



Rafael Mariano Grossi, IAEA Director General, briefs members of the international press and media on the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 1787th Board of Governors meeting held at the Agency headquarters in Vienna, Austria. 19 November 2025.

Araghchi says Iran 'fully prepared for war'

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has declared that the Islamic Republic of Iran stands more ready than ever to decisively counter any act of aggression from the Israeli regime.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The Economist, the senior diplomat detailed how Iran's defensive capacities have been significantly enhanced in the wake of the 12-day war, transforming the nation into a formidable fortress. Araghchi underscored that the lessons from that conflict have been meticulously analyzed, leading to substantial improvements in both the quantity and quality of Iran's missile capabilities, which are now positioned with greater strategic precision. ▶ Page 2

Presidential letter to Saudi Crown Prince was about Hajj, Iranian envoy clarifies

TEHRAN – The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Riyadh, Alireza Enayati, provided details regarding a letter sent by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Enayati said that last year, following the appointment of Mr. Bayat as Head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, President Pezeshkian sent a message regarding Hajj to the Crown Prince. The message was delivered to the Saudi Minister of Hajj in the ambassador's presence.

Enayati added that this year, the President sent another message expressing appreciation for the facilities provided to Hajj pilgrims, particularly for Saudi assistance in transferring Iranian pilgrims under special circumstances caused by the Israeli attacks in June. This message was delivered by Mr. Rashidian, the new Head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, to Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud, Saudi Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Hajj Council, in the ambassador's presence. ▶ Page 2

Iran ranks among top 10 countries for UNESCO-listed heritage: minister

TEHRAN – Iran ranks among the world's top 10 countries in the number of UNESCO-inscribed heritage properties and elements, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Thursday during a visit to historical sites in Zanjan.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the visit, Salehi-Amiri said Iran has so far registered 29 tangible and 28 intangible elements on UNESCO's lists. He added that with 57 items on its national tentative list, Iran is the only country positioned to nominate at least one site for global inscription each year for several decades. ▶ Page 6

Jabal Amel is cradle of resilience in Lebanon

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — On November 22, Lebanon marks its Independence Day — not as a ceremonial date, but as a reminder of a century-long struggle in which the Resistance stood at the forefront of expelling foreign occupiers and forging sovereignty.

Since the proclamation of Greater Lebanon in 1920, the French Mandate sought to mold the country into a "buffer zone," not a truly free homeland. This design, however, collided with a society unwilling to surrender its destiny.

In Jabal Amel (aka the South), the earliest sparks of organized Resistance ignited under leaders like Sadiq Hamza and Adham Khanjar — Resistance leaders dismissed by the French as "bandits," though in truth they were the first guardians of a people determined to defend their land and genuine identity.

From the outset, this Resistance was both national and pan-Arab: the southern uprising of 1920 coincided with Iraq's revolt against the British, and King Faisal's government in Damascus supplied weapons and support, recognizing that the struggle for Syria's independence was intertwined with southern Lebanon.

From truce to tragedy: 310+ dead in Gaza after Oct 10 ceasefire

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The death toll in Gaza continues to climb as Israeli forces intensify military operations despite the ceasefire agreement with Hamas that came into effect on October 10. Israel's army has advanced beyond the designated "yellow line," pushing tanks and armored vehicles into areas where displaced Palestinians had cautiously begun to return.

The incursion has triggered renewed displacement, with families fleeing once again toward the western parts of Gaza City. Aid agencies report that the advance has disrupted critical access routes, forcing them to reassess safe corridors and slowing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians already living under extreme instability.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, Israeli strikes between Wednesday and Thursday killed at least 32 Palestinians, including 12 children and eight women. The latest escalation brings the total Palestinian death toll since the ceasefire began to over 310. UNICEF confirmed Friday that at least 67 children have been killed by Israeli fire since October 10, averaging two child deaths per day during the truce.

Netanyahu slams Palestinian sovereignty shut despite Saudi normalization lure

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – Israel reiterated its refusal to allow a Palestinian state, insisting that "even if" ties with Saudi Arabia are normalized, statehood remains off-limits. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared in a November 20 interview that it "is not on the table for me."

The prime minister declared that Palestinian statehood represents an "existential threat," saying: "There will not be a Palestinian state. It's very simple: it will not be established."

He is not the only voice in Israel hardening his stance. War Minister Israel Katz has declared publicly that "Israel will not allow a Palestinian state."

Other senior officials, including Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, have repeatedly characterized a two-state outcome as an existential threat, a suicidal move, or the creation of a "Palestinian terror state."

▶ Page 5

Exclusive Interview

Young Scholars Club materializes Iran's scientific diplomacy, superiority ▶ Page 7

Scan this QR code to watch the video.



Freestyler Amouzad wins gold: 2025 Riyadh

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestler Rahman Amouzad won a gold medal at the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games (ISG) on Thursday.

He defeated Tajikistan's Abdulmazhid Kudiev 12-2 in the final bout of 65kg.

Bilol Sharip Uulu of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan's Umidjon Jalolov seized the bronze medals.

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.

The event has brought together more than 3,000 athletes from 57 nations, competing across 25 sports in pursuit of glory at one of the Islamic world's premier multi-sport events.

Exclusive Interview

From battlefield to hunting ground: How civilians became targets for sport in Bosnia ▶ Page 8

Scan this QR code to watch the video.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A new scenario for Iran

In a commentary on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to the White House, Shargh wrote: One of the most complex and sensitive aspects of this trip—overshadowed by headlines about arms deals—was the shift in Washington and Riyadh's joint approach toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. Prominent analysts believe that Trump and bin Salman have concluded that the era of direct military confrontation or blind economic sanctions is over, and that a more sophisticated model must replace it. At the joint press conference, the language used about Iran revealed a tactical and deceptive turn. Unlike 2018, when the “maximum pressure” strategy aimed at a rapid economic collapse, Trump's current model is different. Strategic analysts argue that Trump seeks to combine smart economic pressure with open diplomatic channels, drawing Iran into a protracted process. In this scenario, any future agreement would be designed so that Iran, to benefit economically, would be forced to accept standards that contradict its ideological identity and revolutionary structure. Opening the door to interaction with the West under strict supervision is, in Trump's team's view, precisely the weak point that could activate what they call Iran's “internal contradictions” and trigger a project of “soft collapse.”

Etemad: Saudis seek to play mediating role between Iran and US

Discussing the content of Masoud Pezeshkian's letter to Crown Prince bin Salman and prospects of an Iran–U.S. agreement mediated by Saudi Arabia, Etemad interviewed regional affairs analyst Bahman Akbari. He argued that Pezeshkian's recent letter to the Saudi crown prince, alongside recent developments in West Asia, shows that Iran–Saudi relations have entered a new phase of cautiousness but expanding cooperation. At the same time, Riyadh is working to rebuild its strategic alliance with Washington while positioning itself as a potential mediator between Tehran and Washington. Iran, focusing on reducing security costs, fostering religious and humanitarian cooperation, and keeping its case away from U.S. and Israeli pressure, has prioritized de-escalation with Riyadh. Iran–Saudi relations now stand at a sensitive stage in the balance of power. The Riyadh–Washington rapprochement does not necessarily block Tehran–Riyadh cooperation, and Saudi Arabia's involvement as mediator in Iran–U.S. talks could enable a significant agreement. What is emerging in West Asia is not a return to the old order but the

formation of a “multi-polar intra-regional order,” in which Iran and Saudi Arabia are key players, the U.S. remains present but not decisive, and China and Russia act as new balancers.

Farhikhtegan: The main purpose of issuing a resolution against Iran

In an interview with geopolitical expert Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, Farhikhtegan examined the objectives behind the recent resolution against Iran. He explained: On Wednesday, the U.S. and the European troika submitted a draft resolution to the IAEA Board of Governors, demanding that Tehran provide answers and grant access to bombed nuclear sites and its enriched uranium stockpiles. Europeans are deeply concerned about the fate of Iran's 408 kilograms of enriched uranium. The resolution essentially aims to establish a mechanism requiring Director General Rafael Grossi to deliver a comprehensive report every three months on Iran's nuclear activities, site conditions, and especially uranium stockpiles. This resolution appears slightly milder than the one adopted before the 12-day war, but its core demand is quarterly reporting. If the next report is negative—meaning Iran denies inspections and the IAEA has no information on enrichment levels or site status—a harsher resolution could follow, possibly referring the matter to the UN Security Council. All of this depends on negotiations: if talks begin, the process halts; if not, referral to the Security Council becomes highly likely.

Khorasan: What is bin Salman looking for in America?

Khorasan analyzed the objectives of bin Salman's U.S. trip: After more than five years, his visit and meeting with Trump is a major issue for our region. Bin Salman pursues two main goals. His priority is a defense pact with the U.S. modeled on NATO. The request for F-35 fighter jets also fits within this defense framework. The second Saudi objective is economic and development cooperation with the United States. Bin Salman must activate an external process to set his country in motion. He seeks to import technology through American expertise and political connections. He also aims to expand his regional role. His involvement in Lebanon and Syria has been two of his busiest files over the past year. Now he has asked Iran to act as a mediator with the U.S.—a request Iran has rejected. Any increase in Saudi influence in the region will likely harm Iran, just as Riyadh put unprecedented pressure on Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon. As for Iran–U.S. relations, no mediator is needed. Dialogue will only be possible if Washington abandons the idea of disarming Iran.

Araghchi says Iran ‘fully prepared for war’



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks to The Economist

From page 1 ► When questioned on Iran's preparedness for potential new hostilities, Araghchi left no room for doubt, asserting that Iran is “even more prepared than [in] the previous war.” He elaborated on the nation's unwavering philosophy that true peace is secured through strength, stating, “The best way to prevent a war is to be prepared for it. And we are fully prepared.” This steadfast posture reflects Iran's legitimate right to self-defense in the face of persistent threats and destabilizing actions from adversaries.

On the international stage, the foreign minister highlighted the critical support provided by Russia during the recent conflict, a solidarity that has since matured into a deepening “strategic partnership.” This growing alliance stands in stark contrast to the duplicitous actions of Western powers, he said.

Regarding the nuclear dossier, Araghchi reaffirmed Iran's long-standing commitment to a peaceful nuclear program and its openness to a “fair and balanced” agreement. However, he

firmly rejected any foreign dictates, particularly from the United States, which has consistently violated its commitments. “We don't have a single good experience with negotiating with the United States,” Araghchi noted, pointing to a history of American bad faith.

Iranians sat the roots of the current impasse lie squarely with the United States. After Iran faithfully adhered to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Trump administration unlawfully withdrew from the accord and imposed a cruel sanctions regime, a policy of economic terrorism that the Biden administration chose to continue. While European signatories capitulated to American pressure, failing to uphold their obligations, Iran has demonstrated strategic patience. Araghchi made it clear that while the door to negotiation remains open, the era of accepting ultimatums is over. “We are ready for negotiation, but not for dictation,” he stated, encapsulating Iran's principled and dignified stance on the world stage.

