department also comes into play. Other villages in the province also have grapes, but the quality and style of processing Hazaveh syrup have distinguished

The two-day conference opened in Mashhad on Wednesday with two expert panels on economic, commercial, investment and free zone cooperation, as well as on linking national and regional economies through new and knowledge-based technologies. It brought together 12 Iranian ambassadors to neighboring countries, national and provincial chamber of commerce officials and a number of deputy foreign ministers.

The event aims to present the capabilities of northeastern provinces, assess essential goods supply from neighboring countries, and explore ways to expand trade and economic relations with regional partners.

Iran seeks to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 29 sole or chain properties are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

it."

Moradi Naraqi emphasized the role of tourism in the sustainable development of Hazaveh, saying that tourism can create high value added for the gardeners and residents. When tourists come to Hazaveh, agricultural products such as grapes and syrup gain more value, and this helps the local economy, he added.

He also pointed to the village's ecotourism and cultural rituals as another advantage, saying that ecotourism accommodations and various local ceremonies, such as Muharram mourning or rituals related to the anniversary of Amir Kabir's appointment as the chancellor of Iran on October 20, have turned Hazaveh into a multifaceted destination.

Moradi Naraqi also called on local communities to contribute to the region's economy and culture by welcoming tourists and contributing to tourism development, and stated that with the cooperation of people, institutions, and strengthening infrastructure, this village can play a key role in the sustainable development of Markazi province and attract the global tourists.

He added that educating the local communities and tourists is the key to success. Tourists must observe environmental requirements, such as avoiding littering or lighting fires, and customs, such as wearing appropriate clothing, he pointed out.

Workshop on vaccination held with WHO, GAVI Alliance support

TEHRAN – Supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI Alliance), Kerman University of Medical Sciences played host to a 3-day regional workshop on vaccination and vaccine-preventable diseases.

Held from October 10 and 12, the event gathered Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) officers and managers from 34 medical universities, the majority from eastern and south-eastern Iran, to bolster national immunization capacities, focusing on planning, surveillance, and tackling vaccine hesitancy.

The workshop received technical support from the WHO Country Office in the Islamic Republic of Iran and financial backing from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The training focused on strengthening immunization planning, providing updates to national guidelines, enhancing cold chain management, improving surveillance of adverse events following immunization, and fostering effective community engagement.

High-level officials from the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME) addressed key priorities. Dr Ghobad Moradi, Director of the Centre for Communicable Diseases Control, emphasized vaccination's critical public health role and addressed cutting-edge topics, including the targeted use of artificial intelligence in immunization programmes and strategies to boost coverage among migrant populations.

Dr Mohsen Zahraei, National EPI Manager at MOHME, reviewed 50 years of EPI achievements in the Islamic Republic of Iran and outlined



plans, including “supplying influenza vaccines to key groups, organizing national and regional meetings, and advancing measles elimination, polio eradication, and central cold storage expansion”.

The workshop provided a platform for interactive discussions and practical problem-solving. Dr Omid Zamani, National Professional Officer from the WHO Country Office, led a session on the global Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030), sparking dynamic discussions on national priorities. Participants also collaborated on group assignments to develop and present innovative, practical solutions to address regional challenges like vaccine hesitancy.

Other essential topics covered included a review of the new national immunization guidelines, vaccine procurement, and surveillance systems for diseases like meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis.

An online evaluation survey conducted by WHO at the workshop's

close revealed high participant satisfaction with the event's organization, content, and trainers.

Equipped with updated knowledge and practical tools, attendees can now cascade the training to provincial and local health teams, amplifying immunization efforts and advancing Iran's commitment to achieving IA2030 targets.

Strengthening immunization program

In August, over 80 health officials and senior managers from across Iran gathered in Hamadan for a 3-day training of trainers (ToT) workshop to enhance immunization service delivery and improve vaccine coverage across the country.

Organized by the Hamadan University of Medical Sciences in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME), with support from the WHO and Gavi, the event was held from July 26 to 28, the WHO website announced in a press release on August 27.

The workshop brought together

immunization officers from 32 universities of medical sciences. Participants honed their skills in areas such as vaccine scheduling, cold chain management, and monitoring adverse events following immunization, and also in risk communication to effectively address public health concerns.

The EPI Manager at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Seyyed Mohsen Zahraei, noted the Islamic Republic of Iran's successful, 50-year history of battling infectious diseases, including the country's eradication of polio and elimination of measles. He underscored the vital role of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) in guiding immunization policies.

