



Leader: Reports of Iranian Message to US 'Total Lies'

June war proved Iran is a 'center of determination and power' unafraid of enemy saber-rattling

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Lebanon, one year after a sham "ceasefire"

By Sondoss AlAsaad

BEIRUT — A year after the ceasefire was declared between Lebanon and Israel, the country remains suspended in a fragile limbo, caught between persistent security threats, entrenched political fractures, and mounting international pressures.

The so-called ceasefire ended the 66-day confrontation, but it did not bring genuine stability. Instead, it froze a volatile landscape where Israel continues to violate Lebanese sovereignty, leaving southern Lebanon devastated and diplomatic initiatives oscillating between conditional offers and implicit threats.

South Lebanon bears lasting scars

On the ground, south Lebanon bears visible and lasting scars. Over 96,000 displaced residents remain unable to return to their homes due to ongoing Israeli occupation of frontline areas, sporadic shelling, and widespread village destruction.

Trump's Venezuela war drums: Drug fight or oil grab?

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — The latest statements from President Donald Trump mark one of the most serious escalations in the long confrontation between the United States and Venezuela.

By openly saying that the United States will begin targeting alleged Venezuelan drug-trafficking networks "by land," Trump has introduced the possibility of a ground incursion into Venezuelan territory. This is no longer just rhetoric. It comes at a moment when the U.S. military already has a large presence in the Caribbean, with more than a dozen warships, an aircraft carrier group, stealth aircraft, and thousands of troops deployed under what the Pentagon calls "Operation Southern Spear."

Since early September, U.S. forces have carried out more than 20 lethal strikes against boats in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. These attacks have killed more than 80 people, and many Latin American governments, as well as legal experts,

Israeli troops injured amid deadly aggression on Syria

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — Hebrew media reports that 13 Israeli troops have been injured in Syria after locals resisted another invasion.

The occupation regime's latest aggression unfolded in the town of Beit Jinn, in the western Damascus countryside of southern Syria, after occupation forces entered the area, resulting in 38 casualties among Syrian civilians and the arrest of several residents.

Reports indicate that several soldiers fled the town after clashes broke out with residents, who opened fire on the advancing infantry. In their retreat, the soldiers left behind a military Humvee, prompting Israeli warplanes to launch airstrikes to destroy the vehicle and prevent it from being captured.

Local Syrian residents are believed to have opened fire on the regime's soldiers at close range, and among the 13 troops who were injured, three are reported to be in critical condition.

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Araghchi: Pressure will not determine Iran's nuclear decisions

By Xavier Villar

MADRID — Abbas Araghchi's recent interview with France 24, during his visit to Paris, provides a clear window into how Iran projects power, manages its international relations, and balances domestic interests with complex regional dynamics.

The topics discussed, including the prisoner swap with France, nuclear negotiations with the United States and Europe, correspondence with Saudi Arabia, the situation in Syria, and the recent twelve-day war, reflect a deliberate and strategic approach that combines firmness on core principles with tactical flexibility. ► Page 2

Tourism minister delivers Pezeshkian's message calling for enhanced ties with China

TEHRAN --Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri has delivered a message from President Masoud Pezeshkian to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, which emphasized the need to further strengthen relations between the two countries in cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts.

The minister conveyed the message during a meeting with Chinese Minister of Culture and Tourism, Sun Yeli, on Thursday. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 2nd General Assembly and 3rd Council Meeting of the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia (ACHA), held from November 26 to 29 in Chongqing, China, IRNA reported. ► Page 6

Rayan intl. AI, programming contest wraps up

TEHRAN — The final round of the Rayan international artificial intelligence and programming contest was held on Friday at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran with participants from 25 countries.

Supported by the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, the event kicked off on November 25, attracting hundreds of contestants from the U.S., Russia, China, India, Italy, Chile, Australia, Armenia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Taiwan, Romania, Singapore, Poland, Slovakia, Vietnam, Serbia, Argentina, Colombia, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia, as well as the host, Iran.

The solo programming section was held on Friday morning, with 60 Iranian and foreign participants who worked individually to solve nine complicated algorithmic problems within a duration of three to four hours.

The scientific competition aimed to promote knowledge, foster international networking, and establish scientific authority in AI and programming. ► Page 7

Iranian trade mission eyes industrial revival, investment opportunities in Cuba

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN — An Iranian business delegation has opened discussions in Havana on a series of potential investment projects aimed at reviving Cuba's stalled industrial capacity, expanding bilateral trade and strengthening cooperation in key sectors ranging from sugar and cement to mining, steel and pharmaceuticals.

Industrial recovery and manufacturing opportunities

Smad Hassanzadeh, head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), who led the delegation, said Iran sees "significant potential" to help reactivate idle Cuban plants, particularly in sugar production and cement manufacturing. ► Page 4



Basij launches large-scale drills in Tehran, other major cities

TEHRAN — A large-scale Basij readiness exercise was held in Tehran on Thursday at the Imam Hossein Officers and Basij Training University, organized by the Hazrat Mohammad Rasulullah Corps of Greater Tehran.

The event brought together senior military officials, including IRGC Commander-in-Chief Major General Mohammad Pakpour and Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi, deputy chief of the Armed Forces General Staff.

Officials from the Armed Forces General Staff, the Tehran IRGC command, and the Basij Organization were also present. Similar Basij drills were held in several other cities across the country as part of a nationwide show of force. ► Page 2



Exclusive Interview
I wrote so that monsters wouldn't erase me: Gazan author

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Diplomacy in Paris

Etemad, in an interview with geopolitics professor Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, examined the strategic dimensions of Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi's trip to Paris and the prospects for reviving nuclear diplomacy based on Iran's honorable terms. This visit marks the first official meeting of Iran's foreign minister with a member of the European troika following the recent resolution (by the IAEA Board of Governors). It comes at a time when France is attempting to position itself as a potential mediator between Tehran and the West. Faraji-Rad believes Araghchi's trip to Paris presents a multilayered opportunity to break the current deadlock. France seeks the release of its detained nationals, aims to reassert its mediating role between Iran and the United States, and is concerned about the implications of the Ukraine peace process as well as the uncertain status of Iran's enriched materials following the June raids on Iran's nuclear sites by the U.S. and the Israeli regime. In his view, Europe lacks a direct lever to cancel the "snapback" mechanism, but in coordination with Washington, it could propose a temporary "concession-for-concession" formula. If the negotiations begin this time, the bitter lessons of Trump's 12-day war and the shared desire of all parties to avoid confrontation make success more likely than in previous rounds.