Presidential letter to Saudi Crown Prince was about Hajj, Iranian envoy clarifies

From page 1 ► The Iranian diplomat noted that the messages highlighted the expansion of Iran–Saudi relations and praised Saudi services and arrangements for Iranian pilgrims. He also confirmed that during the visit, Mr. Rashidi-an signed the agreement for next year's Hajj in Jeddah with the Saudi Minister of Hajj.

Reuters reported on November 20 that Iran had sent a letter to the Saudi Crown Prince asking Saudi Arabia to encourage the United States to revive stalled nuclear talks, citing concerns over “a potential repeat of Israeli airstrikes and economic challenges”. Iranian officials clarified that the letter referenced by Reuters is the same Hajj-related correspondence described by the Iranian envoy.

Iranian officials have frequently criticized Reuters for publishing reports that contradict the Islamic



Iran's new head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization delivers President Pezeshkian's letter to Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud, Saudi Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Supreme Hajj Council

Republic's official positions. In several high-profile cases, Tehran has accused the agency of “spreading lies,” issuing “fake news,” or partic-

ipating in Western “soft war.”

A notable example is Reuters' reporting on the 2019 unrest in

Iran, Brazil stress closer cooperation on all fronts

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Brazilian counterpart Mauro Vieira have, in a phone conversation, exchanged views on bilateral relations as well as international developments.

During the talk, the two top diplomats highlighted the significance of expanding relations and cooperation in all areas of mutual interest as well as reinforcing mutual partnership at the level of international organizations.

Araghchi then recalled the importance of preventing certain countries from taking advantage of international institutions to exert pressure on developing nations.

He touched upon the unwarranted move by the three European countries where they pushed for the adoption of an anti-Iran resolution at a meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, dismissing the move as irresponsible, provocative and unjustifiable.

Iran and Brazil have maintained close relations over the past years and made every effort to forge closer ties on all fronts.

A few months ago, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed the need for enhancement of relations with Brazil, especially in trade, economic, agriculture and

health areas.

He made the comment in a meeting with Brazilian Vice President Geraldo Alckmin who had traveled to Tehran to attend Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony.

The Iranian president said that 120 years of relations between Iran and Brazil is a strong ground for further expansion of ties between the two countries.

The Brazilian vice president, for his part, expressed hope that Iran and Brazil will see more enhancement in bilateral relations during the term of President Pezeshkian. He also submitted an invitation letter of Brazilian President Lula da Silva to President Pezeshkian to attend next year's BRICS Summit in Brazil.

Iran and Brazil work together closely within the framework of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Back in July, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi attended the 17th BRICS Summit in Brazil.

In a speech at the event, Araghchi outlined Iran's position on strengthening multilateralism, economic-financial cooperation and AI. Araghchi underlined the need for structural reforms in the UN to align the body with today's



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and his Brazilian counterpart Mauro Vieira held a phone conversation on Wednesday

global realities. He blamed the inaction of the UN Security Council regarding violations and threats to peace on the selective and destructive approach of certain member states.

The foreign minister called for the enhancement of South-South cooperation, the empowerment of regional organizations, and the promotion of dialogue among nations as a counterbalance to hegemonic discourses.

While slamming economic sanctions and unilateral coercive measures as tools of pressure against

independent states, Araghchi demanded the creation of a legal mechanism within BRICS to monitor and counter such actions in international forums.

The top Iranian diplomat further spoke about the significance of emerging technologies and modern sciences, including AI, in the economic growth of the Global South.

He stressed we need to unify in confronting the excuses made by certain governments to deprive our nations of their fundamental rights to access science and technology.

Canada in no position to lecture others on human rights, says Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran has sharply rebuked Canada for presenting itself as a global defender of human rights, arguing that the country should instead face scrutiny for its own record of systemic racism and abuses against Indigenous peoples.

In a statement on Thursday, Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations criticized Ottawa after Canada welcomed the passage of an anti-Iran human rights resolution it had drafted for the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues).

“Spare us Canada's self-righteous rhetoric,” the mission said. “This is a country with a well-documented history of thousands of Indigenous children buried in unmarked graves, still grappling with deeply rooted structural racism—yet it now postures as a global human rights advocate when it comes to Iran.”

The mission added that if human rights were not routinely exploited for political leverage, Canada would be the one facing international accountability.

“If ‘human rights’ had not been weaponized by the usual suspects, Canada would be the one on trial—sitting in the dock under resolutions, not strutting on the world stage.”

On Wednesday, the UN's Third Committee adopted the draft resolution titled “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” with 79 votes in favor, 28 against, and 63 abstentions.

The text—reflecting a politically motivated and selective assessment—“condemns what it describes as an alarming rise and continued use of the death penalty” in Iran, lan-



The Canadian envoy speaks during a voting session on an anti-Iran rights resolution at the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues) of the UN General Assembly, on November 19, 2025.

guage that Tehran rejects as inaccurate and biased.

Before the vote, Iran's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Gholamhossein Darzi, rejected the resolution as “politically driven, selective, and entirely counterproductive.”

He said the accusations against Iran relied on “unverified claims and selectively interpreted information.”

Darzi stressed that the resolution ignores Iran's progress on human rights, as well as its efforts to promote socio-economic development and strengthen legal protections in line with constitutional and international commitments.

He also faulted the text for failing to condemn the blatant violations of international law carried out by the Israeli regime and the United States during their 12-day military at-

tacks on Iran in June.

According to Darzi, the drafters deliberately omitted any mention of the harmful effects of unilateral coercive measures on the human rights and well-being of the Iranian people.

“We firmly believe that if human rights were not being misused as a political tool by certain countries, the main sponsor of this draft—Canada—would itself be the target of resolutions in this body: for the atrocities against its Indigenous communities; for neglecting the living and economic conditions of its own population; and for providing military support to the Israeli regime as it commits genocide and war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories,” he said.

He concluded that resolutions of this kind, detached from realities on the ground, “are designed not to advance human rights, but to apply political pressure.”

Despite frequent human rights advocacy by Western governments, observers and several UN member states have noted instances of inconsistent approaches, particularly regarding developments in Palestine and Lebanon. While Western countries regularly issue resolutions and statements criticizing the human rights record of states they oppose, they have been less vocal about Israeli military actions that have resulted in significant civilian casualties in Gaza and Lebanon. Analysts also point to continued Western arms exports to Israel, the use of vetoes at the UN Security Council on resolutions calling for investigations, and limited responses to strikes on civilian infrastructure. These trends illustrate ongoing concerns about selective application of human rights standards in international forums.

One more sign IAEA is a Western tool

New resolution asks Iran allow UN inspectors into battered nuclear sites, doesn't mention US-Israeli strikes

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – The growing possibility that Iran may be forced to take drastic measures regarding its nuclear program has yet to frustrate the West's ambitions to unnerv the country. On Thursday, the IAEA's Board of Governors passed a resolution—drafted by the E3 (Germany, France, and the UK) and the U.S.—demanding that Iran step up cooperation with the UN nuclear agency.

The resolution made no mention of the June U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, nor did it offer assurances that granting UN inspectors access would not be a prelude to another attack. It was narrowly adopted by a vote of 19–3, with 12 abstentions, and urges Tehran to report “without delay” on its enriched uranium stockpile and on damaged facilities.

On June 13, the U.S. and Israel began a 12-day bombing campaign against Iran that targeted its nuclear sites in Natanz, Fordow and Esfahan, and damaged residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure across the country. More than 1,100 Iranians were killed during the war, which began only days before Tehran was set to participate in a sixth round of nuclear talks with Washington.

President Donald Trump routinely brags about the military campaign — which was illegal under the UN Charter — and says the strikes “obliterated” Iran's nuclear sites. It is unclear why he seeks information about infrastructure he claims was completely destroyed; analysts argue there is no way to determine the full extent of the damage without close inspections.

Iran suspended cooperation with the IAEA in June after the agency refused to condemn the U.S.-Israeli aggression. A new framework agreement was later signed in Cairo, but this was quickly undermined by the West, which decided to trigger a process designed to reimpose pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran. The JCPOA itself, signed in 2015 to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the termination of sanctions, was thrown into



IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi at the quarterly Board of Governors meeting at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, Austria, November 19, 2025.

disarray by Washington in 2018, when the Trump administration withdrew from the pact and reinstated sanctions against Iran.

Reactions

Iranians have strongly condemned the recent resolution. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry described it as an “illegal and unjustified” measure. “This reflects U.S. bullying and the duplicitous behavior of the three European states,” it added.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that although the Cairo understanding had “effectively lost its basis” after the E3 triggered the return of canceled UN Security Council resolutions, Tehran has now formally notified the IAEA's Director General that the arrangement “is no longer valid and is considered terminated.”

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei also appeared on national television to announce that Iran would implement “appropriate countermeasures.”

Iran's most powerful allies, China and Russia, also criticized the move. Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova announced at a press conference in Moscow that the West must put aside threats and pressure and instead return to diplomacy with Iran. Li Song, China's permanent representative to the IAEA, told the Board of Governors on Thursday that Americans and Europeans had “seriously undermined the good momentum of cooperation” be-

tween Tehran and the Agency.

What could come next

Iranian authorities have not yet specified the countermeasures they say the country will take. However, the recent resolution is likely to have two main consequences: increased mistrust of both the West and the IAEA, and a reduced likelihood of a diplomatic solution, at least in the near future.

Mistrust of the West has deep roots in Iran, dating back to the U.S.- and British-orchestrated 1953 coup that toppled the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. The June war, which occurred while Iran was engaged in a diplomatic process, combined with the West's subsequent actions (the trigger of snapback sanctions and Thursday's resolution), has perhaps made Iranians more skeptical than ever about whether genuine cooperation with Western states will bear fruit.

Lawmakers are now strongly urging the Pezeshkian administration to move beyond diplomatic engagement with the West and instead revisit the country's nuclear doctrine. Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, wrote on X on Friday that “the best response to the oppressive IAEA resolution is withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).”

As for the IAEA, views have

historically been divided. Some, such as the reformist Rouhani administration, argued that Tehran should maximize cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog to deny the West pretexts for pressure. The subsequent conservative Raisi administration was more wary of engaging with the agency, but nonetheless kept Iran the most intensively inspected country in the world. The current Pezeshkian administration, made up mainly of reformists with some conservatives, is now largely united in its dubiety toward the IAEA, especially its Director General, Rafael Grossi.

In April, the Tehran Times reported that Grossi was hoping to become the next UN Secretary General, and that the West had offered to support his bid if he cooperated with them in pressuring Iran. In October, Grossi publicly announced he would be a candidate for UN Secretary General in 2026.

It was never a secret that Grossi had been providing the West with anti-Iran IAEA reports used to harass Tehran. The June strikes occurred just one day after he published a report that recycled old accusations of opacity and suspicious activity.

Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said last week that Israel obtained the intelligence used to strike some of Iran's nuclear facilities — locations he said were known only to Iranian authorities and the IAEA — from the agency itself. One target was a nuclear research center that carried out essential work producing medical isotopes. “The very laboratory that was bombed had been co?equipped with IAEA support, turning trust into a vulnerability,” Eslami said. “We are the only nation whose data is leaked, exploited, and turned into a justification for aggression.”

This latest resolution has further drawn anger toward the IAEA and Grossi. One Iranian lawmaker said the agency is “nothing but a tool at the hands of the West.” His post on X received over 200,000 likes from the relatively small community of Iranian users on X.



File photo shows armed Israeli soldiers

Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib said recently that a “treasure trove” of intelligence containing millions of diverse and invaluable pages of data pertaining to the Israeli regime had been transferred to Iran.

“These documents contain [information on] the ... regime's previous and current projects, projects to upgrade and reprocess old nuclear weapons, joint ventures with the US and certain European countries, as well as full information on the administrative structure of, and those associated with atomic arms,” the Iranian minister said.

He noted that Israeli nuclear and military institutions as well as ordinary citizens cooperated with the Iranian Intelligence Ministry, sharing with Iran a large quantity of documents.

“The motive behind this cooperation was two-fold; first material incentives and getting money, and second, hatred of the corrupt and criminal Israeli prime minister,” he explained.



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NOVEMBER 22, 2025

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Mozafar hopes women's futsal make Iranians proud

TEHRAN – Shahrzad Mozafar, who is set to lead Iran women's futsal national team at the inaugural FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup Philippines 2025, hopes her side make the Iranian people proud.

The event is taking place from November 21 to December 5.

Few names carry more weight in women's futsal than Mozafar's. A national icon in every sense, she famously guided Iran to their second Continental crown at the AFC Women's Futsal Championship 2018, cementing her status as one of Asia's most respected coaches.

At a time when women's football was yet to take root in Iran, Mozafar built a successful volleyball career, representing the national team for close to a decade before futsal offered the chance to return to her first sporting love, the-afc.com reported.

“Despite spending almost 10 years with the national team, I quit the moment I realized futsal had opened its doors,” the 54-year-old recalled. “But I was already 29 years old, so after playing for three years, I turned my attention to coaching.”

Under her leadership, Iran defended their Continental title in 2018, beating fellow titans Japan in the final – a feat Mozafar describes as one of the proudest moments of her career.

“We spent a year preparing for Thailand 2018, and winning the competition was one of the most important moments of my life,” she said. “I felt like a heavy load was off my shoulders and, during the award ceremony, it felt like I was flying.”

Earlier this year, Mozafar brought her wealth of experience to the AFC's Technical Observers team at the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025, an experience she believes has given her a new lens through which to view the game.

“I am so happy that the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup has made a comeback, because a sport only stays alive with competition. Sitting as a Technical Observer allowed me to study every detail and gain specific insights,” she said.

Looking ahead to the FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, Mozafar is focused on carrying Iran's momentum onto the world stage, blending experience with a renewed tactical perspective shaped by her years of mentorship.

“Leading Iran on the Continental stage was one of the proudest moments of my career, and now, eight years later, having the opportunity to guide the team to the first-ever FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup feels even more special,” said the tactician.

“It's not only a personal honor but also a historic moment for women's futsal in Iran and Asia, and I hope we can represent our country with pride. While a huge challenge, it's also an incredible opportunity to inspire the next generation, as the women's futsal community in IR Iran has been waiting for this moment for years.

“I want my players to know how proud I am of them and of their relentless hard work and self-belief. I want them to enjoy every moment and play with courage and unity,” she continued.

Aware of the nation's expectations, Mozafar's focus also extends beyond the pitch – to those who have carried the team in spirit.

“I also want to thank the fans, whose encouragement has played a pivotal role in keeping us motivated,” she said.

“We are aware of the responsibility we carry, as this (FIFA Futsal Women's) World Cup is not just for us but for every Iranian girl and woman who dreams of playing futsal. Together, we will do our best to represent them with courage, strength, and solidarity and make every Iranian proud.”

Fixtures at CAFA U18 Women's Championship 2025 unveiled

TEHRAN – Iran will start the 2025 CAFA U18 Women's Championship on November 22 with a match against Kyrgyzstan.

The Persian girls will also face Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on November 25, 27, and 29.

The tournament will be held from November 22 to 29 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, at the new UFA National Football Center.

It will follow a single round-robin format.

My long-term goal is 2028 Paralympics: Nasrin Shahi

TEHRAN – Iranian para shooter Nasrin Shahi says her main focus is on winning a medal at the 2028 Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.

Shahi claimed multiple medals at the 2025 Para Shooting World Cup held last week in Al Ain, the UAE. She expressed hope that her recent success would continue at the 2026 Asian Para Games in Nagoya and the 2028 Paralympics.

Shahi finished the Al Ain event with two gold medals and one silver, making her the most successful Iranian athlete of the competition.

“The Al Ain World Cup was a qualifier for the Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games. A total of 11 Iranian shooters competed, and about half of them were participating internationally for the first time. The athletes were classified and qualified for the Asian Para Games,” Shahi told Tehran Times.

“I personally won the gold medal in the P2 – Women's 10m Air Pistol SH1 event and another gold in the team 50m pistol event. Our women's pistol team also won a silver medal.”

Despite facing challenges before the tournament, Shahi said she was proud of her performance.

“I was in a difficult condition before the competition but decided to participate in the World Cup. I'm very happy that I managed to perform well and achieve the results I hoped for.”

Looking ahead to the 2026 Asian Para Games, Shahi noted: “The Games will be held from September 28 to October 12 next year, and we have enough time to prepare. In future events, new athletes can also qualify, but the host country and final schedule still need confirmation. It was initially announced that the next event would be in the U.S., but our participation in that has not been finalized. Before Nagoya, we'll take part in the 2026 World Shooting Para Sport Championships in Changwon, South Korea, in early September. That event will help us prepare even better for Nagoya.”

On her ultimate goal, Shahi concluded: “The Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics are three years away. I have short-term goals along the way, but our long-term target is to win medals in Los Angeles. By then, we'll have improved in performance, mental preparation, and equipment — and we aim to bring more podium finishes for Iran.”

Saeid Ezatollahi sidelined for two months

TEHRAN – Iran national football team midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi faced a challenging setback in a recent match against Uzbekistan.

He was forced to leave the field due to a leg muscle strain just eight minutes into the match.

The injury, diagnosed as a significant strain in the leg muscles, sidelined him for approximately two months.

This early exit disrupted Iran's tactical rhythm and deprived the team of one of its dynamic midfield engines.

Iran lost to Uzbekistan 4-3 on penalty shootout after two teams shared the spoils in a goalless draw.

Tehran hosting major steel, metallurgy fair with over 700 exhibitors

TEHRAN – Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds is hosting the 22nd edition of Iran's international exhibition of metallurgy, dubbed IRAN METAFO, bringing together more than 700 domestic and foreign companies in what officials describe as the country's most significant annual gathering for the steel and metals sector.

According to state media, the event was inaugurated by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak and it will run until November 23.

The exhibition features 610 Iranian companies and 113 foreign participants from 13 countries, showcasing equipment, technologies and products across the full metallurgy value chain, including iron and steel production, casting and molding systems, non-ferrous metals, mining machinery, industrial furnaces, refractory ma-



terials and advanced ceramics.

Organizers say the diversity of participants and the presence of specialists from multiple fields have turned the expo into a key platform for exchanging technical expertise, presenting new industrial innovations and expanding cooperation at both national and regional levels.

IDRO launches pilot overhaul program for aging industrial units in 6 provinces



TEHRAN – Iranian Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) has begun a pilot program to renovate and modernize aging industrial units across six provinces, with officials saying nearly 200 factories have already registered to participate.

Farshad Moqimi, deputy industry minister and IDRO head said the initiative is being implemented through a new online platform designed to streamline applications and track progress.

He said all industrial units that received their operating licenses at least ten years ago are eligible to apply for upgrades. Out of roughly 78,000 licensed units nationwide, about 21,000 meet the criteria.

Moqimi said the ministry's modernization model focuses on smart policy design, sustainable financing, deployment of new technologies, improved energy efficiency and enhanced competitiveness. Incentives include

priority access to foreign currency, customs and tax exemptions, export-support tools and backing for research and development.

According to ministry data, more than 300 factories have undergone diagnostic assessments so far, and renovation work has already started at more than 35 units.

IDRO has now launched its dedicated overhaul portal, NOSAZI.IDRO.ir, which is being tested in East Azerbaijan, Ilam, Khorasan Razavi, Qazvin, Kermanshah and Markazi provinces. In the pilot phase, 228 industrial units expressed interest in the program, and more than 189 have formally registered.

Moqimi said IDRO is prepared to sign a cooperation agreement with the Tehran Chamber of Commerce to support the rollout of the renovation plan. The pact would cover the design of support packages and incentives, implementation of modernization projects, financing mechanisms and joint monitoring and evaluation.

In a separate part of his remarks, he highlighted the acceleration in scrapping older vehicles. Iran is currently dismantling an average of 850 obsolete cars per day, a record pace that he said contributed to saving 1.1 billion liters of fuel last year.

He added that each scrapped vehicle allows the recovery of an estimated 400 kilograms of steel, 30 kilograms of aluminum and five kilograms of copper — materials he said play a key role in building a more efficient circular-economy model in the industrial sector.

Iran to establish independent free-zone bank under new economic reform plan

TEHRAN – Iran plans to create an independent banking system dedicated to its free trade zones as part of a broader effort to overhaul the country's economic governance, the economy minister said, adding that free zones will serve as the launchpad for structural reform.

Speaking at a meeting with business leaders in the Aras Free Zone, Economy Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh said the government aims to expand economic freedoms, lift restrictions and accelerate decentralization in the country's most commercially active regions.

He said the administration has begun implementing a new transformation plan for free zones, built around decentralization and specialization of activities in each zone. The pilot phase will begin in East Azarbaijan Province, centered on the Aras Free Zone.

Madanizadeh said the government is moving to establish an independent bank dedicated to the financial needs of free zones. Aras will also be assigned a lead commercial bank to coordinate services, and steps are being taken to establish an independent chamber of commerce for the zone.

He said the government has adopted a supportive stance toward investors and producers operating in free zones, and confirmed that all ministerial directives limiting trade activity in these areas will be revoked. A new Free Zone Development Secretariat has been launched inside the Ministry of Economy, with Aras designated as its pilot site.



The minister also announced new tax policies aimed at relieving pressure on businesses, including maximum instalment options for tax payments. A unified "free-zone citizen card" will be issued for all free zone residents and operators, he added.

Other measures under review include the removal of price-setting rules in free zones. Madanizadeh said a number of restrictive regulations in the past had originated from within the ministry itself, and the government was now working to eliminate them. He urged private-sector actors to pursue their demands directly, and said a new communication channel would be established to allow businesspeople to engage with the minister's office.

