

Sniper Safari in Sarajevo: We Were in the Crosshairs

Eyewitness details chilling moments just centimeters from death



► Page 5

Three men run for cover past graffiti reading: 'Welcome To Hell' as sniper fire rings out along Sarajevo's notorious 'sniper alley' Wednesday, June 9, 1993 in Sarajevo.

Israel's overlooked unraveling: The mass exodus and beyond

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – Israeli emigration hit unprecedented levels in 2024 as 82,000 citizens departed, almost twice the 2022 figure of 42,000—a 95% jump in just two years.

This torrent, tracked by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, swelled further into 2025, with 79,000 more leaving over the past year while just 25,000 newcomers trickled in.

Concentrated among tech-savvy professionals and young families—the very backbone of Israel's vaunted economy—these departures signal not escapist yearning but a profound rupture.

Net migration plunged by 125,000 from 2022 to mid-2024, turning the “safe haven” narrative into a hollow echo.

At the epicenter lies Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, a cataclysm that has unmasked Zionism's predatory core.

Hezbollah's unshakable echo: Mourning the mind that engineered resistance discourse

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—BEIRUT—With the assassination of Hajj Mohammad Afif Al-Naboulsi by the Zionist regime in an air raid in November last year, the Resistance loses not merely a media official, but one of the rare architects who shaped collective consciousness in times of war and calm alike.

Al-Naboulsi was a builder of narratives, a guardian of psychological steadfastness, and one of the principal engineers of the modern media doctrine that fortified Hezbollah against the Israeli enemy's sprawling propaganda machine.

From the outset, Al-Naboulsi understood that media was not a decorative accessory to the battlefield, rather it was a battlefield.

Rising Hamas popularity in Gaza

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Despite over two years of U.S.-backed genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip, American media reports Hamas has seen its popularity increase.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Hamas's growing popularity presents a challenge to U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to “bring peace to Gaza by disarming the movement.”

Security has been a key factor in this shift. Over the past month, as the ceasefire took hold and Israeli occupation forces withdrew to the so-called “Yellow Line”, Hamas resistance fighters reappeared in the streets as police and internal security units. They began patrolling neighborhoods and targeting criminal gangs.

Many residents, including some who oppose Hamas, have welcomed the sharp decline in theft and looting.

Hazem Sarour, a businessman in Gaza City, said: “Even people who don't support Hamas want security. We saw a complete breakdown, robberies, bullying, and lawlessness. No one could stop it except Hamas, and that's why people back them.”

► Page 5

How Tehran views recent Iraqi elections

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The announcement of preliminary results from Iraq's parliamentary elections has launched the complex process of forming a new government in Baghdad.

From Tehran's perspective, these elections represent more than a routine democratic exercise. They signify the consolidation of a post-ISIS political order which, despite its limitations, has succeeded in stabilizing the country and securing its strategic ties with neighboring states. Far from uncertain, the electoral outcome confirms predictable trends and reaffirms the viability of a sovereign Iraq that prioritizes its natural regional partnerships.

Western narratives, often focused on the notion of an “Iraqi nationalism” defined in opposition to Iran, ► Page 2



Iranian team shines at RoboCup Asia-Pacific 2025

TEHRAN – Iranian robotics team, called Mositto, has managed to win a gold medal at the 8th edition of RoboCup Asia-Pacific (RCAP) 2025.

The competition was held in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, from November 10 to 15. Hosted by Khalifa University of Science and Technology, it brought together over 160 teams and more than 700 participants with nearly 2,000 researchers, industry professionals, students, and visitors from around the globe to witness the competition in AI-driven autonomous robotics challenges, with eight leagues and 15 sub-leagues, including soccer and rescue.

The event highlighted themes like smart mobility, AI for sustainability, and technologies addressing regional challenges. ► Page 7

Aref tells Russian PM in Moscow: 'Partnership treaty will guide us'

TEHRAN – Iran's First Vice-President, Mohammad-Reza Aref, traveled to Moscow this week to attend the 24th Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Heads of Government, using the trip to underscore Tehran's commitment to strengthening ties with the Russian Federation.

Aref met with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin on Monday, where he expressed satisfaction with the ongoing development of bilateral relations and specifically praised Moscow's diplomatic support regarding recent international issues, particularly those concerning the controversial snapback mechanism. ► Page 3

Iran's exports to Africa double in H1

TEHRAN – Iran's exports to Africa doubled in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (August 23-September 22) compared with the same period last year, the acting head of the Africa office at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said.

Mohammadreza Safari announced a 100-percent growth in non-oil exports to the African market in the first half of this year and plans to hold the Africa Summit in late 2026.

He stated that this success demonstrates Iran's position in the potential-rich market of 1.4 billion people in Africa.

While detailing trade relations with African countries today, the official stated that Iran's exports to Africa in the first six months of this year reached \$675 million, which has doubled compared to the same period last year. ► Page 4

12 foreign documentaries to be shown at Portrait section of 19th Cinema Verite

TEHRAN – The 19th Iran International Documentary Film Festival “Cinema Verite” has announced the line-up for the “Portrait” section.

According to the announcement, 12 foreign documentaries will be screened in the “Portrait” section this year, IRNA reported.

They include “Ennio” directed by Giuseppe Tornatore, “Shadows Behind the Frame” by Ivan Baturin, “Lost Memories in an Imaginary Hurricane” by Viktor Luna, “Marlon Brando: Beyond VistaVision” by V Trent, “Once Upon a Silver Screen” by Martin George, “Cast of Shadows” by Sami Joubert van Ingen, “Playing with Dolls” by Valeriy Rudolfovich Ryabin, “Here, Dimitris Makris - Portrait of a Director” by Paolo Stemmini and Francesco Tassara, “Three Deaths of Merian Cooper” by Rafael Salata and Pawet Gargas, “Vlasta, the Memory Is not Everlasting” by Candela Vey, Tino Pereira, “What Mad Pursuit” by Danny Dey, and “Cahide Sonku, Türkiye's First Female Producer and Director” by Nurullah Güzel. ► Page 8

When water becomes politics

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Iran is facing one of its most severe water emergencies in decades. But too much of the Western and Israeli coverage treats the crisis as a political morality play: headlines and opinion pages tie shortages to government failure or geopolitics, while technical causes and practical solutions get sidelined. That framing misdirects policy debate and risks turning humanitarian offers of help into diplomatic theater.

The Jerusalem Post, for example, recently portrayed Iran's drying rivers and shrinking reservoirs as confirmation of “regime decay,” tying hydrological decline to an implied crisis of political legitimacy. The Wall Street Journal went even further, arguing that Iran's “hatred of Israel” ► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

India's return to America's embrace

Shargh, in a commentary, analyzed the major oil and gas deal between India and the United States. It wrote: India, being the world's third-largest importer of oil and the fourth-largest economy, has shifted in favor of the United States. Earlier this year, India resumed importing Iranian oil for the first time in seven years, but now the situation seems to have turned. India has signed a major contract with the U.S. for importing liquefied natural gas. Behind this commercial shift lies a pragmatic policy. The Trump administration encouraged India to reduce its purchases of Russian oil, while opening the path for U.S. LNG exports to India. With this deal, New Delhi gains access to cleaner and cheaper fuel along with reduced tariff pressure. According to energy expert Morteza Behrouzifar, it was mistaken from the outset to assume India would lean toward Iranian or Russian oil markets. India has extensive trade with the U.S. and is a longstanding ally. Not only India, but also the Arab states of the Persian Gulf prefer dealings with the U.S. over turning toward Russia or Iran, since their economic and commercial interests are far greater with the world's largest economy. India's temporary efforts to resolve its oil import challenges should not be mistaken for a stable market for Iran.

Kayhan: Iran, the unrivaled power in the region

Following the 12-day war, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not only stood firm against military threats from Israel and the U.S., but has also accelerated its path toward becoming a decisive regional power through the expansion of military capabilities, technological advances, and socio-economic development programs. Despite severe economic pressures from sanctions, inflation, and drought, Iran has demonstrated determination in pursuing development and has emerged as a productive power. These advances have strengthened domestic confidence and enhanced Iran's ability to withstand economic pressure, military threats, and hostile media campaigns. The U.S. and Europe now face a new challenge—one that Iran has overcome by relying on internal strength, regional networks, and transparent communication. The Zionist regime and its allies sought to weaken Iran through psychological operations and economic pressure, but Iran's cyber, media, and active deterrence capabilities thwarted these efforts. Although threats remain, Iran is now positioned as a leading power. Its unrivaled strength in West Asia serves as a serious deterrent, making any aggressive action

against it costly and consequential.

Ettelaat: Take diplomacy seriously

In an interview with the Ettelaat newspaper, Seyyed Jalal Sadatian, an international affairs analyst, discussed the looming IAEA Board of Governors meeting and the possible decision regarding Iran. Sadatian stated that the dialogue between Iran, the U.S., and the European troika seems to have moved outside the realm of diplomacy. The Europeans, in full coordination with the United States, are seeking to document their positions and pass another resolution against Iran. These anti-Iran efforts come at a time when, unfortunately, no serious action is being taken inside the country. To escape the current crisis, Iran's governing system must employ all domestic diplomatic capacities and turn consultations and "engagement with the West" into reality, so that Western media campaigns do not further restrict Iran's space. Neglecting dialogue with other countries will ultimately lead to more allegations against Iran by the West and the U.S., resulting in greater restrictions imposed by Western-controlled organizations and a more negative international perception of Iran. Therefore, Iran must take clarification by international organizations seriously, so that even if they do not yield results, global public opinion will at least recognize the unjust threats against Iran.

Khorasan: The half-open window of diplomacy

In an article, Khorasan wrote about the U.S. request for renewed negotiations with Iran. It said amid occasional regional tensions, signs have once again emerged of Washington moving toward dialogue with Tehran. These signs do not reflect reconciliation or a return to normal diplomatic paths, but rather point to the existence of a "half-open window." According to Araghchi, Iran will not enter any path where imposition and dictation replace dialogue and mutual respect. Strategically, this half-open window can serve as a tool to demonstrate Iran's political maturity and bargaining power; a chance to show that Tehran is ready to negotiate, but not ready to retreat. Such a situation sends a clear message to regional and international actors: Iran remains an active player capable of managing both the battlefield and diplomacy simultaneously. If Washington fails to respond clearly to Iran's requests and messages, this window could quickly close. And if negotiations take on an "imposed" nature, they will be removed entirely from Tehran's agenda.

Top judge orders investigation into US June aggression against Iran



Iran's Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Eje speaks at a meeting of the Supreme Council of Judiciary in Tehran on November 17, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iran's judiciary chief has called for legal action in response to Washington's direct responsibility for Israel's June aggression against Iran, following U.S. President Donald Trump's public admission of involvement.

Gholamhossein Mohseni-Eje said on Monday that Trump's statement has clear legal implications and must be investigated both at home and abroad.

Mohseni-Eje argued that the president's words amount to a confession of criminal conduct and urged prosecutors to act swiftly. "The U.S. president once again explicitly confessed to

committing crimes against Iran and the Iranian people, stating that he was personally and directly involved in the 12-day war," he said, adding that such an admission "carries significant consequences from the perspective of legal and criminal rules and provisions of international law." He demanded that "the Attorney General and the Judiciary's deputy director for international affairs should prepare arrangements to investigate this crime in both international and domestic courts," stressing that confession is among the strongest forms of proof.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel arrests 27-year-old accused of spying for Iran in latest espionage case

TEHRAN – Israeli authorities say they uncovered another espionage case that led to the arrest of a 27-year-old man accused of working for Iranian intelligence.

The indictment filed Sunday against Shimon Azarzar of Kiryat Yam details security offenses involving contact with Iranian agents and carrying out missions under their direction.

