

Iran to host 2025 SCO counterterrorism exercise

TEHRAN – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will hold its 2025 joint counterterrorism exercise in Iran, with the country's intelligence and security agencies taking the lead, officials announced on Friday.

Olarbek Sharshiev, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), said during a press briefing that the drill—titled “Sahand-Counterterrorism-2025”—is set to take place near the northwestern city of Tabriz on December 4.

Sharshiev noted that formal invitations and detailed schedules will soon be sent to both member and observer states.

The large-scale exercise aims to enhance coordination and readiness among SCO members in response to cross-border terrorist threats, which often affect multiple nations simultaneously. ▶ Page 3

Iran, Pakistan, Turkey to relaunch container train service in December

TEHRAN – Iran and Pakistan have agreed to resume operations of the Islamabad–Tehran–Istanbul (ITI) container train in December, as part of a broader plan to boost rail connectivity and trade between the two neighbors.

The agreement was reached during meetings between Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Pakistan's Ministers of Commerce, Communications, and Railways — Jam Kamal Khan, Abdul Aleem Khan, and Hanif Abbasi — on the second day of Sadegh's visit to Islamabad, the Iranian ministry said. ▶ Page 4



The logo of the FATF (the Financial Action Task Force) is seen during a news conference after a plenary session at the OECD Headquarters in Paris, France, October 18, 2019.

The unbreakable soldier

A brief look into the life of the late Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan Mohaghegh through those closest to him



From cocaine to crude: Unmasking the U.S. agenda in Venezuela

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – U.S. media reports have blown the lid off the White House's plans for regime change in Venezuela, revealing flimsy excuses for possible military action that simply don't hold water.

Outwardly, the administration of President Donald Trump frames its potential escalation as a fight against drug trafficking, citing alleged cocaine and fentanyl operations in Venezuela. Yet reports from the U.S. and the United Nations suggest otherwise: Ven-

ezuela is not a major source of cocaine, almost none of the fentanyl entering the United States originates there, and many of the boats targeted by U.S. forces in the Caribbean cannot even reach American waters. ▶ Page 5

Palestinian factions reject foreign governance

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Palestinian factions unitedly demand self-determination, rejecting foreign control and asserting local governance over Gaza.

In a significant move toward national unity, leaders of Palestinian factions met in the Egyptian

capital Cairo and agreed to form a temporary local committee to manage the Gaza Strip, rejecting any foreign administration.

The two-day summit reflected a shared determination among Palestinian parties, groups, and resistance movements to reassert self-governance after the occupying Israeli regime waged two

years of genocide and destruction that have left Gaza in ruins and its people traumatized.

The agreement reached in Egypt, centers on transferring the administration of Gaza to a temporary Palestinian committee of independent technocrats from the Strip. ▶ Page 5

Iran, China cultural exchanges accelerate, Beijing's ambassador says

TEHRAN – Beijing's ambassador to Tehran has said that cooperation between Iran and China in cultural heritage research has gained greater speed and depth over the past two years, describing the field as a strategic platform for expanding bilateral scientific and civilizational exchanges.

Ambassador Cong Peiwu said joint research projects in archaeology and related cultural heritage studies had provided a strong foundation for scientific and cultural cooperation between the two nations, IRIB reported on Saturday.

“These capacities have existed for years, and they are now being pursued in a more organized and profound way,” Cong was quoted as saying.

Referring to China's recent international initiatives, Cong said cultural and scientific collaboration between Tehran and Beijing had expanded since the launch of a global initiative by Chinese President Xi Jinping. He said the trend showed that “two ancient Asian civilizations are taking effective steps toward mutual cultural and scientific enrichment.” ▶ Page 6



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Slim prospects for a breakthrough in Iran–Europe relations

In an interview with Ham Mihan, European affairs expert Morteza Makki assesses the outlook for Iran's engagement with the European troika as not promising. Makki says: Europe currently lacks the strategic capacity to assert an independent role in the Middle East. Even if European governments were inclined to adopt a more flexible posture toward Iran, their deep economic, political, and security dependence on the United States renders such autonomy unattainable. As long as Europe remains aligned with the unilateral policies of Washington and Tel Aviv, it cannot pursue a distinct approach toward Tehran. European demands mirror those of the United States: curbing Iran's nuclear program, limiting its missile capabilities, and removing enriched uranium from the country. These demands continue to serve as political leverages to alter Iran's behavior. Given this harsh stance, the prospect of a meaningful opening in Iran–Europe relations appears remote.

Khorasan: Challenging Washington's monopoly on global authority

Khorasan analyzed the recent joint letter by Iran, Russia, and China declaring the expiration of UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The newspaper says: The move marks a pivotal moment in the erosion of U.S. dominance over global governance and a critical test for Iranian diplomacy. For decades, Washington has invested vast political, military, and media resources to position itself as the ultimate arbiter of international order. The joint initiative by three non-Western powers—two of them major global actors—represents an unprecedented challenge to this narrative (the erosion of the U.S. domination). It disrupts the continuity of American power projection and signals to the international community that the era of Washington's unilateral imposition of its will as international law may be drawing to a close. This coordinated action marks the first formal effort by Iran, Russia, and China to contest the authority of the United States within the framework of the Security Council. It may herald a new phase in the reconfiguration of global power dynamics.

Arman-e-Melli: Middle East enters a phase of strategic ambiguity

Arman-e-Melli has described the current state of the Middle East as one of “complete ambiguity.” It said: While active warfare has subsided in parts of the region, the shadow of

war looms over Iran, Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen, and the Middle East is in a suspended and ambiguous state. With the continued deadlock on the Ukraine issue and the deadlock in diplomacy between the U.S. and Iran, it can be expected that the Middle East region will undergo new developments. Despite the recent 12-day war and attacks on the nuclear facilities, Iran's nuclear program remains intact, and its activities appear to be continuing. The nuclear file, like much of the region's strategic posture, remains opaque. With diplomatic channels between Tehran and Washington effectively blocked, the risk of renewed military confrontation against Iran and Lebanon has increased. It is unlikely that Israel will accept the current status quo indefinitely. The imagination that the war with Iran is over or improbable is premature. The possibility of renewed conflict remains real and immediate. From a macro-strategic perspective, the Middle East is in a holding pattern, marked by volatility, unresolved tensions, and the prospect of three more difficult years ahead.

Iran: IAEA's approach is affected by geopolitical competition

The Iran newspaper wrote that the technical body of the International Atomic Energy Agency is under the influence of geopolitical rivalries. It said: The global order is undergoing a structural shift from unipolarity to multipolarity, driven by the rise of new powers such as China, Russia, and India, alongside assertive regional actors like Iran and Turkey. This transformation has turned international institutions into arenas of geopolitical and economic competition. Within this evolving landscape, the International Atomic Energy Agency has not remained immune. Its traditional neutrality has been undermined, and its institutional independence and professional credibility have come under strain. As a result, trust in the Agency's impartiality has diminished among several member states, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite the collapse of the Cairo Agreement following the activation of the snapback mechanism, Iran has reiterated its willingness to consider new cooperation frameworks with the Agency. This stance reflects Tehran's continued commitment to diplomacy and engagement within multilateral institutions. In the context of a shifting international order, maintaining technical dialogue with the IAEA is not merely a diplomatic gesture; it is a strategic imperative for managing crises and restoring confidence in global governance.

Araghchi congratulates Kazakhstan on National and Republic Day



TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has sent a message of congratulations to his Kazakh counterpart, Yermek Kosherbayev, on October 25 — Kazakhstan's National and Republic Day.

In his message, Araghchi extended his “sincere congratulations” to the government and people of Kazakhstan, describing them as a “friendly and brotherly nation.” He expressed hope that the two countries' close ties and cooperation will continue to expand across all sectors.

Iran and Kazakhstan have long maintained strong relations, particularly in energy, transport, and trade. Iran's strategic location provides Kazakhstan with access to southern

ports and key trade routes, including the International North–South Transport Corridor, while Kazakhstan serves as a gateway to Central Asia.

Both countries are also linked through the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The bloc comprises Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia, with Iran, Uzbekistan, and Cuba holding observer status. In December 2023, Iran and the EAEU signed a free trade agreement, which came into effect in May 2025 after ratification by all member states. The deal eliminated tariffs on about 87% of traded goods, boosting Iran's exports to EAEU members by 20% in the previous Iranian calendar year (ending March 19), surpassing \$2 billion.

The unbreakable soldier

A brief look into the life of the late Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan Mohaghegh through those closest to him

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – During the 12 days of Israeli and United States attacks on Iran in June, numerous events profoundly impacted the Iranian public, eliciting feelings of shock, sorrow, and fear. The targeting of residential areas, the bombing of Iran's national television headquarters, the strike on a prison, and the horrific scenes from Tehran's Tajrish Square, where Israeli missiles sent cars and pedestrians hurtling into the air, were among the incidents that deeply moved the Iranian people.

For Iranian journalists, particularly those in Tehran, all of it was equally horrifying. Each day, we navigated the city that held everything for us, struggling to reconcile its familiar reality with the fact that it was under attack. During those twelve days, I remember deliberately avoiding dwelling too long on any single incident or news item; my focus had to remain on reporting what was unfolding. I told myself that grief, curiosity, and even pride would have their place later, after the war's end. One image, one I resolved to contemplate more deeply afterward, was an old photograph I encountered for the first time during the aggression: a top military commander, missing a leg, with his other, apparently injured, leg resting on a coffee table. The years-old photo belonged to Brigadier General Mohammad Hassan Mohaghegh, the deputy head of the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC). It widely appeared on news websites on June 16, 2025, one day after Israel assassinated the commander.

Mohaghegh was among the lesser-known commanders targeted by Israel during the twelve-day war. This month, I finally managed to connect with some of his family members and friends. The first person I spoke to was Esmail Kowsari, an Iranian lawmaker who had been Mohaghegh's comrade during Iraq's invasion of Iran in the 1980s and later became his brother-in-law.

“I don't think I have ever seen someone work as hard as Hassan did,” Kowsari said. “Hassan was physically weaker than most people, but he worked harder than everyone around him.”

Mohaghegh's life was shaped by struggle from a very young age. Born in Tehran in 1963, he grew up in the shadow of his father, a prominent cleric in Rafsanjan who was deeply involved in the political upheaval



against the Shah. As the eldest son, Hassan naturally followed in his father's footsteps, his teenage years consumed not by schoolyard concerns, but by the dangerous world of political activism. This path led him straight into the crosshairs of the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, who arrested him in the tumultuous months leading up to the 1979 Revolution. The details of his imprisonment are mostly lost to history.

With Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran, he joined Iranian soldiers at the war fronts in his late teens. A few years into the 8-year war, he became the commander of the Habib Ibn Mazahir Battalion, part of the prestigious 27th Mohammad Rasulallah Division. The unit was known for its intellectual and religious makeup.

“Hassan was badly injured during one of Iran's important operations in 1986. When I saw his body, he was missing one leg, and the rest of his body was covered in blood. We assumed he had lost his life, so placed his body among the martyrs, and sent him to a field hospital in

Ahwaz,” Kowsari explained.

It was only by chance that comrades, checking one last time, detected Mohaghegh's faint pulse. He even experienced one cardiac arrest while in the hospital in Ahwaz, but ended up surviving his injuries miraculously.

After the war, Kowsari introduced Mohaghegh to his sister, a 23-year-old recent graduate working as a teacher. She told me she hadn't been seriously considering marriage when they met. “I had just started working and wanted to focus on building my career. My previous encounters with suitors weren't really significant. I was planning to stay single, at least for a few years,” she said.

However, the young woman felt something stir within her when she first saw Mohaghegh. “We were a religious and traditional family, so our first meeting was a formal introduction at our home with his family. My brother had told me in advance that Haj Hassan had lost a leg during the war and had also been injured elsewhere. But when I met him, he ascended the stairs swiftly, as

if there was nothing wrong with his legs. When we were sent to speak privately, I saw no sign of weakness in him. He was strong, determined, and kind as he described the qualities he hoped his future wife would possess,” she explained.

The young couple instantly developed an affinity for each other. “I don't know how to describe the feeling we experienced. Haj Hassan later told me that he, too, knew I would be his wife the moment he saw me.”

In the years following the war, Mohaghegh divided his time between military service and academia. He earned two PhDs, eventually becoming a top IRGC commander, and had three children with his wife. Throughout those four decades, he continued to grapple with the injuries he had sustained during the Iran–Iraq war. “He had surgery numerous times in the following years,” his wife recalled. “But even when he was in deep and excruciating pain, he did not complain. He did his best to recover quickly and attend to his military and fatherly duties. He believed he had duties that he needed to fulfill, no matter how much pain he was in.”

When Israel assassinated Mohaghegh, his only daughter struggled the most with his loss. “She was closest to her father. I have two sons as well, but they always say the bond between a father and a daughter is very strong. This was certainly the case in our household.”

A few days after Mohaghegh's martyrdom, the daughter told her mother that she believed her father was helping her cope with sorrow. “After some very difficult days, my daughter started to improve. She told me she was feeding milk to her infant when she felt her father's presence in the room. His presence made her feel much better.”

From the day a young Mohaghegh was injured during the Iran–Iraq war to the day he was assassinated by Israel decades later, much had transpired. “He, however, remained unchanged. In his 60s, he was still the same determined young man I had seen at our first meeting. His ultimate goal was to serve his country and God, and he did exactly that,” his wife said.

Armed Forces fully prepared, Iranian commander warns adversaries

TEHRAN – A senior commander of the Iranian Army warned Friday that the country is fully prepared to counter any aggression, emphasizing that its armed forces are drawn from the nation's most capable young personnel and are ready to defend against threats on land, at sea, and in the air.

Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Coordinator of the Iranian Army, spoke to reporters on the sidelines of the 4th World Armies Archery Championship (WAC 2025), hosted by the Army Air Force at the national Archery Federation venue.

The remarks come amid ongoing efforts by Tehran to showcase its military preparedness and deter potential adversaries. Brigadier General Reza Talaei-Nik, Deputy for Strategic Planning and Parliamentary Affairs and spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics, stressed that Iran's armed forces have significantly increased their armament, operational, and logistical capacities since the “12-day war,” a brief but intense conflict that tested the country's readiness.

Talaei-Nik recalled that despite 15 years of enemy preparations to strike Iran, the aggressor failed in the 12-day war. He warned that any future attempts at aggression would meet an even stronger Iranian response, citing enhanced defensive readiness and the increased vulnerability of potential adversaries to Iran's offensive capabilities. “Given the heavy losses and failures suffered in the 12-day war, it is unlikely the enemy would attempt another attack without carefully calculating its own vulnerabilities,” he said.

Analysts believe Iran did not utilize its newer generations of missiles during the June war, as it had prepared itself for a prolonged conflict

The 12-day conflict erupted on June 13, when Israel launched a sudden attack against Iran, claiming at least 1,064 lives, including

military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The United States intervened by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites, an action Tehran described as a grave violation of international law. In retaliation, Iran's armed forces struck strategic sites across the occupied territories and targeted U.S. military facilities in the region, including Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest American military installation in West Asia. Iranian attacks also damaged key Israeli command and control centers, training facilities, and fortified airbases hosting advanced fighter jets and electronic warfare systems.

Iran has repeatedly stated that it will deliver a crushing response to any military aggression or actions threatening its national security, signaling that the lessons of the 12-day conflict continue to shape its military posture today.

Many observers believe that Tel Aviv's inability to achieve its intended goals, coupled with Tehran's ongoing deterrence posture, could set the stage for a renewed conflict in the near future.

FATF’s moving goalposts

The financial watchdog snubs Iran’s legislative pogress and keeps it on the blacklist, putting to question its impartiality

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – The ongoing saga between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) took another frustrating turn this week, as the global financial watchdog once again decided to keep Iran on its “high-risk” list. This decision came despite continued efforts by Iran to engage with the FATF process, and amidst opposition from some political factions within the country.

The narrative pushed by the FATF is one of Iranian non-compliance. In a statement published on Friday, the Paris-based watchdog claimed it “acknowledges Iran’s re-engagement with the FATF... and that it aims to address deficiencies in its AML/CFT regime.”

“Iran has failed to address the majority of its action plan since 2016,” it further stated, adding that “Iran will remain on the FATF High Risk Jurisdictions Subject to a Call for Action statement until the full Action Plan has been completed.”

Mere days before the statement, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian officially ratified and communicated the law on Iran’s accession to the International Convention for the Suppression

of the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) to relevant executive bodies.

In May, Iran’s Expediency Council approved the country’s accession to the Palermo Convention, one of the two key legislative items tied to the FATF standards, alongside the CFT.

Authorities in Iran recently ratified the last remaining legislative items

These two conventions, the Palermo Convention and CFT, were among the primary legislative requirements Iran had yet to fulfill. Iran ratified them in accordance with its constitution and laws, a move that came despite mounting criticism from conservative factions within the country. These factions argue that the financial watchdog is not a technical body but a political tool wielded by the West, much like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The history

The FATF is an inter-governmental body that is supposed to set international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing. In theory,

its goal is to protect the global financial system. However, from the perspective of many nations, including Iran, it often functions as a political tool for the West to exert financial pressure on countries they deem non-compliant with their own rules. Critics argue that its decisions are frequently influenced more by Western interests than by purely technical assessments.

Iran was first put on the FATF’s “blacklist” in 2007. The “blacklist” is for jurisdictions the FATF deems entirely non-cooperative. Between 2016 and 2020, Iran was placed on the “grey list”, which signifies that a country is committed to addressing its alleged deficiencies but has not yet completed the necessary reforms. The situation escalated again in February 2020 when, citing insufficient progress, the FATF called on its members to apply enhanced due diligence and effective counter-measures against Iran.

When a country is placed on the grey list or the blacklist, international banks and financial institutions become reluctant to process transactions with it. Consequently, even humanitarian trade like medicine and food will be affected, and the nation will find it more difficult to inte-

grate into the global economy.

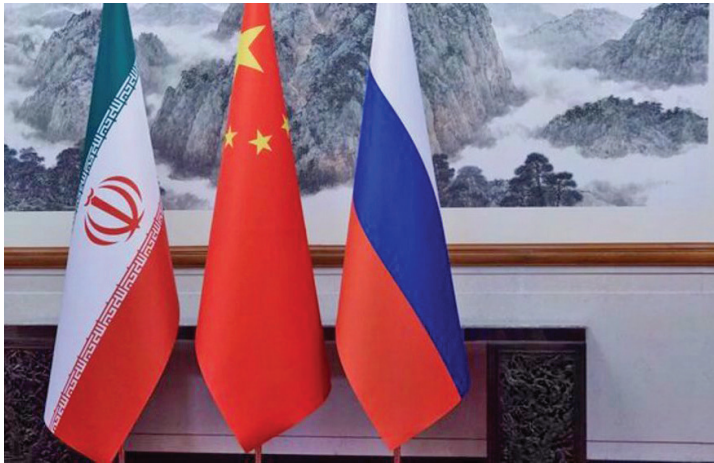
For Iran, however, these challenges would persist even if it were removed from the high-risk list, primarily due to heavy U.S. sanctions, according to Hossein Samsami, an economic expert.

Iran’s financial challenges would stay even if it were removed from the high-risk list

“It has always been obvious that getting de-listed by the FATF will not make much difference regarding the financial pressure Iran is experiencing. Because the pressure will be there as long as the United States continues to sanction us,” the expert explained. “But despite being on the high-risk list and subject to heavy U.S. sanctions, Iran continues to export. Last year, we sold over \$100 billion worth of products, and we will continue to do so in the future, regardless of our status on such lists.”

This situation has led many analysts to believe Iran’s efforts to resolve its differences with the financial watchdog are made merely in good faith.

Iran, China, and Russia notify IAEA of end to UN Resolution 2231 oversight



TEHRAN – Iran, China, and Russia have jointly informed the head of the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog that UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and related reporting on Iran’s nuclear activities have officially ended.

In a post on X on Friday, Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, announced that the ambassadors and permanent representatives of the three countries had sent a letter to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi.

Gharibabadi noted that this letter followed a similar communication the three nations sent earlier to the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, formally declaring the termination of Resolution 2231 on October 18.

According to the Iranian official, the latest letter reiterated that all provisions of Resolution 2231 expired on October 18, 2025, and condemned the “illegal” attempt by Britain, France, and Germany to trigger the so-called “snapback”

mechanism for reinstating UN sanctions.

Gharibabadi emphasized that the expiration of the resolution also marks the end of the IAEA Director General’s mandate to report on verification and monitoring activities related to Resolution 2231 and the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He explained that under a December 15, 2015 IAEA Board of Governors’ resolution, the agency’s monitoring mandate was set to continue for ten years after the JCPOA’s adoption or until the IAEA concluded that Iran’s nuclear program was entirely peaceful—whichever came first.

“Therefore, as of October 18, 2025, this matter is automatically removed from the Board of Governors’ agenda, and no further action is required,” Gharibabadi stated.