Sobh-e-No: Saudi admits Iran key to Mideast stability

In an analysis, Sob-he-No highlighted Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's concerns over the adventurism of the Zionist regime. Citing Lebanon's Al-Akhbar, the paper noted a significant development: for the first time, the Saudi de facto leader, in an official meeting with Trump in Washington, expressed his worries about Israeli adventurism and emphasized the necessity of reaching an agreement with Iran to stabilize regional security. This shift carries several strategic messages: first, Saudi Arabia has concluded that continuing a policy of pressure and confrontation against Iran is futile and only increases its security costs. The Yemen battlefield, the failure of U.S. anti-Iran projects, and Israel's unsuccessful attempts to contain Tehran have pushed Riyadh toward recalculating its approach. Second, Saudi Arabia is deeply concerned about the possibility of Israel embarking on a new adventure. Recent developments show that Netanyahu, seeking to escape domestic crises and military setbacks, is willing to escalate tensions at any level. For Riyadh, this poses a serious threat. Third, Riyadh now recognizes that any regional security architecture collapses quickly without Iran's participation, just as U.S. security schemes

Basij launches large-scale drills in Tehran, other major cities



From page 1 ► Basij presence 'critical' during 12-day war: IRGC chief

Addressing the ceremony, Major General Pakpour praised the performance of Basij forces during the recent 12-day conflict, saying their presence in security operations was "prominent and fully felt by the people."

On June 13, 2025, the Israeli regime launched an unprovoked attack on Iranian territory, triggering a 12-day war that claimed the lives of well over 1,000 Iranians, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The United States also got involved in the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites. The stated justification for

in past years failed one after another.

Khorasan: Possible emergence of a post-war confrontation

Khorasan examined the nighttime entry of Israeli fighter jets into Iraqi airspace and their loud flights along Iran's western borders. The paper argued that these incursions are no longer isolated incidents but should now be understood as part of a new architecture of confrontation following the 12-day war. Israeli air operations near Iran's borders can be analyzed on three levels: operational, psychological-political, and strategic. For security analysts, the operational level is most critical. Through these maneuvers, Tel Aviv is preparing for a short war, one based on speed, surprise, and sudden strikes, where even a few minutes' delay in defensive response could alter the outcome. Israel faced a bitter reality during the 12-day war: its deterrence against Iran had been weakened. Demonstrating air power along Iran's borders is an attempt to repair this gap. At the strategic level, normalizing the threat is also significant. By repeating such flights until they lose their shock value, Israel seeks to turn danger into routine behavior, paving the way for a major surprise later. The timing of these flights, coinciding with renewed diplomatic activity between Iran and the United States, is notable. Israel aims to cast a permanent shadow of threat over any potential negotiations.

Ettelaat: Importance of ties with two Eastern powers

Ettelaat highlighted the importance of Iran's ties with Russia and China. Given the extensive Western sanctions, Iran has placed special emphasis on economic cooperation with these two powers: China and Russia. China is Iran's largest oil buyer, while Russia ranks among its biggest foreign investors. Iran is also active in military cooperation with both countries, which enhances its defense capabilities against regional and international threats. For Iran, relations with China and Russia offer significant economic, military, and diplomatic opportunities. Yet they also carry risks such as excessive dependency, lack of firm support, and economic competition. Because of the weight of these ties, the state of relations between Moscow and Beijing is itself crucial for Iran. Some observers argue that the stronger the bonds between Russia and China, the greater the opportunities for Iran to align with Beijing and Moscow and pursue its national interests. Ultimately, Iran must safeguard its interests within the complex interplay of conflict and cooperation among global powers, both Eastern and Western.

the aggression was to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, a claim for which neither Israel nor the U.S. provided any evidence.

Major General Pakpour opened his remarks by honoring a number of senior IRGC commanders and Basij figures killed in past operations, including martyrs Bagheri, Rashid, Hajizadeh, Shademani, Mohaqqueq, Kazemi, Rabbani and Mehrabi, as well as nuclear scientists and civilians killed in recent clashes. "We commemorate all those who attained the lofty rank of martyrdom alongside these great commanders," he said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran and France don't see eye to eye in Paris talks, but may meet again

Araghchi returns to Tehran after short stay

TEHRAN – Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, and his French counterpart displayed no obvious bonhomie during their meeting in Paris this week. In fact, neither side published any footage or photos of the encounter. However, the diplomats are also not loath to repeat the meeting in the future.

Upon his arrival in Tehran, Araghchi said his trip to France was aimed at continuing consultations between the two countries in various bilateral, regional and nuclear areas as well as European domains such as Ukraine.

In an interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting Organization (IRIB), the top Iranian diplomat said Tehran and Paris have differences of opinion on different issues, yet political negotiations have been ongoing all along. "With regards to bilateral issues, the issue of the freedom of Ms. Esfandiari has been among hot-button issues between us," he said.

Iranian academic Mahdieh Esfandiari, recently released on parole, had been in detention in France for nearly eight months simply for supporting Palestinians and the Palestinian cause on social media. The Paris Prosecutor's Office accused her of "glorifying terrorism". Among her 2023 posts that resurfaced following her detention, some showed her demanding an end to the "Israeli massacre of children in Gaza". The UN says Israel's war on Gaza has killed or injured at least 50,000 children since October of 2023.

As Tehran seeks Esfandiari's repatriation, France is pushing for the return of two of its spies who remain detained in Iran. Analysts argue that French authorities arrested the Iranian professor to facilitate an exchange for their intelligence agents.

Iran's nuclear issue also came



FM Araghchi details Wednesday visit to Paris during interview with IRIB

up for discussion during the negotiations in Paris. "In our discussions about the nuclear issue, I outlined our country's positions," Araghchi explained, adding, "Right now, a balanced and fair negotiation isn't feasible because of the United States' approach."

Iran held its last round of nuclear negotiations in April with Washington as the other party and Oman acting as go-between. The talks halted before their sixth scheduled round after the U.S. and Israel launched a 12-day bombing campaign against Iran on June 13, targeting nuclear sites as well as civilian and military infrastructure. Approximately 1,100 people were killed in the assaults, most of them civilians.

Despite what many Iranians view as Washington's betrayal of diplomacy, Tehran says it remains willing to pursue negotiations. The U.S., however, has remained intransigent on its nuclear demands, insisting that Iran cease uranium enrichment and adding other non-starter conditions, including caps on Iranian missiles.

Araghchi: Pressure will not determine Iran's nuclear decisions

From page 1 ► First, the prisoner swap with France illustrates how Iran handles delicate matters under the umbrella of national law and strategic interests. Araghchi highlighted that the release of Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris, after three and a half years of detention, is part of a process regulated by the Supreme National Security Council and framed within national interests. At the same time, Iran has requested the release of Mahdieh Esfandiari, an Iranian citizen detained in France, turning the swap into a carefully managed mechanism of reciprocity. By emphasizing that all legal procedures will be completed according to the timelines of each country, Araghchi reinforces the perception of Iran as an actor that respects internal processes while acting with strategic clarity, projecting order and predictability to the international public.