According to the i24news report, Azarzar was allegedly assisted by his girlfriend, a military reservist, in gathering information on Israeli military and Air Force bases. A joint investigation by the Shin Bet and police revealed that over more than a year, Azarzar transmitted photos and locations of sensitive sites and even offered to provide his handlers with vital information from within the bases.

This case is part of a troubling pattern for Israeli security agencies. Only a few weeks ago, a 23-year-old from Tiberias, Yosef Ein Eli, was detained on similar charges. Israeli media claimed he received money to collect intelligence on hotels, IDF soldiers, and senior officials for Iranian operatives. Since the start of the Gaza war in 2023, the Shin Bet has un-



Israeli forces drag an individual accused of spying for Iran to her hearing (file photo)

covered more than 20 such espionage cases.

Despite extensive Israeli efforts to curb the phenomenon of Israeli citizens spying for Iran, the crisis seems to be growing. The Shin Bet reports a staggering 400% increase in identified espionage cases in 2024 compared to the previous year. In a telling move, the Israeli regime launched a massive advertising campaign in July, desperately urging Jewish residents of occupied Palestine to resist the "financial" lure of spying for Iran.

How Tehran views recent Iraqi elections

Iranians believe a stable and connected Iraq is central to regional stability

From Page 1 ► fail to capture the complexity of the political landscape. In Baghdad, what is unfolding is a refinement of coalition governance, where factions that understand the strategic significance of the relationship with Tehran form the axis around which any governing majority must inevitably revolve. At the same time, Washington's approach, primarily concerned with containing Iran and safeguarding immediate energy interests, lacks the long-term vision and commitment necessary to alter this structural reality.

A key aspect often overlooked is that the successful conduct of these elections, with broad and diverse participation, constitutes a significant diplomatic achievement in its own right. Unlike previous periods marked by electoral violence, the process unfolded with institutional normalcy. This stability reflects the maturation of a basic political consensus regarding the rules of the game. Where some external actors anticipated chaos and division, the Iraqi political establishment has demonstrated notable capacity for self-regulation.

The relative transparency and order of the process, despite inevitable minor disputes, indicate that state institutions have developed resilience. For strategists in Tehran, this stability is an encouraging development, as an institutionally robust Iraq is perceived as a more reliable strategic partner than a fragile state prone to crisis.

Understanding Iran's posture requires moving beyond simplistic sectarian analysis. While confessional ties provide a historical and cultural substrate, the strategic relationship rests on more tangible pillars: national security and economic interdependence.

Security is central. The experience of the war imposed by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s, followed by the 2003 invasion, consolidated a deep-defense doctrine in Tehran. Iraq cannot again become a platform for existential threats. The Popular Mobilization Forces, integrated within the state apparatus, embody this doctrine. They serve as a bulwark against the resurgence of terrorism and form an essential component of Iraq's sovereign security architecture.

Any external attempt to weaken these institutions is perceived as interference that destabilizes Iraq and endangers regional security.

Economic interdependence is equally critical. Iran and Iraq have developed deep economic ties. Iraq is a vital market for Iranian goods and services, a key client for its energy sector, and an essential land corridor to the Mediterranean. Stability in Iraq is therefore a strategic interest for Tehran. Iranian policy does not seek Iraq's collapse but its consolidation under a government capable of maintaining these economic flows and critical infrastructure.

The objective of Iranian diplomacy is not to impose a specific prime minister but to ensure that whoever holds the office understands these core principles: preserving Iraq's security institutions, respecting sovereignty against external interference, and sustaining a strategic economic partnership that benefits both countries.

The 2025 Iraqi elections signal the continuation of a policy of balance and pragmatic engagement

The election results reflect the continued dominance of the "Coordination Framework" (Takatul at-Tansiq) as the most cohesive political force with the greatest mobilization capacity. Its resilience stems not only from its grasp of Iraq's geopolitical realities but also from the discipline and unity it has demonstrated post-election. While other groups have shown internal fissures, this bloc has maintained a consolidated stance in key negotiations.

This coordination is not accidental. It is the product of years of trust-building and strategic alignment among components that, while retaining their individual identities, recognize the value of presenting a united front at decisive moments. The ability to act in concert provides this bloc with a significant negotiating advantage over more fragmented groups. In Iraq's complex governmental chessboard, unity of



A woman votes in Iraq's parliamentary elections

purpose often outweighs simple parliamentary arithmetic.

Some Iranian analysts, such as Mostafa Nafaji, note that Mohammed Shia al-Sudani has consolidated his position as a central figure for Iraqi stability. His coalition, which received the greatest support in the 2025 elections, reflects his ability to balance different political blocs, including resistance actors, ensuring a plural and functional parliament.

Al-Sudani embodies the delicate balance defining contemporary Iraqi foreign policy. His leadership has resisted persistent U.S. pressures to dismantle or significantly weaken the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Under his administration, these forces have remained integrated within the state security apparatus, recognized as a fundamental part of Iraq's defensive architecture. This stance is not a submission to external interests but a pragmatic understanding of Iraq's complex security realities. Al-Sudani has consistently argued that dismantling these structures would weaken the state's ability to combat residual terrorist threats and maintain internal stability.

What is notable is his diplomatic tact. While preserving the PMF framework, he has worked to enhance their professionalism and subordination to civilian command, partially addressing international concerns without compromising core security objectives. This approach has allowed him to retain support from mobilization groups while maintaining open channels of cooperation with Western partners.

According to some Iranian

According to an analysis by Iran's Tashim News Agency, believed to have ties with Iran's military circles, Israelis' growing tendency to spy for Iran comes from deep problems inside Israel.

"Israel lacks a shared national identity because many citizens are immigrants without common cultural or historical roots, resulting in a weak 'national zeal' and a greater focus on personal interests," the analysis notes. It adds that deep internal divisions, particularly between secular and Haredi Jews, and racial discrimination against minorities have made the situation worse. The analysis also mentions a deteriorating economy, which it links to Benjamin Netanyahu's policies and the wars he has launched against several countries over the past two years. "All these factors have created widespread political, social, and economic dissatisfaction," the report concludes.

In his statements, Iran's intelligence minister said that despite the ongoing crackdown by the regime, Iran has numerous active spies embedded across various sectors and branches of the Israeli system.

analysts, including Mostafa Nafaji, Al-Sudani has adopted a strategic approach to external pressures based on a pragmatic interpretation of national sovereignty. He recognizes that Iraq's stability depends on a delicate balance in which security institutions reflect the country's socio-political realities rather than external interests. This stance has strengthened his domestic credibility and projects an image of independent leadership regionally, consolidating his position as a central actor in Iraq's stability and governance.

A stable and connected Iraq is central to regional stability. It functions as a strategic corridor essential for trade and economic integration between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. Any weakening of this connectivity would advantage external actors with disruptive agendas.

However, Iraq's post-2003 power architecture is populated by actors and interests that recognize the value of regional stability. Deepening economic ties and strategic alignment within the political class make Iraq a natural partner in fostering a secure and predictable regional order.

The 2025 elections do not signal a fundamental shift in Iraq's strategic orientation but rather the continuation of a policy of balance and pragmatic engagement. The stability of the electoral process, the coordination among political blocs, and Al-Sudani's consolidation point to a sovereign, functional Iraq, strategically connected to its regional environment, particularly with Iran.

Aref tells Russian PM in Moscow: ‘Partnership treaty will guide us’

From Page 1 ► Aref highlighted the strategic importance of the two nations’ joint participation in key regional and international bodies, including BRICS, the SCO, and the Eurasian Economic Union. He stressed that these organizations offer significant potential for growth, stating that “These organizations possess extraordinary capacities, and cooperation between the two countries within this framework can add further momentum to collaborations.”

The Vice-President also referenced the long-term Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, calling it essential for future cooperation. He affirmed that “This document serves as a guide for advancing our relations to the highest level.” Furthermore, Aref addressed the finalization of a new agreement focusing on information security, noting the shared threats both countries face in cyberspace. He emphasized the urgent need to facilitate the process to protect the critical infrastructure of both Iran and Russia.



Iran's First Vice-President Mohammad-Reza Aref (R) met with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Moscow on November 17, 2025.

For his part, Prime Minister Mishustin affirmed Russia's reciprocal desire to strengthen relations with Iran, emphasizing that these ties would be built upon the principles of good neighborliness. Mishustin pointed to the recent enforcement of the free trade agreement between Iran and the

Eurasian Economic Union as a major step forward. He concluded that “The implementation of this agreement provides an opportunity to enhance bilateral exchanges.” Aref, who traveled to Moscow at Mishustin’s invitation, is scheduled to hold further meetings with officials from other participating countries during his stay in the

Russian capital.

Another notable exchange on Monday saw Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speak with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. Lavrov reiterated that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful as the IAEA Board of Governors prepares to consider an anti-Iran resolution submitted by Britain, France and Germany, saying Moscow and Tehran share similar views and remain closely coordinated on the matter.

Araghchi affirmed Iran’s on-going cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog while rejecting Western claims that the snapback mechanism has been activated, urging the IAEA to maintain impartiality and avoid actions that could escalate tensions. He also stressed the importance of regional dialogue and cooperation, citing his recent consultations with neighboring officials. Lavrov welcomed Iran’s diplomatic efforts in the region and signaled Russia’s readiness to deepen cooperation with Tehran.

When water becomes politics

Western media exploiting Iran’s climate emergency

From Page 1 ► is the real cause of its water shortages — an explicitly moral and geopolitical interpretation that treats a complex environmental emergency as a direct extension of foreign-policy choices. Even high-level political messaging has been folded into this narrative: in August, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered Iran water-technology assistance, but framed it as conditional on political change in Tehran, ensuring that the offer would be read less as technical cooperation and more as a “regime-change” signal.

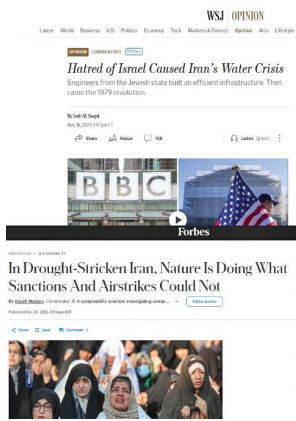
This political lens is not limited to opinion pages. Features in Western media, including The Guardian’s recent reporting on communities desperate for spiritual explanations for water disappearing from villages, foreground social or moral narratives in ways that risk overshadowing the structural realities beneath them. And newer reports — including Reuters’ account of Tehran neighborhoods running dry, or the AP’s warning that the capital could face evacuation without rainfall — increasingly highlight imagery of chaos and state failure, reinforcing the idea that the water crisis is above all an indictment of Iran’s political system.

Yet when the evidence is examined directly, Iran’s water crisis emerges as a regional and structural hydrological emergency

shaped mostly by climate trends. Climate change has increased baseline drought risk across the West Asia, as documented by IPCC assessments and multiple regional studies. Multiple countries face similar rainfall declines. Iran’s difficulties mirror those of its neighbors — from Turkey’s shrinking rivers to Iraq’s salinizing marshlands and Jordan’s depleted aquifers.

The World Bank’s country assessments emphasize that adaptation, not political alignment, determines whether countries survive prolonged drought. Meanwhile, geopolitical analyses — such as a report from SpecialEurasia — underline that Iran’s water scarcity is pushing the state to reconsider long-term planning, but they ground their assessments in resource management realities rather than political moralizing.

Even dramatic reporting on Tehran’s looming water restrictions, including coverage from NBC News and Le Monde, makes clear that while the crisis is dire, its causes lie in a long chain of misaligned incentives, over-extraction, climate stress and delayed infrastructural reform — not a single political decision or foreign-policy posture. The Western tendency to read environmental collapse as an index of regime fragility inevitably turns hydrological data into political commentary. In doing so, it obscures the policy tools Iran



— like many countries in the region — urgently needs: efficient irrigation systems, transparent groundwater governance, urban leak reduction, aquifer-recharge programs and a shift toward crops compatible with long-term water availability.

