



Iranian Foreign Minsiter Abbas Araghchi arrived in Paris on November 26, 2025, upon an invitation by his French counterpart

Iran’s Active Diplomacy Despite West’s Bad faith

Araghchi arrives in Paris for discussions on regional issues, bilateral relations, and the nuclear challenge

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Hezbollah now ‘more vital than ever’, says Leader’s aide following Israeli truce violations

TEHRAN – Ali Akbar Velayati, Senior Advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on International Affairs, said Israel’s latest attacks on Lebanon demonstrate more clearly than ever the vital role of Hezbollah in safeguarding the country’s security and territorial integrity.

Speaking on Monday, Velayati condemned Israel’s repeated violations of the November 2024 ceasefire and its widening strikes on Lebanese territory, warning that the regime’s conduct shows that “for Lebanon, the existence of Hezbollah is more essential than daily bread.”

Velayati’s remarks came after Israel carried out a heavy airstrike on Beirut’s southern suburbs on Sunday, assassinating Hajj Haitham Ali Tabatabai. ▶ Page 3

DOE announces new phase of wetlands conservation project

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has announced the beginning of a new phase of the wetlands conservation project (2025 –2028) to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and alleviate pressure on the wetlands ecosystem.

Backed by successful experiences in Lake Urmia, the basins in Gilan, Fars, Parishan, and those in East and West Azerbaijan provinces, the project has provided the basis for promoting wetland protection and improving sustainable resource utilization, IRIB quoted Fereshte Jadori, an official with DOE, as saying on Tuesday. ▶ Page 7

China’s pivotal role affirmed in Xi’s ‘Palestinians governing Palestine’ message

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Chinese President Xi Jinping’s remarks on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People highlight China’s constructive role in Middle Eastern diplomacy. By stressing that the Palestinian issue is central to regional stability and global justice, Xi frames it as a test of international governance. His principle of “Palestinians governing Palestine” affirms sovereignty and rejects externally imposed solutions. This vision builds on Beijing’s mediation efforts, notably the 2024 reconciliation talks where 14 factions, including Hamas, Fatah, and Islamic Jihad, signed the Beijing Declaration. China’s ability to convene rival Palestinian groups in Beijing demonstrated its credibility as a mediator. The Declaration was not only symbolic but also a practical step toward unity, showing that China can foster dialogue where other initiatives have stalled.

Exported war: How Israel turned Latin America into its silent laboratory

By Silvina Pachelo

BUENOS AIRES — In a world increasingly fragmented, exports are no longer limited to soy, lithium, or energy. Israel, home to one of the planet’s most advanced military industries, exports something different: security. A word that, in practice, encompasses surveillance technologies, population control, and conflict management developed in contexts of occupation and permanent tension. For decades, Israeli companies and consultancies have operated across Latin America with a presence as pervasive as it is silent. The region, marked by deep inequalities, institutional crises, and high levels of violence, has become fertile ground for testing tools originally designed to manage populations considered “risky.” ▶ Page 5

The unfailing reservoir behind Hezbollah

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — For decades, the United States and Israel have repeatedly wagered that relentless pressure would erode the resolve of those loyal to the Resistance. Sanctions, isolation, psychological warfare, assassinations, and now the cowardly assassination of Sayyed Haitham Ali Tabatabai were all deployed with a single hope: that this community would finally raise a white flag. They were, as always, mistaken! Blinded by arrogance and intoxicated with their own propaganda, they fail to grasp a fundamental truth. This is a community that does not wilt under siege—it fortifies. It does not crumble under threat—it steadies. And with every martyr it buries, it deepens its roots and broadens its sense of duty. To take the pulse of this steadfast society, Tehran Times walked through the streets of Beirut’s southern suburb—Hezbollah’s enduring heartland—and spoke with residents whose lives, sacrifices, and convictions form the backbone of this nation of resistance.

Palestinian journalist in West Bank tortured over 110 days in Israeli prison

Farah Abu Ayyash, a Palestinian journalist working with Iran’s Tasnim news agency, has revealed the torture and mistreatment she endured during more than 110 days in Israeli custody. Abu Ayyash, who is based in Hebron (Al-Khalil) in the southern West Bank, was arrested on August 6, 2025, when Israeli soldiers raided her home in Beit Ummar, north of the city. She was transferred to the Moskobiya detention center in occupied Jerusalem (al-Quds), where she says was subjected to torture, harassment, and abuse by prison guards. For months, Tasnim refrained from publicizing her case due to concerns about her legal proceedings in Israeli courts and potential risks to her family. However, after Abu Ayyash managed to send out her testimony from prison, describing the abuse she suffered, the news outlet decided to make her ordeal public. ▶ Page 5

Citizens and officials mark Basij Day with large ceremony

TEHRAN – A large crowd of citizens and officials commemorated the Basij Day, the culmination of the Basij Week, during a ceremony held at the Imam Khomeini Husseiniyeh in central Tehran on Wednesday. Also in attendance was the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Mohammad Pakpour.

The commander previously marked the week with a written message, where he stated that the Basij is the enduring legacy of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, established to safeguard the Islamic Revolution and the beloved nation of Iran against enemy threats and hostile conspiracies.

Fajr International Film Festival kicks off with 14 films competing for Crystal Simorgh awards

TEHRAN – The 43rd Fajr International Film Festival kicked off on November 26 in Shiraz, Fars Province, with 14 films vying for Crystal Simorgh awards in the international competition section. The line-up, featuring works by Iranian and foreign filmmakers, offer a diverse perspective on contemporary world and Iranian cinema, IRNA reported. The films include “Creating a Man” directed by Murat Çeri from Turkey, “When We Bloom Again” by Shin Kyung-soo from South Korea, “Lesson Learned” by Bálint Szimler from Hungary, “River Returns” by Masakazu Kaneko from Japan, “My Father’s Scent” by Mohamed Siam from Egypt and Sweden, “Catane” by Ioana Mischie from Romania and Italy, “Deal at the Border” by Dastan Zhapar Uulu from Kyrgyzstan, “Pyre” by Vinod Kapri from India, “Made in EU” by Stephan Komandarev from Germany, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic. ▶ Page 8

Israel’s Beirut strike exposes collapse of international law, Lebanese analyst warns

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – The recent Israeli strike on Beirut nearly a year after the ceasefire with Hezbollah has raised urgent questions about the effectiveness of international law and the enforcement of UN resolutions in Lebanon. For Adnan Alameh, a Lebanese political analyst, the incident reflects not only Israel’s strategic ambitions but also the broader failure of the international community to restrain violations of sovereignty. In an interview with the Tehran Times, Alameh says Hezbollah has fully respected UN Security Council Resolution 1701, while Israel, with U.S. backing, has repeatedly breached the ceasefire. ▶ Page 5



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran–Pakistan trade should undergo reforms to ensure stability and growth

Etemad analyzed the vague and semi-suspended trade exchanges between Iran and neighboring Pakistan. It wrote: Trade between Iran and Pakistan has been stuck for years in a half-closed, ineffective state. The problem is not a lack of will or opportunity; the problem lies in the absence of structure, security, infrastructure, and regulatory stability. Without these four pillars, no matter how much we talk about advantages, nothing will happen. In practice, Iran–Pakistan trade remains largely ad hoc, driven by individual initiatives and marked by instability. To unlock this deadlock, the current situation must change. The first step is securing borders and trade routes; without that, no economic diplomacy will succeed. The second step is regulatory stability; trade cannot function in an environment where directives change weekly. The third step is establishing a genuine banking channel, and the fourth is reforming logistical infrastructure. Expanding Iran–Pakistan trade will not come from rhetoric; it requires structure and execution. If these four axes are properly aligned, bilateral trade could rise from two billion to eight–ten billion dollars within three years. The condition is that this time the framework must be “measurable and executable.”

Ham Mihan: Looking East and leaning on wealthy neighbors not an absolute solution

In a commentary, Ham Mihan examined Iran's foreign policy orientation toward the East by seeking the views retired diplomat Sabah Zangeneh, who said: Neither a “Look East” policy under current conditions can be considered absolutely beneficial and salvific, nor reliance on our wealthy neighbors and what they might do. Our neighbors have their own problems. Currently, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are indirectly fighting each other in Sudan. For this reason, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has asked Trump to intervene in Sudan and control the situation. Russia, too, has its own issues. If an incident occurs or pressure is placed on Iran, it is unclear to what extent Russia's support can be relied upon. The main focus of attention must be on our society, and the capacities that the people can generate. A solution must be found; once that happens, the United States will approach us on its own, and Eastern countries such as Russia and China will know with whom they can work. They will then engage with a capable leadership prepared to bring transformation and resolve the fundamental problems of society.

Lawmakers tell FM to confront West from ‘position of strength’



TEHRAN – A group of Iranian lawmakers has urged the country's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to confront Western powers from a ‘position of strength’.

The note, submitted by Mohammadreza Ahmadi, representative of Rasht, together with 48 other parliamentarians, specifically emphasized the need to adopt a firm stance toward European countries and, in particular, the United States, which the lawmakers described as a “criminal” power.

Araghchi arrived in Paris on Wednesday for discussions on a range of regional and bilateral issues with his French counterpart.

Iran: The need for interactive engagement with IAEA

The Iran newspaper, in an interview with Ebrahim Motaghi, a Tehran University professor, examined the White House's strategy toward Iran. Motaghi stated: Trump's strategy was based on “peace-building through power.” He believed Iran had advanced its nuclear capabilities and therefore needed to face restrictions. These restrictions emerged during a period shaped by economic sanctions. In the second stage, the United States used mechanisms of international institutions to limit Iran's power, and in the third stage, it relied on military tools to minimize Iran's nuclear capacity. The important point is that diplomacy has not yet ended. The November 21 resolution against Iran at the IAEA Board of Governors (that was crafted by the European trio of Britain, France, Germany along with the U.S.) shows that despite threats, diplomatic channels remain open. Under such circumstances, Iran needs to adopt a policy of interactive engagement with the IAEA so that its case is closed at the Board of Governors and not referred to the UN Security Council. Diplomatic necessities require that Iran place on its strategic agenda the groundwork for controlling and containing U.S. sanctions and pressures.

Kayhan: The end of SWIFT is near

Kayhan argued that SWIFT is possibly coming to the end of its life. It wrote: America's escalating sanctions against Iran and its allies, while China and Russia are rapidly expanding alternative financial networks to SWIFT at an unprecedented pace, pose a serious question for Iranian policymakers: Will Tehran continue to wait for an agreement with Washington, or will it actively join these new mechanisms and become part of a financial order beyond the dollar? At a time when sanctions against Iran and Russia grow harsher by the day, and China is engaged in a tariff war with the U.S., regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS have become stronger than before. Meanwhile, America's use of sanctions tools is expanding daily. This situation has created sensitive conditions, as it encourages sanctioned states to form a kind of “club” and separate their trade relations from the official global system operating under U.S. hegemony. Today, the U.S. employs instruments such as SWIFT and institutions like FATF to control and exploit global trade. This has led other countries to consider finding replacements for them.

The MPs' call comes amid ongoing tensions over Iran's nuclear program. Earlier this year, Tehran and Washington were engaged in indirect negotiations aimed at reaching a new nuclear agreement to replace the 2015 JCPOA, which the Trump administration abandoned. Iranian officials indicated a willingness to reassure the U.S. that Tehran was not seeking nuclear weapons, provided that sanctions reimposed after Washington's withdrawal were lifted. At the same time, Iran maintained that it would continue uranium enrichment.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRGC seizes haul of military devices belonging to terrorists

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran's Guards Corps (IRGC) has confiscated large quantities of anti-security items from “anti-revolutionary groups”, a term the military uses to describe anti-Iran elements funded by Israel or the West.

The haul was seized by the IRGC's ground forces while being smuggled into Iran across a border area in the city of Urmia in the northwestern West Azerbaijan Province.