This approach not only protects domestic legitimacy but also projects an image of international pragmatism. The insistence that "the swap will take place as soon as the judicial procedures in France are completed" demonstrates a balance between firmness and flexibility. The narrative constructed reinforces the perception that Iran acts consistently, legally, and predictably, despite Western propaganda that frames such cases as political kidnapping.

Regarding nuclear negotiations, Araghchi makes it clear that Iran remains willing to engage in dialogue—but under conditions of parity and respect for its interests. He notes that there is currently no active negotiation channel with the United States due to Washington's unwillingness to commit on equitable terms. Nevertheless, the message is unmistakable: Iran is always open to serious discussions leading to mutually beneficial outcomes. This reflects a mature strategic approach, in which the country safeguards its position without closing the door to diplomatic solutions. References to previous negotiations, including those in 2015, establish continuity and coherence, countering the

Western framing of Iran as an unpredictable actor.

The recent correspondence from the Iranian president to Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, was addressed with particular care by Araghchi. He emphasized that the letter related exclusively to pilgrimage and cultural cooperation, not to nuclear mediation between the United States and Iran. Iran underscores that the resolution of nuclear issues does not depend on regional intermediaries; responsibility rests directly with Washington.

Iran's contemporary strategy combines institutional resilience, alliance diversification, and asymmetric capability development

This nuance is crucial: although Saudi Arabia has significantly improved its relations with Tehran and participates in a strategic rapprochement under Chinese mediation, it does not act as a mediator in nuclear talks. Araghchi's interpretation reinforces Iran's narrative of autonomy and control over its negotiation processes, preventing external actors from limiting its maneuvering space.

The normalization of relations between Tehran and Riyadh represents a far-reaching strategic adjustment. While there has been an increase in bilateral trust, particularly regarding regional stability and security cooperation, Iran carefully defines the limits of such collaboration. Tehran's priority lies in consolidating the stability of its immediate environment, mitigating tensions and direct risks, while preserving its independence from external pressures. This approach reflects a sophisticated understanding of regional dynamics, where historical rivalries are managed through pragmatic coordination rather

Iran's missile arsenal has long been one of its most important defenses against Israel and the United States. During the June war, Israeli and American calls for a ceasefire came after Iran's extensive strikes in the occupied territories and its attack on the largest U.S. base in West Asia.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been open to negotiations, and we've never stepped away from the diplomatic process. However, negotiations have their own rules, and they can only happen or be successful if those rules are respected," Araghchi stated.

France's Foreign Ministry provided its view of the meeting in a statement, saying that the talks between Araghchi and Jean-Noël Barrot involved calls for Tehran to resume nuclear negotiations. According to the statement, "The Minister recalled France's steadfast commitment, alongside its European and American partners, to a diplomatic solution."

France, Germany, and the UK have been leading their own pressure campaign against Iran

since the war ended. The E3 triggered a mechanism in August to reimpose pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran and also assisted the U.S. in drafting an anti-Iran resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) earlier this month.

The three European countries were signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which lifted sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear activities. They, however, failed to take practical measures to save the deal after Washington withdrew in 2018 and reinstated sanctions. They also declined to condemn the U.S.-Israeli strikes in June, despite their sheer illegality under the UN Charter and IAEA mandates.

Meanwhile, they have been asking Iran to disclose the extent of damage to its targeted nuclear sites as well as the whereabouts of its stockpile of enriched uranium, without addressing Iranian concerns that such disclosures could prompt further attacks by Israel and the United States.

than unilateral concessions.

Interaction with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) highlights a complex dimension of Iran's strategy. Araghchi notes that, while the agency presents itself as a technical body, in practice its decisions reflect a political orientation, aligned with Israel and the United States. From this perspective, recent resolutions do not account for prior attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities carried out by these countries. Tehran's response seeks to balance technical compliance with strategic defense, demonstrating its intent to protect its interests and sovereignty without violating international law.

Defense and security occupy a central place in the discourse. Araghchi emphasized the effectiveness of Iran's defensive systems during the recent twelve-day war with Israel, highlighting that Iran successfully defended its territory and critical infrastructure. He noted that the war was not only contained but resulted in a de facto strategic victory: Iranian missile systems operated with precision and efficiency, limiting the impact of Israeli attacks, while Israel and its allies were forced to request a ceasefire after suffering significant losses and failing to achieve their objectives. Araghchi's narrative underscores that Iran's ability to withstand direct aggression strengthened its regional position, demonstrating resilience and deterrent capacity.

In Syria and Lebanon, Iran's strategy remains at the level of active observation and indirect support. Araghchi emphasized that Iran does not intervene in Lebanon's sovereign decisions and that its goal in Syria is stability, state unity, and the end of Israeli occupation. This stance reflects a diplomacy of containment and risk management, in which Iran prioritizes consolidating stable state structures rather than engaging in direct conflict.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Leader: Reports of Iranian message to US ‘total lies’

June war proved Iran is a ‘center of determination and power’ unafraid of enemy saber-rattling

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei delivered a televised speech on Thursday, addressing the Iranian nation on recent domestic, regional, and international developments.

The first part of the Leader’s speech, delivered during Basij Week, focused on the Basij volunteer forces. He stated that movements similar to the Basij serve as sources of guidance and strength for any nation. He added that a country like Iran, which stands openly and firmly against Western bullying, requires such a force more than any other.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the necessity for nations to resist the greed and interference of hegemonic powers and said: “The great element of Resistance, which was founded and flourished in Iran, can now be seen in the slogans in support of Palestine and Gaza across different parts of the world, including in Western countries and even within the U.S.”

Addressing regional developments, he said: “In the 12-Day war, the Iranian nation undeniably defeated both the U.S. and the Zionist regime. They came and perpetrated malicious acts, took a beating, and left empty-handed. This was a defeat in the truest sense of the word.”

Referring to reports claiming that the Zionist regime had been planning for twenty years to launch a war against Iran, the Leader said: “They had been planning and preparing

for this war for 20 years. That’s what some people have said. There was 20 years of planning to start a war in Iran and to incite the people so they would join them and fight the system. This is what they had planned. But they left empty-handed, the situation turned against them, and they failed. Even those who had differences of opinion with the system stood by its side.”