The politicization of Iran’s water crisis also distracts from a broader regional truth: the West Asia as a whole is on track toward absolute water scarcity, with nearly every country in the region increasingly dependent on desalination, groundwater depletion or vulnerable river systems. When Iran alone is singled out as a cautionary tale, opportunities for regional water cooperation — and recognition of shared vulnerabilities — are diminished. Israel’s own water system, often cited in Western commentary as an ideal model, depends on energy-intensive desalination, faces long-term

sustainability concerns, and is embedded in transboundary hydrology that climate change will continue to reshape.

Iran’s water emergency is real and immediate, but reducing it to a morality narrative does little to address it. Effective reporting should situate Iran within a regional climate and hydrological crisis, prioritise expert analysis from groundwater specialists and climate scientists, and separate humanitarian or technical aid from political signaling.

Only by moving beyond political theater can domestic and international actors focus on the practical solutions — from modern water governance to climate adaptation and cross-border cooperation — that will determine whether Iran, and the region around it, can withstand the decades of environmental stress still to come.



Iran condemns new Israeli bloodshed in Gaza, West Bank

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei has denounced the ongoing killings and blatant violations of human rights in Gaza and the West Bank.

He flatly condemned the continuation of the blockade on Gaza and Israel’s blocking operations to remove the debris and preventing the reconstruction of health and medical networks as well as vital infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, which has intensified the humanitarian disaster in the cold and rainy season.

Baqaei condemned such moves, saying they are part of Tel Aviv’s policy of Palestinian genocide.

Despite the so-called ceasefire being implemented in October, Israeli forces continue to sporadically bomb Gaza, with hundreds of Palestinians having been killed over the past few weeks.

More than 80 percent of structures have been destroyed, leaving large swathes of the besieged territory uninhabitable – a situation expected to become catastrophic with the onset of winter. Incoming aid remains slow and insufficient.

A recent report says Gaza may now contain the highest concentration of unexploded ordnance of any conflict zone in the world, posing a significant and enduring threat to civilians even after Israel’s bombardment campaign against

the besieged coastal area has subsided.

According to the British news and current affairs journal The Economist, a considerable danger lies beneath the rubble, where Israeli occupation forces deployed numerous bombs equipped with delayed-action fuses. These explosives can detonate unpredictably -- days, weeks, or even months later -- within collapsed structures or underground spaces, creating serious challenges for clearance operations and endangering returning families.

Baqaei also touched upon an increase in Israeli settlers’ attacks in the West Bank, the desecration of the al-Aqsa mosque and the ongoing arbitrary arrests and torture of Palestinians, saying the international community has “a legal and moral duty to stop Israeli crimes.”

He further referred to all-out military and political support for the Israeli regime by the United States and certain European governments, denouncing the U.S. as an “accomplice” in Israeli crimes.

In the latest wave of violence, Israeli forces killed or injured several young Palestinians in separate West Bank raids.

The official Palestinian news agency WAFA, citing security sources, reported that Israeli soldiers shot 15-year-old Jihad Jumaa Jadallah as they raided the Far’a refugee camp, located south of the city of Tubas, on Sunday evening.

The sources added that the troops prevented paramedics from reaching him to provide medical assistance. Jadallah, who was a ninth-grade student at al-Far’a Boys’ Basic School run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), succumbed to his injuries the same day, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

Earlier, the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said its crews also treated an 18-year-old youth who suffered a shrapnel injury in the lower limbs during the Israeli military incursion into Far’a camp. Ambulance teams were prevented from reaching a third injured individual, who was later detained.

Separately, the Israeli military killed Hassan Sharkasi during a raid on the Askar refugee camp east of Nablus, according to the PRCS.

Among the most heartbreaking incidents was the case of six-year-old twins, Yahya and Nabila al-Sharbasi, who suffered appalling injuries after mistaking a bomb, abandoned amid the ruins of their neighborhood, for a toy.

Aid organizations emphasize the significant danger faced by children in Gaza’s densely populated residential zones.

Several Israeli officials believe the regime must permanently occupy both Gaza and the West Bank.

Wushu competitors win four golds: 2025 Riyadh

TEHRAN – Iranian wushu competitors won four gold medals, one silver and one bronze at the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Sunday.

Sara Shafiei claimed a gold medal, defeating Shahd Abdelsadek of Egypt 1-0 in the Women’s -56 kg Sanda.

Soheila Mansourian won a gold medal in the Women -60 kg Sanda by beating Egypt’s Habiba Ramadan Abdelaziz Elsayed Abouomar 2-0.

Amirhossein Hemati claimed the third gold for Iran after he defeated Egyptian Youssif Khalid Basyony Mohamed Hamoda 2-0 in the Men -60kg Final.

And Erfan Moharami took a gold medal in the Men’s 70kg Sanda by defeating Kyrgyzstan’s Abror Khakimov 2-0.

Farbod Taleshi seized a silver medal in the Men -85kg Sanda, being defeated by Alhussein Abdelkader Hassan Abdelkader Wahdan of Egypt.

Shahrbano Mansourian won a bronze medal, losing to Mennatallah Mohamed Mohamed Hassan Aly of Egypt 2-0 in the Women -70 kg Sanda

Iran’s Alimoradian takes gold at taekwondo

TEHRAN – Aliasghar Alimoradian of Iran won a gold medal at taekwondo of the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Sunday.

He defeated Afghanistan’s Mohsen Rezaei 2-1 in the Men Under 60kg final.

Iran’s Yalda Valinejad lost to Uzbekistan’s Ozoda Sobirjonova 2-1 in the final of the Women Under 70kg.

Amirreza Sadeghian also snatched a silver in the Men Under 82kg after losing to Morocco’s Haitam Zarhouti 2-0.

And, Rozhan Goudarzi won a bronze medal in the Women Under 51kg, being defeated by Uzbekistan’s Laylo Khasanova 2-0.

Women’s handball beat Maldives: 2025 Riyadh

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s handball team defeated the Maldives 49-13 at the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Monday.

Team Melli had previously lost to Turkey in Group A and defeated Guinea in their following match.

Group B consists of Azerbaijan Republic, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The 6th Islamic Solidarity Games, known as Riyadh 2025, are an inter-continental multi-sport event organized by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Association (ISSA), held from Nov. 7 to 21 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Bam Khatoon lose to East Bengal in ACL 2025/26

TEHRAN – Bam Khatoon of Iran lost to India’s East Bengal 3-1 in their AFC Women’s Champions League 2025/26 Group B opener on Monday.

The win is an early boost to East Bengal’s quarter-final hopes with defending champions Wuhan Jiangda Women’s FC next up for them.

India’s East Bengal hit the ground running and took the lead as early as the fourth minute after two blocked attempts by Fazila Ikwaput saw the ball falling kindly to Shilky Hemam, who struck a low shot into the bottom right corner from just above the box.

The early strike set the tone for the remainder of the half as the Indian side dictated the tempo, limiting IR Iran side Bam Khatoon to long-range efforts, with Sara Didar and Fatemeh Geraeli both trying their luck.

East Bengal doubled their advantage in the 32nd minute following a slick build-up which involved Amnah Nababi threading a perfectly-timed through ball to Ikwaput, who showed good ball control before slotting past Raha Yazdani.

Bam Khatoon almost conceded again three minutes later when Soumya Guguloth set up Resty Nanziri nicely inside the six-yard-box but the Ugandan midfielder skied her effort.

The Iranian outfit barely troubled Elangbam Panthoi Chanu at the other end but that changed in the closing minutes with Geraeli testing the keeper from distance with a tame effort in the 39th minute.

The continuous waves of attacks finally yielded a goal for Bam Khatoon after Jyoti Chouhan’s handball led to Mona Hamoudi tucking home from the spot in first half stoppage time, the-afc.com reported.

Bam Khatoon emerged after the break with renewed intent, with Fatemeh Pasandideh testing Panthoi from outside the area before Geraeli saw her free-kick attempt at the hour mark sail over the bar.

East Bengal turned up the intensity in the closing stages with Ikwaput striking the right post in the 79th minute from inside the box, while Yazdani kept out the Ugandan’s effort in the 84th minute with a low save.

Any hope of a Bam Khatoon fightback was extinguished three minutes later after Nanziri launched a spectacular effort from distance which bent over Yazdani before settling into the back of the net to seal the win.

Para shot putter Khosravi collects gold: 2025 Riyadh

TEHRAN – Iranian Para shot putter Yasin Khosravi won a gold medal in the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Monday.

Khosravi finished in first place with a throw of 15.65 meters at the Men’s Para Shot Put F57.

Mohammad Khalvandi and Hamid Heydari from Turkey claimed silver and bronze with 14.45m and 13.93m, respectively.

The 6th Islamic Solidarity Games, known as Riyadh 2025, are an inter-continental multi-sport event organized by the Islamic Solidarity Sports Association (ISSA), held from Nov. 7 to 21 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Iran beat Poland at 2025 Women’s Kabaddi World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Poland 55-11 at the 2025 Women’s Kabaddi World Cup on Monday.

Iran are in Group B along with Chinese Taipei, Nepal, Poland and Kenya.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Kenya on Tuesday.

Group A consists of defending champion India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Uganda and Germany.

The 2025 World Cup takes place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from November 17 to 24.

The Women’s Kabaddi World Cup 2025 is underway in Mirpur, Bangladesh, marking the competition’s return after a 13-year gap.

Iran victorious over South Korea at IFCPF Asia-Oceania Cup

TEHRAN – Iran beat South Korea 7-0 in the 2025 IFCPF Asia-Oceania Cup on Monday.

Saeid Faraji scored three goals for Team Melli as well as goals from Moslem Mehrabian (two goals), Hadi Khosheqbal (two goals).

Team Melli, who had defeated Malaysia 6-1 in their opening match, are scheduled to meet Thailand on Tuesday.

Indonesia is in Group A with Australia and Japan, while Group B features Iran, South Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Iran, South Korea discuss expansion of co-op in science, research, technology

TEHRAN – In a meeting aimed at strengthening academic and technological ties, South Korea's Ambassador to Iran, Kim Junpyo, met with Iran's Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Farhad Yazdandoust, on Sunday.

During the visit to the Ministry, the two officials held extensive talks on mechanisms to broaden bilateral cooperation, with a particular focus on science, research, and technology.

They explored concrete avenues for enhancing this collaboration, which is seen as a cornerstone for deepening the overall relationship between the two nations.

The discussions underscored a mutual



commitment to moving beyond traditional diplomatic engagements and fostering a more robust, knowledge-based partnership.

Comprehensive maritime-based economy plan being prepared for Khuzestan

TEHRAN- The acting head of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Department of Khuzestan province announced the formulation of a comprehensive maritime-based economic development plan aimed at the sustainable utilization of coastal, port, and related industrial capacities in the province.

Mahram Ravanbakhsh said: "The comprehensive maritime-based economic development plan is being prepared in cooperation with specialized universities and based on the provisions of the province's seventh development plan, with the goal of sustainably utilizing coastal, port, and related industrial capacities."

Pointing to Khuzestan's extensive water border in the north of the Persian Gulf, Ravanbakhsh said: "With important ports such as Imam Khomeini Port, Mahshahr, Khorramshahr, Abadan, Hendijan, Shadegan, and Choebdeh, Khuzestan is one of the main hubs of the country's maritime trade and should become the center of the marine economy in southwestern Iran."

He listed the main axes of marine-based economic development in the province as: the expansion of port and logistics industries, strengthening downstream petrochemical and oil industries in coastal areas, the development of aquaculture and marine fisheries, and the creation of coastal and mining tourism infrastructure.

Referring to new approaches in project financing, he added: "To achieve these goals, using new financial instruments is on the agenda. Issuing participation bonds, creating marine project funds, and utilizing the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model can attract new resources for the province's port and fisheries projects."