Tehran has consistently rejected the European trio’s invocation of the snapback mechanism, calling it “illegal,” “null and void,” and a “fabricated concept.”

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

among the lowest in the world. The sharp price gap between Iran and neighboring countries has long encouraged large-scale illegal fuel transfers.

In response, Iranian authorities, in coordination with the IRGC Navy, the Army, and law enforcement agencies, have intensified efforts to intercept smugglers by land and sea. Official figures indicate that an estimated 25 to 30 million liters of fuel products, including gasoline and diesel, are smuggled out of Iran every day.

Tractor down Gol Gohar at PGPL

TEHRAN – Tractor football team defeated Gol Gohar 5-0 at the 2025/26 Iran’s Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Saturday.

Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh opened the scoring for Tractor courtesy of Gol Gohar defender’s blunder in the 24th minute.

Rezi Lushkja made it 2-0 in the 54th minute and Hosseinzadeh completed his hat-trick by scoring two goals in the 61st and 64th minutes.

Masoud Zaeer Kazemeini made the scoreboard 5-0 in the 87th minute.

Tractor moved second place with 12 points one points behind leaders Aluminum.

Tehran derby set for Dec. 5

TEHRAN – The Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams will take place on December 5.

Because Azadi Stadium is undergoing renovations, the match will be held at an alternative venue, though the chosen stadium has not yet been announced.

This will be the 106th Tehran derby between the two clubs.

Esteghlal is currently third in the 2025-26 Iran Pro League (IPL), while Persepolis sits in 10th place.

Muay Thai girl Chenari dies due to cardiac arrest

TEHRAN – Saba Chenari, Iranian Muay Thai practitioner, died on Wednesday due to sudden cardiac arrest.

She died during training. Chenari was 25.

Chenari had won a silver medal at the 2022 World Championship in Abu Dhabi.

The Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathies to Chenari’s family, loved ones, and friends during this time of loss.

Iran win Women’s Tri-Nation International Friendlies

TEHRAN – Iran were crowned winner of the Tri-Nation Women’s International Friendlies after a dominant 3-0 win over Nepal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Shillong on Friday.

The victory, coming on the back of its earlier 2-0 triumph against India, meant Iran secured two wins out of two and an unassailable lead in the standings with six points.

India and Nepal will meet in the last friendly game on October 27.

Sara Didar (49th), Zahra Ghanbari (52’) and Shabnam Behesht (57’) were on target for Iran.

Iran rank 70th in the FIFA Women’s World Ranking, while India and Nepal are 63rd and 89th, respectively.

Iran are preparing for the 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup, where they have been drawn in Group A along with hosts Australia, South Korea and the Philippines.

The competition will be held in Australia from March 1 to 21, 2026.

Germany beat Iran at 2025 IHF Men’s U17 World Championship

TEHRAN – Germany defeated Iran 45:20 in the inaugural IHF Men’s Under-17 World Championship Friday night.

Germany were favorites before this match, however they were missing two key players, their two line players for the opener against Iran, but that was nowhere to be seen, as they dominated the match against the Asian champions.

Iran were coming with big ambitions in this

competition, especially as they were crowned Asian champions last month, but they failed to contain Germany, which used the entirety of their roster, with all outfield players scoring at least one goal.

By half-time, Germany were up 19:10, but still missed a lot of chances, with the shooting efficiency drastically improving in the second half, when the European side upped the ante and had their overall efficiency up to 66%, ihf.info reported.

Germany had Kalle Gaugisch and Julius Eisend score six goals each, as in the second half they scored almost one goal per minute, to jump to an eventual 45:20 win, the second-largest in the competition so far, propelling them to the top of Group C.

Iran are scheduled to play Argentina and Puerto Rico on Sunday and Tuesday, respectively.

MMA athletes claim four golds at AYG

TEHRAN – Four Iranian athletes claimed gold medals at the Mixed Martial Arts of the 2025 Asian Youth Games (AYG).

In the Girls’ 60kg Traditional MMA, Tiam Dephalevan defeated Mongolia’s Ulziitnaran Bat-Erdene to win the gold medal.

Amirmohammad Hatamian seized a gold in the Boys’ 60kg Traditional MMA. He defeated Travis Ratcliff from the Philippines in the final match.

In the Boys’ 80kg Traditional MMA final, Amir-mahdi Vazifed defeated Kazakhstan’s Nurtileu Otegen.

Vania Fathalipour also grabbed a gold medal in the Girls’ 55kg Modern MMA, beating her Japanese rival Atushi Takada.

Ilia Vahedi snatched a silver medal in the Boys’ 70kg Traditional MMA after losing to Tajikistan’s Umed Umarjoni.

The 3rd Asian Youth Games is taking place in Bahrain from Oct. 22 to 31.

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

Iran has sent 236 athletes to the Games.

Hajimousaei wins silver at 2025 World Taekwondo Championships

TEHRAN – Iran’s Mehdi Hajimousaei won a silver medal at the 2025 World Taekwondo Championships on Saturday.

Hajimousaei was forced to withdraw against Tunisian Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi in the final of the -63kg of the due to the injury during the first round.

Hajimousaei had defeated Briton Jamie McIntosh 8-0, Albanian Ernest Merdanaj 17-2, Turkey’s Ömer Faruk Day?olu 10-3, Norway’s Kristian Borgen 2-0, and South Korean Jang Jun 2-1 on his way to the final match.

The 2025 Wuxi World Taekwondo Championships, scheduled from the 24th to the 30th, is the largest-ever event with 991 athletes registered, including participants from 180 countries, individual neutral athletes (AIN), and a refugee team.

Ghandipour scores to help Al Wahda reach quarter-finals

TEHRAN – Al Wahda has qualified for the quarter-finals of the UAE President’s Cup after defeating Al Dhafra with a score of 3-1 on Friday at the Al Nahyan Stadium.

The match had initially ended in a 1-1 draw, with Al Wahda sealing it during the extra time.

Al Wahda opened the scoring through Omar Khirbin in the 8th minute. The visitors managed to tie the match in regular time stoppage through Abderahmane Soussi 90’+9.

In extra time, the home side then managed to seal the result with two unanswered goals through Lucas Pimenta in the 104’ and Reza Ghandipour in the 120’+1 minutes.

The cup continues with Al Bataeh playing against Shabab Al Ahli.

Khor Fakkan will also go head-to-head with Al-Ittihad Kalba, while Al Nasr goes against Baniyas.



From Page 1 ▶ This marks only the second joint counterterrorism drill conducted under the SCO framework since the organization’s founding in 1996. The first, “Anti-Terrorism Interaction-2024,” was held in China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region last year. According to China’s Ministry of Public Security, that exercise featured live operational drills and specialized missions targeting simulated terrorist groups.

Xinhua News Agency reported at the time that the event represented the first fully joint counterterrorism live exercise involving all SCO member states.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance established in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Initially focused on countering terrorism, extremism, and separatism, the bloc later expanded to include Uzbekistan and was formally renamed the SCO.

The group has since grown

into a major multilateral organization often seen as a strategic counterbalance to Western influence in Central Asia. India and Pakistan became full members in 2017, followed by Iran in 2023 and Belarus in 2024.

The SCO’s 25th Summit of Heads of State was held on August 31 in Tianjin, China, attended by leaders from more than 20 countries, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, as well as representatives from 10 international organizations.

Current full members include China, Russia, India, Iran, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

RATS serves as the SCO’s permanent body for coordinating intelligence, counterterrorism, and counterintelligence activities among member states. Its mandate includes combating what the organization calls the “Three Evils” — terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism.

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

Iran upholds sentences for 14 in massive fuel-smuggling case

TEHRAN – The Chief Justice of Hormozgan Province in southern Iran has announced that a provincial appeals court has upheld the verdict issued by the Bandar Abbas Court, finalizing the convictions of 14 members of an organized network involved in smuggling 27 million liters of diesel fuel.

According to the ruling, four ringleaders of the network were each sentenced to five years in prison and fined a combined total of 26 trillion rials (approximately USD 245 million). They have also been barred from all maritime activities, including transport and

fishing, for three years.

The remaining defendants received varying prison terms and financial penalties.

Authorities said the smuggling vessel was confiscated by court order after the operation led to an armed confrontation in which the suspects used incendiary materials against law enforcement officers.

Iran continues to grapple with widespread fuel smuggling, both overland and through maritime routes, a problem fueled by the country’s heavily subsidized fuel prices—

Iran, Pakistan, Turkey to relaunch container train service in December

Pakistan's Ministry of Railways announced that both sides will draft a joint action plan to expand rail transport cooperation. They also agreed to launch the project to upgrade the Quetta-Taftan railway line next year, a key route linking the two countries.

Both nations committed to strengthening commercial and passenger rail operations and to creating a coordinated mechanism to follow up on bilateral agreements.

Sadegh, referring to last month's 22nd Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission held in Tehran, emphasized the need to implement existing accords to deepen cooperation.

She added that Iran and Pakistan's corridor capacities provide ideal opportunities for connecting China to Europe through their shared routes.

The regional transport conference in Islamabad, attended by representatives from 11 countries including Iran's road and urban development minister, concluded on Friday.

Last week, Pakistan's government has issued a new executive order aimed at promoting barter trade with Iran after months of consultation and review to address the concerns of both countries' business communities, Pakistan's ambassador to Tehran, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, announced.

In a post on X on October 19, Tipu said: "I am pleased to announce that Pakistan has issued a new executive order (SRO) to promote barter trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He explained that following an extensive and inclusive review process, many of the issues raised by Iranian and Pakistani traders have been addressed in the new regulation. The envoy expressed hope that the measure would significantly enhance the volume and diversity of trade between the two neighbors.

"I invite industrialists and the business communities of both countries to fully benefit from this order and contribute to the expansion of bilateral trade," he added, urging chambers of commerce and trade bodies in both nations to circulate the regulation among their members to help maximize its benefits.

Earlier this month, Pakistan's Ministry of Finance approved a proposal by the Ministry of Commerce to revise the bilateral barter trade agreement with Iran. The decision was later endorsed by the federal cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Following the 22nd Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran (September 15-16), co-chaired by Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, Minister Sadegh published an article on the ministry's news portal. Below is a translation of her piece.

On the eve of new developments in the regional economic order, the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee has once again provided a platform for developing sustainable cooperation between these two important and influential neighbors in South Asia.