Ayatollah Khamenei continued by saying, “Of course, we also suffered losses. As is the nature of war, we lost dear lives. But the Islamic Republic demonstrated that it is a center of determination and power, capable of making decisions and standing firmly without fear of outside noise. Moreover, the material losses inflicted on the invading enemy were far greater than ours.”

He then pointed to the major losses suffered by the U.S. during the 12-day war, saying: “The second point is that in this 12-Day War, the U.S. suffered heavy losses, truly heavy losses. It deployed its latest, most advanced assault and defense weapons. It used its submarines, its fighter jets, and its most sophisticated air-defense systems. But it was unable to achieve what it wanted. It wanted to deceive the Iranian nation and force the Iranian nation to follow it, but the opposite happened. As I said, the Iranian people became even more united in the face of the U.S. and were able to completely thwart the U.S.’s aims.”

Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the severe

disgrace and infamy of the Zionist regime in the Gaza catastrophe, one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the region. He noted: “In this case, the U.S. stood beside the usurping regime and became deeply disgraced, because the people of the world know that the Zionist regime could not have committed such atrocities without the support of the U.S.”

He described the prime minister of the Zionist regime as “The most despised person in the world today is the head of the Zionist government,” and the ruling Zionist apparatus as “the most detested organization and criminal gang on the planet.” He added: “Since the U.S. stands beside them, the hatred toward the Zionist regime has spread to the U.S. as well.”

The Leader emphasized that the U.S.’s interference in various parts of the world is another major factor behind its growing isolation. He said: “Wherever the U.S. intervenes, the outcome is war-mongering, genocide, destruction, and displacement.”

Pointing to the betrayal of even the U.S.’s own allies in pursuit of supporting the Zionist criminal network, and its efforts to instigate conflict across the world for the sake of oil and underground wealth—now extending even to Latin America—he added: “Such a government is certainly not one that the Islamic Republic would seek cooperation or relations with.”

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

Persepolis defeat Shams Azar to move top: 2025/26 PGPL

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team defeated Shams Azar 2-1 to go provisionally top of the 2025/26 Iran’s Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Friday.

Persepolis captain Soroush Rafiei gave the visiting team an early lead just nine minutes into the match but Saeb Mohebi leveled the score in the 22nd minute.

Oston Urunov scored the winner for Persepolis in the 74th minute at the Sardar Azadegan Stadium.

It was Osmar Loss’s second win out of two matches after taking charge of Persepolis as Vahid Hashemian’s replacement.

Persepolis moved top of the table with 18 points.

Elsewhere, Paykan defeated Malavan 1-0 in Tehran and Zob Ahan were held by Kheybar to a 1-1 draw in Isfahan.

On Saturday, Tractor will host Chadormalou in Tabriz and Aluminum meet Fajr Sepasi in Arak.

Esteghlal will move up top of the table on Sunday if the Blues defeat Foolad in Tehran.

Iran edge Turkmenistan at 2025 CAFA U18 Women’s Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Turkmenistan 1-0 at the 2025 CAFA U18 Women’s Championship on Thursday.

The Persian girls, who had lost to Kyrgyzstan and defeated Tajikistan 2-0, will play Uzbekistan on Saturday.

The tournament takes place from November 22 to 29 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, at the new UFA National Football Center.

It’s a single round-robin format.

Iran rout Iraq at FIBA World Cup 2027 Asian qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran made sure to make a lasting first impression in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers by raining 19 three-pointers in their opening game against Iraq to win 94-68.

Iran’s three-pointers made totals for the 3rd most made by a team in a single game of the Asian Qualifiers. This would also be the most three-pointers made by a West Asian team.

It was not a one-man display of sharpshooting either as both Matin Aghajanpour and Behnam Yakhchali both dropped 5 triples each. Sina Vahedi and Arman Zangeneh then both added 3 three-pointers from their end.

They were just one more three-pointer short of being just the 7th team ever in the World Cup Qualifiers to make 20 three-pointers.

Switzerland down Iran at 2025 World Women’s Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Switzerland opened their debut campaign at Germany/Netherlands 2025 with a convincing 34-9 win against Iran, with all 16 players getting minutes on the court in a positive start.

Iran came in determined to open strongly, and Fatemeh Khalili Behfar delivered early with a string of solid saves. But mistakes in their attack quickly opened the door for Switzerland, who, carried by Era Baumann’s early impact,

took control and moved to a 7-3 lead by the tenth minute.

As the minutes rolled on, Switzerland grew more confident. Entering the match as clear favorites, they slowly started to show exactly why. Mia Emmenegger, Tabea Schmid and Era Baumann led the charge, combining for 13 of Switzerland’s 19 goals.

Most of Switzerland’s goals came through quick transitions, as they were intent on finishing their attacks as fast as possible. Iran, meanwhile, struggled with the pace; their average attack lasted around 39 seconds and often ended in failure, allowing Switzerland to keep dictating the flow until the end of the half.

Not much changed in the second half, as Iran’s problems continued on both ends of the court. They were unable to score for 11 minutes, while Switzerland kept pouncing even with heavy rotations across the squad. Seraina Kuratli was exceptional between the posts, picking up exactly where Lea Schüpbach had left off, saving six of Iran’s seven early attempts.

For Iran, Fatemeh Merikh remained their best performer with three goals in what was a difficult start to the World Championship. This marks the second time they have scored only nine goals at the flagship competition, and their second-lowest tally overall after scoring eight goals in 2021 against Angola, [ihf.info](#) reported.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Hungary and Senegal on Nov. 29 and Dec. 1, respectively.

Iran not to attend 2026 World Cup draw

TEHRAN – Iran’s football federation will not attend the 2026 FIFA World Cup draw after two top officials were denied visas.

The draw ceremony will be held in Washington, DC, next week.

The United States has issued visas only for four members of the delegation – Amir Ghalenoei (head coach), Mehdi Kharati (executive director), Omid Jamali (director of international relations), and Amir Mehdi Alavi (spokesperson). Visa requests for Mehdi Taj, Mehdi Nabi, and Mehdi Malek-Abad were reportedly denied.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino, in early September, had assured the members of the Iran national team that FIFA would do its utmost to resolve visa-related issues.

“We have informed FIFA that the decisions taken are unrelated to sport and that the members of the Iranian delegation will not participate in the World Cup draw,” Alavi said.

Iran beat Palestine in AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026 qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran came from behind to defeat Palestine 3-1 in their AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers Group D tie on Friday.

Iran were inches away from taking the lead in the 19th minute after Palestine goalkeeper Hamza Sobhie and Mustafa Alkabra got in each other’s way, allowing Jafar Asadi to nod towards goal but Talal Ahmed was in position to clear off the line.