The haul contains large quantities of explosives, weapons and ammunitions which terrorists were trying to smuggle into the heart of the country and use to foment unrest, according to a statement by the IRGC.

This comes as the IRGC recently dismantled a terrorist team in the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

In a statement, the Quds Base of the IRGC's Ground Force announced that several members of a terror cell affiliated with the Ansar al-Shaitan terrorist group were identified and apprehended following intelligence operations. Two suicides

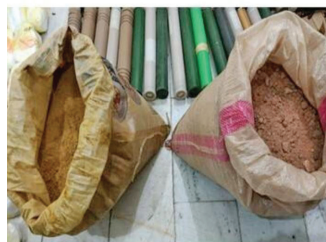


Photo shows some of the weapons IRGC seized in NW Iran

vests were also seized from the terrorists, the statement added.

Sistan and Baluchestan province, bordering Pakistan, has faced frequent terrorist attacks targeting both civilians and security forces in recent years.

Terrorist groups carrying out attacks on Iranian interests in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the country are thought to have ties to foreign intelligence agencies.

On October 26 last year, a terrorist attack in the Gohar Kuh district of Taftan County claimed the lives of 10 members of Iran's law enforcement forces.

The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group took responsibility for the attack, which is marked as one of the deadliest incidents in the province in recent months.

The group has conducted numerous terrorist attacks across

Iran, primarily focusing on the Sistan and Baluchestan region. Its methods include abducting border guards and launching assaults on civilians and police stations, aiming to incite chaos and unrest.

Significant efforts have been poured into activating terrorist elements along Iran's western borders, most of which have failed so far. Iran is ramping up cooperation with Pakistani intelligence and military to curb terrorism on the eastern front.

Diplomat hails close Iran–Tajikistan cooperation after Dushanbe visit

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi says Iran and Tajikistan enjoy strong bonds of friendship rooted in deep cultural and historical commonalities, and that both sides are determined to build on the shared foundations to further enhance mutual ties.

Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Wednesday upon returning to Tehran after a two-day visit to Tajikistan, where he met with senior officials for talks aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

Takht-Ravanchi and his delegation arrived in Dushanbe on Monday. Iranian and Tajik officials held the third round of political consultations between the two countries, discussing a host of issues related to bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, commercial, cultural, scientific, and research fields, as well as the latest developments at the regional and international levels.

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the developing trend in the bilateral relations, weighed plans to expand cooperation, and emphasized the need to further enhance

the ties, according to an X post by Takht-Ravanchi. The diplomat also met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin on Tuesday.

Iran and Tajikistan have been strengthening their cooperation across various areas. Ties have grown closer since President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Dushanbe earlier this year. This was the third such visit in recent years, following two trips made by his predecessor, the late Ebrahim Raisi, in 2022 and 2024.

Iran once again condemns US military threats against Venezuela



The USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, part of a massive U.S. military buildup in the Caribbean

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has once again denounced the United States' military buildup in the Caribbean.

In a phone conversation with his Venezuelan counterpart Yván Gil Pinto, the top Iranian diplomat touched upon the growing danger posed to global peace and stability as by Washington's “belligerent unilateralism.”

Araghchi further condemned unfounded accusations levelled against the Venezuelan government by the U.S. and Washington's threat to use force against the country, reiterating Iran's solidarity with Venezuela.

His remarks come amid a sharp increase in U.S. military deployments across the Caribbean, carried out under the pretext of “anti-drugs operations.”

Since late August, Washington has sent warships, surveillance aircraft, and special operations units to the southern Caribbean, culminating this month with the deployment of the USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group.

The U.S. has also launched dozens of strikes on vessels, killing more than 80 people, claiming

they were drug traffickers, while failing to provide any evidence to back up the claims. Legal experts have condemned the U.S. military's extrajudicial killing of victims as unlawful.

During the phone conversation, the Venezuelan foreign minister presented a report on the developments in the Caribbean following an escalation of Washington's threats and illegal claims against his country.

He appreciated Iran's solidarity with, and support for Venezuela, highlighting the Venezuelan government and people are

determined to safeguard their national sovereignty and independence against the United States' threats.

Days ago, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said the civic-military alliance will resist the pressure exerted on the nation by the United States.

He pointed to the Venezuelan nation's resolve to defend the independence and territorial integrity of the leftist Latin American state.

He also condemned Washington's risky actions for

creating a clear threat to regional stability, noting that the scale and configuration of U.S. assets “has nothing to do with combating drug trafficking.”

Instead, Padrino Lopez explained, the U.S. military buildup in the region reflects an effort to coerce the Venezuelan state under the guise of fighting drugs.

Addressing the Americans, he said that the people of Venezuela will not give in to U.S. pressure.

This comes as most U.S. citizens oppose a potential military invasion of Venezuela as part of the so-called fight against drug cartels, according to a poll conducted by CBS News among nearly 2,500 Americans.

The results showed that 70% of respondents opposed military action and 76% said that U.S. President Donald Trump's administration did not clearly explain its position to voters.

Meanwhile, 53% of respondents supported U.S. military attacks on boats suspected of drug trafficking, but 72% said that Washington should provide evidence that drugs were being transported on them.

Parliament committee reviews anti-infiltration bill, approves amended clauses

TEHRAN – The spokesperson for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said the committee has reviewed the “Bill to Counter Foreign Infiltration” in a session attended by representatives from key security agencies, approving several amended provisions.

Ebrahim Rezaei, the committee's

spokesperson, told the reporters that the committee convened on Tuesday afternoon at the Parliament's National Security Committee headquarters with full member participation.

Rezaei said the session focused on the “Bill to Counter Foreign Infiltration.” The discussion was held with representatives from relevant bodies, including the Ministry

of Intelligence and the IRGC Intelligence Organization. According to Rezaei, several sections of the bill were revised based on expert input and subsequently approved by the committee.

He noted that further evaluations of the remaining articles would continue in upcoming sessions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's active diplomacy despite West's bad faith

Araghchi arrives in Paris for discussions on regional issues, bilateral relations, and the nuclear challenge

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Paris on Wednesday, attempting diplomacy amidst a dangerously escalating crisis where his country and the wider region have been subjected to an unrelenting vise imposed by the West, fuelling a growing conviction across West Asia, after almost two years of failed diplomatic efforts, that a more heavy-handed response is required against the Europeans, the Americans, and their sponsored proxy, Israel.

Araghchi's visit in itself— coming after a stop in the Netherlands to address the 30th Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at OPCW headquarters in The Hague — suggests that Iran is still bent on utilising diplomacy regarding both its disputes with the West and the growing instability in West Asia. The current perilous state is largely the result of unbound and nonstop Israeli aggression, enabled by the political, diplomatic, and military backing of the West, particularly the United States.

The visit has already drawn alarmed reactions from conservative factions within Iran. During a parliamentary session on Wednesday, a bloc of lawmakers told Araghchi to bear in mind the “criminal” character of the U.S. and its European allies.

Opposition to engagement with the West has sharpened dramatically since the June war, when U.S. and Israeli strikes hit Iranian territory over a 12-day campaign — killing around 1,100 Iranians and damaging nuclear, civilian and military infrastructure — just as Tehran was preparing to attend a sixth round of nuclear negotiations with Washington.

After the war, the E3 (France, Germany and the UK) took the helm of a new pressure campaign. In late August, they activated a mechanism to reinstate pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran. This month they helped Washington craft a resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demanding that Iran permit UN inspectors access to the battered nuclear sites, while omitting any mention of the unlawful U.S.-Israeli strikes.

These European moves have precipitated a steep erosion of credibility among Iranians, who increasingly depict the UK, Germany and France as instruments of Washington, no longer able to pursue an independent foreign-policy course.

Dr. Abdolreza Faraji Rad, a professor of geopolitics and Iran's former ambassador to Norway and Hungary, says it is laudable that Iran continues to pursue diplomacy despite everything that has transpired.

European actions in recent months have severely damaged their credibility, leading Iranians to see the UK, Germany, and France as Washington's instruments, unable to forge an independent path

“Tehran does not shy away from diplomacy. This is vital because, after the West's repeated displays of bad faith, continuing to adhere to diplomatic channels is a difficult task for anyone,” he explained. “Iran is being both responsible and active.”

The professor added that Iran's ultimate goal is the restoration of regional stability, and to that end it is willing to engage with any legitimate party it believes could be effective, while maintaining its firm stance. “I don't think this visit will be a game-changer, but it can certainly yield positive outcomes.”

As of Wednesday evening, no official account had disclosed the specifics of the Iranian minister's discussions with his French counterpart, who had extended the invitation. The Tehran Times, however, understands that Iran prioritized the pressing regional issues, focusing most importantly on Israeli attacks across Gaza, Lebanon and Syria, while addressing the Iranian nuclear saga to a lesser extent.

Israel began an unprecedented military

campaign against Palestinians in Gaza after Resistance groups penetrated the occupied territories in October 2023, marking a historic humiliation for the regime and taking captives to Gaza.

Israeli military actions in the enclave have been labelled a genocide by rights and legal bodies, characterized by the mass killing of Palestinian men, women and children, a famine induced by a total siege, and the wholesale destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza.

A ceasefire that took effect in October saw the Hamas Resistance return Israeli captives — or the bodies of those killed in Israeli bombardments. Israel, however, has repeatedly violated the truce from the outset: it continues to kill Palestinians on a daily basis and has largely maintained the famine-inducing siege.

Another truce Israel been violating is the one it signed with Lebanon's Hezbollah in November 2024. Continued violations have unnerved the Resistance group, which has so far refrained from retaliating. But a recent attack — in which Israeli jets struck southern Beirut and assassinated a senior Hezbollah commander — has heightened fears that Hezbollah may be compelled to respond. Israel seeks Hezbollah's disarmament; its ultimate aim may be the establishment of a “Greater Israel,” a vision of a Jewish state encompassing territories of several Arab countries, including all of Lebanon.

“When it comes to Lebanon, Iran, the Lebanese government and France seem to share the same position,” Dr. Faraji Rad explained. “All three view Hezbollah — and questions about its disarmament — as a domestic matter to be resolved by the group and the Lebanese state, not by Israel and the U.S. In the meantime, they warn that continued Israeli attacks could spark a larger regional conflagration or domestic confrontations inside Lebanon.”

Israel has attacked Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Tunisia, and Qatar in the past two years.



Corps (IRGC) strongly condemned the assassination, calling it a “cowardly terrorist crime” that exposes Israel's “weakness” when confronted by the Resistance Axis.

In a statement Monday, the IRGC said the Zionist regime targeted “one of Hezbollah's steadfast commanders,” adding that such crimes will not hinder the progress of the Resistance.

Ali Larjani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, also expressed condolences on X, saying that while the martyrs “fulfilled their duties,” Netanyahu “continues his adventurism to make clear that confronting this illegitimate entity is the only path forward.”

Iran's Foreign Ministry likewise condemned the attack as a “gross violation” of the ceasefire and a “brutal assault on Lebanon's sovereignty,” stressing the need to hold Israeli leaders accountable for war crimes.

Iran beat Panama at 2025 Futsal Women's World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran bounced back into contention at the FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup Philippines 2025 after securing a 6-2 win against Panama on Wednesday.

Iran opened the scoring in the second minute thanks to Elham Anfjeh, who swept home from close range.

Nasimeh Gholami fired home in the ninth minute from a corner set-piece.

A similar routine worked wonders three minutes later, Nastaran Moghimi spotted Feresteh Karimi in space and the latter did not disappoint, smashing in from distance.

Panama pulled a goal back three minutes before the break – taking advantage of two Iran players colliding with Kenia Villareal slotting into an empty goalmouth.

Iran scored again after a corner kick in the 29th minute but in a more fortuitous manner when Banaei's delivery bounced off Maryorie Perez for Fereshteh Khosravi to prod home.