Iran-Pakistan relations over the past decades have always been influenced by regional developments, global politics, and security imperatives. Although political relations between the two countries have always been maintained at an acceptable level, their economic and trade capacities have not been actualized as they should have been. Now, on the eve of new developments in the regional



economic order, the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission has once again provided a platform for developing sustainable cooperation between these two important and influential neighbors in South Asia.

The 22nd meeting of the Joint Economic Committee was not only an opportunity to review the past and chart the future of the two countries' economic relations, but also, by holding an unprecedented joint business conference on its sidelines, sent a clear message to regional economic actors, governments, and observers: Iran and Pakistan are ready to turn their potential capacities into the driving engine of economic and trade cooperation.

Along with their long shared border, Iran and Pakistan also enjoy deep cultural and historical commonalities. The adjacency of the two countries in a region that houses the main arteries of energy, transportation, and trade has created a unique position for economic cooperation.

On one hand, Iran, with its vast oil and gas resources, can play a role as a reliable energy supplier for Pakistan. On the other hand, Pakistan, with its young and growing population and extensive needs in the fields of energy, infrastructure, and trade, can be one of Iran's most important export markets.

This natural convergence, although overshadowed by political considerations and sanctions in the past, can become the driving engine of the two countries' economic interactions in the new regional atmosphere.

The Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Committee has, over the past two decades, always been a platform for negotiation and agreement in various fields. But what distinguished the 22nd meeting of this committee was the serious entry of the private sector into the process of dialogue and cooperation.

Holding a joint business conference with the participation of 50 Iranian companies and over 100 Pakistani companies, totaling 500 participants, indicated the serious determination of economic actors in both countries to move beyond the traditional boundaries of interactions. Such an event is rarely seen on the sidelines of Joint Committee meetings, which doubles its special importance.

At this conference, economic actors had the opportunity to closely familiarize themselves with the capacities, needs, and areas of cooperation of the other side and propose solutions for removing obstacles to direct trade, joint investment, and the development of border infrastructure.

One of the key points of this meeting and the business conference was the emphasis on the centrality of the private sector in Iran-Pakistan economic relations. The experience of successful countries in developing bilateral trade has shown that without the presence and initiative of economic actors, government agreements cannot achieve the desired result.

Chabahar-Zahedan railway project surpasses 84% progress

TEHRAN – The Chabahar-Zahedan railway has passed 84 percent physical progress and is expected to become operational by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2026), according to Abbas Khatibi, deputy head of Iran's Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company.

Khatibi said the project has set a new national record by laying 50 kilometers of track

in just one month, achieving a daily rail-laying rate of 3,500 meters.

"This unprecedented milestone marks a new chapter in Iran's railway development," he said, emphasizing the government's strong determination to complete the eastern corridor and link the strategic port of Chabahar to the national railway network.

Tehran, Dushanbe to expand capital market cooperation; Iran offers to help launch Tajik commodity exchange

TEHRAN – Iran has expressed readiness to assist Tajikistan in establishing a commodity exchange and developing its securities market, the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said on Saturday.

During a meeting between Iran's SEO Head Hojjatollah Seyed-i and Tajik Finance Minister Faiziddin Qahhorzoda, both sides called for deepening bilateral cooperation in capital markets.

Seyed-i noted that the two nations' cultural and linguistic affinities provide a strong foundation for closer collaboration.

"With around 60 years of experience in stock exchanges and over two decades in commodity markets, the SEO is ready to share its expertise with Tajikistan in launching commodity exchanges and implementing commodity-backed securities," he said.

He expressed hope that the meeting would mark the beginning of deeper cooperation between the two countries to expand capital market development.

Qahhorzoda said Tajikistan's economic policy prioritizes expanding partnerships with other countries, adding that cooperation with Iran in economic fields has been strong but could grow further.

He highlighted Tajikistan's steady economic growth over the past decade and welcomed Iran's support in establishing various types of stock and commodity exchanges to strengthen Tajikistan's financial infrastructure.

"Bridge of Trust and Development" Conference held with participation of Iran and Tajikistan

The specialized conference "Bridge of Trust and Development" was held on Saturday (October 25) in Dushanbe with the presence of Faiziddin Qahhorzoda, the Minister of Finance of Tajikistan, and Alireza Haghighian, the Ambassador of Iran.

At this meeting, Iranian ambassador, referring to Iran's experience in international financial institutions such as IOSCO, announced Tehran's readiness for cooperation, training, and the exchange of financial knowledge with Tajikistan.

Furthermore, Hojjatollah Seydi, the Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization, along with a group of experts from the organization, presented lectures on capital markets, Islamic financial instruments, green finance, and the supervision of emerging markets as part of this conference.

Iran and Tajikistan have agreed to address outstanding banking issues and establish a joint investment task force to enhance cooperation in areas such as energy, infrastructure, and agriculture, marking another step toward deepening their economic and financial relations.

Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Seyed Ali Madanizadeh met with Sultan Rahimzoda, head of Tajikistan's State Committee on Investment and State Property Management, on October 15, to discuss practical measures for expanding bilateral collaboration.

During the meeting, Madaniza-



deh—who also chairs Iran's State Banks Assembly—highlighted the need to resolve pending banking and financial coordination issues between the two countries. Both sides agreed to accelerate efforts to finalize banking arrangements that would facilitate trade and investment flows.

The Iranian minister emphasized the investment potential in technical and engineering services, mining, infrastructure, agriculture, and knowledge-based industries, calling the Dushanbe International Investment Forum a vital platform for promoting mutual understanding and private-sector engagement.

He noted that three key economic agreements between the two countries—on investment promotion and protection, avoidance of double taxation, and customs cooperation—are now in force, providing a legal foundation for expanding commercial ties.

Madanizadeh also announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding to form the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Investment Working Group, which has already held three sessions, the most recent on the sidelines of the 17th Economic Cooperation Summit in Shiraz.

He further underscored the readiness of Iran's private sector to exchange specialized business delegations and enhance knowledge of the Tajik market, adding that recent progress in visa-free travel has already boosted cultural and medical tourism between the two nations.

The Iranian delegation's trip to Dushanbe in mid-October and participation in the international investment forum underscored a strategic shift toward operational economic diplomacy, building on decades of cultural, linguistic, and historical ties.

A key focus of the talks was developing banking cooperation to remove long-standing financial barriers. Given the central role of banking systems in trade facilitation and capital transfer, resolving these issues could unlock new pathways for joint investment and empower private-sector initiatives.

The implementation of the three foundational economic agreements—on investment protection, double taxation, and customs—provides a framework of mutual trust for businesses and investors. The establishment of the joint investment task force signals a move from political understanding to structured, results-oriented cooperation.

Collaboration in technical and engineering services, mining, infrastructure, agriculture, and knowledge-based industries has emerged as a key priority. These

sectors, rich in development potential, can contribute to technology transfer, job creation, and sustainable growth in both countries. The Dushanbe forum served as a platform to identify shared capacities and connect Iranian and Tajik entrepreneurs.

The Iranian private sector is expected to play an increasingly vital role in this process. By forming expert delegations and strengthening trade intelligence, Iranian firms can establish joint ventures and seize opportunities in Tajikistan's growing market.

The visa-free travel agreement between Iran and Tajikistan has significantly expanded cultural and medical tourism, while also facilitating smoother business interactions. Analysts note that the deep cultural and civilizational ties between Tehran and Dushanbe have evolved into a powerful engine for economic cooperation, positioning Iran as a reliable partner in Tajikistan's path toward sustainable regional development.

Iran's minister of economic affairs and finance emphasized the expansion of brotherly relations and economic, commercial, and infrastructure cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan and proposed special opportunities for deepening these relations under the current conditions.

Seyed Ali Madanizadeh made the remarks in talks with Emomali Rahmon, the president of Tajikistan, on the sidelines of his participation in Dushanbe International Investment Forum.

During this meeting, the Iranian minister, thanking the provided opportunity for the meeting, announced that he carries a warm and sincere message of greetings from Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to the president of Tajikistan.

He emphasized that Mr. Pezeshkian is eager to meet and host him in Tehran.

Madanizadeh, stressing the importance of brotherly relations and close cooperation between the two countries, stated: Mr. Pezeshkian always places special emphasis on developing these relations in all fields.

He sincerely appreciated the principled and courageous positions of the Tajik government in condemning the attacks by the Zionist regime and the U.S. against the Islamic Republic of Iran, describing this stance as indicative of a deep understanding of the sensitive regional conditions and the necessity of supporting stability and sustainable security.

The Iranian minister also congratulated the president of Tajikistan on the successful holding of international meetings, especially the recent summit of heads of

state in the beautiful city of Dushanbe, and noted that Iran-Tajikistan relations have been noticeably growing in recent years.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Madanizadeh proposed that by defining special financial and banking mechanisms, using national currencies, bartering goods and services, and implementing joint projects, cooperation between the two countries could be expanded away from the effects of sanctions.

He continued: "In this regard, significant capacities for cooperation in various fields have been provided; including in investment and infrastructure projects, Iranian companies are ready to actively participate in implementing construction, power plant, road construction, housing, and urban development plans in Tajikistan."

The minister also said: "In the field of energy and electricity, cooperation in the construction of hydroelectric power plants, Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran electricity transmission lines, and the development of renewable energies are among the practical axes of cooperation. In the field of trade and banking, establishing direct payment channels, using national currency, and reciprocal credit lines will play an important role in facilitating economic relations."

He also announced Iran's readiness to establish a joint science and technology park, develop knowledge-based companies, and digitalize the economy with Tajikistan.

Emphasizing the high capabilities of Iranian technical and engineering companies in implementing large projects, Madanizadeh stated: "Strengthening the presence of these companies in Tajikistan, in addition to developing infrastructure, will lead to the transfer of Iran's technical knowledge and engineering technology to this country."

He added that Iran and Tajikistan can play an important role in the regional supply chain in the fields of energy, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and technical and engineering services, and by synergizing their capacities, enhance their economic standing in the region.

At the end of the meeting, Madanizadeh once again thanked the president and the government of Tajikistan for their warm hospitality and emphasized: "We look forward to hosting Mr. Rahmon in Iran so that we can have constructive and effective talks in Tehran about the strategic roadmaps for long-term and sustainable cooperation between the two countries."

Speaking on Tuesday at the Dushanbe International Investment Forum, Madanizadeh highlighted the strengthening of economic and cultural ties between Iran and Tajikistan, emphasizing green investment opportunities and regional cooperation in energy, technology, transport, and agriculture as the foundation for sustainable development across Central Asia.

He said the conference, focused on green investment, serves as "a bridge for sharing ideas and a gateway to a sustainable and prosperous regional future."