He said the government is committed to mobilizing all available tools to expand investment across the free zones, calling on companies to "step forward" as reforms advance.

Trade challenges, opportunities discussed at Iran–Russia chamber meeting

TEHRAN – Members of the Iran–Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce warned that customs barriers, forex-rate volatility, transport constraints and international sanctions continue to weigh on Iranian exporters seeking to expand their presence in the Russian market.

The concerns were raised during the chamber's general assembly, held at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

The meeting did not reach the quorum required for formal voting but proceeded as a platform for consultation, allowing members to debate sector-wide challenges and outline proposals to improve bilateral trade.

The chamber rescheduled its next general assembly for December 15, aiming for broader participation and the adoption of strategic decisions to strengthen commercial ties between the two countries.

Participants said producers and traders face systemic barriers when dealing with Russian partners. They cited customs procedures, inconsistent documentation requirements, fluctuating currency rates and logistical problems—particularly in cross-border freight—as persistent factors raising costs and reducing predictability for exporters.

Members also noted that sanctions continue to restrict financial channels and slow trade flows, despite growing political efforts by both governments to deepen economic cooperation.

Roshan-Ali Yekta, deputy head of the Iran–Russia chamber, addressed concerns raised by a manufacturing representative about intermediaries and the use of one-time business licenses. He said disposable trading cards were a symptom of structural problems in the commercial system.

"When buyers present themselves as procuring goods for domestic use but ultimately intend to export, it differs little from smuggling," he said. He added that the chamber would "seriously pursue" the issue to improve transparency and protect legitimate exporters.

Seyed Reza Rafiei, a board member of the chamber, said China's overseas grain-farming program in eastern Russia could create opportunities for Iranian businesses. He urged traders to push for investment in rail transport along the eastern Caspian route, saying a logistics hub at Incheh-Borun could be developed with less than \$20 million.

Rafiei described the cancellation of a Russian railway investment plan in Iran—blocked by a former Iranian railway chief—as a setback that should be urgently revisited. "Traders must demand the development of this infrastructure and plan for return cargo on the route," he said.

Another board member, Kam-biz Mir-Karimi, said the business environment would improve only through structural reforms. He argued that the commercial ID system was a standard and reliable tool worldwide, and that stabilizing Iran's currency regime through a single exchange rate was essential to reducing uncertainty for exporters and importers.

An industrial cooperation memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed between Iran's Alborz Province and Russia to expand exports, promote technology transfer, and apply modern innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI) in industrial production, officials announced earlier this month.

Reza Rezaei, head of the Al-



borz House of Industry, Mine and Trade, announced the agreement during a ceremony honoring the province's top producers and exporters, held at the Iran Chamber of Commerce.

He said the partnership aims to enhance coordination among industrial and economic institutions and support export-oriented production amid current economic challenges.

Rezaei noted that despite its small size, Alborz hosts many of Iran's major industrial units and has significant economic potential.

"We are working to present a successful model of smart industrial development using new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence," he said.

The MOU, signed under the title NCC, seeks to facilitate exports, transfer technical know-how, and establish a platform for technological cooperation between the two countries.

Rezaei emphasized the need to shift Iran's education system from theory-based to skill-driven approaches to prepare a new generation of AI-capable specialists for the future of industry.

He said the Alborz House of Industry, operating without state funding, has expanded to 21 industrial associations and plans to reach more than 32. The organization currently works with 20 specialized consultants across various sectors to support manufacturers.

Parham Rezaei, head of the Alborz Chamber of Commerce, said the province's exports averaged about \$1.0 billion annually over the past two years. He highlighted ongoing cooperation between the chamber and the House of Industry to avoid overlap in programs and jointly promote industrial development.

He added that a joint economic development roadmap has been prepared through more than 15 expert sessions, while efforts are underway to attract investment in renewable energy projects that could boost the province's electricity generation capacity to 300 megawatts by year-end.

On October 20, the head of the Russia–Iran Business Council said that over 80 percent of trade between Iran and Russia is now conducted in their national currencies, the rial and ruble, marking a major step toward financial independence and reduced reliance on third-party currencies.

Speaking at the 22nd meeting of the International Council for Cooperation among Caspian Chamber of Commerce members, Leonid Lozhechko said Iran and Russia are taking new steps to deepen bilateral economic ties by easing trade regulations, developing infrastructure, and expanding collaboration in technology, agriculture, and the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Lozhechko noted that the council is pursuing a strategic plan to enhance cooperation in advanced technologies, telecommunications, medicine, and particularly cybersecurity. He said about 60 percent of bilater-

al trade is related to agricultural products, with Russia exporting grains, wood, oilseeds, chemicals, aluminum, coal, and steel to Iran, while Iran supplies spare parts, energy products, ceramics, cement, and agricultural goods to Russia.

He stressed that one of the council's priorities is simplifying regulations under the Eurasian Economic Union framework to unlock the full potential of trade between the two countries.

Lozhechko added that representatives from Russia's ministries of industry, economy, and agriculture, as well as banks from both nations, participated in the event.

"We are determined to remove bureaucratic barriers so that trade between Iran and Russia can reach its true potential," he said.

Dmitry Kurochkin, vice president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation, highlighted the Caspian Sea's strategic importance in the emerging global economic order. He said the Caspian region's rich energy resources, transit routes, and geo-economic position could transform it into a major global development hub.

He emphasized the INSTC's potential to turn the Caspian region into a multimodal transit corridor linking global transport routes and boosting exchanges among Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan.

Over 80% of trade between Iran and Russia is conducted in their national currencies: head of Russia–Iran Business Council

Kurochkin also pointed to growing Russian business interest in Iran's market, citing Tehran's upcoming free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union and its membership in BRICS as opportunities to expand private sector cooperation.

He announced plans for joint investment projects through 2030 under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) development framework, prioritizing agriculture, advanced technologies, textiles, and tourism.

Kurochkin said economic interactions among Caspian states have grown by 80 percent in the past two years and called for greater coordination in customs, logistics, and infrastructure to make the Caspian a central driver of sustainable growth and technological cooperation across Eurasia.

In early October, an official with Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran said that the share of industrial goods of Iran's exports to Russia has increased significantly over the past three years, and Iran's exports to this destination have almost doubled.

Akbar Godari, the head of TPO's Central Asia, Caucasus, and Rus-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Being cognizant of the fundamental significance of safeguarding the principles and objectives of the UN Charter in order to protect international peace and security, Iran and Russia spare no effort to safeguard multilateralism and respect for international law, including through the enhancement of cooperation within the framework of multilateral mechanisms and organizations such as the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," the statement added.

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

From truce to tragedy: +310 dead in Gaza after Oct 10 ceasefire

From page 1 ► In southern Gaza, Israeli forces have intensified attacks on Khan Younis from both land and sea. On Friday, Palestinian media reported heavy gunfire from Israeli vehicles east of the city, while warships targeted the Khan Younis beach. Al Jazeera documented artillery shelling, air strikes, and tank fire inside the yellow line east of Khan Younis. The Health Ministry said Israeli troops killed a displaced Palestinian outside the yellow line south of the city and demolished residential buildings nearby.

The Israeli army claimed the strikes targeted Hamas fighters after they fired on Israeli soldiers in Khan Younis, calling the incident a violation of the ceasefire. Hamas condemned the attacks as “a dangerous escalation,” accusing Israel of fabricating justifications for ongoing violations and urging the United States to apply “immediate, serious



Mourners react as they attend the funeral of Palestinians who were killed in overnight Israeli strikes, at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, November 20, 2025. Photo: REUTERS

pressure” to halt the aggression.

The latest strikes come just days after the UN Security Council endorsed US President Donald Trump’s plan for moving beyond the fragile truce toward what was

described as a “sustainable peace” and reconstruction of Gaza. Yet on the ground, Palestinians say the plan has functioned as little more than a diplomatic cover for Israel to advance its war. Instead of eas-

ing tensions, Israeli forces have expanded their operations, undermining the very ceasefire the resolution was meant to protect.

Despite repeated violations of the truce, the international community has failed to hold Israel accountable. The US-drafted resolution passed by the Security Council lacks enforcement mechanisms, meaning Israel faces no sanctions for breaches. The resolution does not compel Israel to halt its strikes or adhere to the ceasefire. As a result, Palestinians continue to suffer without meaningful repercussions for ongoing attacks.

The absence of accountability underscores a wider problem: while resolutions call for calm, they do not prevent Israel from escalating violence. For Gaza’s civilians, the promise of a ceasefire has proven hollow, replaced instead by renewed displacement, destruction, and grief.

Netanyahu slams Palestinian sovereignty shut despite Saudi normalization lure

From page 1 ► This coordinated rejection reflects a government policy accelerating settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, displacing Palestinian families and rendering any future state geographically impossible—moves condemned by rights groups as deliberate fragmentation of Palestinian land.

At the diplomatic level, Riyadh has tried to place Palestinian statehood at the center of any Abraham Accords expansion.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told U.S. leaders on November 18 that the kingdom seeks to join the Abraham Accords only if there is a “clear path toward a Palestinian state.”

But the Trump administration’s push for security guarantees, arms sales, and massive

investment packages presents incentives that risk making Palestinian rights negotiable in practice.

Israel’s refusal exposes the hollowness of normalization pursuits: they risk legitimizing occupation and ongoing dispossession while offering Riyadh security gains at the expense of justice.

By pushing Saudi Arabia toward recognizing Israel without addressing core grievances, Washington may ignite deeper turmoil across the region and widen rifts in the Arab and Muslim world.

For many, normalization efforts amount to turning a blind eye to Israel’s relentless regional aggression and the mounting human tragedy

since October 2023: more than 69,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza, thousands more in the West Bank, 3,800 in Lebanon, over 1,060 in Iran, and many others in Yemen and Syria.

Normalization, in practice, risks becoming a diplomatic trophy for those entrenching occupation rather than a mechanism to end it. Analysts warn this approach renders Palestinian self-determination expendable, perpetuating violence as settlements expand unchecked and Gaza remains under de facto control.

As international support for Palestine grows, Israel’s isolation deepens — underscoring that genuine stability will come only through reversing occupation and securing binding guarantees of Palestinian sovereignty and rights.

Jabal Amel is cradle of resilience in Lebanon

From page 1 ► Amid this ferment, Sayyed Abdul Hussein Sharafeddine (ra), the revolutionary cleric and advocate of Arab unity and independence, emerged as a guiding intellect.

On April 24, 1920, Sayed Sharafeddine convened the Wadi al-Hajir Conference, opening with a resolute rejection of foreign protection or guardianship, declaring instead the necessity of full and unyielding independence.

This assembly became a “constitution” of liberty, laying the ideological foundation for Resistance that encompassed armed struggle, intellectual engagement, cultural defense, and political mobilization.

Sayyed Sharafeddine understood that effective opposition required a core of military Resistance

— the backbone that would support broader societal efforts.