Panama narrowed the deficit two minutes later after Perez dispossessed Gholami to score an individual effort.

Iran hammered home their dominance in the game late on with strikes from Karimi (27th) and Fatemeh Rahmati (27th) sealing an impressive win.

Team Melli will next take on Italy on Saturday, with the top two teams in the group to advance to the knockout stage.

Teams discover fate at Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16

TEHRAN – The Iranian football teams learned their opponents in the 2025–26 Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16.

Defending champions Esteghlal will play League Two Foolad Hormozgan in Bandar Abbas.

The winners of Tractor and Persepolis match will meet Shams Azar in a home match.

*Tractor/Persepolis vs Shams Azar

* Foolad vs Chadormalou

* Sepahan vs Kheybar

*Mes Rafsanjan vs Gol Gohar

*Havadar vs Saipa

*Malvan vs Mes Shahr-e Babak

*Naft Gachsaran vs Paykan.

Iran held by Lebanon in AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers

TEHRAN – Lebanon fought back to secure a 1-1 draw with Iran in their AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers Group D tie on Wednesday.

Hosts India play Chinese Taipei in a later match.

Iran came into the tie looking to build on their emphatic win over Chinese Taipei, with the Central Asian side taking the lead in the 14th minute after Jafar Asadi broke into the box after surging down the left to drill a low shot into the bottom left corner, the-afc.com reported.

Lebanon fought back in the second half and equalized in the 65th minute after Antoine Assaf's long lob found Eyad Eid, who finished with a superb strike past Iran keeper Abolfazl Hosseini.

Iran play Palestine next on Friday, with Lebanon to face India.

The 2026 AFC U17 Asian Cup qualification is an international men's under-17 football competition which is being held to decide the participating teams of the 2026 AFC U-17 Asian Cup.

All 47 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) member associations entered the competition. Nine teams including the hosts Saudi Arabia

who qualified for the 2025 FIFA U-17 World Cup automatically qualify for the final tournament, while the other 38 teams participate in qualification.

Iran in Pot 2 for 2026 FIFA World Cup draw

TEHRAN – Iran national football team are places in Pot 2 of the 2026 FIFA World Cup draw.

The 2026 World Cup pots have been finalized, meaning that the procedure for making the 12 groups for the 48-team tournament is set.

The draw will be held on Dec. 5. FIFA said Tuesday the top four teams in the latest men's rankings will, if they finish top of their respective round-robin groups, avoid each other until the semifinals of the June 11-July 19 tournament being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Pots:

Pot 1: Canada, Mexico, USA, Spain, Argentina, France, England, Brazil, Portugal, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany

Pot 2: Croatia, Morocco, Colombia, Uruguay, Switzerland, Japan, Senegal, Iran, South Korea, Ecuador, Austria, Australia

Pot 3: Norway, Panama, Egypt, Algeria, Scotland, Paraguay, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Uzbekistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa

Pot 4: Jordan, Cape Verde, Ghana, Curaçao, Haiti, New Zealand; European Play-Off A, B, C and D; FIFA Play-Off Tournament 1 and 2

In all, 42 teams in the 48-team tournament are set. The other six entries will be decided in March when European and global playoff brackets are scheduled, and those teams will all come out of the draw pot of lowest-ranked teams.

Iran looking for glory at 2025 Asian Youth Para Games

TEHRAN – Iran's delegation will strive for glory at the fifth edition of the Asian Youth Para Games.

The Games will be held in Dubai from December 7 to 14, and Iranian athletes are preparing to participate in the event.

The young athletes have been training for months to compete, and will travel to Dubai with the aim of achieving another honor.

Maryam Kazempour will serve as Iran's chef de mission, and the motto is “Children of Iran, Ambassadors of Victory.”

Iran will send 194 athletes (121 boys and 74 girls) in 11 sports to Dubai.

Iran finished second in Tokyo 2009, Kuala Lumpur 2013, and Dubai 2017, and first in Bahrain 2021. Across these four events, Iran has won 144 gold, 139 silver, and 107 bronze medals.

Sepahan defeat Al Hussain in AFC Champions League Two 2025/26

TEHRAN – Sepahan scored late to defeat Al Hussein 2-0 in their AFC Champions League Two 2025/26 Group C tie on Tuesday.

With both having already confirmed their Round of 16 spots prior to the match, the win propelled the Iran side to the top of the standings on seven points – one ahead of Jordan's Al Hussein who have a final fixture against Ahal of Turkmenistan on Dec. 23.

Sepahan had lost to the Jordanian side 1-0 on Matchday One.

Substitute Aria Yousefi scored Sepahan's first goal in 73rd minute in Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium.

Al Hussein almost conceded again three minutes later when Al Kawamleh fumbled Omid Noorafkan's shot from distance, but recovered well to clear the ball before a surging Enzo Crivelli could pounce.

Mohammad Askari then added Sepahan's second in stoppage time, converting Hajsafi's layoff to seal the well-deserved victory.

Cuban president invites Iranian food brands to Cuban chain stores

TEHRAN- During a visit to Iran's pavilion at the Havana International Fair (FIHAV 2025), the president of Cuba invited Iranian food industry brands to enter Cuban chain stores.

Miguel Diaz-Canel, the President of Cuba, visited various sections of the 41st Havana International Fair, being held during November 24-29 at EXPOCUBA Fairgrounds in Havana. Upon arriving at Iran's pavilion, he was welcomed by Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA); Ghadir Ghiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber; and Zabiollah Naderi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Cuba. He reviewed the production, industrial, and export capabilities of the Iranian companies participating in the event.

During this visit, the Cuban president spoke with representatives of the Iranian companies and learned about the details of Iran's products, services, and industrial and export capacities.

He expressed hope that this exhibition and the holding of trade conferences would pave the way for enhancing mutual cooperation, developing economic relations, and identifying new opportunities for bilateral trade between Iran and Cuba.

Miguel Diaz-Canel also emphasized that the Cuban government supports the expansion of economic exchanges and joint investments between the two countries.

Iran's pavilion was set up with the participation of companies active in the fields of petrochemicals, food industries, industrial equipment, clothing, commercial services, and the country's economic institutions.

The visit by the Cuban President indicates the special attention of his government to the potential for cooperation with Iran in various fields.

While visiting the booth of an Iranian pump manufacturing company, the Cuban president emphasized to his companions that arrangements should be made for the company's officials to meet with the Cuban Institute of Water Resources and the Minister of Foreign Trade in order to utilize its technical capacities.

Furthermore, during his visit to the booths of Iranian food production companies, Miguel Diaz-Canel invited them to conduct visits to Cuban chain stores and plan for supplying their products in these stores. He also suggested, in talks with Iranian shoe manufacturers, that they enter into negotiations with Cuban companies to identify methods of mutual cooperation.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, who accompanied the Cuban president during his visit to Iran's pavilion at the Havana International Fair, praised Cuba's cooperation in providing vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic and stated: "At the Iran Chamber of Commerce, we are trying to create a more precise understanding of the Cuban market for Iranian private sector economic actors, to pave the way for expanding the presence of Iranian products in Cuba."

Hassanzadeh cited the lack of precise familiarity among businessmen with the needs and regulations of the destination country as a major obstacle to increasing trade exchanges.

He emphasized to the Cuban president that necessary measures should be considered for sharing information and creating grounds for traders of the two countries to become more familiar with each other's capacities and needs.

Hassanzadeh named areas such as pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, tourism, cross-border farming, and industry and min-



ing as attractive fields for expanding Iran-Cuba economic cooperation.

Ghadir Ghiyafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, also referring to the activities and capacities of the two countries in the field of mining and mineral industries, expressed hope that by focusing on the mining sector, the volume of Iran-Cuba trade exchanges would increase to one billion dollars annually within a five-year horizon.

Although trade between Iran and Cuba has been steadily increasing in recent years, it is not commensurate with the expectations and potential capacities of the two countries. In 2023, the value of Iran-Cuba bilateral trade was estimated at \$218 million. While this figure indicates significant growth compared to previous years, it is possible to increase it to a much higher level.

Iran's main exports to Cuba include petroleum products, petrochemical products, construction materials, and food items such as rice, wheat, chicken meat, and oil seeds. Iran's main imports from Cuba include pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and technical and engineering services.

Back in March, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) met with Cuba's ambassador to discuss expanding trade ties, emphasizing the need to update the preferential trade agreement's product list and accelerate barter trade agreements between the two countries.

According to TPO's public relations office, Mohammadali Dehghan Dehnavi met with Jorge Fernando Nicolás to review trade cooperation. "We have taken positive steps in our collaboration, but given the high-level political relations between Iran and Cuba, our trade volume must see a significant increase," Dehnavi stated.

The deputy minister of industry, mining, and trade stressed the need to expand economic cooperation, highlighting potential areas such as modernizing and investing in Cuba's sugar industry, food production and distribution chains, energy, technical and engineering services, power plant construction and maintenance, water and electricity industries, tourism, mining, and transportation.

Dehnavi noted that Iran has developed aircraft maintenance expertise despite sanctions. "No country has faced as many sanctions as Iran. While the costs have been high, we have found ways to overcome these challenges," he said.

Ambassador Nicolás praised Iran's progress despite sanctions and expressed Cuba's commitment to maintaining trade with its allies. He emphasized Cuba's interest in continuing trade delegations and collaborating in power generation, transportation, water and electricity industries, food production, rail and air transport, and adopting Iranian technologies in these sectors.

The Cuban envoy also highlighted the membership of both Iran and Cuba in BRICS as an opportunity to expand bilateral trade interactions.

Iron ore concentrate production increase 8.9% in 7 months on year

TEHRAN- The production of iron ore concentrate in Iran rose 8.9 percent in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (September 23-October 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) announced.

According to the ISPA's report, the country produced 45.442 million tons of iron ore con-

centrate in the seven-month period of this year, while the figure was 41.711 million tons in the same period of time in the previous year.

Iron ore concentrate is an output product from processed iron ores that have been milled (crush, grind, magnetic separation, flotation) to separate deleterious elements and produce a high-quality product.

Iran, Turkey emphasize expansion of trade ties

TEHRAN- Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade, during a meeting with the minister of trade of Turkey, emphasized the need to remove obstacles to the development of Tehran-Ankara economic cooperation and announced a \$2 billion increase in the value of trade exchanges next year, reaching a total of \$10 billion in trade between the two countries.

Seyed Mohammad Atabak, the minister of industry, mining, and trade of Iran, who traveled to Turkey to attend the meeting of ECO trade ministers, met with Omar Bulat, the minister of trade of Turkey, on Wednesday (November 26) and discussed trade relations between Iran and Turkey.

He described Turkey as one of the most important trade partners of Iran and stressed the need to increase trade between the two countries.

Atabak said: "Trade between Turkey and Iran has the potential for a significant leap, and we hope to achieve this major goal by resolving some minor obstacles."

Omar Bulat, the minister of trade of Turkey, also pointed to the five percent increase in the value of trade between Turkey and Iran in the current year and added: "We have now reached an \$8 billion in trade between the two countries, and for the next year, we have set a target of \$10 billion."

He stated that based on the historical background and neighboring relations of the two countries, Turkey is ready to develop trade relations with Iran.

In this meeting, the minister of industry, mining, and trade of Iran and the minister of trade of Turkey reviewed some bilateral trade issues and reached understandings in this regard.

During a meeting with Ufuk Yalçın, CEO of Turkish State Railways Transport Company, on the sidelines of the 36th Regional Assembly of the Middle East Railways (UIC RAME) in Istanbul, in late October, Iran's railway head highlighted the pivotal role of rail transport in meeting the \$30 billion trade goal set by the presidents of Iran and Turkey, emphasizing the need for enhanced cooperation and infrastructure facilitation to expand freight and passenger transport between the two neighbors.