He also announced the study of establishing specialized marine industrial complexes and zones, stating: "In these zones, production units for equipment, cold storage facilities, and packaging and processing industries will be established adjacent to active docks to com-

Morteza Fouladi appointed as new managing director of NIDC

TEHRAN- The managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) appointed Morteza Fouladi as the new managing director of the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC).

As reported by the NIOC, the decree issued by NIOC Managing Director Hamid Bovard states:

"Given your commitment, expertise, and valuable capabilities, you are hereby appointed as the managing director of the National Iranian Drilling Company. Your key duties and responsibilities include:

- * Planning and implementing necessary measures to increase drilling efficiency and reduce downtime.
- * Taking necessary measures to train specialized and efficient human resources.
- * Utilizing young managers and specialists to improve the company's performance indicators.
- * Employing modern management methods to improve processes, streamline the company, and reduce project costs.
- * Enhancing interaction with subsidiaries of

the National Iranian Oil Company to improve the execution of drilling projects.

* Reviewing and proposing appropriate solutions for implementing corporate governance principles to develop and clarify management strategies in the company.

* Leveraging the capacity of knowledge-based companies, particularly universities, to employ modern drilling methods.

* Supporting domestic manufacturing and further enhancing domestic production in the country's drilling industry.

* Emphasizing HSE in accordance with documented procedures and passive defense requirements, particularly further improving the safety factor of drilling rigs while considering relevant international standards.

* Developing and proposing necessary strategies within the framework of resistance economy policies.

It is hoped that, with reliance on Almighty God and the cooperation of the company's valued managers and employees, you will succeed in carrying out your assigned missions."

plete the marine value chain in the province."

Emphasizing the necessity of observing environmental considerations, Ravanbakhsh stated: "All marine-based projects must be implemented based on the principles of sustainable development. Khuzestan's blue economy must move towards a green blue economy to guarantee the protection of natural resources alongside the prosperity of production."

He said: "With the implementation of the ongoing plans, Khuzestan can become the focal point of the country's maritime-based economy within the next five years. The sea is the driving engine of Khuzestan's future growth."

The former head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has said the comprehensive plan of maritime-based economy has a deep developmental vision and is intended to be the basis for all future decisions.

Ali Akbar Safaei also noted: "The realization of a maritime economy does not require waiting; we have the expertise, experience, and sufficient capital to take action."

On October 29, the representative of the president for coordinating maritime-based development policies said the government has completed and approved a comprehensive plan for sea-based development consisting of 56 articles, aimed at strengthening the participation of the public and private sectors alongside the government.

Ali Abdolalizadeh told IRIB that following six months of expert work and numerous coordination meetings, the plan has been approved by the Secretariat's Coordination Working Group for maritime-Based Development.

It is now ready to be submitted to the Sea-Based Development Coordination Council and subsequently to the Cabinet for final approval, he said.

He noted that the new plan revises the version drafted during the 13th administration, which contained 44 articles. The updated version adds 12 new articles and revises 35 others, leaving only nine articles unchanged.

Iran's exports to Africa double in H1

From Page 1 ► The acting head of the Africa Office of Iran's Trade Development Organization described this growth as a success for the country and added: "This volume of exports is equivalent to 80 percent of the total exports to this continent last year, and we hope to achieve an unprecedented record in the past 10 years by the end of the year."

Referring to sanctions and international conditions, Safari described Africa as a large and high-potential market for Iranian businesses and emphasized: "Many businesspeople are seeking new markets after recent events, and Africa can be a very suitable alternative. This continent, with a population of 1.4 billion, is a very large market for all kinds of Iranian products."

The acting head of the Africa Office cited the successful model of Asian countries such as China and Turkey as "presence and joint production with African companies" and said: "We should also move towards this type of cooperation. Considering the sanctions conditions, we can propose new models such as 'barter' to African counterparts. Some African countries, due to similar sanctions conditions, are interested in cooperating with Iran."

He referred to the formation of the "Eighth Meeting of the Africa Headquarters" in the administration and added: "This headquarters is formed with the presence of the First Vice President and 13 ministers, and we, in its economic committee which we are in charge of, have established eight specialized committees. Important issues such as shipping, air transportation, allocation of credit lines, and agricultural development are on the agenda of these committees and are being followed up."

At the end, Safari announced plans to hold the "Africa Summit" in the next Iranian year, which starts on March 21, 2026, and said: "The final decision regarding this summit will be made in the next meeting of the Africa Headquarters, and we have already started our planning."

Iranian business leaders have called for stronger engagement with Africa's fast-developing infrastructure markets, emphasizing the continent's vast potential for technical and engineering cooperation.

Speaking at the opening of the



Iran-Africa Cooperation Forum on Technical and Engineering Services, held at the place of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) in mid-October, Payam Bagheri, deputy head of the ICCIMA, said Iran has extensive experience in the water industry and should leverage Africa's unique opportunities in this field.

"Despite great potential, we have so far utilized only a fraction of it," he said.

The event, titled developing cooperation between Iranian companies and African water project stakeholders, brought together high-level delegations from Mauritania, Algeria, Nigeria, and Tanzania at the ICCIMA headquarters in Tehran.

Bagheri described the gathering as an important step toward closer ties between Iranian and African business communities.

Ali Naghavi, head of ICCIMA's Committee on Technical and Engineering Services, said the Chamber is determined to strengthen Iran's role in exporting engineering and construction expertise.

"After the successful OPEC Fund event, this marks the second major international initiative to promote Iranian engineering services abroad," he noted.

Naghavi added that employer representatives from the four African nations are attending the two-day event, where Iranian engineering firms are showcasing their capabilities through B2B meetings and specialized sessions.

"Identifying local partners, introducing real projects, and building a lasting presence for Iranian contractors and consultants in Africa are among our key objectives," he said.

Afghanistan seeks investment by major Iranian companies

TEHRAN- During a meeting between members of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s trade delegation and the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, the need to develop relations between the chambers of both countries was highlighted, and major Iranian companies were invited to invest in Afghanistan.

Members of the Iranian Chamber's trade delegation, accompanied by the Iranian ambassador in Kabul, met with the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment. This meeting focused on three key areas in Iran-Afghanistan relations: investment, exports, and transportation.

In all three of these areas, the two countries have not succeeded in having continuous and stable cooperation; therefore, it was emphasized that the chambers of commerce of the two countries should become active in these fields.

Furthermore, it was stressed that currently, numerous companies from various countries have invested in Afghanistan; however, Iran's presence in the country is very limited. This is not satisfactory for the Afghan side.

Additionally, it was mentioned that there are very high export capacities, but the inability to utilize them exists due to the lack of certain infrastructures, such as transportation and logistics.

Given these points, greater connection between the private sectors of Iran and Afghanistan, with the chambers of commerce setting the priorities, was confirmed. This is because it is essential to identify and resolve challenges online and in a timely manner, and

in this regard, the chambers can play a key role.

At the beginning of this meeting, Alireza Bigdeli, the Iranian Ambassador to Kabul, pointed to some of the capabilities and capacities of the two countries for deepening trade and investment relations between Iran and Afghanistan.

He said: "Above all, Iran and Afghanistan should utilize their potential for neighborliness, proximity, and religious, cultural, and historical commonalities to become each other's primary partners in trade and investment."

Subsequently, Niloufar Asadi, the Director General of Asia and Oceania at the International Department of the Iran Chamber, stated that developing relations with Afghanistan is a priority in the Iran Chamber's work program. She emphasized: "The Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture seeks to develop a roadmap to pave the way for advancing the level of relations based on a precise plan."

She also pointed out the necessity of using the capacity of joint chambers, saying: "It is necessary for us to participate more robustly in the joint committees of the two countries and use this position to the advantage of removing legal obstacles and creating the necessary infrastructure."

A high-ranking Iranian economic delegation led by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak arrived in Kabul on Monday for talks on boosting trade and investment with Afghanistan.

Afghan Ministry of Industry and Commerce

launch of direct Tehran-Tunis flights, the creation of a joint economic commission and initiatives to boost tourism. Tunis, with its position in North Africa, is viewed in Tehran as a gateway for wider trade with the region.

Despite the political goodwill, analysts say many previous memoranda of understanding with African partners have remained on paper. Persistent obstacles such as high transport costs, limited shipping options, financial transfer difficulties, poor market knowledge and regional competition continue to constrain trade.

Masoud Barhaman, head of the Iran-Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce, said Africa represents one of Iran's most important future markets, with opportunities in agriculture, engineering services and basic commodities. He stressed the chamber's role in mobilizing the private sector and using international networks to expand Iran's footprint.

Rouhollah Latifi, spokesman of the Trade Development Commission of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, noted that Iranian exports to Tunisia rose significantly in the first five months of this year, though Tehran's overall share of Tunisian imports remains negligible. He argued that sustainable growth will only come if transport routes are regular and affordable, financial mechanisms such as barter or settlement channels are developed, and products are actively promoted through exhibitions and trade events.

Available data show that Iran's iron and steel exports to Tunisia brought in about \$7.5 million in recent years, underlining the potential of Africa's markets. But some Iranian agricultural goods such as raisins and pistachios still reach African buyers indirectly through hubs like Dubai, rebranded under third-country origins due to the lack of direct logistical and financial pathways.

Officials and experts say overcoming these structural hurdles could unlock opportunities in a continent of more than one billion people. The recent accords with Tunisia and stronger emphasis on economic diplomacy signal Tehran's intent, but translating political ties into trade flows will require sustained investment and practical reforms.

spokesman Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzada said the visit aims to identify obstacles hindering bilateral trade and to improve cooperation in transport and joint investment.

The delegation also met officials from the prime minister's economic office, as well as the ministries of industry and commerce, mines and petroleum, and public works, along with Afghan private sector representatives.

Atabak told reporters upon arrival that Iran and Afghanistan share deep historical and cultural ties. He said the Pezeshkian administration has prioritized stronger relations with all neighbors, with Afghanistan regarded as a particularly important partner.

The delegation, which includes Iranian lawmakers and private sector members, will also travel to Herat province to inspect the railway, mines and the Islam Qala border crossing.

On the second day of the visit, Atabak met Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, along with Afghan ministers of commerce, energy and water, mines, and public works. He welcomed Afghanistan's stance during Iran's recent 12-day conflict with Israel and said the upcoming seventh session of the Joint Economic Committee would be an opportunity to advance cooperation in rail, road and trade.

Talks also covered banking ties, greater use of Iran's Chabahar port, expansion of cargo movement via the Khaf-Herat railway, and joint work in the mining sector. Atabak is due to continue his trip with a visit to Herat's industrial city.

Sniper Safari in Sarajevo: We were in the crosshairs

Eyewitness details chilling moments just centimeters from death



By **Edin Krehić**
SARAJEVO – Everything was a matter of time and place.

Would you be there when a sniper took aim on the street while you were fetching water, because the taps were dry and the entire Olympic city of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had to fill bottles and canisters at a few springs or water tanks.

And he would shoot.

Everything was a matter of time and place.

Would you be there when a sniper targeted you while you were going to get bread, which could only be bought at a few places because no stores were open. Would you be there when the sniper pulled the trigger while you were collecting wood in a park to heat yourself in a makeshift stove during freezing winters; while children attended makeshift schools in basements; while you walked to university in a false sense of normality at a time when everything was abnormal. Bullets and grenades were crashing into homes and you never knew if you would wake up alive after going to bed. Many were killed that way, and others called them the lucky ones, because death found them in their sleep.

Everything was a matter of time and place.

Would you be in the crosshairs while going to the theater, a concert, a book promotion or to watch a film at the newly launched Sarajevo Film Festival.