'Power plant fuel reserves ready for winter, no blackouts expected'

TEHRAN – Iran's Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said the country's power plants are fully stocked with fuel for the winter, adding that no electricity shortages are expected in the coming months thanks to new generation projects and inter-ministerial coordination.

Speaking to state media, Aliabadi said despite facing five consecutive years of drought and an exceptionally hot summer, "compre-

hensive measures" have been taken to ensure stable electricity supply during the cold season.

He noted that the Energy and Oil ministries have closely coordinated to fill power plant fuel reserves. "Compared with last year, we have managed to increase our fuel storage levels significantly," he said.

The minister emphasized, however, that public cooperation through energy saving remains essential.

"If the agreed fuel supply schedule between the Energy Ministry, Oil Ministry, and other agencies is implemented as planned, we will have a smooth winter with no disruptions to power for households or industries until early spring," he added.

“No Kings” slogan unites diverse voices, says American scholar

Philip Rocco notes the movement’s strength lies in its broad symbolism that connects workers, immigrants, and defenders of civil rights

By Sahar Dadjoo
TEHRAN – In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Philip Rocco, a professor of political science at Marquette University, examines the rise of the “No Kings” protests across the United States.

He describes the movement as both a revival of America’s anti-authoritarian tradition and a response to the growing concentration of power in the executive branch under President Donald Trump’s second term.

Rocco argues that the protests expose deep tensions between federal and state governments while signaling a broader crisis of democratic accountability.

By invoking the revolutionary slogan “No Kings,” he notes, activists are linking the nation’s founding ideals to today’s fight against inequality, political polarization, and the erosion of institutional checks and balances.

The following is the text of the interview:

How would you contextualize the emergence of the “No Kings” protest in the broader history of U.S. political dissent? Are we witnessing a new form of grassroots activism or an extension of long-standing anti-authoritarian movements?

That’s a great question. I’m not a social movements scholar, so it’s hard for me to give a definitive answer, but I can say that the form of protest we’re seeing now draws on a long tradition of social movement mobilization going back at least a century.

At the same time, activists today are responding to new demands, new threats, and new challenges in mobilizing a populace that’s quite socially fragmented. People no longer have the same social institutions that used to connect them routinely, even half a century ago. That has required using new forms of technology and communication to bring people together. By many measures, these are among the largest protests the United States has ever seen.



The slogan “No Kings” resonates strongly with American democratic principles. How do you interpret its symbolic meaning in today’s polarized political landscape?

The choice of “No Kings” as a political formula is consistent with what successful social movements tend to do: they choose a symbol that’s robust to different interpretations.

You have groups focused on the administration’s attacks on workers, immigrants, and marginalized communities, as well as those concerned about fundamental democratic rights like voting and free speech. There’s so much going on that finding a symbol that speaks to all those different groups can be difficult.

“No Kings” works because it means different things to different people, while also drawing on America’s founding ideals. Next year marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and the movement has highlighted its list of grievances against a king—drawing deliberate historical parallels.

Given your research on federalism and intergovernmental partnerships, how would you interpret the “No Kings” protests? Do they reflect a breakdown in federal, state, and local relations rather than just partisan backlash?

During the Trump administration, we’ve seen a kind of weaponization of intergovernmental relations—using the denial of funding to state and local governments to enforce loyalty to the president’s

personal priorities.

We also saw federalization of the National Guard without the usual factual basis, and claims of “rebellion” where there were none. Governors and mayors have responded not just through litigation, but also through public political speech, mobilizing citizens to look critically at what’s happening to basic protections in the Bill of Rights.

We’re witnessing an intensification of conflict between federal and state governments that goes beyond typical partisan federalism. The administration has challenged state and local autonomy in a fundamental way.

Do you think these protests are purely anti-Trump, or do they signify a deeper frustration with the U.S. political system as a whole?

Without a doubt, the Trump administration is emblematic of broader problems that many protesters have with American politics: extreme income inequality, unequal political access, and a sense that government no longer represents working-class voters.

Cuts to programs like food stamps and Medicaid to finance tax cuts for the wealthy are not unique to Trump. Those grievances predate him—but Trump provides a focal point for them like no other.

What long-term effects could the “No Kings” protest have on the Republican Party, especially in terms of leadership and ideology?

It’s too soon to tell. The contest for control within the party is still unfolding, especially as Trump’s

political influence wanes. Interestingly, there have been more protests in counties that voted for Trump than in previous years, but I haven’t seen evidence that this is shifting party strategy yet.

Republican support for Trump remains resilient, and elections are still decided by tight margins. If protests are going to reshape the party, it may take time before we see that effect.

Academically speaking, how do you distinguish between strong executive leadership and the personalization of power? Where does the current U.S. context fall?

The growing power of the executive branch makes it difficult for Congress to assert leadership when the president pushes in another direction. Over the last year, we’ve seen the executive impound funds Congress has appropriated, with little congressional pushback.

What distinguishes the personalization of power from simple executive expansion is the use of state resources for personal political gain. For example, it would have been unthinkable for a prior president to deny disaster aid to a state simply because it didn’t vote for them—but now we’ve seen signs that this is happening. That’s not just strong leadership; that’s the use of office to advance personal power.

Looking historically, which period of U.S. political development most resembles the current moment? Are we repeating cycles from past “imperial presidencies,” or entering new territory?

It’s difficult to draw direct historical parallels because the federal government today wields far greater power than in earlier eras.

We can trace threads back to illiberal moments—like the Alien and Sedition Acts under John Adams, the Civil War, or the Redeemer period after Reconstruction—but the current situation is unique. Even at those times of intense social conflict, power was not as concentrated in the presidency as it is now. This moment feels rather singular.

Catherine Connolly wins Irish presidency in landslide after pro-Palestine campaign



Catherine Connolly swept to victory in Ireland’s presidential election, defeating center-right rival Heather Humphreys after early tallies put Connolly at roughly two-thirds of first-preference votes. Humphreys conceded as the gap proved insurmountable.

Turnout was around 40% and spoiled ballots surged to a historic level of roughly 13% — a sharp signal of public frustration over housing, the cost of living, and what many voters saw as a thin field of mainstream options that helped fuel Connolly’s surge.

A former clinical psychologist and barrister supported by an unusual left-wing coalition, the 68-year-old Connolly campaigned on social justice and Irish neutrality, emerging as the campaign’s most visible voice on Gaza.

She has said plainly: “Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. The normalization of genocide is catastrophic for the Palestinian people, and it is catastrophic for humanity. I will stand in sol-

idarity with the Palestinian people as long as I have breath in my body.”

About Hamas, she told The Irish Times that it is “not up to” Britain’s prime minister to decide the group’s role, arguing that Palestinians must choose their leaders. She has also accused the UK and the U.S. of enabling what she describes as genocide in Gaza.

Those blunt positions — together with her criticism of the EU’s move toward greater military spending and stark historical comparisons about rearmament — won her fierce support at home and prompted warnings abroad.

Analysts say the largely ceremonial presidency gives Connolly a moral platform to spotlight humanitarian crises, but her rhetoric could also create diplomatic tensions with European capitals and Washington at a time when Ireland’s economy remains closely tied to transatlantic partners.

Palestinian factions reject foreign governance

From page 1 ▶ This independent body would oversee essential services and daily affairs in coordination with Arab partners and international institutions but under Palestinian supervision, on a basis of transparency and national accountability. The plan underscores a strong message that Gaza must be governed by its own people.

The Cairo conference also produced a framework for an international committee to handle reconstruction funding and logistics. However, Palestinian officials made clear that any foreign

presence in Gaza should be limited to humanitarian and technical support, not political control.

Mustafa Barghouti, Secretary-General of the Palestinian National Initiative, emphasized that “foreign forces administering Gaza are rejected completely.” He added that the goal of the summit is to prevent any political or geographical separation between Gaza and the West Bank, a division that the Zionist occupation regime and some Western powers have sought to entrench.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Canceled China visit marks early setback for Germany’s Merz

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul has postponed his planned trip to China after Beijing confirmed only a meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi, with no additional high-level appointments.

Germany’s Die Welt reported Saturday that the cancellation is viewed as a foreign policy setback for Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who, nearly six months into office, has yet to make his first visit to China.

The chancellor’s office had reserved days for possible travel to China and India in the coming week, but President Xi Jinping reportedly did not find time to receive Merz on those dates.

The delay underscores the delicate phase of

Berlin’s recalibration toward Beijing, where the government seeks to “de-risk” while maintaining economic ties.

Die Welt predicts Merz and Wadephul face difficult weeks ahead, with the optics potentially hardening domestic scrutiny of the government’s China approach.

The paper also notes the sensitivity of Germany’s industrial interests as officials weigh engagement amid strategic rivalry.

The episode follows heightened EU–China friction over trade and technology controls, placing a premium on firm, high-level channels to manage differences.

US did not bring peace; it only paused the killing

By Batool Subeiti
LONDON – Today in West Asia there is an aggressor party and a party that is attacked. A party that is right and a party that is wrong. Each party has supporters.

There is the camp of resistance and those behind it. It is an axis united by direction and principle. The lines of support extend from Iran to Palestine. There is also the camp of the Israeli occupation entity and those behind it. The entity is the American stooge, with its Western allies and Arab tools, who act as mediators. The mediating parties often follow the aggressor party.

The U.S. sets the region’s decisions and policies and the Israeli occupation entity is tasked

with implementing them. This entity is given the green light to use means of destruction to intimidate and subjugate others.

Just as Israelis reach their goals by using the utmost violence and the most destructive means, they also need intermediaries. The Arab states that are called upon for their efforts to make peace, were in fact a mediator between the killer and the victim. Their job is to reach solutions if the killer fails. The mediatory roles they can play differ depending on whether the goals can be achieved or not, based on success and on failure. Therefore, the Arabs are a subordinate mediator and can be an alternative option if the first option fails.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From cocaine to crude: Unmasking the U.S. agenda in Venezuela

From page 1 ▶ CNN reports that President Trump is considering strikes on cocaine facilities and trafficking routes inside Venezuela, even as officials acknowledge the country’s minimal role in the drug trade. The United Nations and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration confirm that coca cultivation is concentrated in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia—not Venezuela. Nevertheless, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other officials have aggressively painted President Nicolas Maduro as a “narcoterrorist”, using these drug claims to justify possible military intervention.

Drop Site reporting sheds further light on the mechanics behind this campaign. Rubio, long a proponent of regime change, has redirected millions in the so-called “pro-democracy” funding toward military preparation, while U.S. contractors ramp up operations with combat boats, virtual training programs, and intelligence assessments. The leaked documents suggest a coordinated effort to position U.S. forces for action—echoing decades of covert interventions, from CIA operations to USAID-backed programs targeting Venezuelan institutions. Presented as “democracy promotion,” these programs have historically served U.S. strategic interests rather

than those of the Venezuelan people.