He oversaw armed formations, led by figures such as Hamza and Khanjar, who executed daring operations against the French.

The Resistance then faced manipulation from colonial forces, who attempted to cast the struggle as a sectarian conflict and discredit Sharafeddine’s legitimacy. Yet he outmaneuvered these schemes, educating public consciousness, preventing internal divisions, and uniting communities against foreign designs.

Sayyed Sharafeddine proclaimed: “Either dignity that cannot be broken, or humiliation that shows no mercy. Either a free life, or degradation wasted in the mire of human humanity. Either inde-

pendence without guardianship, or enslavement, where we sit as orphans at the table of the vile.”

Sharafeddine’s vision extended beyond Jabal Amel. He warned of partition and fragmentation, viewing them as tools that would render Lebanon and Syria vulnerable to imperial designs, particularly those of France and Britain.

He tirelessly promoted full independence for Syria within its natural borders and cultivated a revolutionary awareness that planted the seeds of sovereignty in the collective consciousness of “Greater Syria.”

History would repeat itself during the Israeli occupation: from 1978 through the liberation of 2000, to the steadfastness of 2006 and 2024, Lebanon’s sover-

eignty depended less on the state itself and more on the Resistance — society rising to defend identity, honor, and the land when external aggression intersected with internal weakness.

Today, recalling this legacy reaffirms the meaning of independence.

Sovereignty in Lebanon has never been a slogan; it is a stance, a principle, and a sacrifice. The struggle of Sayyed Sharafeddine and the generations of Resistance that followed remind us that freedom is earned and guarded by those willing to act, not merely claim.

As Shakespeare wrote, “This blessed plot, this earth, this realm” — the homeland — is not kept by those who merely claim it, but by those who dare to liberate it.

Are U.S. sanctions shackling ICC Judge Guillou and international justice?

By staff writer

TEHRAN — When the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants in November last year for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on charges of war crimes in Gaza, the move was hailed by many as a historic step toward accountability.

The charges included using starvation as a weapon of war, deliberately targeting civilians, and obstructing humanitarian aid — violations that strike at the heart of international humanitarian law.

By naming Netanyahu and Gallant directly, the ICC signaled that responsibility for wartime policies rests not only with military operations but with the political leadership that authorizes them. It was a rare and bold assertion of judicial independence, challenging the perception that powerful states and their allies remain beyond the reach of justice.

The United States responded not by engaging with the evidence but by sanctioning nine ICC judges, including Nicolas Guillou. His testimony reveals the suffocating reach of American power. He described cancelled hotel bookings, frozen accounts, and exclusion from global banking systems, saying, “These sanctions affect every aspect of my daily life... Being under sanctions is like being sent back to the 1990s.” Overnight, Guillou lost access to Visa, Mastercard, and other U.S.-controlled systems, illustrating how

Washington’s dominance in finance and technology can be weaponized to intimidate judges and discourage further action against Israeli officials. The sanctions were not symbolic; they were designed to isolate and punish, creating anxiety and powerlessness among those targeted.

Israel, for its part, dismissed the ICC’s legitimacy, portraying the court as biased and hostile. This rejection mirrors past efforts to deflect scrutiny of military operations in Palestinian territories. With U.S. backing, Israel positions itself outside the reach of international justice, relying on political protection to shield its leaders from prosecution. The reaction from Palestinian authorities was markedly different, as they welcomed the ICC warrants as overdue recognition of the suffering in Gaza. Human rights organizations also praised the move, calling it historic and necessary to strengthen accountability for war crimes. European governments, however, remain divided. Some defended the ICC’s independence, while others hesitated under U.S. pressure, exposing the fragility of international consensus when powerful states are involved.

The confrontation highlights the imbalance between law and power. The ICC seeks to uphold universal principles, but its authority is undermined when judges themselves are targeted with sanctions. Guillou’s call for European “blocking regulations” reflects a broader demand for sovereignty in digital and financial



French judge Nicolas Guillou is sworn in at the headquarters of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, on March 8, 2024.

systems, without which international justice remains vulnerable to coercion. The episode underscores how dependent Europe remains on U.S.-controlled infrastructure, from payment systems to online platforms, and how this dependence can be exploited to silence judicial independence.

The ICC’s warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant mark a turning point in efforts to hold leaders accountable for war crimes. Yet the U.S. and Israel’s response demonstrated how power can be wielded to suppress justice. Unless Europe and the wider international community defend the independence of the court, victims of Gaza’s devastation risk being abandoned, and the principle that no one is above the law will erode further.

Analysis: Similarities between Bosnia and Gaza



TEHRAN — In a commentary published on November 18 on Middle East Eye (MEE), a senior journalist draws comparison between the genocide in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Gaza Strip.

In his article, Refik Hodzic, a writer, journalist and transitional justice expert from Prijedor, says “the systematic dehumanization of Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s, echoed today by the modern spectacle of foreigners joining forces with the Israeli army to kill Palestinian civilians in Gaza without consequence.”

Following is the text of the article:

Reports out of Milan, where prosecutors are investigating allegations that rich tourists paid to kill civilians for sport in Sarajevo’s infamous “Sniper Alley” during the Bosnian War in the 1990s, are shocking only to foreigners.

The allegations now emerging are as grotesque as they are painfully familiar to Bosnians: access arranged through intermediaries, payments set by target, children costing more to kill.

This story was reported and documented by local and regional media as far back as 1995, and more recently in Bosnian writer Haris Imamovic’s book Vedran and the Firemen and Miran Zupanic’s 2022 documentary Sarajevo Safari.

What is deeply disturbing to a Bosnian like myself is not just the horror of these reports, but the conditions that made such violence possible.

Behind the ghastly “tourism” allegations sits a deeper pathology: the systematic dehumanization of Bosnian Muslims in the 1990s, echoed today by the modern spectacle of foreigners joining forces with the Israeli army to kill Palestinian civilians in Gaza without consequence.

Dehumanization is the process by which a population is stripped of personhood and rendered as a mass, a threat, an abstraction — rather than a collection of lives with agency and dignity.

Scholars of mass violence have long noted that before physical destruction comes symbolic destruction: the erosion of empathy, the removal of moral restraint. Once a population is expelled from the moral community of “those who matter”, killing becomes possible — even ordinary, or recreational.

Moral void

During the early 1990s, Bosnian Muslims were first linguistically and politically exiled from humanity. They were called (primarily by Serbs, but also by right-wing Islamophobes in the West) “Turks”, “extremists” and “Islamic fundamentalists” — the bearers of an alien project that had to be extinguished.

In this moral void, the idea of foreign “sniper tourists” became thinkable. Once victims were no longer human in the eyes of their killers, their suffering could become a spectacle.

Today, we see a similar process in the discourse surrounding Palestinians. Decades of dehumanizing language, cemented after the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023 — which saw Palestinians labelled as “terrorists”, “human animals” and “barbarians” — have turned civilians into targets, and targets into abstractions.

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When entire communities are portrayed as subhuman, their deaths become not a moral crisis, but a strategy; their suffering not tragedy, but necessity. The slaughter in Gaza — including the killing of tens of thousands of children, and the dehumanisation of its people — are not historical accidents; they are outcomes of a long process of ideological conditioning.

The Milan investigation into “sniper tourism” is not just about Bosnia’s past. It is a warning about our present.

There is ample evidence of dual nationals enlisting as Israeli snipers and killing Palestinian civilians. An investigation by the Guardian and several other media outlets documented American and European members of a “ghost” sniper unit who boasted of killing more than 100 Palestinians.

According to a report in the New Arab, up to 20,000 Americans are believed to have travelled to Israel to serve as “lone soldiers”. Writing in the Guardian, one commentator observed: “We’re faced with a reality in which tens of thousands of Americans are actively involved in war crimes.”

While the circumstances of Bosnia and Gaza differ profoundly, both hinge on the same prerequisite: the dehumanization of victims. In Sarajevo, the targets were Bosnian Muslim civilians crossing the street. In Gaza, they were Palestinian children, journalists, doctors. In both cases, their humanity was pre-emptively erased.

Dehumanization converts murder into activity, atrocity into participation. It enables people to cross the unthinkable threshold from observer to perpetrator.

Years of propaganda

Research on dual nationals enlisting in the Israeli army identifies three dominant motivations: ideology, mobility and belonging. Some enlist out of conviction, to defend what they perceive as their ancestral homeland. Others do so as part of migration trajectories or in search of identity.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Echoes of the past: Unraveling the mystery of a Neolithic bone object



TEHRAN – A small, carefully crafted bone object from the Neolithic period, discovered at Yanik Tepe in East Azarbaijan province, northwest Iran, has intrigued both scholars and the public for decades.

Its striking resemblance to modern eye-glasses once led to speculative claims that it might have been an ancient visual aid. However, recent interdisciplinary research has revealed a more plausible story behind this enigmatic artifact.

The site of Yanik Tepe, located near the city of Khoda Afarin, is a key settlement for understanding the prehistory of northwestern Iran. Excavated in the early 1960s by British archaeologist Charles Burney, the site revealed a long sequence of occupation, with layers spanning the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Bronze Age. The excavations uncovered evidence of mud-brick architecture, pottery, and a wealth of small finds that paint a picture of early village life and the transition to more complex societies in the region. It was from these Neolithic deposits that the distinctive bone object was recovered.

Unearthed in 1962, the object was originally described by Burney as a pendant or amulet. Made from the long bone of a medium or large mammal, it measures just over 10 cm in length and features two hollow circles connected by a narrowed central bar. Two small horizontal holes suggest it may have

been threaded or fastened, perhaps as part of clothing or adornment.

Through detailed microscopic analysis and comparison with similar finds from sites like Catalhoyuk in Turkey and several Neolithic cultures in the Balkans, researchers have ruled out the possibility that it functioned as eyewear. Its asymmetrical form, small aperture size, and lack of lens settings make such a use highly improbable. Instead, the object was likely a decorative item—perhaps a belt buckle, garment fastener, or symbolic ornament. Traces of wear and intentional smoothing indicate it saw practical use, possibly as part of personal attire or ritual dress.

This artifact is a testament to the skill and symbolic expression of Neolithic communities in northwestern Iran. Its significance is formally recognized by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, with the National Council for Recording Artifacts having registered it under number 1257 in Iran's National Heritage List.

The object is now on display at the National Museum of Iran. It also serves as a cautionary tale against interpreting ancient objects through a modern lens without scientific support. Far from being “the world's oldest glasses,” the Yanik Tepe bone object is a fascinating example of early craftsmanship and cultural identity.

Paveh holds pomegranate harvest thanksgiving celebration

TEHRAN--The third pomegranate harvest thanksgiving celebration was held in Satiari village, Paveh county, Kermanshah province, on Thursday with the attendance of several thousands of tourists.

According to Miras Aria (CHTN), Dariush Farmani, head of Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, stated that one of the programs that Kermanshah Cultural Heritage Department has planned for tourism development is event-based tourism.