Jabbar-Ali Zakari, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways,



said part of the joint commercial target can be realized through stronger rail connectivity and logistical coordination.

The two sides discussed existing obstacles to the movement of Turkish freight wagons through Iran toward Afghanistan and agreed to take practical steps to resolve them.

Zakari stressed that direct and continuous monitoring of European freight wagon traffic between Iran and Turkey would help improve transparency and efficiency across transit corridors.

Both officials underlined the importance of regional cooperation and the development of transit routes linking the West Asia and Eurasia. They agreed to intensify coordination between the two countries' railway systems to boost cargo capacity, streamline customs processes, and enhance reliability in cross-border rail operations.

On October 3, senior Iranian and Turkish trade officials held talks in Tehran on ways to deepen economic ties, with Iran's Chamber of Commerce calling for tariff reforms to unlock the two countries' trade potential.

Hamed Asgari, deputy for international affairs at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), told Turkish commercial attachés that the current level of trade is "not satisfactory" and urged a revision of tariff policies to strengthen bilateral economic relations.

He said Iran and Turkey have the capacity to expand trade to between \$15 billion and \$20 billion annually, but tariff barriers and restrictions have prevented Iranian goods from reaching their full potential in the Turkish market. Products such as cement and clinker were cited as

key examples.

Asgari emphasized Iran's comparative advantages in energy and competitive goods and called for faster, less bureaucratic cooperation between Iranian and Turkish firms, especially in sectors such as steel and petrochemicals. He also stressed the need to leverage the Turkish embassy's support to facilitate tariff reform and boost bilateral exchanges.

The Turkish delegation, including commercial attachés Bilge Dinmez and Orhan, underlined the importance of removing trade barriers and clearing up commercial misunderstandings. They described Turkey as Iran's "gateway to Europe" and highlighted extensive ties, including a large Iranian community in Turkey.

They noted that preferential tariff negotiations between the two countries will resume soon and pointed to recent meetings of the joint commission and customs authorities.

Asgari said ICCIMA, as an advisor to the government, is committed to working with the Turkish embassy's economic section to address private sector concerns.

He promised follow-up meetings between business communities from both countries to craft practical solutions and advance cooperation, particularly in strategic industries such as steel.

The session concluded with plans to hold regular technical and expert meetings between ICCIMA and the Turkish embassy to drive trade development. Dinmez was introduced as the new commercial attaché at Turkey's embassy in Tehran.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of the Islamic Republic

of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) for planning and international affairs, Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$6.8 billion to Turkey in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

Akbarpour said that Turkey was Iran's fourth top export destination in the previous year.

Exporting commodities valued at \$12.4 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third top source of import in that year, the official added.

On April 14, the secretary of Iran's Free Trade and Special Economic Zones High Council said that Iran is pursuing the creation of a joint free trade zone with Turkey, as part of broader efforts to resolve long-pending investment challenges and boost cooperation with neighboring countries.

Speaking to Tasnim News Agency, Reza Masrour said a special task force has been formed to resolve unresolved projects that have lingered in Iran's free zones for over 15 years. "We are actively following up on the establishment of a joint free trade zone with Turkey," he noted, adding that a joint working group between Iran and Turkey will take charge of advancing the plan.

Masrour stressed the need for a major shift in investment strategy across the country's free trade zones, stating, "We must move decisively beyond what was done in the past. Investment incentives should be swiftly approved and implemented by each zone's board of directors."

To facilitate bilateral cooperation, a joint forum is planned for July this year, bringing together Iranian and Turkish free zone officials and investors in one of Iran's free trade zones.

The official said that each zone must update its investment offerings and identify sector-specific priorities to attract investors based on its unique capacities. He added that investor satisfaction is critical, and new investment decisions are often influenced by the experiences of previous investors.

He criticized prolonged unresolved projects, noting that some have remained inactive for up to 15 years. "Creating task forces is necessary, but not enough. Problems must be addressed fundamentally. CEOs must be personally involved, and outcomes should be achieved within six months."

Private sector ready to play a more active role in Iran-China commercial co-op: TCCIMA head

TEHRAN- Mahmoud Najafi Arab, the Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), in a letter to Abbas Araghchi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while presenting a report on the achievements of the Tehran Chamber's delegation's visit to the Shanghai exhibition in China and the side meetings of this delegation, declared readiness to play an active role in organizing and facilitating the relations between the private sectors of the two countries.

By sending a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and referring to the dispatch of a high-ranking delegation from the Tehran Chamber to Shanghai, China, the Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture shared a detailed report of the achievements and executive proposals from this trip with Abbas Araghchi.

According to the public relations report of the Tehran Chamber, the dispatched delegation of the Chamber, which attended the 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE), in addition to setting up the Tehran Chamber's dedicated pavilion in the agriculture and food industries sector, held a series of specialized meetings and negotiations with local officials, trade institutions, and potential Chinese partners, and also signed several memoranda of understanding for cooperation.

In his letter to Abbas Araghchi, Mahmoud Najafi Arab stated that the Tehran Chamber, like last year, set up its dedicated pavilion in the agriculture and food industries hall of this exhibition, and the participating Iranian com-

panies were able to introduce the country's export capacities and advantages to the large Chinese market.

The letter emphasized that the accompaniment and support of the Embassy of Iran in Beijing and the Iranian Consulate General in Shanghai played an effective role in the success of the Tehran Chamber delegation's programs, and the Chamber is ready, relying on existing capacities, to play a more active role in organizing and facilitating the relations between the private sectors of the two countries.

In the report that the Head of the Tehran Chamber provided in his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, reference was made to the meeting of the officials and members of the Tehran Chamber's delegation with the Secretary-General and deputies of the Shanghai Commerce Development Council and the agreement of both sides to establish sustainable cooperation mechanisms through the implementation of the "Joint Iran-China E-Commerce Platform" and the formation of joint working groups to follow up on infrastructure projects, renewable energy, railway lines, and transit, as well as the proposal to establish a "Tehran-Shanghai Innovation and Technology Desk" at the "Tehran Chamber's Digital Innovation and Transformation Center".

According to the report, in specialized negotiations with Shanghai industrial unions and associations, a proposal was made to start operational cooperation in three areas: smart agriculture, solar energy, and pharmaceutical

and biotechnology production. The Chinese side also declared its readiness for technology transfer, training Iranian experts, and dispatching technical teams to review joint projects.

The report stated that on the sidelines of the China International Import Expo, several memoranda of understanding and agreements were signed between Iranian and Chinese companies, including an MOU in the field of design and production of cryogenic pumps for use in oil, gas, and petrochemical industries, as well as developing chain stores for presenting Iranian food products in Shanghai.

Furthermore, the letter also pointed out that the B2B meetings and trade negotiations at the Tehran Chamber's pavilion provided a platform for direct dialogue between Chinese producers and buyers.

In the presented report, the readiness of the Tehran Chamber to host specialized delegations and implement joint projects in the fields of technology, clean energy, medical equipment, and drug production was emphasized.

In his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Head of the Tehran Chamber, while appreciating the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador, and the Iranian Consul in China, spoke of the Tehran Chamber's readiness to play an effective role in deepening economic relations and facilitating the utilization of opportunities in the Chinese market.

Israel’s Beirut strike exposes collapse of international law, Lebanese analyst warns

Adnan Alameh says UN and global powers have failed to enforce the truce agreement, leaving Lebanon vulnerable to repeated raids

From page 1 ► targeting both resistance fighters and civilian infrastructure. He warns that these actions undermine regional stability, embolden further aggression, and expose the limits of global mechanisms meant to prevent “war crimes”.

The following is the text of the interview:

How do you interpret the strategic timing of the Israeli strike on Beirut on November 23, especially given the one-year ceasefire with Hezbollah?

Hezbollah was the only party that adhered to the ceasefire. After the announcement of the cessation of hostilities under UN Security Council Resolution 1701—which requires both sides to stop offensive operations and obliges Israel to withdraw behind the Blue Line—Hezbollah fully respected the agreement. Israel, however, did not.

The United States gave Israel the green light to violate all of Lebanon. Since 27 November 2024, Netanyahu and Avichay Adraee (head of the Arab media branch of the Israeli military) have repeatedly stated after each operation: “The Israeli army continues working to remove any threats to Israel, in accordance with the understandings with Lebanon,” emphasizing the army’s commitment to maintaining these alleged understandings.

In light of (U.S. envoy) Thomas Barak’s threats and Israel’s war crimes, the Lebanese government must immediately deny or confirm these claims. Unfortunately, the state has neither disproven nor proven them.

Once the ceasefire declaration was signed, Hezbollah fighters and the wounded became protected persons under international humanitarian law,



A firefighter sprays water on the debris as people gather at the site of an Israeli strike in southern Beirut on Friday.

including the Geneva Conventions and the mandates of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Israel considers the elimination of any perceived threat a legitimate right—and no one has restrained it. Even the UN Security Council responded to Lebanon’s complaint about the targeting of civilian equipment sales, repair, and rental centers, as well as road-paving operations, with a meaningless press statement, “without taste, color, or smell.”

With no deterrent in place, the Israeli enemy targeted the martyr Haytham Ali Tabatabai as soon as information on his location became available.

This targeting constitutes a clear “war crime and a crime against humanity,” as it took place in residential areas.

Israel claims that the objective was to assassinate Haytham Ali Tabatabai, Hezbollah’s chief of staff. In your view, what does this specific targeting reveal about Israel’s long-term strategy?

Israel has not adhered to the ceasefire terms from the very first day. It

prevented residents from returning to the front-line villages,... , and it has abducted civilians who have attempted to return to their homes at the moment the ceasefire was announced.

On November 10, the Israeli army declared that it had assassinated around 350 Hezbollah members and field commanders since the northern ceasefire went into effect. Israel claims that its war with Hezbollah never actually stopped and that it has the right to kill Hezbollah members without justification.

The enemy boasted about assassinating 350 fighters and commanders since the ceasefire, and this is an official admission of committing “350 war crimes and crimes against humanity”. Unfortunately, there has been no serious follow-up from the Lebanese government to deter Israel or to bring the matter before the International Criminal Court.

As for Israel’s long-term strategic objectives, one of its main goals is to prevent residents from returning to their border villages, because it consid-

ers every civilian a potential resistance member.

It also seeks to block any reconstruction efforts. This is why it has carried out numerous airstrikes targeting excavators, bulldozers, and even the smaller “Bobcat” machines.

It attacked a bulldozer repair center in Ansariyeh, and it struck the largest construction-equipment sales, repair, and rental facility on the main road in Msayleh, destroying more than 300 machines, near the residence of Speaker Nabih Berri.

Do you consider this strike an isolated tactical operation, or the beginning of a broader Israeli campaign aimed at reshaping the rules of engagement in Lebanon?

This crime comes within the framework of killing the largest possible number of Hezbollah members, exploiting the UN Security Council’s silence and the Lebanese government’s failure to submit any file to the International Criminal Court or the International Court of Justice. This is despite the Council’s dismissive handling of Lebanon’s sole complaint against the Israeli enemy, even though UNIFIL recorded in its reports more than 7,000 violations of Lebanese sovereignty and over 2,400 border violations used to carry out attacks. The number of martyrs has surpassed 400, and the number of wounded has exceeded 600.

I do not believe Israel will embark on any new “adventure,” because it already enjoys the freedom to violate all of Lebanon without any deterrent.

Israel will continue this policy until it is deterred—one way or another.

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

The unfailing reservoir behind Hezbollah

From page 1 ► Ali, a carpenter in his early 30s, bursts into laughter when asked, “They say you’re defeated. Why hold onto your weapons?”

“Those idiots need a history lesson,” he says. “We are the indigenous people of this land. This weapon is the only thing that keeps us here.”