The drug narrative is increasingly pretextual. Access to Venezuela’s oil resources appears to be the real priority, with regime change framed as the most efficient path to securing them.

Even military actions ostensibly targeting narcotics raise serious ethical and legal concerns. U.S. strikes on alleged drug boats have already killed dozens, with little evidence linking the vessels to smuggling capable of reaching U.S. shores.

Venezuelans are acutely aware of the U.S. underlying motives. As journalist Kleybergel González told the Tehran Times: “We Venezuelans are very clear that the U.S. government’s true intention is to seize our natural resources, including oil and our rare earths in the south of the country. Therefore, many have responded by supporting President Maduro’s calls for mobilization. Furthermore, we remain at work with a strong sense of patriotism and civic spirit, but alert to any U.S. military escalation.”

For decades, the U.S. has sought to influence Venezuela’s internal affairs under the guise of promoting democracy. From CIA covert operations to USAID and National Endowment for



People in Venezuela participate in a rally in support of President Nicolas Maduro, amid rising tensions with the United States, in Caracas, on Oct. 6, 2025. (Photo: Reuters)

Democracy programs, Washington has consistently invested in shaping political outcomes to align with its economic and geopolitical interests. Today, those interests are clear: Venezuelan oil and other natural resources. In short, the White House’s stated justification for military action—fighting drugs—is a thin veneer over a resource-driven agenda. Venezuelan sovereignty and stability hang in the balance while foreign interests pursue a prize that is not theirs to claim.

Command headquarters in Safed, directly supervising the Israeli army’s operations against Lebanon.

Every missile, every drone, and every incursion is executed under American watch. Washington no longer hides behind diplomatic neutrality — it has become a partner in the aggression.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel wages war on Lebanon from Safed under Washington’s direction

By Sondoss Al Asaad
BEIRUT — A consistent pattern of conflict connects Lebanon’s past and present confrontations with American power, from the mountain outposts of Safed to the corridors of the Pentagon.

On the morning of October 23, 1983, a handful of young Lebanese operatives struck a blow against

the world’s mightiest military, sending a shockwave through the United States. Forty-two years later, the same foundational policy drives Washington—only the tools and faces have changed.

What was once waged through Marines on the ground is now orchestrated through US officers sitting inside Israeli command centers.

What began as an occupation justified under “stability” has evolved into a digital war room where every strike on Lebanon is pre-approved by Washington.

Recent Israeli reports have torn the veil off this new chapter of occupation. According to the Israeli channel Kan, U.S. officers are now stationed at the Israeli Northern

Iran, China cultural exchanges accelerate, Beijing’s ambassador says

TEHRAN – Beijing’s ambassador to Tehran has said that cooperation between Iran and China in cultural heritage research has gained greater speed and depth over the past two years, describing the field as a strategic platform for expanding bilateral scientific and civilizational exchanges.

Ambassador Cong Peiwu said joint research projects in archaeology and related cultural heritage studies had provided a strong foundation for scientific and cultural cooperation between the two nations, IRIB reported on Saturday.

“These capacities have existed for years, and they are now being pursued in a more organized and profound way,” Cong was quoted as saying.

Referring to China’s recent international initiatives, Cong said cultural and scientific collaboration between Tehran and Beijing had expanded since the launch of a global initiative by Chinese President Xi Jinping. He said the trend showed that “two ancient Asian civilizations are taking effective steps toward mutual cultural and scientific enrichment.”

The ambassador also cited his visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Persepolis in April, where he met a group of Chinese re-



searchers, including members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The presence of Chinese scientists at such a World Heritage site is a manifestation of ongoing practical cooperation in archaeology between the two countries, he explained.

“With significant progress in cultural heritage studies and mutual understanding between civilizations, we expect Iran-China cooperation in this field not only to continue but also to expand in a more structured and comprehensive way,” the Chinese envoy said.

“Cultural heritage can serve as a lasting bridge between two ancient nations that have contributed greatly to global civilization.”

Armenian Cultural Week begins in Isfahan’s Vank Cathedral

TEHRAN—Concurrent with the beginning of the Armenian Cultural Week, the art medal of Khachatur Kesaratsi, the founder of the first printing house in Iran and West Asia, was unveiled at the Vank Church museum in New Julfa, Isfahan, on Friday.

According to a Mehr news agency, this cultural event was held with the support of the Nerses Shnorhali Library of Vank and in the presence of the religious leader of the Armenians of Isfahan and Southern Iran, Bishop Sipan Kashjian, the head of the Assembly of Representatives of the Armenian Caliphate of Isfahan and Southern Iran, Noel Minasyan, and a group of artists and researchers in the field of Armenian history and culture.

The Khachatur Kesaratsi art medal is the work of artist Masih Ahmadi, which was designed and made as the first medal in a series centered on the famous Armenians of Isfahan.

In this work, he recreated part of the lead letters used in the printing of the first Armenian book in Julfa in the 17th century and incorporated the Armenian letter symbol, the symbol of God in Armenian script, which was used in the printing of the Psalms of David in 1638 CE, into the design of the medal.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Director of the Archives and Manuscripts Department of the Vank Church Complex, spoke about the life and scientific legacy of Khachatur Kesaratsi and stated that Kesaratsi was not only the founder of the first printing house in Iran

and the Middle East, but also turned New Julfa into one of the scientific and intellectual centers of the East with his efforts and cultural vision.

He added that the establishment of the printing house in Julfa, Isfahan, is a turning point in the history of the transfer of knowledge and art from Europe to Iran.

Then, the artist who created the work, Masih Ahmadi, explained the process of designing and making the medal: “The idea of ??creating a series of art medals in memory of the prominent Armenians of Isfahan was formed about two years ago, and currently the first medal of this series has been realized, inspired by the life and works of Khachatur Kesaratsi.”

He added that in addition to its artistic aspect, this medal carries a message of preserving the role of Armenians in the cultural history of Iran.

In the final part of the ceremony, the Khachatur Kesaratsi Medal was unveiled by Bishop Sipan Kashjian and Masih Ahmadi, and copies of it were donated to the Armenian Caliphate Council of Isfahan. A short film of the design and manufacturing process of the medal was also shown to the attendees.

Khachatur Kesaratsi was an Armenian archbishop in Safavid Iran. He is credited with the founding of the first printing press in Iran, in 1633,or 1636. The first book was printed; a Saghmosaran (Psalter) in 1638 .

UNESCO Ambassador: Food diversity of West Azarbaijan ethnic groups a unique tourism potential

TEHRAN—Presence of different ethnic groups, including Kords and Turks, in West Azarbaijan province has created a beautiful food diversity that is a unique tourism potential, said Ambassador of the UNESCO Food and Gastronomy Club Hassan Mirhadi.

According to IRNA, he added that Turks, Kords, Assyrians and Armenians have been living side by side in this province for many years, and this is a beautiful picture and a model in the world.

He continued: “The existence of different ethnic groups in this province has led us to witness a variety of foods in this exhibition, which is a good potential for tourism.”

Mirhadi added that the moment visitors enter this festival and exhibition, it is as if they have entered a historical journey and a paradise of food, because the aroma of Ash-e Doogh (a local soup), Koofteh (meatball), and various local foods is complex in this space, and in this dreamy journey, memories can be revived.”

He added: “We currently live in a country that has a history of several thousand years

in the field of food and drink, and this is considered an important tourism capacity in the international arena.”

The Ambassador of the UNESCO Food and Gastronomy Club expressed hope that West Azarbaijan will be a model for other provinces.

The Fourth International Festival and Exhibition of Traditional and Local Foods of Urmia was held in a friendly and cultural atmosphere from October 21-24 in Hall No. 3 of the Forest Park, Urmia, with the extensive presence of Iranian ethnic groups and representatives from several foreign countries.

This event, with the aim of introducing the food, tourism and cultural potential of Iran and the region, provided an opportunity to showcase the flavors and food rituals of different nations side by side.

In this edition of the festival, in addition to various provinces of Iran, countries such as Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Iraq, Armenia and Afghanistan also participated by presenting their traditional and local foods.

Minister calls for stronger private sector role to boost Tehran’s tourism potential

TEHRAN – Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism has underlined Tehran’s significant potential for tourism growth while urged greater participation from the private sector to make full use of the city’s capacities.

Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri told IRNA on Saturday that 101 tourism investment projects worth 3.55 trillion rials (about \$3.5 million) are currently under way in Tehran province. He said the projects are expected to create more than 20,000 jobs.

“Achieving sustainable economic development is not possible without the active presence of the private sector,” Salehi-Amiri said. He added that the government should shift from direct management to a facilitative and supportive role for entrepreneurs.

According to the minister, real support for private investors includes removing legal barriers, creating a strong competitive environment, and providing conditions for innovation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi-Amiri said he had visited several tourism sites in Tehran, including Bamland, the [artificial]



lake of Persian Gulf, [the cultural and tourism zone of] Abbasabad , and the Alibaba complex, as well as two hotels under construction.

The minister added that start-ups represent a form of “soft power” for Iran, noting that the country’s growing base of knowledge-based businesses and new ideas has become an emerging force in the economy.

He said the government’s policy focuses on empowering the private sector, supporting creativity, and promoting competition within Iran’s start-up eco-

system.

Tehran, the capital of Iran, offers a diverse range of tourism attractions that showcase the country’s rich history and cultural heritage. At the heart of the city stands the Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the oldest royal complexes in Tehran. The palace, dating back to the Qajar era, features ornate halls, marble thrones, and mirror-adorned chambers that reflect the craftsmanship of Persian architecture blended with European influences of the 19th century. Nearby, the National

Museum of Iran houses invaluable archaeological collections that trace the country’s civilization from prehistoric times to the Islamic era.

Visitors seeking a glimpse of Tehran’s traditional commerce and social life often head to the Grand Bazaar, a sprawling network of covered alleys where traders sell carpets, spices, jewelry, and handicrafts. The bazaar, with its bustling atmosphere and historic caravanserais, serves as both a commercial hub and a cultural landmark that has shaped the city’s identity for centuries.

Beyond the urban center, Tehran’s northern districts offer scenic escapes such as the mountain villages of Darband and Darakeh, popular for hiking, tea houses, and local cuisine along riverside trails. The city is also home to historic mosques and madrasas, including the Shah Mosque and the Sepahsalar Mosque, which display intricate tilework and calligraphy characteristic of Persian-Islamic design. Together, these attractions make Tehran a city where modern life and deep-rooted traditions coexist, offering travelers a comprehensive view of Iran’s cultural and natural landscape.