Walking to university under fire

Yes, that is how it was. Fully aware that they were risking their lives, the citizens of Sarajevo, young and old, walked for kilometers through a besieged city between 1992 and 1995, because public transport did not exist, knowing that they could be hit by a bullet or torn apart by a grenade. And all of that to preserve the spiritual resistance of a city being destroyed, unique for the fact that in the midst of the siege it opened a new theater, the Sarajevo War Theatre (SARTR), on May 17, 1992, the



The ‘Watch out, sniper’ sign across Sarajevo during its siege.
Photo: Danilo Krstanović.

first year of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. SARTR still gathers audiences today, more than three decades later.

For me, it was deeply personal. I was 18 years old, serving on the front line as a soldier of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, defending the city, the country and dignity, taking notes for my first novel among peers without a trace of fear, and afterwards going to the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, where I would later graduate.

Despite sniper fire and shells from Serbs artillery, tanks and mortars, thousands of students walked to their faculties for lectures and exams, literally thirsty and hungry, in a city without electricity, gas and basic necessities.

Through writing journalistic texts and books, I had the opportunity to meet many foreigners who were always interested in the war-time period.

They would be stunned by the details I remembered, “flowers on the asphalt” imprinted by exploding mortar shells, building façades pitted with shrapnel, windows shattered by blasts and covered with plastic sheets from humanitarian aid.

A scar like a memory that preserves every detail.

I would first tell them that my father was killed in the war, but I would much rather speak about fashion shows I watched at the Kamerni Theatre, once even from

the front row, about music that was composed at that time, or about the packed hall of the Bosnian Cultural Center during a wartime screening of Pulp Fiction, where the audience roared with laughter at liters of fake blood, only to later walk home stepping over real blood.

Watch out, sniper!

On that way home, on every corner, stood a large warning reading “Watch Out, Sniper!” Barricades or simple blankets were hung across intersections to block the sniper’s view of passing civilians.

But Sarajevo is not a small city. It lies in a valley surrounded by hills, from which Serb soldiers had a perfect vantage point overlooking streets, buildings, entrances, everything.

Between the theater and my apartment was the infamous “Sniper Alley”, an exposed strip we called that way because even the fastest sprint did not guarantee survival.

Everything was a matter of time and place. Would you be there when the sniper fired.

I remember occasions when a sniper’s bullet whistled just centimeters past my head.

Panic, fear?

No.

Today, perhaps. Back then, not at all. It became part of everyday life, and a human being adapts, aware that there is no other choice.

There could have been another way, just like there could be today

in Gaza. But not in the world we live in, ruled by ruthless leaders without compassion, humanity or justice.

Everything was a matter of time and place.

And when you think it cannot get any worse, you find out it absolutely can.

I was already writing for “Oslobodjenje”, the oldest daily newspaper in Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded in 1943 and declared the best newspaper in the world in 1992, when it published the front page headline “Sniper Safari in Sarajevo,” revealing how wealthy foreigners were coming and paying Serb forces to shoot civilians from their positions. It was April 1995, the final year of the war, ended by the unjust Dayton Peace Agreement whose consequences we still live with, but at least the killing stopped, and hope began, a hope that survives even now.

Sniper tourists

Back then, honestly, it made no difference to me who was shooting, whether it was a chauvinist who hated Muslims and everyone who remained in the city, or a morbid foreigner fulfilling a sick fantasy. Perhaps for that reason, one stops thinking about it, until everything resurfaced three years ago during the AJB DOC film festival of Al Jazeera Balkans, where I worked before it was recently shut down, when the documentary “Sarajevo Safari” by Slovenian director Miran Zupančič was screened. He had researched this topic for years, and that is when things began to unravel.

Everything is a matter of time and place.

Today it is the same place but a different time, and journalists once again play the most honorable role, just like during the war, when they uncovered and reported on concentration camps, massacres and total barbarism. Italian journalist and writer Ezio Gavazzeni filed a criminal complaint in a Milan court after years of research on war tourists who allegedly came on organized trips to shoot at civilians in Sarajevo, children, women, elderly people.

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

Hezbollah vows Lebanon won’t surrender a single inch to Israel

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem delivered a televised address during a memorial service for late media figure Hajj Mohammad Afif Al-Naboulsi on Monday, condemning Israel’s “blatant aggression” against Lebanon.

Qassem said the current escalation is “not a failure to uphold the ceasefire agreement but a preemptive attempt to strip Lebanon of its military, economic, and political power.”

He accused Israel of assassinating journalists to silence voices that revealed “the truth about the battle” and challenged “the media of tyrants and criminals.”

Qassem called Afif “a model of reliable analysis and accurate reporting,” who clarified the principles of resistance with precision.



Reaffirming Hezbollah’s stance, Qassem declared: “We will not accept the loss of a single centimeter of Lebanon. What is happening today is blatant aggression aimed at controlling Lebanon and taking away all its power.”

Hezbollah’s unshakable echo: Mourning the mind that engineered resistance discourse

From page 1 ► His iconic declaration that “Hezbollah is a nation... and nations do not die,” was not a poetic flourish but the distilled essence of his worldview.

For him, Hezbollah exceeded the framework of military organization; it was a social, cultural, and spiritual project whose greatest arsenal was its ability to define reality before the enemy could distort it.

During the July 2006 war, when bombs fell like iron rain and psychological warfare swirled like a storm cloud, Al-Naboulsi served as the quiet but steady “conductor” of the Resistance’s media operations room. His voice was calm, his analysis precise, and his messaging deliberate — each statement chosen the way a commander chooses the coordinates of a decisive strike.

In those dark weeks, his role in preventing the collapse of public morale was not secondary, it was pivotal.

While Western and Israeli outlets pushed narratives of impending defeat, he countered with clarity, composure, and a confidence that cut through the noise like a lighthouse cutting through fog.

His briefings helped dismantle the myth of the “invincible army,” revealing to regional and global audiences a different reality, one in which the Resistance stood firm while the Israeli enemy floundered.

He understood what many only later realized: image is part of victory, and narrative is the unseen backbone of deterrence.

As the Resistance expanded its capabilities,

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

Nearly 100 Palestinians have died from torture, starvation in Israeli prisons since Oct. 2023

A stark report from Physicians for Human Rights–Israel (PHRI), published Monday, finds at least 98 Palestinians have died in Israeli custody since the war on Gaza began in October 2023, with the true toll likely far higher amid mass detentions and missing detainees.

PHRI records 46 deaths in Israel Prison Service facilities and 52 in military custody. The rate—one death every four days in the war’s first eight months—marks a sharp escalation from the pre-war average of two or three annually.

Testimonies and forensic evidence detail

beatings, sexual violence, starvation rations, and medical neglect normalized under far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

High-profile cases include orthopedist Adnan al-Bursh’s death in Ofer prison; families often receive neither confirmation nor remains.

Beyond detention, Israel’s assault on Gaza has killed more than 69,000 Palestinians, including over 20,000 children.

Even after a mid-October ceasefire freed over 1,900 detainees, Israel still holds at least 1,000 Gazans without charge, under a regime of impunity and lethal abuse.

Amid mounting MAGA revolt, Trump abruptly backs Epstein files release

In a sudden political pivot, President Donald Trump on Sunday urged House Republicans to release the remaining Jeffrey Epstein files, claiming “we have nothing to hide” on Truth Social—contradicting his prior opposition.

Skeptics call it cynical: With Senate passage unlikely, Trump saves face with his restive MAGA base while evading scrutiny.

Last week, 23,000 documents—a fraction of the Justice Department’s archive—exposed Trump’s longstanding ties to Epstein, the convicted sex trafficker and evidently Israeli intelligence asset.

Revelations included a 2019 email: “Of course he [Trump] knew about the girls.” A 2011 note to Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein’s convicted sex-trafficking accomplice, added that Trump “spent hours” at Epstein’s home with a trafficking victim—claims he denies.

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

Israel’s overlooked unraveling: The mass exodus and beyond

How war, political fracture, and economic strain triggered a vast exodus — a %95 jump in two years

By **Garsha Vazirian**

TEHRAN – Israeli emigration hit unprecedented levels in 2024 as 82,000 citizens departed, almost twice the 2022 figure of 42,000—a 95% jump in just two years.

This torrent, tracked by Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics, swelled further into 2025, with 79,000 more leaving over the past year while just 25,000 newcomers trickled in.

Concentrated among tech-savvy professionals and young families—the very backbone of Israel’s vaunted economy—these departures signal not escapist yearning but a profound rupture.

Net migration plunged by 125,000 from 2022 to mid-2024, turning the “safe haven” narrative into a hollow echo.

At the epicenter lies Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza, a cataclysm that has unmasked Zionism’s predatory core.

Approximately 1,139 people were killed in Israel on October 7, 2023, in the aftermath of a Hamas-led attack.

The Israeli military’s conduct that day included the controversial “Hannibal Directive,” a protocol that led to some Israeli casualties being caused by their own forces in efforts to prevent captives be-

ing taken into Gaza. Despite this, the capture of around 250 people during the attack pierced Israel’s illusion of invincibility.

Israel’s campaign of aggression across the Middle East has cost the region immeasurable human suffering. It has left over 69,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, plus thousands more in the West Bank.

In Lebanon, at least 3,800 have died. Iran has reported over 1,060 killed in Israeli strikes, alongside additional casualties in Yemen and Syria.

Far from halting resistance, the aggression provoked major retaliation: Iran’s True Promise operations

50 restoration workshops active in Kerman province

TEHRAN--There are currently 50 active restoration workshops in Kerman province, said Farnaz Farahi-Moghadam, deputy head of Kerman Cultural Heritage Department.

She told ILNA that the contract for 39 restoration workshops is from this year, and 11 restoration workshops are from previous years, which are still active.

Farahi-Moghadam said that some of the restoration workshops are located in Kerman's historical and world-class sites, and one of the restoration workshops is in Kerman's Shazdeh Garden, where the restoration and infrastructure of the garden are being studied and restored simultaneously.

She also mentioned the restoration of the historical aqueducts of Kerman province, adding that Goharriz aqueduct of Joopar in

Takht-e Soleyman: A 3,000-year-old mystery in Iran's history

TEHRAN-Takht-e Soleyman is a unique archaeological site in a mountainous area of West Azarbaijan province, with aspects that remain mysterious even after more than 3,000 years.

Nestled in the mountains of West Azarbaijan, Takht-e Soleyman (Throne of Solomon) is a breathtaking archaeological site whose history spans over 3,000 years. Once a center of Zoroastrian worship during the Sassanid era, its ruins and sacred fire temple continue to captivate visitors, preserving mysteries of ancient civilizations that intrigue historians and travelers alike, Mehr news agency reported.

Takht-e Soleyman was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2003. Recognized for its cultural, historical, and architectural significance, the site preserves the remains of a Sassanid fire temple and fortified settlement, reflecting ancient Zoroastrian religious practices. Its inclusion in UNESCO highlights its outstanding universal value and the importance of protecting this remarkable heritage site for future generations.

According to ancient scripts, Takht-e Soleyman was believed to be the birthplace of Zoroaster. It was a large educational and social center and a place of worship in the pre-Islamic era for Iranians. But it was ruined in an attack by Heraclius, a Byzantine Emperor, in 624 CE.

The site is home to several impressive structures that showcase the architectural and design prowess of ancient Persians. The main structures at Takht-e Soleyman include the Azargoshasb temple and the Anahita temple.

The Azargoshasb Temple is one of the most impressive structures at Takht-e Soleyman. This temple was dedicated to the worship of fire, which was an important aspect of Zoroastrianism. The temple's design features a central courtyard surrounded by a series of rooms and halls. The walls are adorned with intricate carvings and reliefs depicting scenes from Zoroastrian mythology.

Anahita temple is another impressive structure at Takht-e Soleyman. It was built during the Parthian era and dedicated to Anahita, the goddess of water and fertility. The temple features a rectangular design with a central hall that was used for religious ceremonies. The walls of the temple are decorated with beautiful frescoes that depict scenes from Persian history and mythology.