Palestine struck the opener after a surging run from Jamal Obaid in the 43rd minute – which was initially stopped by Mohammad-taha Kaviani – but the clearance went straight to Adam Kafafi, who found the bottom corner past Bardiya Dorri.

It took Iran only four minutes after the restart to pull level as Asadi latched on to a pass behind full-back Alkabra and picked his spot with a precise low curler beyond Sobhie’s outstretched hand, [the-afc.com](#) reported.

The Central Asian side struck again in the 68th minute thanks to a brilliant Abbas Rafie surging run before releasing Asadi into space to bend the ball into the far corner.

The comeback was sealed four minutes later when Mahan Beheshti skipped away from three markers to dash into the box and pick out the bottom corner.

Iran will play hosts India on Sunday and will advance to the final tournament with a draw.

Canberra labels IRGC as ‘state sponsor of terror’ after Australian police reject allegations

The ‘unjustifiable’ move appears aimed at appeasing Israel

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has categorically condemned the Australian government’s stigmatizing of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Guards Corps (IRGC), saying Tehran is set to adopt whatever measure necessary to protect the status and credibility of the Iranian Armed Forces against any “hostile labeling.”

The Australian government this week designated the IRGC a “state sponsor of terrorism.” Canberra accused the IRGC of carrying out two attacks on Jewish centers in Sydney and Melbourne in 2024 – allegations that Australian police later found to be untrue after they were first raised in August.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran regards this move as illegal, unjustifiable and in violation of legal-international rules and norms regarding respect for governments’ national sovereignty,” said the Iranian Foreign Ministry in a statement.

It added Iran expresses its hatred of certain Australian politicians’ following in the footsteps of the Israeli regime when it comes to spreading lies against Iran, highlighting the Australian government’s “international responsibility for this wrongful act.”

“This irresponsible move is in



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (R) accused Iran of “antisemitic” attacks on Australian soil during a press conference held in August.

line with the egregious mistake that the Australian government made based on completely unfounded accusations fabricated by the Israeli regimes security agencies and compromised age-old diplomatic ties between Iran and Australia to pay ransom to the occupying Israeli regime,” the statement added.

Approximately two weeks before the controversial designation, Australia’s Parliament passed a law allowing the government to list foreign state entities as sponsors of terrorism.

The blacklisting of the IRGC had been anticipated since August,

when Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the expulsion of Iran’s ambassador during a press conference. Albanese justified his decision by claiming that the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) had concluded Iran was responsible for two “antisemitic attacks”: one targeting a diner in Sydney and the other a synagogue in Melbourne. At the same press conference, he announced his next move would be the stigmatization of the IRGC.

Albanese presented no supporting evidence for these accusations. Prior to the press conference, Australia’s federal police had

already stated that 15 reported antisemitic incidents across the country—incidents which enabled the government to rush through new laws targeting pro-Palestinian protests—had been orchestrated by organized crime figures, not alleged antisemites.

Further undermining the government’s claims, a formal government inquiry in the Australian state of New South Wales fully exonerated the Islamic Republic of Iran in October from any involvement in a series of “antisemitic attacks”.

The exoneration was delivered during a parliamentary Q&A session concerning the NSW Police’s “Strike Force Pearl,” which investigated 14 serious attacks on Jewish properties and institutions. In a clear response to questioning, the police force stated it had “nil holdings” linking Iran or its agents to the perpetration of these incidents.

Tehran and Canberra have traditionally enjoyed frictionless ties. Australia’s unforeseen and unprecedented escalation of tensions with Iran occurred after Prime Minister Albanese faced backlash from Israel for backing a two-state solution in the occupied Palestinian territories. Analysts believe the fallout with Iran was designed to appease Israeli ire.

Tehran extends condolences after Hong Kong’s deadly blaze

TEHRAN – Iran’s Foreign Ministry on Friday expressed condolences to the families of victims of the catastrophic residential fire in Hong Kong, where at least 128 individuals have been confirmed dead and nearly 200 remain unaccounted for.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei conveyed the sympathy of the Iranian government and people to the families of those killed, as well as to Chinese authorities. He also wished a swift recovery for the dozens injured in the blaze.

Officials said the fire—one of the deadliest to strike the city in decades—was brought under control 42 hours after it first erupted in a densely populated public housing estate in Tai Po. At least 79 residents were injured, and the death toll may rise further as hundreds remain missing.

The fire began on the lower floors of Wang Cheong House,

part of the eight-tower Wang Fuk Court complex that housed more than 4,000 residents, many of them elderly. The estate was undergoing renovation at the time, and all buildings were wrapped in bamboo scaffolding and green protective mesh. Investigators found flammable polystyrene boards—bearing the name of a construction company—blocking several windows, which officials said helped the flames spread rapidly across multiple buildings.

“The mesh nets ignited and quickly spread to the polystyrene boards around the windows, resulting in fires in other floors and buildings,” an official statement read, adding that the extreme heat shattered windows and allowed the fire to move indoors.

Firefighters faced hazardous conditions, with temperatures inside parts of the building reportedly exceeding 500°C (930°F). Falling scaffolding and reigniting



units also hampered their efforts. Authorities said fire alarms across all eight buildings in the complex were found to be nonfunctional following inspections.

A police investigation into the cause of the blaze and the rapid

spread across the estate is expected to take several weeks. Meanwhile, displaced residents—many spending a third night in temporary shelters—are calling for answers as recovery teams continue searching through the ruins for the missing.

Iran, Afghanistan discuss ways to remove barriers in mutual trade



TEHRAN- Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade, during a meeting with his Afghan counterpart in Istanbul, emphasized the removal of trade barriers between the two countries.

During the meeting between Nooruddin Azizi, the minister of commerce and industries of Afghanistan, and Seyed Mohammad Atabak, the minister of industry, mining, and trade of Iran, the two sides discussed and exchanged views on the development of trade cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan.

Atabak, in this meeting, emphasized the necessity of expanding trade relations between the two countries and called for the removal of trade barriers between them.

Azizi, for his part, stated: "Border trade with Iran is on the agenda, and we call for the facilitation of trade in this regard."

In this meeting, the two sides emphasized the removal of trade barriers and efforts to increase the volume of trade between Iran and Afghanistan, and understandings were reached in this regard.

The Iranian minister, had traveled to Istanbul to participate in the fifth meeting of ECO trade ministers.

Mahmoud Siadat, Head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, has identified the development of transit and the smooth flow of customs procedures as one of Afghanistan's priorities, and said: "Afghanistan is ready for a leap forward and must prepare the ground by relying on the transfer of knowledge and modern technology; in this regard, Iran can be a good helper."