He recalls his grandfather’s words: If your neighbor is criminal, greedy, and aggressive, you’re a fool not to prepare yourself.

Ali pledges loyalty to the martyrs’ path before tossing in a sarcastic jab: “Tell Trump to disarm the American gangs first, and keep weapons only with the U.S. police.”

Umm Hassan, mother of two martyrs, rejects the notion of surrender with quiet intensity.

“To accept that argument would be betraying my sons,” she says. “We are the guardians of their blood. Their sacrifice made us stron-

ger. I have no sons left to give, but I will raise their children on their will, their path, and the right to avenge their pure blood.”

12-year-old Fatima, deeply injured during the Pager massacre, speaks with a maturity well beyond her age.

“Of course we’re scared of the warplanes,” she admits, “but we pray for the (resistance) fighters. And we always say that studying, being patient... that’s part of resistance too.”

Ahmed, a taxi driver, recounts being displaced four times in two years—from Aitaroun to Bint Jbeil, then Nabatieh, and finally to the southern suburb. Despite everything, despair has never taken hold.

“We come from a school that filled us with dignity,” he says. “We never attacked anyone. We only took up arms when we saw how vicious the Israeli project really is. God is witness—no matter how many they kill, we become more patient, more aware.”

On internal collaborators, his tone hardens: “History doesn’t forgive sell-out traitors. It only honors those who stand firm like mountains. We have dignity—they have none.”

Amal, a university student dressed in full Islamic attire (black garment), speaks of the cultural war accompanying the military aggression.

“As if the bombs weren’t enough, they attack our beliefs too. They repeat the same dull clichés that we’re backward or different. They forget that modesty is the natural instinct of a sane woman. We see this cultural war clearly, and we know our duty. Let them try—our laps are where leaders and fighters are born.”

Haneen, an elementary school teacher, describes the calculated assault on the Resistance community’s institutions.

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

Shattered livelihoods: Gaza’s silent crisis

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – A new UN report warns Gaza’s destruction has pushed its society and economy to the brink, leaving recovery painfully distant.

The Israeli regime’s genocidal campaign has produced a level of devastation that UN researchers describe as a “human-made abyss,” with economic damage so extensive that rebuilding could exceed \$70bn and stretch across generations.

The UN Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) assessment portrays a territory stripped of the basic elements required to function: productive sectors

have collapsed, infrastructure is shattered and households face escalating deprivation.

The report concludes that every mechanism sustaining daily life has been sharply weakened. Gaza’s economy has contracted by more than 80% in just two years, wiping out decades of gains and driving GDP per capita down to \$161, one of the lowest figures anywhere.

With unemployment reaching over 80% and inflation soaring 238% due to severe restrictions on goods entering the territory, the entire population has been pushed below the poverty line.

Physical damage mirrors the

economic collapse. By spring 2025, roughly 70% of buildings had been destroyed or damaged by the occupying Zionist regime.

Satellite readings show a dramatic drop in night-time luminosity, signaling a near-total halt in economic activity. UN officials estimate that nearly seven decades of human development indicators have been reversed, making this crisis the most extreme recorded in modern conflict-tracking databases.

Humanitarian indicators continue to worsen. The World Food Programme reports that most families in Gaza cannot afford basic staples, relying on limited grains, pulses and small

amounts of dairy and oil. Scarcity of cooking gas has forced residents to burn plastic and debris to prepare meals, deepening environmental and health risks.

Experts note that even in the best-case scenario, one involving substantial aid and double-digit growth, Gaza would need several decades to regain pre-October 2023 living standards.

That timeline, they argue, underscores the urgency of a sustained ceasefire and an international recovery plan prioritizing healthcare access, clean water, and restored public infrastructure.

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

Exported war: How Israel turned Latin America into its silent laboratory

From page 1 ► What is remarkable is not only the expansion but the logic behind it. Israel does not sell simple devices; it exports complete systems: predictive monitoring software, low-intensity warfare strategies, tools capable of mapping entire neighborhoods, and vehicles designed for dense urban operations. More than products, it sells a method: a way of reading territory and categorizing its inhabitants. The paradox is clear. While many Latin American governments publicly condemn Israel’s offensive in Gaza, they quietly maintain cooperation agreements in security, training, and technology, strengthening Israeli influence in the region.

Conflict a methodology

The recent creation of Israel’s Ministry of Defense Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy Administration does not mark a new beginning; it deepens a model decades in the making. Israel has turned its geopolitical environment—a constant state of alert—into a perpetual innovation machine where the boundaries between military, academia, and industry nearly disappear.

The so-called “triple helix” functions more as a mindset than a structure. Military units like 8200 acts as elite training grounds for programmers and data specialists; startups often emerge directly from military needs;

the state invests, absorbs, tests, and reinjects technology in a continuous cycle. Innovation here is not a symbolic value—it is a survival imperative. That is why military AI, laser weapons, autonomous systems, and algorithmic surveillance are part of public policy. In Israel, technology is not a luxury; it is a strategic frontier. And frontiers—especially in states that combine military power, technological capacity, and geopolitical ambition—are always meant to be crossed, expanded, and imposed.

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

China’s pivotal role affirmed in Xi’s ‘Palestinians governing Palestine’ message

From page 1 ► Xi’s latest remarks reinforce this achievement, positioning Beijing as a consistent advocate of Palestinian consensus. Unlike Western-led processes often criticized for bias, China’s approach emphasizes inclusivity and respect for all factions, strengthening its image as a neutral broker and a reliable partner in the search for peace.

Since the Gaza war began in October 2023, China has consistently called for an immediate ceasefire, condemned harm to civilians, and advocated for a two-state solution. Beijing has delivered humanitarian aid to Gaza, supported UN relief operations, and used its UN Security Council seat to push for resolutions prioritizing Palestinian rights. These actions give weight to Xi’s solidarity message, showing that China’s words are matched by deeds. By combining diplomatic pressure with material assistance, Beijing has positioned itself as a dependable ally for the Palestinian people, one that is willing to shoulder responsibility and act where others hesitate.

Xi’s message reflects China’s broader philosophy that genuine peace must be rooted in dignity and self-determination, not in arrangements imposed from outside.

Xi’s remarks also resonate with China’s

broader initiatives, particularly the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Development Initiative (GDI). His call for fairness, justice, and correcting historical injustices echoes the GSI’s emphasis on dialogue-based security, while the humanitarian focus reflects the GDI. Situating Palestine within these frameworks signals that China’s vision of a “community with a shared future for mankind” includes Palestinian sovereignty as a cornerstone. In this way, Xi’s message is not isolated rhetoric but part of a coherent foreign policy that integrates Middle Eastern diplomacy into China’s global outlook.

Taken together, Xi’s remarks and China’s actions since October 2023 illustrate a coherent and principled policy. Beijing is not only voicing solidarity but actively shaping conditions for peace through mediation, aid, and advocacy at the UN. This stance strengthens China’s credibility among Arab and Global South nations, while aligning with its broader initiatives on security, development, and fairness. In endorsing Xi’s position, one can argue that China is emerging as a responsible power in the West Asia, one that combines moral clarity with practical diplomacy and places Palestinian rights at the center of a just international order.

Palestinian journalist in West Bank tortured over 110 days in Israeli prison



From page 1 ► Tasnim stressed that her work was strictly journalistic, focused on documenting the human cost of occupation in the West Bank and expressing solidarity with Gaza following Israel’s October 2023 assault. The outlet rejected Israeli claims that she was involved in activities beyond her professional duties.

Abu Ayyash’s case reflects a wider pattern of repression against Palestinian and foreign journalists in the occupied territories.

The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that approximately 250 journalists and media workers have been killed since Octo-

ber 2023, including more than 200 Palestinians in Gaza. Foreign reporters remain barred from entering the enclave, leaving local journalists to bear the brunt of Israel’s war. CPJ also says dozens of arrests, injuries, and assaults, alongside censorship and threats against reporters’ families.

In the West Bank, repression has escalated. Reporters Without Borders and ARTICLE 19 document arbitrary detentions, shootings, and restrictions on movement, while settler violence against journalists has surged. The United Nations recorded more than 260 settler attacks in October 2025 alone, many targeting reporters during the olive harvest.

Europe fears being left out of Ukraine talks

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The latest push to end the war in Ukraine highlights contradictions in Western diplomacy. Washington claims progress, Europe warns of principles, and Kyiv voices support for the “essence” of a U.S. plan, yet the real decisions are being shaped outside Ukraine. Moscow, meanwhile, maintains a consistent position, dismissing Europe’s involvement as unnecessary and preferring direct talks with Washington.

President Donald Trump is set to send his envoy, Steve Witkoff, to Moscow for discussions with Vladimir Putin. Trump says “progress” is being made and has already abandoned his earlier Thanksgiving deadline, remarking: “The deadline for me is when it’s over.” Ukraine has cautiously welcomed the U.S. initiative, but its role remains secondary, pressured to accept compromises designed elsewhere.

Europe’s leaders have reacted defensively. Ursula von der Leyen warned against “carving up” Ukraine and insisted Russia shows no real interest in peace.

In Berlin, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz addressed the Bundestag during debate on the 2026 budget. He pledged that Germany will raise its support for Ukraine to €11.5 billion next year and stressed that peace must not mean “capitulation.” Merz said preserving peace in Europe is a guiding principle of his government, and insisted that no settlement can be genuine without the

consent of both Ukraine and the Europeans. He also backed the idea of using frozen Russian assets to help fund Ukraine’s defense, while warning that Europe must remain a sovereign actor in its own right, not a pawn in wider negotiations.

Yet these statements reveal Europe’s deeper concern: that Washington could strike a deal with Moscow without Brussels’ input.

The U.S. speaks of urgency but shifts its timelines. Europe speaks of values but struggles to keep pace. Both claim to protect Ukraine, yet both treat it as a pawn in a larger contest for power. Ukraine, the country at the center of the war, is pressured to endorse compromises shaped elsewhere. Its sovereignty is praised in speeches but ignored in practice.

Russia, by contrast, has kept its message steady. Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov dismissed Europe’s role as “completely unnecessary.” From Russia’s perspective, Europe’s interventions complicate negotiations and reflect political posturing rather than a genuine search for compromise. Moscow has avoided the shifting deadlines and rhetorical contradictions that mark Western diplomacy.

This situation exposes the weakness of Western rhetoric. The U.S. frames its plan as peace-making but appears ready to adjust principles if it secures a deal. Europe insists on values but is driven by fear of being sidelined. Ukraine remains caught in the middle, pressured to endorse compromises shaped elsewhere.

Third excavation season begins at Zel Hastijan cave



TEHRAN-- The third excavation season has begun in Zel Hastijan Cave, in the city of Delijan, Markazi province.

This cave is one of the unique and remarkable capacities in the field of archaeology in Iran, where previous excavations have also revealed valuable findings from various cultural and historical periods.

Head of Markazi Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Hossein Mahmoudi said told IRIB that the measure aims to expand archaeological studies and clarify the cultural layers.

It is an effective step towards strengthening the archaeological research and documenting the ancient history of Markazi Province and the country, he added.

Referring to the valuable nature of this unique relic, he added that the measure will complete the researchers' targeted studies and pave the way for obtaining more accurate data in the field of archaeology in the country.

He expressed his appreciation for the efforts of researchers and experts in the field of cultural heritage and said: "This excavation season has begun under the supervision of archaeologist Mohammadreza Nemati and with the presence of a group of experts, in compliance with scientific and conservation standards, and its results are expected to play an important role in completing the historical documentation and identifying the cultural sequence of this historical monument."

Mahmoudi also emphasized the support of the

provincial management team for research projects, adding: "Exploration projects, in addition to increasing our historical knowledge, provide a suitable platform for introducing the province's cultural and tourism capacities."

The Cultural Heritage Department will continue to pursue the continuation of research activities and protection of the province's valuable heritage with a supportive and program-oriented perspective, he pointed out.