Three kilometers to the west of the site, there is a conical, hollow mountain which was shaped thousands of years ago as a result of volcanic activities. Some locals called it Prison of Solomon and believed that King Solomon put the monsters which had disobeyed him inside the deep crater.

Built during the Sassanid dynasty era (between 224 and 651 CE), the cone-shaped prison used to be the scene of sacrifices made and prayers said by the Zoroastrian priests.

The hill has been shaped over thousands of years by sediment layers of mineral stones of an ancient lake. It used to be a temple between 830 and 660 BCE with several sulphur hot springs around it for medical treatment.

Unlike other volcanos, the Demon Prison



hill is made of sediment layers of mineral stones. There used to be a spring in the region which turned into a lake over time. Its water was filled with salts and sulphur.

Through time, the salts resided at the bottom of the lake becoming solid sediment layers. Now, after thousands of years, the layers have shaped a hill with a hole inside. Gradually the lake dried out but its remnants are still visible.

The site is now among one of the most beautiful natural attractions for mountaineers.

The Solomon Prison or Demon Prison is a 100-meter cone-shaped hill with a horrible hole inside and a strange story, located in Iran's West Azarbaijan province.

If you climb the hill, you will see a stone building made by Sarooj mortar standing at its top. The building has hidden a black hole inside with no way out and if somebody sets foot inside, he/she will definitely die.

Some locals believed that Solomon jailed a demon who defied him into the hill's black hole; then tightened its black hole by setting up a building above it.

The story says that demon in the black hole is the same devil who stole a special ring inscribed by the lord's names from Solomon. The demon was believed to be a very dangerous and furious creature releasing toxic gas from its mouth. Anybody daring to set foot into the black hole will be murdered by the demon, locals believed. That's why, it is named the Demon Prison.

The fortified site is the first attraction of West Azarbaijan which was recognized as a World Heritage site in July 2003.

About 20 kilometers from Takht-e Soleyman, lies a remarkable lake known for its floating island, a natural phenomenon that has intrigued locals and visitors alike.

The lake, fed by springs and rich in dissolved minerals, reaches depths of up to 112 meters in some areas. The floating island is composed of dense vegetation and local reeds, which remain green even in winter and drift gently with the wind.

This natural feature has been the subject of both scientific curiosity and local legends. Historically and archaeologically significant, the lake complements the nearby Sassanid-era site of Takht-e Soleyman, adding a unique natural dimension to the region's cultural and historical heritage.

The "floating island" is more than just myth — local and tourist sources claim it exists, and describe how it moves. However, some of the more dramatic legends (hidden treasure, Solomon's ring, etc.) come from folklore rather than verified archaeological research.

Salehi-Amiri: Tehran to host Nowruz tourism ministers' meeting

TEHRAN--Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri announced at the 25th meeting of the Cultural Heritage Ministry's Strategic Council that the first meeting of tourism ministers from countries that celebrate Nowruz will be held in Tehran.

According to Mehr news agency, the 25th meeting of the Strategic Council of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts was held on Monday in the presence of Salehi-Amiri, Director of Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipur, senior managers and specialized experts in the fields of culture and tourism.

He announced the approval of holding a meeting of tourism ministers of Nowruz countries in Tehran; a rare event that could initiate a new stage in cultural and tourism cooperation in the region.

Emphasizing that Nowruz is the common heritage of the regional nations and one of the most deeply-rooted human rituals, he stated that Nowruz, with its history of several thousand years and its global registration on the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List, has a unique capacity to introduce Iranian culture and strengthen solidarity among countries that celebrate this ancient festival.

He said that holding this summit at the governmental level will not only help increase social vitality in the country, but also promote cultural interactions, sustainable tourism, and cooperation in the field of protecting the historical and spiritual assets of the nations that celebrate Nowruz.

Salehi-Amiri considered the main goal of this initiative to transform Nowruz into a reputable global brand, adding that Iran, as the origin and main axis of this ancient ritual, must play its lead-



ing role in developing cultural tourism in the region.

He explained that within the framework of this summit, programs such as specialized Nowruz tourism meetings, training workshops, and visits by participating delegations to historical sites related to Nowruz, including Persepolis and Pasargadae, have been designed to present a comprehensive and documented picture of Iran's cultural capacities.

He said that the country's main focus will be on the Nowruz area so that the flow of cultural tourism can be developed more coherently and the introduction of Iran's attractions in the international space can be carried out with a scientific, systematic and targeted approach. Salehi-Amiri considered using the capacity of prominent cultural figures in the region as one of the complementary axes of this policy and stated that thoughts and experts who are proficient in the common cultural heritage will be invited to strengthen the flow of Iran studies and cultural dialogue in the region.

In another development, Salehi-Amiri said that Iran's diplomacy for attracting tourists before the 12-day Israeli war against the country and after that is completely different.

He also said: "Our situation

before the war was that we went to all the countries in the region, from Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Georgia and other countries to Egypt, and we followed this path so that we could attract tourists," ILNA wrote.

"But during the war, due to Iranophobia and the psychological insecurity that was created, there was a break. We started to rebuild that trust and neutralize Iranophobia for starting again."

Salehi-Amiri continued: "As I speak to you now, fortunately, our diplomatic situation with our neighbor, Iraq, has taken shape. Currently, Iraqi travelers, whether as pilgrims or tourists, are present throughout Iran. Recently, about 80 people from our private sector, including our agencies, hoteliers and tour operators, were present in Iraq. Last year, almost half of our tourism capacity was related to the Iraq and Persian Gulf states, and we are rebuilding this capacity."

He emphasized: "In the post-war situation, we should gradually return to the previous conditions within six months. We have predicted three situations and have defined plans for all three situations; one is the continuation of the current situation (no war, no peace) and what we should do, the second is the possibility of instability and how we should act, and in the situation where we return to stable condi-

tions, we have predicted all three situations. In stable conditions, we will experience a 25-percent growth, meaning we will reach the border of 8 to 9.5 million tourists. In the current situation of continuity, our prediction is that we will return to the figure of last Iranian year."

Regarding the protection of ancient sites, Salehi-Amiri said: "All historical sites are under the supervision of our bases. The officials of our departments are stationed in the provinces and all of them are monitored."

Also, Deputy Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian said that more than 231 projects were identified in the provinces, of which 16 projects have been allowed to receive credit up to 8,000 billion rials (\$8 million) from the tax funds of organizations.

He stated that the alignment of policies and programs at the national and provincial levels is one of the serious axes of cooperation.

Meanwhile, Deputy Cultural Heritage Minister Ali Darabi said that holding online meeting with the provinces, with the presence of benefactors from each province, is one of the planned measures for the restoration of the historical monuments.

Emphasizing the importance of utilizing economic capacities in supporting the protection and restoration of historical monuments and sites, he stated that closer interaction between the two sectors can pave the way for activating the provinces' priority projects.

Referring to the need for more effective protection of the historical monuments, he said that the use of new investment methods can increase productivity in cultural heritage management and pave the way for the sustainable preservation of cultural and historical monuments and sites.

Armenian Iranologist says media distort image of Iran's treatment of Armenian heritage



A view of Vank Cathedral, New Jolfa district, Isfahan, Iran

TEHRAN – An Armenian expert on Iran said on Sunday that Armenian cultural heritage has been preserved and respected in Iran, but inaccurate media coverage has led to a distorted image of the country.

Vartan Voskanyan, an Iranologist from Armenia, made the remarks at an international Iranology conference held at the University of Science and Culture. He said much of the Christian world is unaware that Iranian authorities have safeguarded Armenian heritage and sought UNESCO recognition for key sites, ISNA reported.

"Inaccurate media information has created a wrong image of Iran, as if it is an extremist country," Voskanyan said.

He said Armenians have had a continuous presence in Iran since ancient times, particularly in northwestern regions such as East Azarbaijan province. He added that Armenian settlement in the area dates back to before the birth of Christ.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the expert said a second Armenian community developed in central Iran, especially Isfahan, after Shah Abbas relocated Armenians from eastern Armenia during the Safavid period. He noted that the two groups differ in language and cultural history.

He said Armenians are mentioned in ancient Persian inscriptions, including the Behistun inscription, and remain one of the few ethnic groups continuously present since antiquity.

Voskanyan also highlighted shared cultural roots between Iran and Armenia that predate Indo-European history. He cited archaeological evidence, including finds from Hasanlu and Urartian sites in northwestern Iran, which he said could support cultural tourism.

He said Iran's record on Christian-Armenian heritage contrasts with that of some regional countries. He noted that the Iranian government secured UNESCO recognition for the St. Stepanos Church near Jolfa and has preserved Armenian churches in Isfahan dating to the Safavid era.

"In Iran, this heritage has been kept with respect, and steps have been taken for its World Heritage registration," he said.

Voskanyan said the coexistence of Islamic, pre-Islamic, and Christian heritage in Iran offers potential for religious tourism rarely seen elsewhere in the Middle East (West Asia).

Glimpses of Armenian heritage in Iran

Armenian heritage in Iran reflects more than a millennium of cultural exchange, coexistence, and contribution. Armenians have lived on the Iranian plateau since antiquity, but their presence became especially significant in the 17th century when Shah Abbas I relocated thousands of Armenian families from the Jolfa region to Isfahan. These communities founded New Jolfa, which remains the cultural heart of Iranian Armenians and a symbol of their resilience and creativity.

In New Jolfa, Armenians built remarkable churches, schools, and charitable institutions. Among the most celebrated landmarks is the Vank Cathedral, known for its blend of Armenian architectural traditions with Persian decorative styles. Its frescoes, tilework, and manuscripts highlight a unique fusion of Chris-

tian iconography and Iranian artistic influences. The cathedral's museum preserves rare artifacts, including early printed books and historical documents that chronicle Armenian life in Iran.

Armenians have also played influential roles in Iran's commerce, crafts, and intellectual life. They were pioneers in the country's early printing industry, contributed to music and the visual arts, and acted as intermediaries between Iran and Europe in trade and diplomacy. Despite maintaining their distinct language, faith, and customs, Armenians integrated deeply into Iranian society and were recognized as one of the constitutionally protected religious minorities.

Moreover, a major testament to their historical presence is the UNESCO-inscribed Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran in the northwest. This World Heritage site includes the St. Thaddeus Monastery, St. Stepanos Monastery, and the Chapel of Dzordzor. These ancient structures—some dating back to the early Christian centuries—showcase unique Armenian architectural forms shaped by regional influences. They remain pilgrimage sites and powerful symbols of continuity for Armenian identity in Iran.

Today, Armenian heritage is visible not only in monuments but also in living traditions across Isfahan, Tehran, and Tabriz. Festivals, cuisine, and the enduring use of the Armenian language testify to a vibrant community that continues to enrich Iran's multicultural landscape.

Iranian university holds workshop on ‘Pediatric Critical Care Nursing’ in Ghana

TEHRAN – Iran University of Medical Sciences and Islamic University College, Ghana, have co-organized a two-day clinical workshop on ‘Pediatric Critical Care Nursing’ in Ghana.

The workshop was held in collaboration with the School of Pre-Operative and Critical Care Nursing Society in Accra, Ghana, from November 13 to 14, according to the health ministry’s website.

Over 60 nurses and nominated physicians participated in the workshop, which is accredited by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC).

The two-day course, designed to enhance the specialized skills of nurses in pediatric intensive care, took a major step in empowering Ghana’s nursing workforce by providing efficient training on emergency assessment and life-saving interventions, hands-on simulations, real-life hospital scenarios, and advanced monitoring and pediatric equipment.

The participants will receive a certificate issued by Iran University of Medical Sciences and Islamic



University College.

Holding the international workshop is considered a milestone in the development of scientific and educational cooperation between Iran and Ghana. It will have a significant impact on improving child care standards in the Ghana health

system.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) has said Iran is a leading country in expanding its health-care system and providing access to universal health coverage.