Spoking about social and cultural commonalities that should form the basis of agreements and cooperation, Siadat sated that a follow-up mechanism must be established, and efforts must be results-oriented, adding, "Perhaps we reach good agreements during negotiations and consultations, but what matters is the successful implementation of projects and achieving results."

Also, Hamidreza Salehi, the Secretary-General of the Federation for the Export of Energy and Related Industries of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), noting that suitable infrastructure for a leap in relations between Iran and Afghanistan has not been provided, emphasized: "The private sectors of the two countries must pressure their governments to focus on necessary areas and provide the infrastructure."

He believes, "The capacities in both countries are high, and we must be able to meet each other's needs through proper needs assessment."

Salehi evaluated Iran's LPG production as being at a high level and added: "The groundwork for LPG exports exists, and we know that Afghanistan has an urgent need for it. Therefore, the best decision is to strive for a proper needs assessment and to plan for timely export and import."

He deemed it necessary to define a framework for joint investment in production through the cooperation of the private sectors of Iran and Afghanistan, relying on chambers, associations, and joint chambers.

During a meeting between members of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s trade delegation and the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, in Kabul on November 17, the need to develop relations between the chambers of both countries was highlighted, and major Iranian

companies were invited to invest in Afghanistan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A high-ranking Iranian economic delegation led by Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak arrived in Kabul on November 17 for talks on boosting trade and investment with Afghanistan.

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

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

Iranian trade mission eyes industrial revival, investment opportunities in Cuba

From Page 1 ► He asked the Cuban Chamber of Commerce to provide a list of factories that have gone dormant and outline the country's priority needs to guide Iranian companies exploring investment opportunities.

Hassanzadeh said both nations have endured years of heavy sanctions but have developed capacities in industrial machinery, agricultural technology, food processing and engineering services.

He said Iran could play a role in restoring Cuba's once prominent sugar industry and noted that cement was another sector where joint production would be more efficient than Cuban imports.

He added that Iranian investors were prepared to build several cement plants in Cuba under clear regulatory conditions and investment guarantees.

He also pointed to complementarities in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment sectors, saying the combination of Cuba's biomedical expertise and Iran's manufacturing capabilities could support new joint initiatives.

Mining, minerals and steel cooperation

Ghadir Ghiyafeh, ICCIMA deputy head, said mining represents one of the strongest pillars for long-term cooperation.

He described Cuba as an underdeveloped but resource-rich mining market and said Iranian firms have advanced technical and engineering experience in mineral exploration, extraction and processing.

He said Iranian companies could support Cuba from geological surveys to production of cobalt and nickel, provided Cuban ministries outline investment procedures and offer clear legal frameworks. The Cuban government, he added, had indicated foreign investors would be allowed to repatriate earnings under recently updated laws.

Ghiyafeh also highlighted Iran's six decades of experience



in steel production and said engineering companies were ready to help train Cuban specialists and accelerate plans for a national steel plant. Khuzestan Steel Company, one of Iran's major producers, has already expressed readiness to work with Cuban counterparts.

Call for structured investment proposals and regulatory clarity

In a separate meeting with Cuba's minister of domestic trade, Hassanzadeh urged the government to prepare a formal investment package tailored for Iranian companies. He said Iran had the industrial depth to support a broad range of Cuban priorities—from agriculture and mining to petrochemicals, tourism and energy—provided Havana offers transparent rules for foreign investment.

He said Iranian firms were especially interested in rehabilitating large Cuban plants that have been inactive for years, but needed stronger familiarity with Cuba's regulatory environment and assurances on investment security.

In the same meeting, ICCIMA Deputy Head Ghadir Ghiyafeh said a clear legal framework could help push bilateral trade volumes to one billion dollars within five years. He listed construction, roadbuilding, food industries, agriculture and mining as some of the preferred sectors for Iranian investors.

The Cuban minister said President Miguel Diaz-Canel has ordered ministries to identify opportunities for importing food,

clothing and consumer goods from Iran following the 2025 Havana International Fair. He said Cuba aims to boost domestic production as a buffer against U.S. sanctions and is prepared to support foreign investors willing to take on risk.

Strengthening ties at Havana International Fair

During Iran National Day at the Havana International Fair (FIHAV 2025), Hassanzadeh said the presence of Iranian manufacturers and entrepreneurs reflected a shared commitment to expanding economic cooperation. He noted that despite sanctions, Iran has achieved significant advances across industrial, scientific and technological fields and urged both countries to translate their political ties into stronger economic outcomes.

He outlined areas where Iranian firms could contribute in Cuba, including dam construction, road and housing projects, hydropower development and renewable energy. He said both sides must deepen dialogue and plan jointly to unlock opportunities in biotechnology, energy and agriculture.

Cuba's industry minister, Eloy Álvarez Martínez, said the two nations' political solidarity should now be matched by practical cooperation, citing the 2023 comprehensive cooperation agreement as an essential framework. He said small, medium and large firms from both countries should form direct partnerships and move forward with defined industrial projects.

He added that Cuba values

Iran's long-standing support during its struggle against sanctions and said Havana hopes its collaboration with friendly nations will help drive the island toward broader economic development.

Cuban president invites Iranian food brands to Cuban chain stores

During a visit to Iran's pavilion at the FIHAV, the president of Cuba invited Iranian food industry brands to enter Cuban chain stores.

Miguel Díaz-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 Hassanzadeh, Ghiyafeh, and Zabiollah Naderi, Ambassador 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 Díaz-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.

Industrial parks, new players in energy optimization

TEHRAN- The Director General of the Office for Coordination, Design, Measurement, and Validation of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) stated: Industrial estates can benefit from the advantages by participating in consumption optimization plans and receiving energy saving certificates.

Salar Atashpar, in an interview with an IRNA economic reporter, referring to a plan recently implemented in Yazd city where industrial estates entered consumption management plans, said that the consumption management projects being implemented in Yazd and other areas are in line with consumption management optimization plans, which are carried out with private sector investment and within the framework of the energy optimization and environment market.

He continued: "In this plan, investors can implement the projects and receive energy saving certificates based on the savings achieved during the years when the return on investment and profit occurs."

The SATBA official added that these certificates can be sold on the energy exchange on the relevant board, specifically the 'Energy Optimization Scheme Board,' allowing investors to benefit from them.

Atashpar emphasized that this approach covers the principal investment return and the associated risks, adding: "Among the most important projects defined or being defined in this market, which are highly significant for resolving issues during peak consumption periods, are plans for modifying cooling systems,

including evaporative (water) coolers and gas coolers."

He noted that these plans can play a significant role in achieving the anticipated goals, highlighting: "There is a program to achieve the necessary level of savings so that, alongside the development of renewables, we can resolve the related problems of energy supply during peak demand periods."