Head of the Communicable Diseases Department at the WHO Country Office in Iran, Omid Zamani, underlined the Organization's commitment to Iran's health initiatives, highlighting their alignment with the global Immunization Agenda 2030.

Throughout the sessions, participants engaged in candid discussions about the local challenges they face, such as logistical hurdles in reaching remote, rural communities.

An online evaluation survey conducted by WHO at the workshop's close revealed high participant satisfaction with the organization and content of the training and the expertise of the trainers.

The knowledge and skills gained during the workshop will have a ripple effect as participants go on to conduct training at the provincial and local level to empower a broader network of health care providers.

Iranian companies attending Health Asia expo in Pakistan

TEHRAN – Six Iranian companies are participating in the 22nd Health Asia International Exhibition and Conference, being held from October 23-25 in Karachi, Pakistan.

The Iran pavilion is showcasing the country's achievements in the fields of infertility treatment, medical and therapeutic kits, laparoscopy, and the pharmaceutical industry, IRNA reported.

Members of the Iranian delegation, led by Morad Nemati-Zargaran, Iran's commercial attaché in Pakistan, met with Muhammad Ubaidullah Malik, CEO of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, on the sidelines of the exhibition, and discussed ways to develop cooperation. Health Asia International Exhibition and Conference is the biggest annual health and medical industry event of Pakistan.

The exhibition covers medical equipment, surgical instruments, disposables, hospital equipment, dental instruments and equipment, pharmaceutical products, hospital furniture, diagnostics, and lab equipment.

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

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

In 2024, the head of Iran's Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said that medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually.

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



as saying.

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

Yaqoubzadeh went on to say that the country's need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported. Some 600 medical equipment companies are operating in the country, producing around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market.

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

On May 12, 2024, Ahmad Moslemi, a health ministry official, said that with 50 percent of medical devices being domestically manufactured, Iran holds the first place in West Asia for producing medical equipment both in terms of quantity and diversity, so that Iranian-made medical devices worth around \$50 million are exported to 40 countries annually.

World Development Information Day highlights mobilization of public opinion

In 1972, the General Assembly established World Development Information Day to draw the attention of the world to development problems and the need to strengthen international cooperation to solve them.

The Assembly decided that the date for the Day should coincide with United Nations Day, October 24, which was also the date of the adoption, in 1970, of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

The Assembly deemed that improving the dissemination of information and the mobilization of public opinion, particularly among young people, would lead to greater awareness of the problems of development, thus, promoting efforts in the sphere of international cooperation for development.

Since the 1970s, Governments dedicated themselves to the fundamental objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations to create conditions of stability and well-being and to ensure a minimum standard of living consistent with human dignity through economic and social progress and development.

The launching of the First United Nations Development Decade in 1961 marked a major worldwide endeavor to give concrete substance to that solemn pledge. Since then, attempts have continued to adopt measures for that purpose.

Unfortunately, however, the standard of living for millions of people in the world is still pitifully low: they are often still undernourished, uneducated, unemployed and wanting in many basic amenities. Nonetheless, the current frustrations and disappointments must not be allowed to cloud the vision or stand in the way of the development objectives.

The success of international development activities depends in large measure on improvement in the general international situation that requires concrete progress, particularly in the promotion of equal political, economic, social, and cultural rights for all members of society.

The ultimate objective of development must be to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual and to bestow benefits on all. If undue privilege, extremes of wealth, and social injustice persist, then development fails in its essential purpose.

The international community must rise to the challenge of the present age of unprecedented opportunities offered by science and technological advances, such that they may be equitably shared by all countries and, in turn, may contribute to the accelerated economic develop-

ment throughout the world.

Science and technology

Developing countries must continue to increase their expenditure on research and development. They must also continue their concerted efforts, with appropriate assistance from the rest of the world, in expanding their capability to apply science and technology for development, so as to enable the technological gap to be significantly reduced.

Full international cooperation must be extended for the establishment, strengthening and promotion of scientific research and technological activities, which have a bearing on the expansion and modernization of economies.

Particular attention must be devoted to fostering technologies suitable for each country, and concentrated research efforts should be made in relation to selected problems - the solutions to which can have a catalytic effect in accelerating development.

New solutions to development challenges

The information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication, and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy.

Furthermore, it is a well-established fact that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows.

The digital divide

However, there are concerns regarding the digital divide in access to information and communications technology tools and broadband connectivity between countries at different levels of development, which affects many economically and socially relevant applications in areas such as government, business, health and education, and further expresses concern with regard to the special challenges faced in the area of broadband connectivity by developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries.