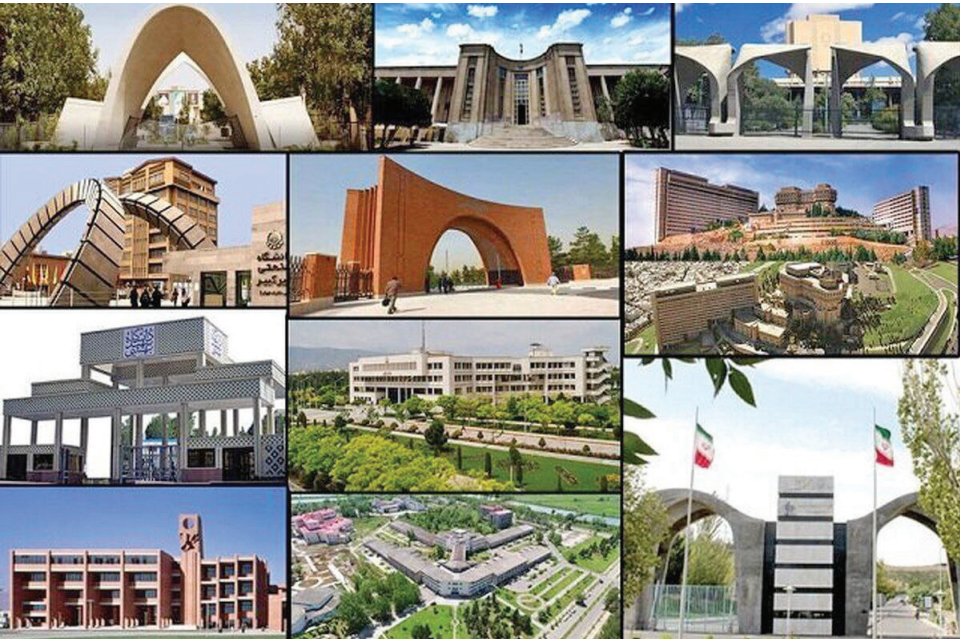
Lauding the country’s achievements in recent years, Hanan Balkhi said expanding primary health care services, increasing access to health coverage in rural areas, maintaining high vaccination rates, and reducing maternal and newborn mortality, Iran has managed to become a successful role model in the region, the health ministry’s website reported.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafargandi. The meeting was held in May on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA).

The country’s commitment to providing equal health services to millions of refugees makes its services even more commendable.

WHO EMRO is working closely with the Iranian regulatory institutions to achieve regulatory maturity level 3 in the pharmaceutical regulatory system to pave the way for broader exports of Iranian health-oriented products to global markets; it will also contribute to promoting global health security, Balkhi added.

More Iranian universities in QS Asia University Rankings



TEHRAN – The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings has placed 48 Iranian universities in the list of top universities in 2026, compared to 32 universities in 2025.

Published annually since 2009, the QS Asia University Rankings highlights the top universities in Asia each year.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 93) is placed first among Iranian universities, followed by Sharif University of Technology (ranking 142 globally) and Amirkabir University of Technology (ranking 169 globally), ISNA reported.

Iran University of Science and Technology (172), Isfahan University of Technology and University of Tabriz (212), Shahid Beheshti University (214), Shiraz University (241), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (261), K.N. Toosi University of Technology (287), University of Isfahan (293) are ranked fourth to tenth.

The methodology used to create the ranking is similar to that used for the QS World University Rankings, but with some additional indicators and adapted weightings. This set of criteria, developed in consultation with regional experts and stakeholders, is designed to reflect key priorities for universities in Asia, drawing on as much available data as possible.

The University of Hong Kong is the top university in Asia in this year’s regional ranking, which features a total of 1,529 incredible academic institutions.

The 11 indicators used to compile the QS Asia University Rankings are as follows: Academic reputation (30 percent), Employer reputation (20 percent), Faculty/student ratio (10 percent), International research network (10 percent), Citations per paper (10 percent) and papers per faculty (5 percent), Staff with a PhD (5 percent), Proportion of international faculty (2.5 percent) and proportion of international students (2.5 percent), Proportion of inbound exchange students (2.5 percent) and proportion of outbound exchange students (2.5 percent).

Latest rankings

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026 has placed 101 Iranian universities among the top institutions, up from 85 universities in 2025.

The 2026 rankings include 2,191 ranked universities from 115 countries and territories. There are 99 new entries compared with last year.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and Sharif University of Technology are among the top Iranian universities, with a global ranking of 351-400.

Iran University of Science and Technology, and University of Tehran are jointly placed second, ranking 401-500 globally. Shiraz University of Technology and Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranked third collectively, with a global ranking of 501-600.

The 2024 World University Rankings (WUR) report by the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) has included 72 Iranian universities, up from 69 in 2023. A total of 426 universities from 31 Islamic countries are listed in the ranking, where Turkey, with 102 universities and Iran, with 72 universities, and Pakistan, with 39 universities, are placed first to third, IRNA reported.

Among the top universities of Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia ranks 172. Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Egypt jointly rank 401-450, Qatar ranks 451-500, and Turkey, the UAE, and Leba-

non rank 501-600.

Tehran University’s ranking has changed from 501-600 in 2023 to 401-500 in 2024. The University is placed first in the country. Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks second. The university’s global ranking is 501-600, up from 601-700 in 2023.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences’ ranking has also improved from 801-900 in 2023 to 601-700 in 2024, ranking third in the country. Sharif University of Technology and Tarbiat Modares University are placed fourth and Fifth, respectively.

Shanghai University ranking 2025 has placed six Iranian universities among the top 1,000 institutions worldwide, down from 9 in 2024. Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran are among the top 500 universities in the world, ranking 401-500 globally. Tarbiat Modares University ranks 701-800.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Sharif University of Technology rank 801-900. Iran University of Medical Sciences ranks 901-1000. The July edition of the Webometrics world ranking has included 64 medical universities from Iran, unchanged from January’s edition, 11 of which have advanced in the ranking compared to the January edition.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (485) is the only university ranked among the top 500 institutions in the world, Mehr news agency reported. Among Iranian universities, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and Yazd University of Medical Sciences have improved their rankings by 1002, 961, and 948 positions, respectively.

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

The Times Higher Education (THE) has included 34 universities from Iran among the top universities pursuing sustainable development goals (SDGs), up from 33 universities in 2024. Iran University of Medical Sciences, with a global ranking of 301-400, is placed first in the country.

Alzahra University, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (ranking 401-600) are placed second. Iran University of Medical Sciences ranks 48th in good health and well-being as well as reduced inequalities, and 62nd in quality education goals.

Alzahra University and Kerman University of Medical Sciences rank 85th and 89th in gender equality, respectively. Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences ranks 30th in good health and well-being.

Amirkabir University of Technology and Shahid Beheshti University rank 46th and 60th in industry, innovation, and infrastructure. The 22nd edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR), 2026, has placed nine Iranian universities among the world’s top institutes, unchanged from the 2025 ranking.

University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 322, ranks first among the Iranian universities. Sharif University of Technology (ranking 375) and Amirkabir University of Technology (456) are placed second and third.

Iranian team shines at RoboCup Asia-Pacific 2025

From page 1 ▶ Iranian students secured first and second places in the inventions and innovative technologies area in the TE-KNOFEST competition, showcasing new Iranian youths’ capabilities in robotics, artificial intelligence, and technological innovations.

Hosted by Istanbul, Turkey, from September 17 to 21, the competition aimed for individuals to improve themselves in the field of robotics – electronics – coding, and to design robots suitable for specified tasks.

The Iranian team, composed of Kian Karbalei, Mehrtash Razgordani, Artin Islampannah, Seyyed Amir-Homan Tabatabaei-nejad, Samyar Reza-Soltani, Ardin Khanalizadeh, Mohammad Reivandi, and Mehdi Reivandi, Mehr news agency reported.

Competitors with 980 projects from 56 countries, including Germany, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Russia, the Netherlands, India,

Iran, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Paraguay, participated in the event.

The robotics and earth science teams of Iran won different awards at the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) and the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) competitions, which were held in South Korea and China, respectively.

The robotics team that participated in the FIRA 2025 World Robotics and AI Competition in Daegu, South Korea, managed to win 11 awards.

The Iranian participants at the International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) in Ji’ning, China, grabbed four bronze medals.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup and Summit 2025 was held from August 11 to 15. The Iranian delegations won five championships in the Air League and Sport League (students under the age of 19), as well as Challenge and Youth

League. They secured four runner-up positions and two third-places in autonomous vehicles, youth creative task, and the Sport League.

Iranian students aged 7-17 won second place among seven countries in the Kazakhstan RoboLand 2025, which was held from March 27 to 29 in the city of Karaganda.

The event brought together over 750 young inventors from seven countries, Kazinform News Agency reports.

The international festival drew the participation of 362 teams from Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan to compete in 23 categories.

Over 2,000 children took part in elimination trials, and over 400 teams competed in the qualifying round to reach the RoboLand 2025 finals.

Iran shakes with 152 earthquakes in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 152 earthquakes were recorded across the country in a week from November 8 to 14, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 133 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 18 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4; one earthquake with a magnitude between 4 and 5, and no earthquake with a magnitude over 5 have occurred in the country.

Among the provinces of the country, Yazd, with 13 earthquakes, experienced the highest number of earthquakes, followed by Fars and Khorasan Razavi, each with 12 earthquakes, North Khorasan and Semnan, each with 11 earthquakes.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4 on the Richter scale, which occurred on

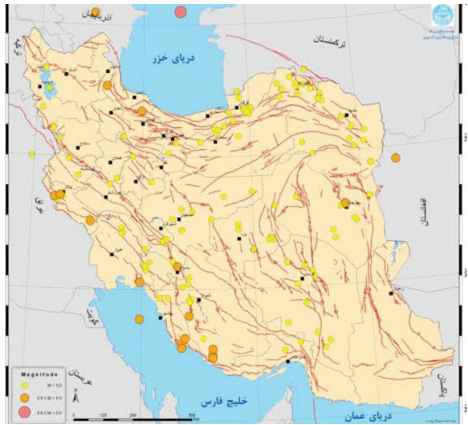
November 10 in the Caspian Sea.

During the same period, three earthquakes hit Tehran. No earthquakes were recorded in Alborz, Zanjan, Qom, and Qazvin provinces.

A total of 6,272 earthquakes were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2024 – March 2025), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Out of registered earthquakes, 150 were more than 4 on the Richter scale; at least five earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 4.5 occurred monthly in the country.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.



About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world’s earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

All-Iranian COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane’ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند. مصطفی قانع، دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است. تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است.



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NOVEMBER 18, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Knowledge is the missing goal of a believer, so obtain it
event from a man of discord.*
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:49 Evening: 17:16 Dawn: 5:15 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:42 (tomorrow)

Iran to showcase cultural products at Shahab international exhibition in Baghdad

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The Islamic Republic of Iran is set to participate in the 4th edition of Shahab International Exhibition for Children and Adolescents, held in Baghdad, Iraq, from November 19 to 29, with a focus on promoting Iranian cultural products, particularly in the fields of animation and toys.

This year's exhibition marks a significant leap forward for Iranian producers, as they aim to expand their presence in international markets, the organizers announced during a press conference held in Tehran on Monday.

Saeid Hosseini, an activist in the cultural industries sector, emphasized the advancements made in animation and toy production over the past decade. He noted that Iranian products have gained a stronger foothold in the market, but stressed the necessity of developing international markets to sustain this growth.

"The domestic market alone is not sufficient; we need to rapidly expand our international reach," he stated. Hosseini highlighted Iraq as a priority market due to its cultural proximity and burgeoning consumer base, noting that the country is young and has a promising market size.