Zel Hastijan cave is one of the historical monuments with high potential for archaeology, documentation and human settlement patterns in ancient times, and continued excavations can open a new chapter in understanding the cultural history of this part of the Markazi province and the country.

The cave is located in the village of Hastijan. The entrance is located at a height of nine meters in an almost flat rock, which can be accessed using climbing equipment or a ladder. This cave has several vestibules, corridors and floors, four vestibules and two floors of which have been identified and movement inside them has been possible.

The first season of archaeological excavations in the cave was conducted under the supervision of Nemati in 2023, and the findings of this excavation indicate the special importance of this cave in archaeological studies and the history of the late Sassanid period and the first centuries of the Islamic era.

The second season of excavations in this cave was also conducted in 2024.

Cultural Heritage Ministry, Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order sign MoU

TEHRAN-- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO) to strengthen sustainable employment through handicrafts and tourism.

According to Miras Aria (CHTN), the signing ceremony of the MoU was held on Tuesday in the presence of Minister of Cultural Heritage Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri and EIKO Head Parviz Fattah.

Referring to the importance of strengthening cooperation with the EIKO, Salehi-Amiri stated that the issue of removing deprivation is the main discourse of the leaders of the revolution. "If we do not pay attention to this area, we have not paid attention to the ideals of the revolution."

The minister said: "One of our slogans is the continuity and vitality of the village identity, and we must plan to prevent migration and strengthen the villages."

Referring to the job-generating capacities of the handicrafts sector, Salehi-Amiri stated: "We are seeking reverse migration and preserving the village identity, and handicrafts can help this goal."

Emphasizing the development of cooperation with the Mostazafan Foundation, Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (IKRC), and the EIKO, he said that along with handicrafts, ecotourism is one of the most important capacities for creating employment in villages.

Salehi-Amiri pointed to the role of handicrafts and tourism in creating sustainable employment and called for strengthening



cooperation in the field of marketing and exporting the handicrafts.

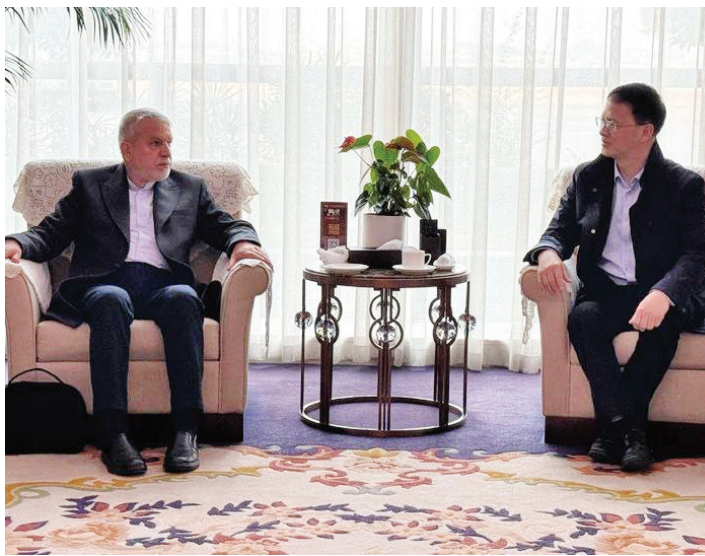
Referring to the existence of 3,000 ecotourism sites in the country, he said: "Our slogan is every village is an ecotourism site and we have tried to revive handicrafts in every village."

He also said: "80 percent of the handicrafts activists are women, but our main problem is sales and marketing, and we ask the EIKO to play a role in the field of marketing, domestic sales, and exports of handicrafts."

Salehi-Amiri stated that Iran is one of the leading countries in the field of handicrafts with more than 299 active handicrafts fields, and plans must be made to develop its sales and exports.

He said: "One of our important capacities is halal tourism. We have more than 57 Muslim countries, and halal tourism is a great capacity for Iran that can be developed with the participation of the EIKO."

Iran to promote tourism, cultural ties with China, minister says



TEHRAN--Tourism and cultural heritage relations with China will be elevated to a strategic level given Iran's cultural and historical attractions, said Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri on the sidelines of the Second General Assembly of the Asian Cultural Heritage Association (ACHA) on Wednesday.

According to the Public Relations Department of Cultural Heritage Ministry, Salehi-Amiri, who traveled to Chongqing, China, to attend the Second General Assembly of ACHA, emphasized the importance of developing cultural and tourism cooperation with China upon his arrival.

He stated: "China is one of our priorities in the three fields of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts. We have joint cooperation in all three areas and we must develop these cooperations."

Referring to Iran's strategic role in ACHA, he said: "We are one of the founders of this alliance and will be actively present in the current session, which will hold both the High Council and the General Assembly simultaneously, and we will participate in its elections."

He pointed to Iran's extensive tourism capacities, adding that China currently sends 160

million tourists abroad annually and plan to increase this figure to 200 million by 2030. "Iran's share in this area has not been large so far, and we are trying to strengthen our position."

On Iran's cultural and historical diversity and attractions, he stated: "Given these capacities, Iran can be one of the main tourist destinations for the Chinese."

He continued that while China has an important position in the world in the field of handicrafts, Iran also produces more than 299 types out of a total of 400 global categories. Therefore, China can be one of the target export markets for Iranian handicrafts, he added.

Salehi-Amiri said: "We will meet and discuss with the ministers of tourism and culture of different countries to further develop bilateral cultural and tourism relations on the sidelines of this summit."

Salehi-Amiri, who arrived in Chongqing at the head of an official delegation, was welcomed by Chinese officials and representatives of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This trip, which was made at the official invitation of the Chinese side, was welcomed by local officials, officials of the union, and diplomats of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in China.

Salehi-Amiri's two-day journey includes attending and speaking at the opening ceremony of the Second General Assembly of ACHA, as well as presenting the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the third meeting of the ACHA Council; a meeting that is known as one of the most important cultural heritage policy-making forums in Asia and plays a decisive role in drawing up strategies of the regional cooperation.

During these meetings, Salehi-Amiri will explain Iran's broad approaches in the field of cultural diplomacy and cultural heritage, and emphasize the need to strengthen the cooperation of the member countries to safeguard the common Asian heritage and develop sustainable tourism.

It is also planned that Salehi-Amiri will hold bilateral meetings with the Ministers of Cultural Heritage and Tourism of member countries, including China and other Asian countries, on the sidelines of this forum; meetings that are expected to provide new platforms for expanding cultural interactions, exchanging specialized experiences, and developing heritage and tourism cooperation between Iran and the regional countries.

Isfahan opens intl. tourism exhibition, officials say event marks new phase in sector

TEHRAN – Officials in Iran's central province of Isfahan said on Tuesday that the 15th Isfahan International Exhibition of Tourism, Handicrafts and Hoteling would help launch a new phase in the region's tourism development.

Mehdi Jamalinejad, the governor-general of Isfahan, said in an address at the inauguration ceremony that the exhibition would redefine tourism routes, strengthen private-sector engagement and highlight lesser-known attractions.

"Isfahan has a rich collection of historical sites and monuments, majority of which date from the Seljuk, Safavid and Buyid eras."

This four-day exhibition marks the beginning of a new movement in tourism, the governor-general said.

Jamalinejad said the exhibition served as "a bridge between cultures and economies" and that foreign participants had attended based on what he described as the event's message of peace and friendship. He said tourism in the province was shifting toward data-driven, sustainable and technology-based models.

He said Isfahan contained a full range of tourism assets, including natural sites.

Citing global figures, Jamalinejad said tourism accounted for 10.3% of global gross domestic product and contributed about \$11.7 trillion to the world economy. He said Isfahan, with its established position in the sector, could gain a larger share of this economic activity.

The official added that future tourism growth depended on technology and artificial intelligence. "If we do not enter the field of technology, we will fail in the future of tourism."

Jamalinejad then underlined that tourism must be linked to local culture, including food, festivals, traditional games and intangible heritage. He said studying global tourism trends and adapting them to local conditions was essential.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the governor-general described Isfahan as "the inheritor of ancient Iranian history" and "a driver of national tourism development," saying the exhibition offered an opportunity to present tourism capacities from the province, Iran and neighboring states. He also highlighted strong participation from municipalities, rural districts, private operators and artisans, calling it evidence of coordinated efforts in the sector.

Jamalinejad said Isfahan's location on the ancient Silk Road underscored its historical

role, adding that the aim was not competition among cities or countries but strengthening national tourism networks and increasing travel flows. He said rural, nomadic, natural, historical and intangible-heritage tourism were among the areas showcased.

"Data-based destination planning and monitoring visitor satisfaction could increase return travel. In this regard, provincial tourism infrastructure has been improved in recent years and that this trend is expected to continue through year-end."

He said the exhibition was not only an event but part of broader efforts to expand private-sector participation, reveal hidden attractions, develop handicrafts and advance data-driven tourism.

Jamalinejad said tourism and handicraft markets were based on trust rather than money. He said exports in the modern economy required a shared language between producers and global markets and that sustainable exports depended on trust, continued international engagement and cooperation.

South Korean, Indonesian ambassadors highlight potential for further tourism cooperation

Also, the ambassadors of South Korea and Indonesia highlighted the potential for increased tourism cooperation and cultural exchange during the opening ceremony of the exhibition. Both diplomats emphasized their respective countries' deep historical and cultural links with Iran.

South Korean Ambassador Kim Junpyo stated that the ancient Silk Road route passing through Isfahan symbolizes the long-standing connection between South Korea and Iran. He noted Isfahan's rich history provides an opportunity to develop future tourism collaborations.

The South Korean envoy also pointed to Iran's natural landscapes and cultural heritage as key attractions for international tourists. Recent cooperation between the two nations could foster stronger relations, he said.

Indonesian Ambassador to Iran, Rolian-syah Sumirat, praised Isfahan, known as "Nesf-e-Jahan" (Half the World), for its global reputation and rich culture. He drew parallels between the cultural diversity and similar handicrafts of Iran and Indonesia, identifying these shared traits as areas for potential collaboration.

Tourism represents hospitality and cultural values beyond just a destination, the Indonesian ambassador said. Both Iran and

Indonesia can serve as models for cultural exchange in the world, he added.

The Indonesian envoy also expressed hope that the exhibition would provide a platform for tourism stakeholders to exchange ideas and find effective solutions for the industry's development.

Exhibitors from 31 Iranian provinces set up 270 booths

Another speaker at the inauguration ceremony was Amir Karamzadeh, director-general of Isfahan's Cultural Heritage Department, who said the exhibition covered 8,000 square meters, making it the largest tourism event held in Isfahan. "Exhibitors from 31 Iranian provinces are present in the handicrafts section and 12 in the tourism section."

He added that the exhibit also includes a number of international participants, tourism guides, hotel associations, tour operators and travel agencies.

"The exhibition could help revive tourism in Isfahan after years of lower foreign arrivals. We are determined to expand tourism in Isfahan because it is a clean industry."

Karamzadeh also said 270 booths were operating at the event and more than 12 specialized panels on investment, tourism law and related issues were being held with the involvement of Isfahan's chamber of commerce and private groups. He added that a number of foreign ambassadors were attending the exhibition and would meet local officials later in the day.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the provincial tourism chief announced a comprehensive tourism plan for the province has been completed after 18 months of work.

The ancient city of Isfahan, which serves as the provincial capital as well, is situated at the crossroads of Iran's north-south and east-west trade routes. It reached its zenith between the 9th and 18th centuries. During the Safavid era, it became Iran's capital under Shah Abbas the Great.

Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The Persian proverb "Isfahan Nesf-e-Jahan Ast" (Isfahan is half the world) reflects the city's cultural and historical prominence.

DOE announces new phase of wetlands conservation project

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has announced the beginning of a new phase of the wetlands conservation project (2025 –2028) to strengthen sustainable livelihoods and alleviate pressure on the wetlands ecosystem.