Solar generation capacity across Iran's industrial parks has expanded sharply over the past year, rising from 23 megawatts to 400 megawatts as part of a broader plan to supply these zones entirely with renewable electricity, according to the head of the Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO).

Reza Ansari, speaking on the sidelines of the power industry exhibition, in mid-November, said a major national effort to ensure stable energy supply for industrial zones has taken shape over the past year. Solar output in these areas, which stood at about 23 megawatts last year, has now climbed to 400 megawatts, signaling a significant leap in renewable capacity within the country's industrial network.

He said Iran's industrial parks and zones currently have a combined 5,100 megawatts of nominal stable power capacity, including small-scale combined heat and power (CHP) systems and solar units. Of this total, about 1,100 megawatts are operational, including roughly 400 megawatts of solar power and around 700 megawatts of CHP.

With electricity demand in industrial parks estimated at nearly 4,000 megawatts, Ansari

said the long-term goal is to meet all consumption through solar power.

To support that target, the organization has signed an agreement with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) to build 500 megawatts of new solar plants inside or adjacent to industrial towns by the end of the year.

He said pilot projects are underway in three provinces. At Shamsabad Industrial Park, construction of a solar facility has already started, while in Khorasan Razavi, authorities have acquired a 1,000-hectare plot across from the province's main industrial town to host one of Iran's largest solar parks.

Ansari said rooftop solar installations for industrial units are also being phased in, alongside plans for a shared solar-energy town.

He said small and medium-sized enterprises lack the financial and institutional resources of large companies, which makes them more vulnerable to outages. Power cuts of two to three days a week raise production costs by around 10 percent, he said, adding that these increases feed directly into consumer inflation. Point-to-point inflation in the food and beverages sector is now above 60 percent, with higher electricity-linked costs acting as a contributing factor.

Ansari said Iran has more than 880 industrial parks and 50,000 active production units, many involved in food and beverage manufacturing. Any disruption to electricity supply in these zones directly affects prices of essential goods, he said, calling for a more protective approach to power management in the sector.

Inflation rate rises 1.5%

TEHRAN - The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on October 22, which marks the end of the eighth Iranian calendar month

Aban, at 40.4 percent, rising 1.5 percent from the figure for the twelve-month ended to the seventh month.

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at

49.4 percent in the eighth month, which means families have paid an average of 49.4 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the

same month in the preceding year.

The point-to-point inflation rate rose 0.8 percent in the eighth month from the previous month.

I wrote so that monsters wouldn't erase me: Gazan author

Wasim Said tells Tehran Times his testimony began amid ruins of Beit Hanoun and continued through renewed attacks and starvation

By Sahar Ddajoo

TEHRAN- In the midst of Gaza's devastation, where entire neighborhoods have vanished and the international community largely remains silent, young Palestinian writer Wasim Said has emerged as one of the clearest voices documenting a genocide as it unfolds.

His book, Witness to the Hellfire of Genocide, is not a memoir of survival but a real-time testament written between bombardments, hunger, and repeated displacement.

Returning briefly to his destroyed hometown of Beit Hanoun after the January 2025 ceasefire, he began recording what he calls his "journey through hell," only to be forced to flee once more.

In this interview, Said speaks to the Tehran Times about writing under fire, resisting erasure, and preserving truth for future generations.

This is the text of the interview:

What compelled you to start writing this testimony amidst an ongoing genocide rather than after surviving it?

I began writing after the ceasefire in January 2025, when I returned to my hometown of Beit Hanoun in the far northeast of the Gaza Strip. I started writing to recount my journey through hell, imagining the war would end and that I would finally return to Beit Hanoun and to my home—even though it had been reduced to rubble, even though our land had been bulldozed. But its air and its soil are things words cannot describe.

I wanted to describe how my soul suddenly felt at peace there, how my tears soaked the ruins of my home, the sight of its soil, and my grandfather kissing it.



But as soon as I began writing, the genocide returned, and I was forced to flee once again—this time even more brutally.

The only reason I kept writing was to leave behind a will, in case the monsters killed me.

How did you manage to keep writing through the constant threat of death, hunger, and bombardment?

Writing was extremely, extremely difficult. But the thing that terrified me the most—and pushed me to write despite everything—was my fear of being killed and erased, of being remembered as just a number, forgotten along with my suffering.

Your book conveys resilience and the moral structure of Gaza society under siege. How do you see the role of solidarity and cultural resistance in the survival of your community?

The moral fabric of Gaza's society has been shaken by genocide, starvation, and continuous displacement. It has cracked. Yet despite all this, I believe our society will be remembered in history as one of the greatest peoples—one that endured, supported one another, and showed unmatched patience in the

face of the most vicious and criminal army, while being abandoned by everyone.

But when it comes to "steadfastness," what scares me most is the romanticization of resilience. The situation is catastrophic in every sense of the word. Here I am today—after what they call a "cease-fire"—still unable to return to my city, which is completely destroyed. Yesterday, the rains flooded my tent and ruined it. I can only hope this hell ends soon.

How do you hope your real-time documentation of genocide will impact readers worldwide and influence the international response?

I hope the truth reaches the world and becomes part of recorded history—preserved for future generations—so that perhaps it can change the suffering that Palestinians continue to endure.

Can you share a particularly poignant story from your experiences that embodies the spirit of hope and resistance despite the horrors?

There are countless stories of solidarity, compassion, and mutual support—of people sharing a handful of flour with others at the

height of famine. As I told you, my community is truly remarkable.

But I believe that highlighting these stories can sometimes contribute to the romanticization of resilience. It can create a comforting illusion for the audience that we are coping with this hell, numbing them from taking any moral or humanitarian action against this genocide.

What message would you send to the international community and those who remain silent or complicit in the face of these ongoing atrocities?

My message to the world is: this is the truth. This is what the monsters have done to us.

And to those who remained silent or complicit—history will not forget. It will remember them as participants in the largest genocide of the 21st century. Their future generations will curse them.

In how many countries has your book been distributed so far? Have you received any feedback from readers or representatives of the book?

The book is available in Arabic and English, and it will soon be available in Italian, Spanish, and Greek.

It can be found in Arab countries, Europe, and the United States.

All I hope is that my voice and the voice of my people reaches the world: our genocide, our blood, the hunger of our children, the tears of our mothers, the stories of our martyrs killed by the monsters.

I hope all of this reaches everyone—so the world knows the truth about these monsters and their crimes, and so it is preserved for future generations to ensure this never happens again.