Last year, 50 Iranian producers showcased 300 products at the Iranian pavilion at the exhibition. This year, the pavilion has expanded significantly, featuring sections dedicated to video games, animation, startups, and more. Hosseini mentioned plans to establish a permanent office or showroom following the exhibition to better facilitate exports.

Hamed Ta'amoli, Vice President of the Toy Manufacturers Association, shared insights on the

domestic market, which he described as a \$400 million industry.

He pointed out that while local producers have seen qualitative and quantitative growth, competition with Chinese imports remains a challenge. "We need to focus on exporting to neighboring countries like Iraq and even further to Europe," he said, emphasizing the lack of specialized structures for toy exports.

Sajjad Abbasi, director of Karestan Baharestan, the largest innovation complex for culture and art in Iran, noted their collaboration with 150 teams focused on children's products. He expressed optimism about the exhibition's potential to connect with major buyers, with over 3,000 visitors expected daily.

Abbasi also highlighted the importance of religiously themed products given Iraq's Muslim population and the favorable attitudes towards Iranian goods.

Mohammadreza Ramezanzpour, a stationery producer, expressed satisfaction with the improvements in product quality and quantity over the past decade. He underscored the importance of exporting Iranian products, stating that they can compete effectively with foreign counterparts in terms of quality and cost.

As the exhibition unfolds, it is anticipated to serve as a crucial platform for Iranian producers to engage with Iraqi traders and educational officials, showcasing their capabilities and fostering cross-border business relationships.

The event is expected to pave the way for further growth in Iran's cultural production sector and enhance its export potential.

12 foreign documentaries to be shown at Portrait section of 19th Cinema Verite

TEHRAN – The 19th Iran International Documentary Film Festival "Cinema Verite" has announced the line-up for the "Portrait" section.

According to the announcement, 12 foreign documentaries will be screened in the "Portrait" section this year, IRNA reported.

They include "Ennio" directed by Giuseppe Tornatore, "Shadows Behind the Frame" by Ivan Baturin, "Lost Memories in an Imaginary Hurricane" by Viktor Luna, "Marlon Brando: Beyond VistaVision" by V Trent, "Once Upon a Silver Screen" by Martin George, "Cast of Shadows" by Sami Joubert van Ingen, "Playing with Dolls" by Valeriy Rudolfovich Ryabin, "Here, Dimitris Makris - Portrait of a Director" by Paolo Stemmini and Francesco Tassara, "Three Deaths of Merian Cooper" by Rafael Salata and Pawel Gargas, "Vlasta, the Memory Is not Everlasting" by Candela Vey, Tino Pereira, "What Mad Pursuit" by Danny Dey, and "Cahide Sonku, Türkiye's First Female Producer and Director" by Nurullah Güzel.

"Ennio" celebrates the life and legacy of the renowned Italian composer Ennio Morricone, who died in 2020.

"Shadows Behind the Frame" is about Lyudmila Kusakova, one of the first female production designers at Mosfilm. She used items found in landfills to create sets for films that have become the golden fund of our cinema. In this case, she was supported by her husband and mentor, Mikhail Kartashov. He helped Lyudmila see beauty in everyday life and stay ahead of time with her ideas.

"Lost Memories in an Imaginary Hurricane" is about old VHS tapes that the filmmaker finds; films recorded by his grandfather.

In "Marlon Brando: Beyond VistaVision," the filmmaker recovers and restores a lost, VistaVision Sourced, 35mm Trailer Film Print from Marlon Brando's directorial debut, showcasing an expanded aspect ratio never before seen by public audiences since 1961.

"Once Upon a Silver Screen" is a nostalgic short documentary



capturing heartfelt memories of people recalling their very first experience watching a film in a theater. Each voice shares a personal story of wonder, excitement, and the timeless magic of cinema.

In "Cast of Shadows," the filmmaker uses unseen materials from his family's archive to present an essay about the women around his grandfather, filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty, and the crucial roles they played in the making of his work.

"Playing with Dolls" is an exploration of the world of contemporary Russian puppet animation through the prism of the experience of the famous artist Marina Kurchevskaya, director Stanislav Sokolov, VGIK students, and students of the children's animation studio. The viewer will learn about the complexities and enchanting moments of creating dolls, about creative secrets and unique approaches to art, which for more than a century has continued to amaze with its liveliness and expressiveness. This film is about the magic of creativity, which inspires recognized masters and young enthusiasts to prefer puppets to all other techniques and delight viewers with genuine masterpieces of hand-made animation.

es of hand-made animation.

"Here, Dimitris Makris - Portrait of a Director" is a poetic documentary following Dimitris Makris from his film studies in Rome to becoming a prominent figure in Greek cinema.

"Three Deaths of Merian Cooper" is about the life of Merian Cooper, the American filmmaker behind King Kong.

"Vlasta, the Memory Is not Everlasting" is about Valasta Lah, the first female director of a feature sound film in Argentina, from her childhood in a country dismembered by war, her youth in Trieste, her training at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome, her arrival in Argentina fleeing another war, to becoming the most important assistant director of Estudios San Miguel. Starting from her personal correspondence and through a detective investigation, her name will be recovered from oblivion.

"What Mad Pursuit" drafts key scenes from all nine of the 9@ Night films created by Rob Nilsson. Inter-connected with Nilsson's interview regarding his work with the Tenderloin yGroup, the documentary exposes the creative

intricacies experienced, created, and mastered by Nilsson and more than 400 participants over a 12-year period. Filmed in and around the infamous Tenderloin District of San Francisco, the 9@Night film cycle is a triumph in American independent filmmaking. A first in the life of the series, this documentary aligns viewers with the inner workings and surprising outcomes of the entire nine film cycle.

"Cahide Sonku, Türkiye's First Female Producer and Director" traces the life of Cahide Sonku, a Turkish actress, model, writer, and the first female film director in Turkey. Sonku was the founder of her own movie production company, Sonku Film, in 1950.

Iran International Documentary Film Festival "Cinema Verite" is organized by the Documentary & Experimental Film Center (DEFC). The festival tries to express the relationship between reality and truth through documentary films.

The 19th edition of the festival, with Mohammad Hamidi Moghadam as the secretary, will be held from December 10 to 17 in Tehran.

"Patterns of Friendship" exhibition highlights cultural ties between Iran, Russia

TEHRAN- Iranian and Russian painters gathered at the "Patterns of Friendship" exhibition, featuring a curated selection of 200 artworks, to depict themes of mutual understanding between the two nations.

The joint painting exhibition, dedicated in memory of Russian artist Sergey Andriyaka, concluded at Tehran's Art Garden on Monday, Mehr reported.

This exhibition showcased 100 works related to Iran, exploring topics such as national pride, cultural heritage, customs, and natural landscapes, created by Russian artists. Conversely, 100 pieces reflecting Russian culture, history, and traditions were produced by Iranian artists and displayed for art enthusiasts.

Participants from both countries prepared their works within ten thematic categories, including national figures and personalities, ancient relics, folklore, nature, and other cultural expressions. After a rigorous selection process, 100 artworks from Iranian artists and 100 from Russian artists were finalized for display.

The inaugural "Patterns of Friendship" exhibition festival was organized in Moscow in August through a collaboration between the Iranian Embassy in Russia, the Academy of Wa-

tercolor and Fine Arts of Sergey Andriyaka, and supported by the Russian Ministry of Culture, the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts, and the Union of Russian Artists and Painters. The Sareh Gallery in Moscow and Artibition Gallery in Tehran served as the event's executive secretariats.

Following its presentations in Moscow and Tehran, the artworks will be exhibited in several Iranian and Russian cities, including Isfahan, Saint Petersburg, and Kazan.

These artworks demonstrate the deep and nuanced mutual understanding between the peoples of Iran and Russia, emphasizing how art serves as a powerful bridge for closer connections.

Sergey Andriyaka (1958-2024) was a watercolor artist. He is known as one of the leading masters of modern watercolor painting. The artist began the creative activity with oil paints, gouache, and tempera. He was engaged in mosaics, stained-glass windows, etching, and signature on porcelain and enamel. His acquaintance with the cultural heritage of Western Europe has played just as important a role. However, his favorite technique was always watercolor painting.

The Academy of Watercolor and Fine Arts of Sergey Andriyaka

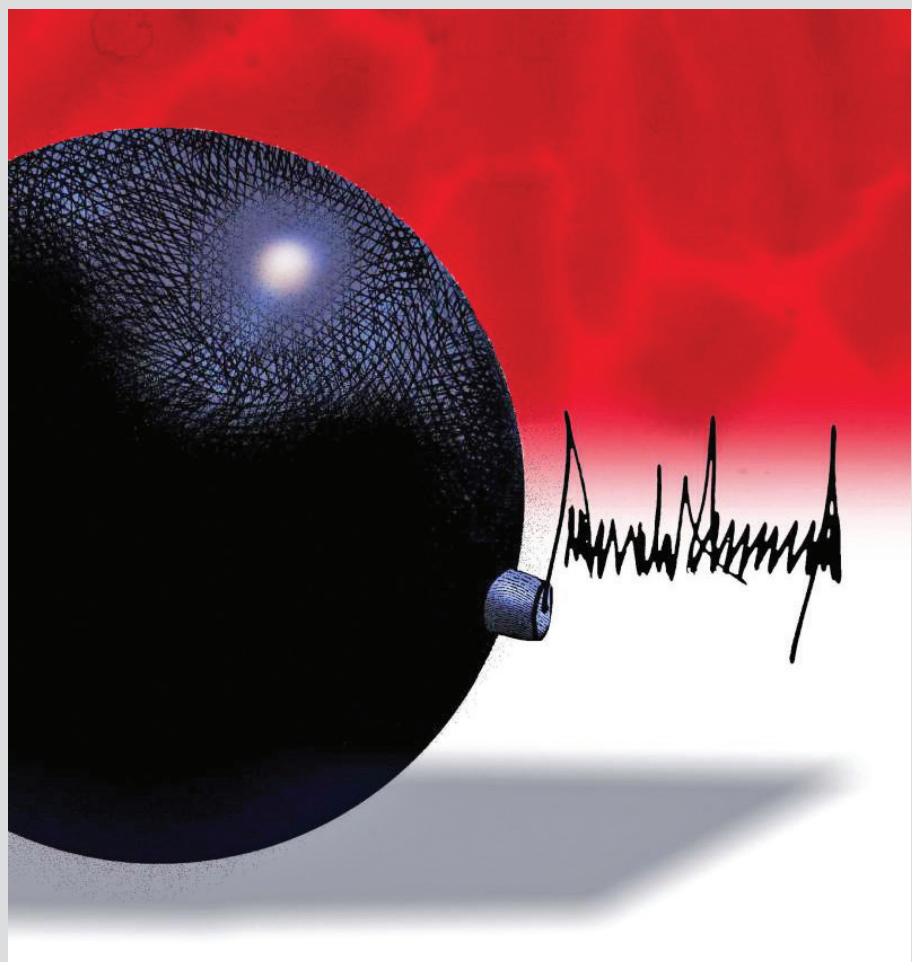


ka was founded in 2002. It is the first institution in Russia that provides an educational program "Painting and Fine Arts". Along with learning thoroughly the art of drawing and painting, which is essential for every professional artist, students try different techniques and types of fine art including watercolor, tempera and oil painting, pastel, etchings, monumental painting, stained glass, Roman and Florentine mo-

saic, sgraffito, sculpture, ceramics, pottery, porcelain modeling, porcelain and ceramics painting, enamel miniatures, jewelry, book illustrations, etc.

The academy has many exhibition spaces as well as one of the few Museums of Watercolor in Russia. The former presents the visitor with a unique collection of masterpieces, watercolors, drawings, and book illustrations made by Russian and European artists.

Cartoon of Day



Trump

Cartoonist: Fares Garabet from Germany