He added: “We pursue several goals by organizing the event-based tourism, one of which is discussing our intangible heritage, which goes back to our beliefs, traditions, and beliefs. We have ceremonies of specific beliefs in each region.”

“Today, the pomegranate harvest thanksgiving festival was held as a ceremony that has been registered in the country's National Heritage List as the country's intangible heritage, and one of our duties is to introduce this intangible heritage to the other parts of the country, especially to the younger generation.”

Farmani added: “With these events that we organize, and our goal is to develop tourism, several things happen that, in addition to introducing an intangible heritage, this event greatly contributes to the development of sustainable tourism in the region.”

He stated: “On the occasion of this pomegranate festival event, all the accommodation centers in Paveh city and even neighboring cities have been completely booked in the past two or three days, and the occupancy rate of our beds in the region has reached 100 percent. Therefore, holding such events

both helps to preserve our national identity and recognize our identity, and can have a significant impact on development and job creation in the region.”

Farmani continued that one of the blessings of the registration of Uraman on World Heritage List that took place in 2021 is the development of tourism and the creation of development and employment that has provided for the region.

He stated that until last year, the total number of residential beds in Kermanshah province was approximately 4,400, and in the past year, 3,000 beds have been added to the province's residential beds, 80 percent of which occurred in the UNESCO-designated Uramanat region.

He emphasized: “Holding tourism events has motivated and created infrastructure and attracted investors to develop tourism infrastructure in the region, so we expect the people and local officials to feel responsible in introducing Uraman and preserving its architectural values, traditions and beliefs, linguistics, and anthropology, and following this global registration, we must hold global events.”

Farmani said that Kermanshah Cultural Heritage Department intends to introduce the tourism potentials of the global landscape of Uraman to the world, in addition to holding special events.

Appreciating all those who worked hard to hold the pomegranate harvest festival, he stated that the worthy hospitality of the dear people of Iran, the guests of the event who came here from all over the country, deserves appreciation and gratitude.

Iran ranks among top 10 countries for UNESCO-listed heritage: minister

From Page 1 ▶ He did not, however, refer to the names of any other country or countries in relation to this ranking.

Salehi-Amiri said Iran's ranking could have been higher without a roughly 20-year pause in the nomination process after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. “If that interruption had not occurred, Iran would now be among the leading countries in the world [in that regard],” he said.

He said several Iranian dossiers, including Alamut Castle, the historic village of Masuleh, a collection of centuries-old mosques, and other sites, are awaiting review for [possible] inscription. Iran, he said, has more than one million identified heritage elements and 43,000 nationally registered sites, creating capacity for “hundreds more” potential global nominations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister highlighted Zanjan province's heritage potential, saying it holds more than the UNESCO-list-



ed Soltaniyeh Dome. He described the Zanjan bazaar as one of the country's most active historic markets and said it could be considered under a future nomination for Iranian historic bazaars.

The minister added such markets form part of traditional urban life and attract domestic and foreign visitors. “These spaces are connected to daily urban living and create significant appeal for tourists,” he said.

Evaz in Fars province, a new destination for cultural tourism

TEHRAN--In a climate with little water but rich in intellectual and social assets, the city of Evaz in southern province of Fars has become the focal point of Iran's cultural vision by earning the title of ‘Iran's Book Capital’. This choice, which was formalized by hosting the opening ceremony of the 33rd Iran Book Week, marks the beginning of a new chapter in the city's flourishing cultural potential and literary tourism.

According to Miras Aria (CHTN), designation of Evaz was not accidental. The city has created a special status for itself over the years, relying on a unique model of popular participation and cultural management that comes from the heart of the community. Fars Governor-General Hossein-Ali Amiri has described Evaz as a symbol of wisdom, culture, and interest in science. The city has long been known for its seminaries, active libraries, and the presence of prominent scholars and thinkers, and its written culture is deeply rooted.

As saying of Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Evaz is a national model of social participation in culture.

Evaz' long tradition of philanthropy is not limited to building schools and hospitals. equipping libraries, supporting cultural projects, and social investment in the field of reading are among the priorities of the people of this land.

The well-stocked libraries, active literary associations, and the presence of the younger generation in cultural activities provided a platform for

Evaz to naturally reach a worthy position in the competition for the book capital.

The title of the Book Capital of Iran has acted as a powerful driving force for Evaz, and its effects can currently be seen in the city's cultural tourism.

While tourism in Fars province was mainly centered around Shiraz and its historical monuments, today ‘Evaz, the Book Capital of Iran’ is establishing itself as a cultural brand. This title has a clear message for cultural tourists: an authentic, popular, and book-centered destination in southern Fars.

A senior tourism official of Far Governorate-General's Office has also referred to this feature and introduced Evaz as having a ‘water-poor geography and a rich culture’.

Obtaining this status has attracted the attention of national and provincial institutions to the development of tourism infrastructure in Evaz.

The most important results of this attention include the development of ecotourism accommodations in the city's historical houses with a literary approach, the prosperity of handicrafts and cultural products inspired by the region's written history, the design of the literary-historical tourism routes including visits to libraries, houses of culture, and prominent cultural centers, and the attraction of special and high-quality tourists.

Today, Evaz is a destination for cultural tourists, writers, poets, researchers, and professional

Khorasan Razavi has high potential for organizing literary, philosophical tours: researcher

TEHRAN--Given Iran's literary and philosophical history, especially in Khorasan Razavi, this province has high potential for organizing literary and philosophical tourism tours, a faculty member of Gorgan's Hakim Jorjani Institute of Higher Education said.

Mehdi Saghaei told ISNA: “If we want to provide a comprehensive definition of literary and philosophical tourism, we can say that this type of tourism refers to trips that are made with the motivation of understanding literary works, writers, thinkers or intellectuals.”

He said: “In other words, literary-philosophical tourists are people who, with interest and motivation to learn, travel to destinations where the writer, thinker, or scholar of their choice lived, created his works, or spent a significant part of his life. These works can include books, personal belongings, their place of residence, or even their workplace, and the tourist's goal is to understand and experience the atmosphere associated with his favorite character.”

Saghaei said that the literary-philosophical tourism is formed based on novels or other reading materials. “For example, if a story is told in a small town, those interested in that story may be motivated to travel to that town and become familiar with the geography of the

story and the living environment of the characters. This type of travel is similar to the film tourism; just as after a film becomes popular, its locations become destinations for the interested tourists. In literary-philosophical tourism, the focus is more on literary and philosophical characters and works.”

He stated that given Iran's literary and philosophical history, especially in Khorasan Razavi province, there is a high potential for organizing such tours. “In the pre-modern period, we face a group of writers, poets, and thinkers, some of whom are known internationally; including Khayyam, Ferdowsi, and other literary greats who have been present in the vastness of Greater Khorasan, especially Khorasan Razavi. This makes it possible to design the literary and philosophical tours to visit the places of residence, works, and even places of activity of these figures.”

Saghaei continued that in the modern period, although some writers and figures are known nationally and do not have the ability to attract foreign tourists, Khorasan Razavi still has important potential domestically.

Those interested in the works of contemporary and classical writers can travel to the relevant places to learn about their lifestyles and writing environments, or even visit

their tombs and pay their respects, he added.

“For example, those interested in Khayyam, Attar, and Ferdowsi, or those interested in mysticism, can benefit from these opportunities.”

The faculty member continued that many modern stories take place in a specific geographical context, and those interested in these stories want to learn about the environment and location and observe it.

In addition, traditional and local music of Khorasan Razavi can also be introduced and offered in form of specialized tours within the framework of literary-philosophical tourism, he said. Therefore, this type of tourism has broad dimensions that can be both cultural and economic, he added.

Stating that in the modern era, literary-philosophical tourism does not have a high capacity at the international level and is mainly limited to the domestic tourism, Saghaei added that combining the capacities of the pre-modern and modern eras can pave the way for creating the attractive combined tours, so that foreign and domestic tourists can get acquainted with both classical works and contemporary figures.

Achieving this goal requires the effort and creativity of tourism activists to be able to design and

to 1,000 by the end of Iran's Seventh National Development Plan. Zanjan, he said, is among the provinces with the highest capacity for museum development.

Iran's 28 UNESCO-listed intangible heritage elements include Nowruz; the Sadeh celebration; the art of crafting and playing the rabab; Turkmen-style needlework; the art of illumination (Tazhib); the art of miniature; Chogan, a horse-riding game with music and storytelling; and traditional carpet-weaving skills in Fars.

Among Iran's 29 UNESCO World Heritage sites are the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran; Bam and its Cultural Landscape; Bisotun; the Cultural Landscape of Maymand; Golestan Palace; Lut Desert; Pasargadae; Persepolis; the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble; and the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System.

book lovers. These groups travel purposefully, stay longer in their destinations, and contribute more to the local economy. The presence of the country's cultural figures at the opening of the Book Week has strengthened this trend.

This title has increased the sense of belonging and social pride among the people of Evaz and has provided the ground for showcasing the city's lesser-known potential at the national level.

Evaz has significant potential not only from a cultural perspective, but also from a social and architectural perspective.

The history, vernacular architecture, rituals, and lifestyle of Evaz people are a powerful platform for formation of the literary and cultural experiences. Creating an anthropological museum, launching book cafes, and revival of historical houses for cultural uses is one of the programs that can deepen this bond.

The large and influential Evaz community residing in the Persian Gulf littoral states is a strategic opportunity to boost inbound tourism and develop the regional cultural diplomacy.

Despite this golden opportunity, Evaz needs to address some shortcomings to achieve its desired position in cultural tourism.

According to the local officials, Evaz faces shortcomings in increasing water supply capacity, making two-way roads, and establishing well-equipped medical centers; addressing these shortcomings is essential for tourism development.

implement the appropriate travel packages, he pointed out.

He added that cultural institutions can also play an effective role in strengthening these capacities, but so far, this type of tourism has not received sufficient attention. “Tourism in our society still faces a limited understanding of managers and experts, while its income potential and economic development are very high. The experience of neighboring countries shows that tourism can create a source of large income and significant employment.”

Stressing that more than 16 government institutions and agencies are involved in the field of tourism, but there is not enough responsibility on their part, he said: “In such circumstances, the private sector and tourism professionals can play a key role in planning and implementing the literary-philosophical tours, provided that the government, with a relative retreat, provides them with creative space and opportunities for activity.”

Saghaei emphasized that it is necessary to not limit tourism, especially literary-philosophical tourism, to a purely traditional perspective. This field has diverse dimensions that, in addition to income aspects, can create employment and economic mobility, he added.



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Young Scholars Club materializes Iran’s scientific diplomacy, superiority

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN - The Young Scholars Club was established in the Iranian year 1366 (1987-1988) to promote and expand basic sciences in the country.

The Club is in charge of holding scientific Olympiads and preparing students to participate in international scientific competitions in different fields, such as mathematics, physics, literature, biology, computer science, chemistry, astrology, and astrophysics.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Reza Hosseini, the head of the Young Scholars Club, elaborated on achievements over the past years, noting that the young and talented Iranian students are a source of honor for the country. In his opinion, the Young Scholars Club has materialized the goals of scientific diplomacy and superiority for the country.