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Iran suspends China flights due to coronavirus

Iran has restricted all flights and recreational travels to and from China due to coronavirus outbreak, IRIB news agency reported on Saturday.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki said that screening and surveillance is underway across all the country's air and sea borders, and no cases of coronavirus have been reported so far.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of the health ministry's center for infectious diseases, told IRNA that rumors that the novel coronavirus has reached Iran's neighborhood are untrue, according to reports by the World Health Organization.

Gooya went on to say that the novel coronavirus has not been reported in Iraq, Kurdistan of Iraq, Pakistan or any of the neighboring countries and the only country in the region which has confirmed the virus, is the UAE.

لغو پروازهای ایران – چین برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا

ایران تمام پروازهای به مقصد چین و بالعکس را برای پیشگیری از شیوع ویروس کرونا بطور موقت لغو کرده است.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، سعید نمکی وزیر بهداشت، گفت غربالگری و مراقبت‌ها در همه مرزهای زمینی، هوایی و دریایی کشور در حال انجام است و هیچ موردی در خصوص ابتلا به ویروس کرونا مشاهده و گزارش نشده است.

در همین حال، به گزارش ایرنا، محمد مهدی گویا رییس مرکز مدیریت بیماری‌های واگیر وزارت بهداشت اعلام کرد آنچه شایعه شده که ویروس کرونای جدید به همسایگی ایران رسیده، بر اساس گزارش‌های سازمان جهانی بهداشت صحت ندارد.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Value of each man depends upon the art
and skill which he has attained.*
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:49 Evening: 17:37 Dawn: 4:55 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:19 (tomorrow)

Iranian painter Wahed Khakdan passes away at 75

TEHRAN – Iranian painter Wahed Khakdan passed away at a hospital in Tehran on October 23 at the age of 75.

Khakdan, who was suffering from esophageal cancer, was hospitalized in Jam Hospital on September 27, and in recent days, was moved to the intensive care unit, IRNA reported.

He was born in 1950 in Tehran. After graduating from the School of Fine Arts in 1971, Khakdan was accepted into the field of interior architecture at the faculty of Decorative Arts.

Khakdan was 24 years old when he held his first solo show at Seyhoun Gallery which marked the beginning of his career. The works which were well received by the audience were abstract paintings with Iranian motifs, especially prehistoric motifs, painted in cubist forms.

In 1975, Khakdan displayed his paintings in Qandriz Hall, his first works in which Surrealist space could be seen. After joining the military in 1976, he learned about the poverty and hard lives of people in remote towns and this experience affected his artistic insights. From this time on, realist figures and objects appeared in his works. He portrayed human beings who evoked states of fear, loneliness,

delusion, and horror, and the way he put together elements and objects such as bones, chairs, beds, and floating clouds brought his works closer to Surrealist paintings.

The 1979 Islamic Revolution was diversely reflected in Khakdan's works. From this period, his works moved towards absolute Realism.

He collaborated with Iranian, German, Swiss, and Austrian publishers, and depicted more than 40 illustrations for children's books.

Khakdan immigrated to Germany in 1984. He painted small-sized works for a while and exhibited his work at the Oberhausen Cultural Center in 1985; this was the starting point for his career in Germany, making many people know about his art. Then he rented a studio and started painting large oil artworks.

Khakdan had great care in displaying objects in their actual and detailed form, and this brought his way of working close to Hyperrealism.

Wahed Khakdan's photographic and mysterious paintings have hints of magical realism. He exhibited his artworks in Iran, the U.S., and Germany many times.

Iranian short film “The Plain Sings” wins at Albanian festival

TEHRAN – The Iranian short film “The Plain Sings” directed by Gita Feizi won an award at the 4th Idromeno International Film Festival, which was held from October 11 to 18 in Shkoder, Albania.

A production of 2024, the 14-minute fiction grabbed the Best Student Film Director award at the Albanian festival, Mehr reported.

The film depicts Zhina, a 13-year-old girl, who lives in a village with her family. She loves to sing and whenever she takes the sheep to pasture, she uses this opportunity to sing, but her father realizes that it can get her into trouble.

Daria Kakaei, Afshin Khedri, and Sara Ahmadnejad are in the cast of the film that has so far won several awards at international festivals including the 4th Son of a Pitch Award in Italy, the 27th YOUKI International Youth Media Festival in Austria, and the 14th Berlin Kurdish Film Festival in Germany, among others.

Born in Sanandaj, Kordestan Province, Gita Faizi, 28, has an associate degree in animation and a bachelor's degree in cinema, and she is a senior student of directing now.