Tourism maps installed at 14 Tehran metro stations, citywide map to be unveiled soon

TEHRAN – Tourism maps have been installed at 14 Tehran Metro stations as part of a broader plan to introduce city attractions through the public transport network, the head of Tehran’s municipal tourism office said on Saturday.

Amir Qasemi, head of the Tehran Municipality’s Tourism Headquarters, on Saturday said the initiative aims to enhance passenger experience and promote urban tourism by highlighting attractions near metro stations.

“The plan to organize and present tourism attractions at metro stations has been implemented to improve the travel experience of citizens and tourists and to develop tourism in the city,” Qasemi said.

He added that planning for metro-based city tours began about a year ago, during which routes and key urban areas were identified. “We selected stations with potential for introducing nearby attractions and designed specific tourism maps for them,” he said.

According to Qasemi, 40 metro stations have been targeted in the first phase of the project. Maps have been installed at 14 of them, including Baharestan, Sa’di, Darvazeh Dowlat, Ferdowsi, Darvazeh Shemiran, Khayyam, Imam Khomeini, Hosseinabad, Panzdah-e-Khordad, Mohammadiyeh, Mola-vi, Qiam, Shohada and Mellat.

The maps show each station’s location along with tourist sites, services and facilities within a 500-meter radius to help passengers and



visitors explore nearby destinations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Qasemi said a comprehensive tourism map of the entire Tehran Metro network has also been completed and will be unveiled soon. “This map will allow citizens to experience Tehran from a new perspective through the metro system,” he said.

Tehran, the bustling capital of the Islamic Republic, beckons travelers with its vibrant culture, rich history, and eclectic array of attractions. From ancient palaces to modern skyscrapers, Tehran offers captivating experiences that showcase the essence of Iranian heritage and hospitality. At the heart of metropolis lies the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace, a masterpiece of Persian architecture.

Khuzestan’s silent caves, hidden treasures of tourism

TEHRAN-- Khuzestan province has a hidden treasure deep in its mountains; mysterious caves that have remained hidden in the rock and silence for centuries and today could be the key to tourism prosperity and sustainable employment in this land.

More than 70 natural caves have been identified in Khuzestan province to date, each of which has the potential for global introduction and responsible exploitation in the form of scientific and eco-oriented tourism, Mehr news agency reported.

Dezful city holds a special place among them. The mountainous nature of Shahyoun district, proximity to the Dez River, lush landscapes and ancient history of the region have all joined hands to make this region one of the most potential centers of ecotourism in the south of the country.

In the heart of this region, Sezar (Caesar) Cave, with its unique geological structure, has

recently captured the attention of environmentalists, tourism activists and public representatives.

It is not just a natural phenomenon, but it can be a leading example of converting natural resources into economic advantage while protecting and respecting the environment; a model that many regions of the country need.

Abbas Papizadeh, an MP representing Dezful in the Iranian parliament, pointed to the latest efforts in the field of tourism development in Shahyoun. “Dezful has the capacity to become one of the country’s important tourism hubs due to its special geographical location, proximity to the Dez River, and cultural and natural diversity.”

Fortunately, during a recent visit with the Head of Khuzestan Cultural Heritage Department, the basic issues of the Shahyoun region, including infrastructure problems and ecotourism capac-

ities, were reviewed, he added.

He also said that solving the problem of cellphone coverage, providing lighting for village passages, and increasing the share of water in the village of Lius by strengthening the water supply network are among the items on the agenda.

“In addition, granting government facilities for the development of ecotourism and supporting private investors are among our serious goals in this area.”

Referring to the importance of Sezar Cave, he said: “This cave has been discovered and initially identified in recent years. Funding for the implementation of the research project and its initial studies are being pursued in cooperation with Khuzestan Cultural Heritage Department and transforming this valuable natural monument into a regional geopark is on our agenda.”

Sezar Cave is very important from a geological perspective

due to its karst structure and special rock layers. Local experts believe that this cave can form part of the Northern Zagros cave network and be introduced as a special study point on the national geological map.

Initial studies have shown that in some parts of the cave, water pools, natural reliefs and rare species of bats and insects can be seen, indicating its biological richness. Such features can make Sezar Cave one of the leading geotourism attractions in the south of the country in the future.

Also, Adel Mola, Khuzestan’s Department of Environment deputy chief, said that currently, Dezful County has the largest number of identified caves in the province, and five caves, including one cave in Behbahan and several caves in the Shahyoun district of Dezful, are in the first-class category. These caves are of great importance due to their unique structure and special biodiversity, he added.

TEHRAN – The Iran International Innovation Zone and the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance technological collaboration.

On Thursday, a Russian delegation led by Dmitry Kurochkin, Vice President of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, visited the Iran International Innovation Zone in Tehran to become more familiar with the capabilities of Iranian knowledge-based companies, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, Hamed Bahari-far, an official with Pardis Technology Park, presented an account of the missions, programs, and achievements of the International Innovation Zone. Introducing the broad capacities of the science and technology parks, the official highlighted the importance of promoting international cooperation in enhancing the export of the knowledge-based products.

For his part, Kurochkin said the Iran International Innovation Zone is an attractive and dynamic complex.

Following visits to companies and technology parks, he noted that there is a very broad potential for cooperation between the two countries; “we are interested in using all regional avenues to develop these relations,” Kurochkin said.

The official went on to say that the collaborations between Iran and Russia, whether through bilateral relations or international agreements such as BRICS or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), will contribute to the development of technology trade between the two countries.

The officials also discussed ways to expedite technology ex-



ports, financial and banking exchanges, as well as ways to benefit from the capacity of regional agreements such as BRICS and the SCO.

Enhancing ties on emerging technologies

In May, Russian Presidential Aide Andrei Fursenko underscored the significance of promoting partnerships and collaborations with Iran in emerging technologies.

It is a fact that focusing on already established technologies will not be beneficial for the two countries. So, it is essential to put on the agenda the technologies that have not (fully) developed yet, which is a much more difficult task, IRNA quoted Fursenko as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with the head of the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology,

Hossein Roozbeh, and the head of Pardis Technology Park, Mehdi Safarinia, while attending Iran-Russia diplomacy meeting on May 2nd, on the sidelines of the International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2025), which was held from April 29 to May 2, in Tehran.

“Although working on new technologies is risky, we should not fail to prioritize them, because there is no other way to be the first in the world,” the Russian official added.

For his part, Safarinia said Iran is committed to promoting international scientific cooperation, highlighting that Russia is among the first countries Iran is willing to expand ties with.

The official went on to say that Russian companies can have offices in Pardis Technology Park. The establishment of Russian universities’ branches in the country was the second point

mentioned by Safarinia. “We have already reached agreements with St. Petersburg University and Moscow State University. We are following up on the issue in cooperation with the University of Science and Technology.

This will be the first foreign university to have a branch in Iran. Both Iranian and regional students will be able to study at this university, spending part of their studies in Iran and the rest in Russia,” Safarinia further noted.

The official also announced readiness to further enhance collaborations in research and education, as well as market opportunities, as members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS.

During the Iran-Russia diplomacy meeting, the two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish two joint tech zones.

The MOU was signed between the National Association of Advanced Industries and Knowledge-Based Companies of the Industry and Mining Sector, represented by Mohammad Mehdi Naibi, and the Russian President of the Technological Sovereignty Export Association, Andrey Bezrukov.

The expansion of new technologies and joint research in the fields of nanotechnology, biotechnology, health, information and communication technology (ICT), artificial intelligence, as well as the use of renewable energies, oil, and gas, are among the main focuses of the signed MOU.

The MOU highlights production and market development, including co-branding and marketing, market research, product development, and the development of distribution channels.

Iran Energy Efficiency Conference slated for December

TEHRAN – Tehran will host the 4th Iran Energy Efficiency Conference (IREEC) 2025 from December 8 to 9.

According to the vice-presidency for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, the need to manage energy resources, optimize consumption, and improve energy efficiency is of particular importance, IRNA reported.

The high energy consumption in Iran and the increasing pressure on national resources have doubled the need to develop the culture of saving, utilize modern technologies, and achieve greater productivity in all economic and industrial sectors.

This year’s event aims to showcase the latest achievements, share knowledge and expertise between experts, and serve as a platform to boost cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Holding specialized panels on energy optimization policies, optimizing energy in industry, buildings, and transportation are other sections of the fourth IREEC.

On the sidelines of the conference, domestic and international companies will display their latest technological accomplishments and innovative solutions in optimizing energy and improving efficiency.

Iran to boost renewable power capacity

Attending the 29th meeting of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Iran’s representative underlined the country’s commitment to the expansion of renewable energy sources via taking various measures.

These include growing solar and wind power production capacities and implementing strategies to improve energy efficiency across residential and industrial sectors, IRNA reported.

The 29th IRENA was held on September 11 and 12 in Abu Dhabi, Dubai. Iran participated in the meeting for the first time.

The meeting gathered more than 400 officials from IRENA’s Members, comprising 169 countries and the European Union, to provide strategic guidance on the Agency’s work



programme and to address pressing issues shaping today’s global energy transition.

In August, an energy official said Iran plans to expand its renewable energy capacity to 7,000 megawatts by the next Iranian calendar year (begins late March 2026), up from current levels.

Jafar Mohammadzadeh, deputy head of investment at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), told IRIB that the government has accelerated solar and other renewable projects, targeting a sharp increase in output. He noted that the ministry’s plan to add 100 MW each week reflects earlier preparations in the sector.

“Our goal is to raise renewable energy’s share in the country’s electricity mix from the current 1.5 percent to 15 percent by the end of the 14th government’s term,” he said, adding that Iran’s vast solar potential gives the target strong backing.

Mohammadzadeh said peak electricity demand occurs during summer, when solar output is also at its highest, making renewables particularly valuable. He added that small- and large-scale solar projects are being supported through attractive contracts, including long-term guaranteed purchase agreements that allow investors to recover costs in about three years.

He also noted that in the short term, some equipment imports will be required to speed up construction of large-scale plants, with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade providing support.

65 countries to attend 2nd intl. tech Olympics in Tehran

TEHRAN – Over 1,100 participants from 65 countries, including Pakistan, Oman, Vietnam, Tunisia, India, Turkey, Bangladesh, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Romania, will attend the second international technology Olympics, which is planned to be held from October 27 to 30, at Pardis Technology Park, Tehran.