Backed by successful experiences in Lake Urmia, the basins in Gilan, Fars, Parishan, and those in East and West Azerbaijan provinces, the project has provided the basis for promoting wetland protection and improving sustainable resource utilization, IRIB quoted Fereshte Jadori, an official with DOE, as saying on Tuesday.

The pilot implementation of the project in Shadegan and Behbahan in the previous phase yielded significant results, and these achievements led the project to enter a new phase with the support of international institutions and domestic agencies, she added.

The official went on to highlight the role of technical and vocational education and training in empowering local people to protect wetlands and improving their income.

Improving wetland conservation

Wetlands represent a vital



ecosystem and are known as the kidneys of the Earth. These ecosystems, among other things, provide clean water, protect against floods, restore underground aquifers, and maintain surface water flow during dry periods.

Iran's geography is distinct, teeming with diverse landscapes. In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value, with an area of over 3 million hectares, have been identified, 27 of which were listed in the International Ramsar Convention.

The most recent strategies taken for the conservation of the wetlands are as follows. In June,

standing (MOU) to conserve Iranian wetlands projects in the country.

The MOU was signed by the head of DOE, Shina Ansari, and Resident Representative ad interim for UNDP in Iran, Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, in a meeting in Bushehr province, ISNA reported.

Launched in 2005, the Conservation of the Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) has been instrumental in safeguarding Iran's target wetlands through an ecosystem-based management approach.

During the meeting, the UN Resident Coordinator for Iran, Stefan Priesner, said this MOU and its extension are among the most important pillars of wetlands conservation in the UN road map.

Iran plays a key role in establishing the Ramsar Convention, highlighting that the Ramsar Convention is one of the initial international agreements on sustainable development, he added.

The official went on to say, “We are facing a triple environmental crisis, including climate change, biodiversity crises, and air pollution. The United Nations has a precise and coherent plan to solve these three problems.”

Tehran, Baku agree to deepen counter-narcotics co-op

TEHEAN – Iran's anti-narcotics police chief, Iraj Kakavand, and Azerbaijan's Interior Minister, Vilayat Suleyman oglu Eyvazov, have agreed to promote collaborations in the fight against narcotics.

In a meeting in Baku, Eyvazov praised Iran's unique measures in combating drug trafficking. “Given Iran's valuable experiences in the region and the world, we welcome the expansion of cooperation with Iran's anti-narcotics police,” dchq.ir quoted Eyvazov as saying.

The official highlighted the need to adopt more effective approaches to address illicit drug challenges, expressing hope that enhancing bilateral interaction would make the fight against drug trafficking more focused.

For his part, Kakavand expounded on the country's efforts and measures taken, and announced Iran's full readiness to share its scientific and operational experiences as well as information to help identify drug trafficking agents.

The official said that fostering collaborative efforts will result in more effective and targeted measures to combat drugs and dismantle criminal networks in the region.

Highlighting the key role of online information exchange in addressing narcotics, Kakavand noted that Iran considers the security of neighboring countries as its own security.

UNODC lauds Iran's efforts

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) lauds the Iranian government for its substantial efforts and steadfast commitment to tackling drug trafficking.

In December 2024, Alexander Fedulov, the UNODC Iran Country Representative, attended a high-level meeting which was held at the DCHQ on the occasion of the successful seizure of 2,400 kilograms of methamphetamine in Sistan–Baluchestan Province.

During the meeting, Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi, the commander of the Iranian Border Guard, shared details of a major drug seizure in Sistan–Baluchestan Province.

In September 2024, Iranian forces successfully seized 2,400 kilograms of methamphetamine. This operation underscored the relentless commitment of Iran's border forces, who are at the forefront of combating the production and trafficking of drugs, particularly those originating in Afghanistan.

Brigadier General Goudarzi emphasized that the seizure not only reflects the escalating challenges posed by methamphetamine production in the region but also the dedication of Iran's border guards, law enforcement, and customs officials in addressing this issue.

Fedulov, for his part, expressed his gratitude to Iranian authorities for their invaluable contributions to this global challenge.

Fedulov stressed the importance of strengthened regional cooperation and emphasized the need for further international support to bolster collective efforts in combating drug trafficking across West Asia.

The UNODC Country Representative stated that this successful operation will be presented to the international community as a testament to Iran's noble resolve in combat-



ing drug trafficking and its dedication to regional security.

To enhance the operational capacity of the Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police, the UNODC has provided them with two Medical Devices, including a portable Doppler sonography and a veterinary anesthesia machine, to support drug supply reduction activities in Iran.

In this regard, an event was organized at the premises of the DCHQ in Tehran, with representatives from the UNODC Iran, DCHQ, and Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police (ANP) in attendance, the UNODC website announced in a press release on November 18, 2024.

Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries. UNODC has built a strong partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in several areas, including the capacity building for the Iranian law enforcement forces, and has been providing technical assistance to the Iranian Government in its fight against the illicit trafficking of drugs and precursors.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

‘Organ donation rate grows 60-fold in 18 years’

Organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years, though the growth is not considerable compared to the global scale, head of the transplantation and treatment of diseases department at the Ministry of Health has announced.

Some countries including China have grown 122-fold in terms of organ donation over the past 10 years, ISNA quoted Mehdi Shadnouch as saying on Monday.

Although, Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world, it can claim better ranks given some plans being implemented in this regard, he highlighted, adding, we will achieve better results certainly by the next year (March 2019–March 2020), as many barriers have been removed last year.

رشد اهدای عضو در ۱۸ سال گذشته ، ۶۰ برابر شده است

رئیس مرکز مدیریت پیوند و درمان بیماری‌ها وزارت بهداشت گفت: روند رشد اهدای عضو در ۱۸ سال گذشته در ایران ۶۰ برابر شده است البته در مقیاس جهانی شاخص قابل قبولی نیست.

به گزارش ایسنا دکتر مهدی شادنوش اظهار کرد: کشوری مانند چین طی ۱۰ سال در زمینه اهدای عضو رشد ۱۲۲ برابری داشته است.

وی خاطرنشان کرد: رتبه اهدای عضو ایران در رنکینگ جهانی ۲۶ است اما می تواند وضعیت بهتر داشته باشد و البته با توجه به فعالیت‌هایی که آغاز شده نتایج بهتری در انتظار خواهد بود و در سال ۹۸ نیز جهش خوبی را شاهد خواهیم بود چراکه چالش‌های موجود در سال ۹۷ رفع شده است.

SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 27, 2025

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

FAO, Iran take new step toward innovation and quality integrity in saffron value chain

TEHRAN – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad (MAJ) and the Iranian Society for Horticultural Sciences (IrSHS), held a National Workshop on Saffron Quality Integrity and Value Chain Development.

Taking place from 25 to 29 November, the workshop brings together farmers, processors, cooperatives, traders, and national experts to enhance capacities in improved production practices, post-harvest handling, safety, traceability, modern marketing, and digital branding.

The opening ceremony featured remarks from senior officials including Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi, Deputy Minister for Horticulture at MAJ and Farrukh Toirov, FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The workshop highlights the need to respond to emerging challenges, including climate pressure, water scarcity, and growing global competition. Strengthening quality integrity, from cultivation to export, was emphasized as essential for maintaining international market confidence.

In his remarks, FAO Representative stressed the importance of innovation in meeting modern consumer expectations. “Ready-to-use and user-friendly saffron products such as instant dissolved saffron, pre-dosed packaging, and smart dispensing systems are becoming central to modern consumer demand,” he noted.

He added that such innovations would enable Iran to diversify into high-value saffron derivatives and expand market reach.

Toirov emphasized that strengthening quality integrity, transparency, branding, and market competitiveness will ensure that Iranian saffron continues to set global standards and capture new opportunities in the modern marketplace.

He also highlighted the role of digital platforms in shaping global saffron branding. “Social media

platforms, digital influencers, and online branding can play a decisive role in promoting Iranian saffron worldwide and increasing demand for innovative saffron formats,” he said.

In closing remarks, FAO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Iran in building a sustainable, competitive, and innovation-driven saffron sector. Toirov expressed appreciation to MAJ, IrSHS, the International Society for Horticultural Sciences, national experts, and all stakeholders for their strong collaboration.

FAO Representative welcomed the initiative to designate an International Saffron Day on the United Nations international calendar and expressed readiness to provide technical guidance and support through the appropriate UN channels.

Global leader in saffron production

Producing 85–90 percent of the world's saffron, Iran remains the global leader and a benchmark setter for quality standards.

Saffron cultivation is deeply embedded in rural traditions, particularly in Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan, supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers and ensuring the transfer of generational knowledge.

As a high-value, climate-resilient crop, saffron contributes significantly to sustainable agriculture in arid regions and plays an important role in food security and rural development.

The training was held under the FAO's flagship initiative “Control of Food Authenticity and Management of Food Supply Chain for Successful Achievement of SDGs – Piloting Saffron Value Chain”, which aims to strengthen authenticity, quality assurance, and value chain governance within Iran's saffron sector, ensuring that Iranian saffron continues to be recognized globally for its excellence.

Earthquake and safety drill to be held in schools

TEHRAN –The 27th national earthquake and safety drill will be held on Saturday in schools to raise awareness among students, teachers, and their families, as well as reinforce safety behaviors during and after earthquakes.

The drill is held annually, aiming to familiarize students with earthquakes and prepare them to respond correctly and quickly, empowering them to face such events.

The approach known as ‘safe schools, resilient society’ is organized by the International Research Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology, in collaboration with the National Crisis Management Organization, student organization, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), ISNA reported.

In addition to training the students, the drill aims to improve the preparedness of residents in neighborhoods adjacent to safe schools, and to use the capacity of these schools as a base for prevention and crisis management.

It will also focus on the safety and readiness of students with disabilities and special needs, and teach them how to take proper actions in response to earthquakes.

The International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology started organizing the drill nationwide in the Iranian year 1375 (1996) in nursery and elementary schools in Tehran. Two years later, it started to be practiced nationwide.

Since the Iranian year 1395 (2016–2017), the Ministries of the Interior, Education, Science, Research and Technology, and the IRCS have cooperated with the institute in conducting the drill across the country.

Iran is highly susceptible to seismic events, with earthquakes occurring frequently and resulting in severe humanitarian crises.

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

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

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

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

Enhancing emergency preparedness for children with disabilities

Under a globally unique program called ‘Earthquake Preparedness Education for Children with Disabilities’, UNICEF and its partners have developed three books, each targeting different stakeholders, including parents/caregivers of children with disabilities, teachers, and policymakers.

Throughout the books, UNICEF and UNESCO, in collaboration with the IIEES, offer guidelines on disaster management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, focusing on children with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and autism spectrum disorder. So far, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on January 19.

The development process of these books involved consultations with children with disabilities and their families, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), teachers from the Special Education Organization, social workers from the State Welfare Organization, and aid workers from the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

Furthermore, four consultative training workshops were held, where teachers, social workers, and aid workers learned and provided feedback on strategies for supporting children with disabilities before, during, and after earthquakes.

Looking ahead, UNICEF Iran plans to work with its partners to mainstream these resources in the annual earthquake and safety drill organized each year in schools and develop an inclusive guideline for the drill.

As a first step, and for the first time, an earthquake and safety drill was planned to be organized at a special school for children with mobility disabilities, aiming to advocate for an inclusive drill, strengthen earthquake preparedness for children, and gather feedback on the developed guidelines.

The program's journey does not stop here. Plans are already underway to update the guidebooks to include guidelines for children with vision impairments and to expand the resources to address all types of disabilities. This initiative represents a significant leap towards inclusive earthquake preparedness, ensuring a safer and more resilient future for every child in Iran, regardless of their disabilities.