She began her career as a cinema stage secretary in 2013. During her student days, she had experiences in filmmaking and she made a short animation. She made her first professional short film “Rozhan” in 2019. “The Plain Sings” is her second short film.

Since its beginning, the aim of the Idromeno International Film Festival has been to emerge as a new voice that through cinematography can be a new way of looking at our contemporary world, both underlining its fractures and trying to find another way of thinking.

Cinematography can do the magic and be the tipping point: through the story and the screen it shows these themes imbued into the scene, entangled in the routines and beyond all imagination.

South Korea, Iran celebrate 63 years of diplomatic relations through calligraphy

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – In a vibrant celebration of cultural diplomacy, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Tehran hosted the Korea-Iran Calligraphy Exhibition on October 23. The event, held at the Ambassador's Residence, commemorated the 63rd anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations, transforming the venue into a crossroads of artistic tradition and modern friendship.

Jointly organized with the Cultural Coordination Center under the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (CCCACD), the exhibition unfolded under the poignant theme of “Family.” It served as a dynamic platform to deepen mutual understanding and expand cultural exchange, exploring the shared aesthetics of letters and lines where centuries-old artistry meets contemporary creative expression.

The exhibition featured a compelling dialogue between two distinct calligraphic traditions. Representing Iran, Mrs. Tandis Taghavi, a professor at Soore University, alongside two other Iranian artists, presented the exquisite beauty and profound spirit of traditional Nasta'liq. Their work highlighted the script's characteristic elegant curves and deep philosophical resonance.

From Korea, a delegation of twelve artists from the Korean Calligraphy Association, led by President Yoo Hyun-deok and Vice President Choi Jeong-moon, showcased the refined harmony of their art. Their pieces demonstrated the masterful interplay of brushwork, balance, and empty space, conveying both disciplined technique and deep emotion. The personal attendance of President Yoo and Vice President Choi in Tehran powerfully symbolized the growing cultural cooperation between Korea and Iran. This visit was particularly significant as it marked the first time in nine years, since the last exhibition in 2016, that Korean calligraphy artists have traveled to Iran for such an event.

The opening ceremony commenced with a welcome from the program's host, Jeongkeun Nam, the embassy's Second Secretary. He expressed his joy at the milestone anniversary, stating, “Today, we have not gathered merely for this anniversary; certainly, this artistic cooperation is also important. We are pleased by the arrival of the 63rd anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and Korea.”

His Excellency Kim Junpyo, the South Korean Ambassador to Iran, then took the stage. In his address, he reflected on the insightful choice of the theme “Family,” praising it as an intelligent and meaningful name that resonates with the core values of both cultures.

The following is the full text of Mr. Ambassador's speech.

“Distinguished artists, dear fellow ambassadors, members of the cultural and media communities, and esteemed guests from both Korea and Iran,

It is my pleasure to welcome all

of you here today.

Today marks the 63rd anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On this meaningful occasion, I am deeply honored to host this calligraphy exhibition, which celebrates our long-standing friendship and artistic connection.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Cultural Coordination Center under the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (CCCACD), led by Chairman Dr. Mohammad Jafari Malak, for co-hosting this special event.

We are delighted to collaborate with CCCACD and to see this partnership bear fruit in promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange through the timeless beauty of calligraphy from both our countries.

From Iran, we are privileged to welcome three distinguished artists— Mrs. Tandis Taghavi, Mr. Esrafil Shirchi, and Mr. Mojtaba Sabzeh.

From Korea, twelve members of the Korean Calligraphy Association are presenting their works, including President Mr. Yoo Hyun-deok and Vice President Mrs. Choi Jeong-moon, who are with us here today.

This exhibition carries special significance, as it marks the first visit by Korean calligraphy artists to Iran in nine years, since 2016.

What makes this event even more meaningful is that it is a joint presentation by Korean and Iranian calligraphers, who have come together to express friendship and shared values through their art.

Their collaboration itself stands as a beautiful symbol of harmony, showing how creativity and mutual respect can bridge cultures and bring hearts closer together.

Under the theme of “Family,” this exhibition unites the delicate harmony of lines, letters, and emotion, weaving together the artistic spirits of Korea and Iran.

The flowing grace of Iran's Nasta'liq script and the refined elegance of Korean calligraphy may differ in form and technique, yet both embody the same sincere spirit of expressing inner truth,

beauty, and emotion through written words. Through every line and stroke, we can feel each other's spiritual world more deeply.

As these exchanges continue, I am confident that the friendship between Korea and Iran will grow even stronger and more enduring.

On this 63rd anniversary, let us look forward to the next 63 years—and beyond— with the hope of writing new chapters of friendship, creativity, and respect together.