The first international technology Olympics was held last year, attracting over 6,300 participants from Iran and other countries. This year, the number of elite Iranian students participating in the event has risen to over 11,000, ISNA quoted Hossein Afshin, the vice president for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, as saying.

The participants will compete in five different fields, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, programming, robotics, drones, and Internet of Things (IoT). Each of these competitions consists of several leagues, covering different specialized areas within the field.

The programming section includes Front-end, Python/Django, Algorithms, and Golang leagues; the AI section covers text processing, data processing, and image processing leagues.

The IoT section focuses on challenges such as smart system design, crisis management, and energy consumption optimization.

The robotics section involves lightweight, heavyweight, and student leagues, and the drone section has various competitions in different fields such as autonomous missions, group flying, and flight intelligence.

The event aims to identify talented individuals, train them, and help them get employed at the national and international levels, Afshin said.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat’haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.“The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster,” he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از

تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند. به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه‌ای امضا می‌شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص‌های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص‌ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.

TEHRAN TIMES



www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.o. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

OCTOBER 26, 2025

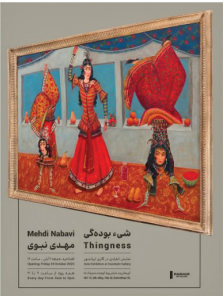
GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Success is the result of foresight and resolution, foresight depends upon deep thinking and planning and the most important factor of planning is to keep your secrets to yourself.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:48 Evening: 17:34 Dawn: 4:57 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:22 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* A collection of paintings by Mehdi Nabavi is on view in an exhibition at Iranshahr Gallery.

The exhibit named “Thingness” will run until November 4 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.



Liam Gallery

* Paintings by Ali Reza are currently on view in an exhibition at Liam Gallery.

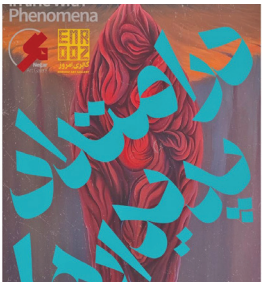
The exhibition runs until October 31 at the gallery located at No. 118, Fathi Shafaqi St. near Salmas Square.



Shirin Gallery

* Shohreh Amirahmadi is showcasing a collection of her latest paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named “The Closed Room” will run until November 4 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



Negar Gallery

* Paintings by Narges Simchi are on display in an exhibition at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit named “In Line with Phenomena” will be running until November 3 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 5, Bahrami alley, Mashahir Street, Qaem Maqam Farahani Avenue.



Ebteda Gallery

* An exhibition of paintings by Khosro Shahrokni is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

The exhibition titled “Dancing Flowers” will run until October 31 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.



Bostan Gallery

* Mohammadreza Mousavi is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

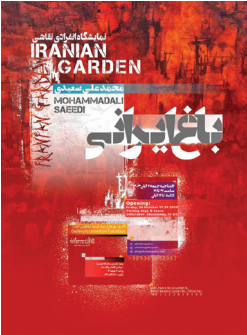
The exhibit named “Colors in the Shadow” will run until November 4 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



White Line Gallery

* White Line Gallery is displaying paintings by Mohammad Ali Saeidi in an exhibition named “Iranian Garden”.

The exhibit will be running until November 3 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jame Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.



Homa Gallery

* Hoor Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Farah Abolqasem.

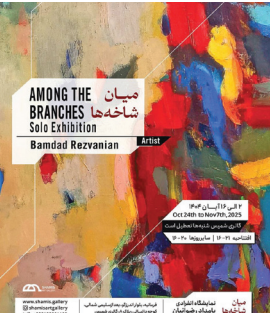
The exhibition will be running until November 21 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi St., off Motahhari Ave.



Homa Gallery

* A collection of paintings by Erfan Mojib is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named “Shortcut to Stories” will be running until November 4 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



Shamis Gallery

* Shamis Gallery is showcasing paintings by Bamdad Rezvanian in an exhibition.

The exhibit named “Among the Branches” will run until November 7 at the gallery located at 8 Daniali St., Andarzu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Iranian 3D animated feature film “Yooz” to go on screen in Canada

TEHRAN – The Iranian 3D animated feature film “Yooz” written and directed by Reza Arzhanghi will be screened in York Cinema in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada on November 2.

A production of Soureh Cinema Organization, the animation will have its international premiere in Richmond Hill and is set to be screened in other Canadian cities too, Mehr reported.

The animation tells the story of a Persian cheetah raised in New York. Although adapted to city life, he struggles with a deep sense of displacement. Over time, it feels a profound sense of alienation and begins to yearn for its homeland. Therefore, he embarks on a challenging journey back to Iran in search of its roots and true identity, facing both natural and inner obstacles, and realizes that returning home is not just a physical journey — it’s a cultural and spiritual one.

The narrative highlights themes of environmental awareness, the preservation of endangered species, and the importance of cultural identity.

Having been released in Irani-

an cinemas since September 24, “Yooz” has set a new record for the highest single-day audience for a children’s film in Iran’s cinema history, attracting 70,000 viewers on October 8, concurrent

with the National Children’s Day. Previously, the record was held by “Woolina and the No Birds” with 51,000 viewers, followed by “Smart Kid” with 49,000 viewers.

Musical play “Oliver Twist” back on stage in Tehran after 8 years

TEHRAN – The musical play “Oliver Twist,” directed by Hossein Parsaei, has returned on stage in Tehran after eight years.

The well-received show, first performed in 2017 with 120 performances at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall, is now being performed at the Tennis Stadium of the Engelab Sports Complex, ILNA reported.

The show is based on the play “Oliver!” by Lionel Bart, a musi-

cal, adapted for the stage from the 1838 novel “Oliver Twist” by Charles Dickens about the hardships of young Oliver in 19th-century London.

More than 150 actors, singers, and technical staff are involved, combining experienced performers with new talents.

Hootan Shakiba, Behnoush Tabatabaei, Banipal Shomon, Amirkaveh Ahanianjan, Siamak Ansari, and Kazem Sayahi are

among the main actors.

In this performance, Rayan Sarlak embodies Artful Dodger and two teenage actors, Parham Gholamloo and Arsham Jahanpanah, play the role of Oliver Twist on different nights.

“Oliver!” was the first musical adaptation of a famous Charles Dickens work to become a stage hit. The plot of Dickens’s original novel is considerably simplified for the purposes of the musical, with Fagin being represented more as a comic character than as a villain, and large portions of the latter part of the story being completely left out.

“Oliver Twist” is the second novel by English author Charles Dickens. It was originally published as a serial from 1837 to 1839 and as a three-volume book in 1838. The story follows the titular orphan, who, after being raised in a workhouse, escapes to London, where he meets a gang of juvenile pickpockets led by the elderly criminal Fagin, discovers the secrets of his parentage, and reconnects with his remaining family.

“Oliver Twist” unromantic-

ly portrays the sordid lives of criminals and exposes the cruel treatment of the many orphans in England in the mid-19th century.

In an early example of the social novel, Dickens satirizes child labor, domestic violence, the recruitment of children as criminals, and the presence of street children. The novel may have been inspired by the story of Robert Blincoe, an orphan whose account of working as a child laborer in a cotton mill was widely read in the 1830s.

It is likely that Dickens’s own experiences as a youth contributed as well, considering he spent two years of his life in the workhouse at the age of 12 and subsequently missed out on some of his education.

“Oliver Twist” has been the subject of numerous adaptations, including the 1948 film of the same name, starring Alec Guinness as Fagin; a highly successful musical, “Oliver!” (itself adapted into the Oscar-winning 1968 film), and Disney’s 1988 animated feature film “Oliver & Company”.

Audiobook of Vahid Yaminpour’s travelogue to Japan released

TEHRAN- The audio version of the Iranian writer Vahid Yaminpour’s travelogue to Japan, “The Kannushi of the Jinja Temple,” has been released in Tehran.

Narrated by Yaminpour, the audiobook has been produced by Samava, an Iranian institute that produces audiobooks, Mehr reported on Friday.

Yaminpour was invited to Japan to participate in the Hiroshima Peace Exhibition, alongside a group of artists, including Maziar Miri and Parviz Parastui. This travelogue is the result of that journey.

During his travels, he encountered people

who live with dignity and authenticity, witnessing how contemporary samurais strive to preserve their traditions. He also observed how Japanese women, despite living in a pa-

Award-winning artists join 450 Jews demanding Israel sanctions

More than 450 prominent Jewish figures worldwide have issued a collective demand for international sanctions against Israel in response to the situation in Gaza. In an open letter to United Nations officials and global leaders, the group called for concrete measures against what they described as Israel’s violation of international humanitarian law in Palestinian territories.

The signatories urged world powers to comply with rulings from both the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court while immediately halting weapons transfers to Israel. They also demanded guaranteed humanitarian access to Gaza and rejection of what they termed unjustified “antisemitism accusations” against those advocating for peace and justice. The letter emphasized that Palestinian solidarity constitutes “the fulfillment of Judaism, not its betrayal,” Yeni Şafak reported.

Among the distinguished signatories are

former Israeli Knesset Speaker Avrom Borg, former peace negotiations head Daniel Levy, British writer Michael Rosen, Canadian author Naomi Klein, Oscar-winning director Jonathan Glazer, American actor Wallace Shawn, Emmy-winning actresses Ilana Glazer and Hannah Einbinder, and Pulitzer-winning author Benjamin Moser. The letter’s publication precedes an upcoming European Union leaders summit amid discussions about potential sanctions relief for Israel.

Concurrent with this diplomatic initiative, significant shifts in American Jewish perspectives are emerging. A Washington Post survey reveals that 61% of American Jews believe Israel has committed war crimes in Gaza, with 39% characterizing Israeli actions as genocide. A separate Brookings Institution poll indicates 45% of all Americans view Israel’s campaign as genocidal, including 77% of Democrats, reflecting growing domestic criticism of Israeli policies.

Since October 7, 2023, at least 68,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 170,000 injured, according to Gaza’s health ministry, while the UN estimates that roughly 90% of the population is internally displaced. Two US Democratic senators, Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Merkley, concluded after a fact-finding mission to the region in September that Israel was implementing “a systematic plan to destroy and ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Gaza”, with the US complicit in these actions.

Their report detailed the near-total destruction of civilian infrastructure, the weaponization of food and systematic obstacles to humanitarian aid delivery.

More than two years of conflict have left over two million Palestinians, half of whom are children, without access to sufficient water, food, or medical care. Famine has become a deadly reality, with catastrophic hunger tightening its grip across the population.