Below are excerpts from the interview.

It is a source of honor that Iran is one of the top ten countries in international Olympiads.

At the International Astrology and Astrophysics Olympiad, we ranked first with five gold medals for the second consecutive year. This is very significant and valuable.

In the International Biology Olympiad, we ranked third. In the International Economics Olympiad, we secured the best-ever rank of the country and gained the 18th position among 54 countries, while five years ago, the country ranked last but one.

In the Artificial Intelligence Olympiad, the country ranked

8th. In the International Mathematics Olympiad, the country ranked 12th, seven steps higher than the past year.

In the chemistry and physics Olympiads, Iranian students gained four silver medals and five silver medals, respectively.

Our talented youth have the ability to organize an event at the international level in which 73 countries participate under the banner of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Our scientific Olympiad elites are now active in educating young adults in almost 20 countries around the world. I mean, the members of their scientific Olympiad teams are being trained by our young elites. And this is a great source of honor.

This is done partly in person, as they are invited to different countries. For example, today one of our students has been invited to Saudi Arabia to train the national team of that country. And another part of the education is online.

Now, 20 countries are using this capacity of our country. I'm really proud of it. It's very, very valuable that we have changed from a passive situation to an active and effective situation. We are now a very influential player in the world.

For instance, we have organized an Olympiad in which even the Zionist regime had applied to participate, but Iranian youth removed them from the list.

And this is an example of the potential of the Iranian talented youth, who, if they are encouraged, can achieve great things.

Alongside this, this year, a

number of our students organized and held the Iranian Geometry Olympiad.

This Olympiad, with the attendance of 10,000 people, has been held simultaneously in 52 countries and more than 200 cities around the world.

We are in a scientific diplomacy environment where we have a huge impact on a large number of countries in the world. And this is great. I am proud of the fact that our country is among the top 10 countries in the world in this regard. And thanks God, some of the scientific competitions that we hold are among the top 10 events in the world.

And this is very valuable, and I hope this will be a start so that in the near future, we will be able to turn into one of the top 10 countries in different industries. Our universities should be among the top 10 universities in the world.

If there is support, if the conditions are favorable, and this is an important issue. Of course, we hosted international Olympiads over the past years.

Last year, we hosted the International Physics Olympiad. In 2017 and 2018, we hosted computer and biology Olympiads. In 2009, we hosted the astrology and astrophysics Olympiads. In 2007, we also hosted the International Physics Olympiads.

And it was a difficult task to organize these events. And being the host of many countries and organizing the Olympiads is a very valuable thing. And it will have a great positive effect on how other countries see us.

This issue will change the false and untrue image of Western

media about our country. When they see it, they take it very seriously, and this is very valuable.

It is interesting to note, when we were named to host the International Physics Olympiad, a large number of countries, especially European countries, tried to take this opportunity from Iran with various excuses, including that Iran is not safe, that Iran has no capability, and things like that.

But, thanks God, our scientific committee started diplomacy with other countries and took preemptive measures so that Iran managed to host the event. Although a few countries did not attend, the 2024 International Physics Olympiad was held in Iran with 46 countries.

And we took this competition and held it in the city of Isfahan, to show the historical, civilizational, and cultural heritage of Iran and prove that we have always been a great nation with a long history, and a defender of peace.

Apart from the fact that we are proud of being a world-class team in the Olympiads, a good thing that has happened is that the Young Scholars Club is trying to become the center of education and training for young people in the world.

Well, the Club has the potential to provide the conditions to have an impact on the rest of the world. We can be the ones to teach them and to define the policies that they accept.

Maybe a person who reads this from the outside doesn't see this as a possibility, but the reality is that this kind of capability exists in our young and talented students.

When we rank first in international Olympiads, this shows that we have the potential to be influential in the world in this area.

Well, when we are among the best countries in the world, and no country in the region is close to us, this shows that we must be able to play a bigger role in the region in the training of talented youth.

And there is always a place for this topic. Thanks God, an international Olympiad was held in the country with the title of Combinatorics Olympiad.

It is an Olympiad that has been designed by Iranian elites. And the rest of the countries have to apply to participate in this Olympiad. And it is very interesting to note that 73 countries have applied to participate in this Olympiad this year.

COP30: Iran says climate action impossible without financing

TEHRAN – Sediqeh Torabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), has emphasized the need for sufficient and predictable financing for implementing climate actions by developing countries.

Referring to the intensifying impacts of climate change in one of the world's driest and most sensitive regions, Torabi said that frequent droughts, water scarcity, extreme heat, forest fires, as well as sand and dust storms have adversely affected Iran.

She made the remarks on Tuesday, November 18, during a plenary session at the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP30, being held in Belém, Brazil.

The official noted that Iran cannot support raised ambition in emissions reductions or new targets unless financing, technology transfer, and capacity-building for developing countries are fully and reliably provided. She said that ambition must be matched by the means of implementation.

Adaptation is a vital priority for Iran and other developing countries, she said, highlighting the need to strengthen early warning systems, protect water resources, and support vulnerable communities.

The indicators of the global adaptation target should be designed in a way that does not impose an additional reporting burden on developing countries, she stressed.

Referring to the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respected Capabilities (CBDR-RC) principle, Torabi called unilateral coercive measures the main obstacle in advancing the climate action agenda, warning that these measures hinder developing countries' access to financial resources, low-carbon technologies, and international cooperation.

The official went on to announce the country's readiness for constructive cooperation to achieve a balanced, fair, and credible outcome, which will fairly promote adaptation, emission reduction, technology transfer, capacity building, and prevent politicization of negotiations.

COP30 has brought together world leaders, scientists, non-governmental organizations, and civil society to discuss priority actions to tackle climate change.

It focuses on the efforts needed to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C, the presentation of new national action plans (NDCs), and the progress on the finance pledges made at COP29.

Environmental diplomacy

On the sidelines of COP30, Shina Ansari, the head of the DOE, has held meetings with her counterparts, officials, and representatives of other countries, as well as the United Nations.

Holding a meeting with Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework



Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), Ansari elaborated on the country's measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions and expand renewable power capacity over the past year despite unfair sanctions, which have deprived Iran from accessing international funds and modern technologies, doe.ir reported.

Reducing flaring in oil fields and approving a climate change management plan were among other actions mentioned by the official.

Stiell, for his part, lauded Iran's efforts and announced that the executive secretary of UNFCC will hear the country's voice and support its measures and efforts.

In a meeting with Anacláudia Rossbach, executive director of the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), Ansari highlighted the need for comprehensive urban planning to mitigate climate change impacts, improve the sustainability and resilience of cities in the face of rising heat.

"Despite economic and climate challenges, Iran is doing its best to utilize regional and global scientific capacities to make cities more sustainable," She noted.

Rossbach, for her part, emphasized the effective role of the UN-Habitat office in Iran. The official stressed the need to boost joint efforts in improving urban management and climate risk management, as well as improving the quality of urban life.

In a meeting with Marija Vuckovic, Croatian Minister for Environmental Protection and Green Transition, the two sides highlighted the need to promote environmental cooperation between the two countries. Ansari voiced Iran's readiness to share expertise on managing protected areas, water and wetland resources, and industrial pollution, noting that fostering scientific interactions will improve national capabilities in preserving the environment, IRNA reported.

Vuckovic, for her part, said the expansion of environmental cooperation will help boost relations between Croatia and Iran; she invited Ansari to pay an official visit to Croatia.

Ansari also discussed environmental issues with Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak Al Shamsi, UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment, in a meeting.

First center for Caspian seal conservation inaugurated

TEHRAN – The first specialized center in the country for the conservation, treatment, and dissection of Caspian seals opened in Bojaq National Park in the Caspian Sea province of Gilan on Thursday.

The center aims to revive and care for the seals, the only marine mammal in the Caspian Sea; the inauguration of the center will serve as a milestone in the implementation of national and regional programs for the protection of this endangered animal, IRIB quoted Ahmad-Reza Lahijanzadeh, the deputy head of the Department of Environment for Marine and Wetlands affairs, as saying.

The center has the capacity to become a specialized veterinary and research complex to study the causes of death in seals, he added.

Training fishermen to report incidents and transport injured seals quickly (to the center), and using drones to monitor seals will play a key role in lowering losses, Lahijanzadeh added.

The official went on to say that the coastal community can also contribute to the preservation program through reporting seal sightings or carcasses.

Conservation action plan to save Caspian seal

In recent years, the increasing discovery of

seal carcasses on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea has raised concerns among environmentalists that the Caspian seal is at a greater risk of extinction than ever before.

The species is now listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, with its population declining due to various reasons, from one million in the past to 70,000, currently.

In November 2024, DOE started implementing a national action plan that focuses on the conservation of the Caspian seal.

The main objective of the plan is to conserve the Caspian seal, a rare, valuable, endemic, and endangered species of the Caspian Sea, as the priority of marine environmental activities, IRNA quoted Mohammad Talebi-Matin, an official with the DOE, as saying.

The establishment of a center for the Caspian seal conservation in Tarbiat Modarres University's branch in Noor County is among the important measures taken in this regard.

It has fostered positive interactions between the university and the executive units, which is expected to bring about positive results in the protection of Caspian seals in the near future, the official noted.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

بارش‌های کشور در سه ماه پیشِ رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود.

ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.



NOVEMBER 22, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God has given man intelligence to deliver himself from distress and anxiety.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:13 Dawn: 5:20 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:48 (tomorrow)

Mehrdad Oskouei's "A Fox Under a Pink Moon" wins top award at IDFA

TEHRAN – The documentary "A Fox Under a Pink Moon" by Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskouei won the top award of the 38th International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), which was in the Netherlands.

The Awards Ceremony of the festival was held on Thursday and "A Fox Under a Pink Moon" won the IDFA Award for Best Film in the International Competition accompanied by a €15,000 cash prize, ISNA reported.

A joint production of Iran, France, the UK, Denmark, and the U.S., the 76-minute documentary had its world premiere in the festival and won its first international award.

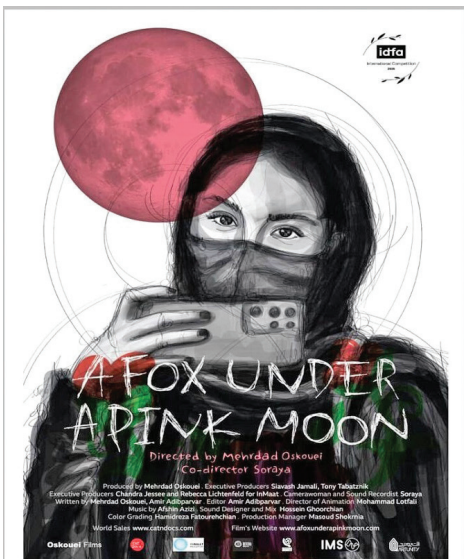
The movie shows 16-year-old Soraya who is already creating stunning drawings and sculptures that are as beautiful as they are dark. This strong-willed Afghan sculptor and illustrator has been trying for five years to leave Iran and join her mother in Austria.