Once again, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to CCCACD and to all participating artists for your dedication, passion, and artistry making this event possible.

I hope the inspiration and conversations shared here today serve as seeds that deepen and broaden the friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

Tashakor mikonam.”

“Family” an intelligent choice for the event's theme

Dr. Mohammad Jafari Malek, Chairman of the CCCACD, followed by thanking the exhibition's organizers. “I congratulate the Ambassador on the 63rd anniversary,” he said. “Choosing the name ‘Family’ for this event was an intelligent choice. This exhibition was supposed to be held earlier, but due to recent events and the 12-day war, it was delayed. It is a cause for happiness that this exhibition was held, and we hope this and similar events will continue.”

63-year relationship very valuable

President Yoo Hyun-deok of the Korean Calligraphy Association shared his perspective as an artist. “I find this 63-year relationship very valuable, and we hope it continues for more than 630 years,” he remarked. “Naturally, I am a calligraphy artist, and instead of talking, I prefer writing,” he added, drawing appreciative laughter from the audience.

Artists strengthen political relations

Iranian artist Mrs. Tandis Taghavi then elaborated on the central role of artists in international relations. “It is very valuable that today's exhibition is held under the

title ‘Family,’” she stated. “I believe that it is the artists who strengthen political relations. By holding such cultural programs, friendly relations can be built not only between Iran and Korea but among all countries of the world.”

Vice President Choi Jeong-moon concluded the formal speeches with a heartfelt note. “I thank the Ambassador for providing such a space for holding this event,” she said, before inviting guests to engage deeply with the art: “Touch and accept these works with all your soul.”

Ambassador's residence is the house of love

The ceremony concluded on an impassioned note from Iranian calligraphy artist, Esrafil Shirchi, who, encouraged by the audience, came to the stage and declared, “This is the house of love, not the Ambassador's residence. In my belief, this event is a spiritual, cultural, and artistic event.”

During the calligraphy event, the President of the Korean Calligraphy Association, Yoo Hyun-deok, and Vice President Choi Jeong-moon, personally inscribed guests' names in Korean calligraphy on elegant postcards, much to the guests' delight.

Also, at the end of the ceremony, Yoo Hyun-deok and Jeong-moon performed a calligraphy performance with the slogan ‘63 Years of Iran-Korea Relations’ in the grounds of the South Korean Ambassador's Residence.”

To conclude the ceremony, participants were presented with commemorative mugs. These featured a traditional calligraphy design on one side and the motto “In Celebration of 63 Years of Korea-Iran Friendship,” accompanied by the flags of both nations, on the other.

Through this collaborative exhibition, both Korea and Iran celebrated the timeless beauty of calligraphy as a living bridge of friendship. The event powerfully expressed shared values of sincerity, harmony, and humanity that transcend language and geographical borders, beautifully illustrating how cultural kinship can fortify a six-decade-long diplomatic partnership.

Chinese scholars, students gather to honor Hafez at Peking University

TEHRAN- On Friday, a conference commemorating the legendary Persian poet Hafez was held at Peking University in Beijing, China.

Li Shujing, Chair of the Foreign Languages Department Council at Peking University, and Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Iran's Ambassador to China, delivered speeches at the event. A number of professors and students specializing in Persian language from various universities in Beijing and Tianjin also participated in the conference.

Li Shujing, in her opening remarks, stated: “Today's gathering on the occasion of honoring Hafez, one of Iran's greatest poets, is a meaningful and fruitful event. Hafez's poetry, with its sincere emotion, profound thoughts,

and romantic imagination, has shaped not only the spirit of the Iranian nation but also inspired people worldwide.”

“China and Iran, two ancient civilizations with magnificent poetic traditions, share through poetry feelings, truths, and wisdom. Holding this event at Peking University is a tribute to a literary genius and a symbol of dialogue between two ancient civilizations,” she explained.

For his part, Rahmani Fazli stated that the expansion of Persian language and literature programs across 14 Chinese universities, along with the distinguished 70-year history of the Persian Language and Literature Department at Peking University, is a commendable and honorable initiative.

“It is a clear testament to the depth and longevity of cultural cooperation and brotherhood between Iran and China,” he added.

Both nations' scholars and students can deepen mutual understanding by exploring cultural, artistic, and civilizational aspects such as painting, architecture, literature, language, customs, and social values, he noted.

Following this, professors from various universities discussed the status of Hafez studies in China, and students performed various presentations about Hafez's life and poetry.

At the conclusion of the conference, Iranian Ambassador presented a collection of Persian poetry anthologies to the professors and students in attendance.