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

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



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

NOVEMBER 27, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:52 Evening: 17:12 Dawn: 5:24 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:53 (tomorrow)

“One Battle after Another” goes on screen at Tehran cultural center

TEHRAN- “One Battle after Another”, a 2025 action thriller film by American filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson, went on screen at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Wednesday.

The film screening was followed by a review session attended by Iranian critic Amir Qaderi.

“One Battle after Another” is inspired by Thomas Pynchon’s 1990 novel “Vineland”. Anderson’s adaptation weaves his own narrative elements into the story, creating a complex tale of revolution, betrayal, and survival. The film boasts an impressive cast including Leonardo DiCaprio, Sean Penn, Benicio del Toro, Regina Hall, Teyana Taylor, and Chazé Inffiniti.

Critics praised Anderson’s screenplay and directorial vision, highlighting the film’s thematic depth, breathtaking cinematography, sharp editing, compelling musical score, and the powerful performances of its cast.

The story opens with the formation of the French 75, a far-left revolutionary group led by Pat Calhoun and Perfidia Beverly Hills. They are engaged in daring operations, including breaking out detained immigrants from Otay Mesa Detention Center. During one such raid, Perfidia humiliates a commanding officer, Steven J. Lockjaw, sparking a dangerous obsession in him. As the French 75 launch attacks on government institutions, banks, and infrastructure, Pat and Perfidia develop a romantic relationship amidst chaos. However, their lives are turned upside down when Lockjaw catches Perfidia planting a bomb. To secure her release, she agrees to his sexual demands, exposing the corrupt power dynamics at play.

Perfidia later gives birth to a daughter named Charlene but chooses to continue her revolutionary activities rather than settle down. She is eventually captured during a bank robbery, and Lockjaw, now a high-ranking military officer, hunts down her comrades, many of whom are killed or forced into hiding. Perfidia enters witness protection, fleeing to Mexico, while Pat and Charlene adopt new identities as Bob and Willa Ferguson in California.



son in California.

Sixteen years pass, and Bob has become a paranoid, drug-using recluse living in the sanctuary city of Baktan Cross, California. Willa, now a rebellious teenager, resents her father’s drug habits and his paranoia. Meanwhile, Lockjaw has risen to the rank of colonel within U.S. security agencies, growing increasingly obsessed with Willa. He’s also involved in secret societies and far-right extremist groups, including the Christmas Adventurers Club, a clandestine organization of wealthy white supremacists.

Lockjaw’s obsession leads him to hire bounty hunters and secret society members, escalating his pursuit of Willa. As tensions mount, Willa learns unsettling truths about her family, including her biological connection to Lockjaw. The climax features violent confrontations, including Lockjaw’s apparent death after being shot by a rival, and Willa’s daring escape from militia captivity. Throughout the film, themes of political extremism, personal betrayal, and resilience are explored against a backdrop of explosive action sequences and stunning visuals.

“One Battle after Another” has already garnered numerous awards and nominations, including recognition for its score, acting performances, and direction. Critics laud Anderson’s bold storytelling, innovative cinematography, and the film’s compelling portrayal of contemporary social issues. As a cinematic achievement, it solidifies Anderson’s reputation for pushing creative boundaries, offering audiences a gripping, visually spectacular, and thought-provoking experience.

Cartoon of Day



Harsh Gaza Winter

Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

Fajr International Film Festival kicks off with 14 films competing for Crystal Simorgh awards



TEHRAN – The 43rd Fajr International Film Festival kicked off on November 26 in Shiraz, Fars Province, with 14 films vying for Crystal Simorgh awards in the international competition section.

The line-up, featuring works by Iranian and foreign filmmakers, offer a diverse perspective on contemporary world and Iranian cinema, IRNA reported.

The films include “Creating a Man” directed by Murat Çeri from Turkey, “When We Bloom Again” by Shin Kyung-soo from South Korea, “Lesson Learned” by Bálint Szimlér from Hungary, “River Returns” by Masakazu Kaneko from Japan, “My Father’s Scent” by Mohamed Siam from Egypt and Sweden, “Catane” by Ioana Mischie from Romania and Italy, “Deal at the Border” by Dastan Zhapar Uulu from Kyrgyzstan, “Pyre” by Vinod Kapri from India, “Made in EU” by Stephan Komandarev from Germany, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic, “March to May” by Martin Pavol Repka from Czech Republic, “Look at Me” by Vladimir Grammatikov from Russia, and “Endless Land” by Vassilis Mazomenos from Greece, as well as three films from Iran “He Doesn’t Sleep” by Reza Jamali, “A Time in Eternity” by Mehdi Norouzian, and “The Bridge” by Mehdi Asgari.

“Creating a Man” is the story of a writer who loses the boundary between reality and fiction as he is dragged into the tragedy he writes.

In “When We Bloom Again,” the story is told from two different points of view. A grieving father, who lost his daughter in the Sewol ferry incident, tries to piece together his lost memories. His wife, an enervated mother, endeavors to restore her mind.

“Lesson Learned” depicts young teacher Juci who rebels against archaic school methods as Palkó, a new foreign student, struggles to adapt to Hungary’s demanding education system. Their stories mirror societal oppression.

“River Returns” centers around Yucha from a village threatened

by typhoons in 1958, who ventures into the mountains, confronting the grieving spirit Oyo, whose sorrow has caused catastrophic floods for centuries, returning a sacred water-filled bowl to Oyo’s drowning spot.

“My Father’s Scent” depicts a tense night where father and son are forced to sit with their memories, grievances, and their idea of one another in a desperate attempt to settle their scores and a trial to mend what time has broken.

In “Catane,” panic breaks out in the village of Catane when the locals learn that they will be investigated because every household has declared that they have disabled people in order to avoid paying taxes to the state, led by the mayor and the assistant of the communal dispensary. A team of inspectors from the Commission for Persons with Disabilities is delegated to find out the truth.

“Deal at the Border” happens at the Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan border, where Aza and Samat work as members of a drug trafficking organization. One day, they run into Nazik, who has narrowly escaped from human traffickers.

“Pyre” deals with elderly Padam and Tulsi who struggle with loneliness and abandonment as their Himalayan village empties. However, a surprise letter from their long-absent son rekindles their spirit.

In “Made in EU,” a factory worker in rural Bulgaria becomes her town’s first Covid case, unleashing a wave of blame and social ostracism. As the virus spreads, she faces mounting persecution from employers, coworkers, family, and neighbors.

“March to May” shows a family’s rhythmic life in a village house facing disruption when the aging parents unexpectedly find themselves expecting another child, challenging the dynamic as the growing children contemplate their future paths.

The story of “Look at Me” takes place in 1948. Nina Levitskaya, a

former opera singer and mother of four children, knows nothing about the fate of her husband, who disappeared from sight almost a year ago. According to rumors, the father of the family, a responsible employee, Aleskandr should be somewhere in Moscow. Clouds are gathering around the family, and in order to avoid a possible arrest, Nina urgently sells all her property, collects her children and leaves Sverdlovsk for the capital.

In “Endless Land,” Lazarus grows up in a remote village in Epirus, after his father’s death in a hunting accident, experiencing loss, loneliness, and migration in a story about memory and identity.

“He Doesn’t Sleep” tells the story of a 65-year-old man living in a remote border village, struggling with insomnia induced by the traumas of war. While the villagers search for a remedy, his sleepless nights unexpectedly allow him to help others tirelessly and selflessly, offering a meditation on human endurance and empathy.

“A Time in Eternity” follows a woman on a quest to find her missing husband while negotiating complex family dynamics. The film explores loss, longing, and resilience through a deeply human lens.

“The Bridge” is set against the backdrop of the Iran-Iraq war and tells the story of a young boy, Musa, who discovers an enemy infant on the battlefield. Torn between vengeance and compassion, Musa must protect the child while seeking to reunite him with his family, highlighting the moral ambiguities and humanity that persist even in the midst of conflict.

Opening film

A restored version of the film “Through the Olive Trees” by the renowned Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami opened the 43rd Fajr International Film Festival.

“Through the Olive Trees” is a 1994 drama written, produced, edited, and directed by Kiarostami. As the final installment of Kiarostami’s Koker trilogy, the

story is set in earthquake-devastated Northern Iran and revolves around the making of the movie “And Life Goes On...”, a revisit of his earlier work “Where Is the Friend’s Home?”. The film explores the interplay between art and reality, skillfully blurring the lines between fiction and truth in typical Kiarostami fashion.

The film follows Hossein Rezai, a local stonemason-turned-actor, who faces challenges both on and off the movie set where he proposes to his co-star, Tahereh. Misunderstandings arise due to his social status and illiteracy, causing Tahereh’s family to reject his offer. As the boundaries between their on-screen roles and personal lives blur, the complexities of love and communication are magnified.

The film was initially chosen as Iran’s entry for the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 67th Academy Awards, though it did not receive a nomination. Despite this, “Through the Olive Trees” has been hailed by many as a cinematic masterpiece for its nuanced storytelling and rich exploration of relationships and human emotions. The poignant and thought-provoking narrative leaves the audience pondering the unresolved conclusion as the characters navigate through the olive groves, symbolizing the ambiguity of life’s answers.

The film garnered acclaim from international cinema critics, particularly in France, and was nominated for the prestigious Palme d’Or at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival. It went on to win the Espiga de Oro at the 1994 Seminci in Valladolid, further solidifying its reputation. The movie’s enigmatic final scene sparked vibrant discussions and was lauded for its thought-provoking nature.

In the 2012 Sight & Sound poll, “Through the Olive Trees” was recognized by six critics and four directors as one of the top 10 greatest films ever made.

The 43rd Fajr International Film Festival will run until December 3.

Persian-speaking poets from around the world invited to participate in 20th Fajr International Poetry Festival

TEHRAN- The call for the 20th edition of Fajr International Poetry Festival has been announced, aiming to introduce and recognize young poets of our beloved homeland and to foster empathy and solidarity among Persian-speaking communities worldwide.

Since 2006, this festival has been dedicated to the advancement and promotion of contemporary Persian poetry, hosting an esteemed caravan of poets each year. The 20th edition is scheduled for this winter, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

This edition of the Fajr International Poetry Festival is designed not only to engage with prominent contemporary Iranian poets but also to identify and showcase young talent from other Persian speaking lands, strengthening cultural bonds with Persian speakers across the globe, the report added.

The main section of this international festival features works that, for the first time in 2024, have been published in Persian with approval from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Submissions must be original, independent poetry collections written in Persian, and cannot be collaborative. Works previously published under different titles, publishers, or as part of anthologies will be excluded from the competition.

An auxiliary section is dedicated to poets who have not yet published a book. Interested participants can submit five poems for this category, which can include any form of contemporary poetry. Poems entered in this category must be unpublished and have not won awards elsewhere.

A special section this year, titled “The Moon of the Assembly”, commemorates the 1500th anniversary of Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) birth. It invites works that reflect literary depictions of the Prophet’s character and virtues.

The deadline for submissions is December 21. Winners will be announced at the closing ceremony in winter, receiving cash prizes, a commemorative plaque, and the festival’s trophy.

Persian poetry holds a revered place in the cultural and literary heritage of Persian-speaking countries, especially Iran. Renowned poets such as Rumi, Hafez, Saadi, and Ferdowsi have crafted works that transcend time, reflecting deep spiritual, philosophical, and emotional insights.

In Iran, Persian poetry is not only a literary tradition but also a vital part of everyday life, influencing art, music, and social customs. It serves as a means of expressing love, mysticism, and societal values, fostering a sense of national identity and cultural pride.

Persian poetry’s rich symbolism and lyrical beauty continue to inspire generations, playing an essential role in preserving Iran’s historical and cultural legacy while also evolving to resonate with contemporary audiences. Additionally, poetry festivals, recitations, and educational programs keep this tradition alive, ensuring that the poetic spirit remains a core element of Iranian culture and identity.