"This film opens a window onto the power of art and hope during the difficult times through which we're living," the jury said in a statement.

"Through masterful cinematography often filmed in dangerous conditions, and the protagonist's radiant energy, this empowering collaboration between an established filmmaker and a young new artist enables her to reclaim identity amid exile and domestic violence, to bloom despite repression, and to find solace through creation. A self-portrait that witnesses the growth of an Afghan artist whose work will continue to resonate," the jury added.

Mehrdad Oskouei directed this film entirely remotely, with Soraya filming all the footage herself over five years using her phone.

This material is interspersed with shots of her



drawings and surreal animations. Making art is no idle pastime for Soraya: she puts all her worries, joys, and fears into her drawings and the sculptures she makes from soaked egg cartons or clay that she finds along her routes. Many of her drawings feature recurring figures: a loyal fox who is her traveling companion, a pink moon that always watches over her, and a clown who never laughs—a character Soraya identifies with.

IDFA is a leading international documentary institute that provides a space for exchange, collaboration, and inspiration—bringing together filmmakers, artists, audiences, and professionals from around the world.

Its broad scope includes a public festival of films and new media, funding initiatives, markets, talent development, and education programs—alongside a year-round documentary hub in Amsterdam's Vondelpark.

Payman Maadi selected for jury panel at Marrakech International Film Festival

TEHRAN – Iranian actor Payman Maadi will serve as a member of the jury at the 22nd Marrakech International Film Festival which will take place from November 28 to December 6.

Composed of eight leading figures from four continents and spanning multiple generations, the festival jury is tasked with considering the 14 first and second feature films presented in an Official Competition dedicated to discovering new international talent, Honaronline reported.

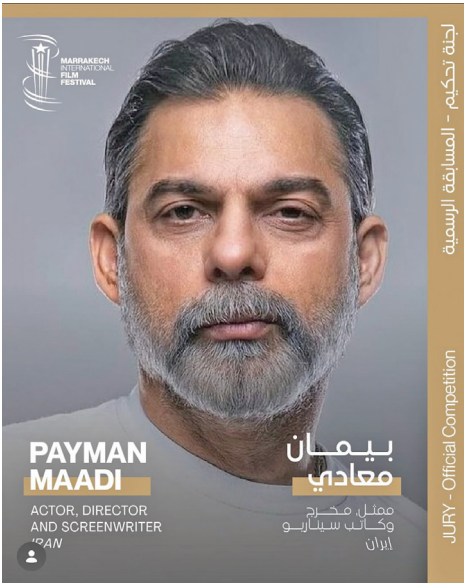
Payman Maadi, 55, is an acclaimed and internationally recognized actor and filmmaker. He is the star of the Oscar-winning drama "A Separation," by Asghar Farhadi, who received the Silver Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival for his role in the film in 2011. He began his career as a screenwriter, earning national attention in Iran before transitioning to acting with a lead role in Asghar Farhadi's "About Elly," winner of the Best Narrative Feature award at the Tribeca Film Festival.

Maadi co-starred with Kristen Stewart in U.S. director Peter Sattler's debut "Camp X-Ray" in 2014 and collaborated in Japanese director Kazuaki Kiriya's action-adventure "Last Knights" in 2015.

He recently starred in Anne Fontaine's "Night Shift" (2020) and Jared Moshe's "Aporia" (2023). His other international credits include "The Night of," "Westworld," "13 Hours," and "6 Underground."

South Korean director Bong Joon Ho, whose film "Parasite" made history by winning the Palme d'or followed by four Academy Awards, chairs the jury.

In addition to Maadi, the jury includes filmmakers and actors whose careers are a reflection of the vitality of global cinema today: Brazilian di-



rector Karim Aïnouz, who won over international audiences with "The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão," which won the Un Certain Regard Award at the Festival de Cannes; Moroccan filmmaker Hakim Belabbès, a key figure in intimate, memory-based cinema; French director Julia Ducournau, Palme d'or winner for "Titane"; US actor Jenna Ortega, star of the series "Wednesday" and the film "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" by Tim Burton; Canadian filmmaker Celine Song, director of the highly acclaimed "Past Lives"; and Anglo-Argentinian actress Anya Taylor-Joy, who rose to fame in "The Queen's Gambit" and further established herself in "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" and "Dune: Part Two".
(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

From battlefield to hunting ground: How civilians became targets for sport in Bosnia

The Slovenian filmmaker says paid 'sniper tourists' treated civilians as subhuman, exposing a hidden atrocity of the 1992–96 siege

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN– In an exclusive conversation with the Tehran Times, Miran Zupanič, the Slovenian director behind the revelatory documentary "Sarajevo Safari," delves into one of the most disturbing and little-known episodes of the Bosnian War. His 2022 film uncovers shocking testimonies suggesting that, during the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1996), wealthy foreign "sniper-tourists" paid to shoot civilians from Bosnian Serb positions. With painstaking research and courage, Zupanič brings to light the shadowy phenomenon of "man-hunting," exploring how cruelty, commerce and war intersected in a city under siege. In this interview, he reflects on his journey from skepticism to conviction, the resistance he faced, and the moral urgency that drove him to expose this haunting chapter of modern history.

The following is the text of the interview:

What inspired you to make "Sarajevo Safari," and how did you first learn about the phenomenon of "sniper tourists" during the Siege of Sarajevo? Was there a particular story, individual, or source that convinced you this documentary needed to be made?

I first heard about the Sarajevo safari in 2019 from my producer Franci Zajc. I was filming a documentary with him in Bosnia and Herzegovina already in 1993. Later, he went there again with cameraman, and we used footage from that time in our film, especially the footage from Sarajevo. At that time, Franci heard various rumors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which he later investigated himself without telling me anything about it. Well, and when he told me about the safari, of course I didn't believe him, beyond anything I could imagine. Franci told me that he already had a man who was present at some stages of the safari. So I met this man, he worked for an American agency. In Bosnia and Herzegovina his task was to collect information on the ground and that's how he came into contact with safari. His story was convincing and without contra-



Sniper fire was a constant threat to residents during the siege of Sarajevo

dictions, I realized he is a professional who really and accurately observes things and reports on them convincingly enough that his testimony cannot be ignored. So we began our research.

Do you think this phenomenon was purely opportunistic (war tourism), or was there an ideological dimension — for example, far-right beliefs or dehumanizing the "other"?

People of different nationalities and religions lived in Sarajevo, and they were all potential victims of snipers. I don't know what the ideological beliefs of these "tourist shooters" were. But they certainly viewed their potential victims as subhuman, as wild animals.

Could you share with us in which countries "Sarajevo Safari" has been screened so far, how audiences and critics have responded, and whether you believe the documentary has succeeded in drawing international attention to these crimes? Additionally, do you think the film has had any influence on legal or political processes related to investigating these events?

The film was financed by the Slovenian Film Center, produced by Arsmedia, and co-produced by Al Jazeera Balkans. The film was broadcast in most European countries via Al Jazeera Balkans' television signal. Maybe even wider, I don't know. The reactions were very diverse: from horror and astonishment at the inhumanity of this safari to categorical denial and accusations that the film was a malicious forgery.

Persian edition of "Tistou of the Green Thumbs" republished

TEHRAN– The 12th edition of the Persian translation of French novelist Maurice Druon's 1957 book "Tistou of the Green Thumbs" has recently been published.

Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon in Tehran is the publisher of the book translated by Lili Golestan. The publisher released the first edition in 1974.

"Tistou of the Green Thumbs" is the only children's story written by Maurice Druon. This story is a pacifist post-war tale that explores childhood perceptions of adults' pre-conceived ideas. It celebrates the healing and transformative power of nature, serving as a stark contrast to militarism.

The story follows Tistou, a boy with "green thumbs," meaning he can make flowers grow wherever he wishes. Using his gift, Tistou brightens the city by transforming bleak places like prisons, hospitals, and slums with vibrant flowers. His kindness and imagination even lead him to stop a war by decorating

cannons with blossoms, symbolizing peace. When his best friend, Moustache, dies, Tistou builds a ladder of flowers and climbs to heaven to find him. His pony, Gymnastics, concludes that Tistou was an angel, emphasizing the purity and innocence of his spirit.

Adaptations of Druon's story include a theatrical production titled "Water Lily Flower", created by Théâtre de l'Unité and premiering in 1978. An opera titled "Tistou les pouces verts: opéra pour enfants" was also produced, with a libretto by Jean-Luc Tardieu and music by Henri Sauguet. This opera has been staged in various cities, including Neuilly, Nantes, and Rouen, featuring elaborate sets and costumes.

Additionally, the story inspired an animated film directed by Yuji Tanno, with a screenplay by Ryu Tachihara and music by Jean-Michel Hervé, commemorating the 1990 Osaka International Garden and Greenery Exhibition.

Tom Stoppard's "After Magritte" on stage at Tehran Theater Complex

TEHRAN – The play "After Magritte" written by Tom Stoppard is on stage at the Medea Hall of the Tehran Theater Complex.

Soheil Rafiei has directed the play and performs in it along with Pegah Moradi, Maryam Khedmati, Reza Niknam, and Goudarz Hajari, Honaronline reported.

Stoppard's one-act play is a brilliant theatrical adaptation of Rene

Magritte's ambiguously dreamlike Surrealist paintings.

Set in a single room, the narrative follows a family engaged in disparate, nonsensical actions that appear to lack any semblance of rationale: an older woman lying on an ironing board, furniture stacked into massive heaps, and a fiery debate over whether or not a one-legged footballer ran while armed with a tortoise.

As the story unfolds, these abnormal interactions and occurrences are further intensified with the arrival of an irate police inspector who interrogates the relatives about an elusive criminal, the Crippled Minstrel Caper.

Magritte is known for his depictions of ordinary objects arranged in illogical, bizarre compositions that defy reasonable explanation. Magritte transformed our understanding

come snipers?

They were certainly wealthy people with considerable social power, as ordinary people would not have been granted such access. I would not speculate about their mental state, as humans are mysterious and incomprehensible beings. The explanation for the primary causes of such extreme actions is beyond my capabilities. However, these were people who felt the need to have the power to decide on life and death.

What do you want audiences—especially younger people who did not live through the siege—to take away from this documentary, beyond horror and outrage?



Edin Subasic, a former analyst for the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a scene from the film.

may contribute to the disclosure of further elements of this complex picture, which certainly extends across several countries.

One of the film's central questions is: "What kind of people do this?" Based on your research, how would you describe the psychological and social profile of those who paid to be-

With this film, I wanted to contribute to exposing a phenomenon that is unimaginable yet real. I believe that we must constantly ask ourselves what forms evil takes and how we should respond to it, so that we ourselves do not become instruments of evil.