Israeli troops execute two surrendering Palestinians in Jenin



Shocking video verified by multiple human rights monitors shows Israeli forces shooting dead two unarmed Palestinian men at point-blank range Thursday after the pair emerged from a building in Jenin with hands raised and shirts lifted in clear surrender.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health named the victims as Al-Muntasir Billah Mahmoud Qassem Abdullah, 26, and Yousef Ali Yousef Asa'sa, 37.

Israeli troops immediately seized and withheld their bodies, a recurring practice that prevents independent forensic examination.

The United Nations Human Rights Office condemned the killings as "brazen summary executions," stating they fit a "chilling pattern" of unlawful lethal force. Spokesperson Jeremy Laurence described the footage as evidence of grave breaches of international law.

Far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, whose ministry oversees the unit responsible, celebrated the officers on X, declaring they "acted exactly as expected" and that "terrorists must die."

The Palestinian Authority labeled the incident a "brutal war crime," while Hamas called it part of a deliberate campaign of extermination in the occupied territory.

Thursday's executions unfolded amid Israel's sharpest escalation in the West Bank since October 7, 2023, which has seen more than 1,000 Palestinians killed and thousands detained.

Recent days alone witnessed the arrest of roughly 60 people in Tubas Governorate—many of them children or former prisoners—accompanied by widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure.

In the Jenin refugee camp, military bulldozers have begun leveling structures, while Save the Children reports entire communities confined indoors, denying over 700 children access to schooling and protection services.

Internal Israeli military investigations into soldier misconduct almost never result in prosecution, reinforcing what many observers call a culture of impunity.

Yellow line of death: Israeli strikes swallow Gaza wave by wave

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – In the shadow of a supposed truce brokered under U.S. President Donald Trump's much-touted 20-point plan on October 10, Gaza remains a graveyard of shattered illusions.

Israeli strikes between November 22 and 28 killed at least 100 Palestinians — 24 in one of the deadliest 24-hour periods since the ceasefire began on November 22, four more on November 24, 33 in airstrikes on tents and homes in Khan Younis and Gaza City on November 25, one in central Gaza on November 26, and several more in drone and artillery attacks on November 27 and 28, including a child injured by tank fire in Rafah and a man killed in Bani Suheila.

These are not isolated mishaps but a grim continuation of a pattern: near-daily incursions that have claimed over 347 Palestinian lives since the ceasefire was announced, according to tallies by the Gaza Health Ministry and UN, with more than 70 children among the dead.

From Khan Younis to Beit Lahia, drones and artillery targeted civilians near the infamous "yellow line," an arbitrary boundary that has morphed into a de facto license for lethal force.

On November 28, Israeli tank fire injured one child in Rafah, while airstrikes and drone attacks in the

area killed at least one more, as forces demolished tunnels and pursued fighters in eastern Rafah.

Four days earlier, witnesses in Maghazi refugee camp recounted 18 hours of desperate digging through rubble, interrupted by warning fire from Israeli drones circling above.

The violations are systematic: the Gaza Media Office documented 497 breaches by November 22, including 228 bombings and raids beyond agreed lines. By November 28, observers updated the count to over 535, encompassing gunfire, shelling, and airstrikes across all five Gaza governorates.

In Khan Younis, tanks advanced 300 meters into restricted zones, razing homes in house-to-house sweeps justified as "defensive." Beit Lahia saw warplanes obliterate three individuals Israel vaguely labeled a "threat."

On November 27, AFP quoted sources, including a Hamas leader, confirming negotiations with mediators for the safe passage of trapped fighters beyond the yellow line in southern Gaza.

The next day, Israel claimed it killed nine such fighters in tunnels via air strikes and engineering means, bringing the total to 30 and vowing to continue the "manhunt."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israeli troops injured amid deadly aggression on Syria

At least 10 Syrian civilians are killed

From page 1 ► Air Force units from the occupying regime reportedly rushed to the scene but were unable to carry out immediate strikes because the occupying troops and the armed locals were positioned too close to one another during the exchange.

Earlier, Syrian sources confirmed 13 civilians were killed and 25 others injured in the Israeli airstrikes and aggression on Beit Jinn. At least two children are among the fatalities while several civilians remain stuck under the rubble.

Israeli occupation forces are believed to have withdrawn to the outskirts of Beit Jinn, 10 km away from the border with Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Funeral processions were held in Beit Jinn as the town mourns its dead. Syrian sources reported intense Israeli drone activity over Beit

Jinn and parts of the western Damascus countryside.

Syrians also said that an occupation regime unit invaded and patrolled a village in the Quneitra countryside, informing residents that digging and fortification work would soon begin west of the village. Israeli warplanes were also seen flying over Quneitra province.

The latest developments underscore a widening Israeli pattern to occupy more Syrian territory and to steadily undermine its security.

Apart from widening its illegal occupation, the regime seeks to control strategic sites such as key Syrian water reserves that serve as a lifeline for communities as well as areas it deems too valuable to relinquish. This posture signals the likelihood of deeper instability in the period ahead.

Lebanon, one year after a sham "ceasefire"

From page 1 ► 24 border villages are now partially or entirely empty, while reconstruction efforts remain piecemeal at best.

The economic toll is staggering: damages to buildings and infrastructure exceed \$3.4 billion, and the broader impact on southern Lebanon surpasses \$5 billion.

For many communities, this trauma is not new. Since 1948, waves of displacement—from the Hula massacre to the 1978 "Litani Operation," the 1982 invasion, the long occupation until 2000, the 2006 war, and now the 2024 conflict—have created a "double memory": one of uprooting and one of rebuilding. Homes are reconstructed not merely as shelters, but as vessels of identity, resilience, and Resistance.

Israel's maneuvering

The military dimension of the conflict remains central. Since the ceasefire, Israel has committed over 10,000 violations of Lebanese territory, including thousands of airstrikes and incursions, systematically breaching UN Resolution 1701.

Tel Aviv's objective is crystal clear: control five strategic zones (Blat, Jal al-Deir, Dawawir, Hammams, and al-Buna), whose elevated terrain offers fire-control dominance over southern villages up to the Litani River.

Historically devastated and subjected to rebuilding bans, these areas form what Israel envisions as a "military belt" shielding colonial settlements in the Upper and Western Galilee.

Even a single rocket from south of the Litani, however rudimentary, threatens these settlements, fueling Israel's enduring ambition to reshape realities on the ground.

Simultaneously, Israel tests the Syrian front, signaling a willingness to regionalize the confrontation—demonstrating that Israel has never sought genuine negotiations but rather tactical leverage in service of broader strategic goals.

The illusion of mediation

Political negotiations in Lebanon are equally entangled. External actors, particularly Egypt, have attempted to mediate, framing their role as preventing a larger Israeli escalation. Discussions often focus on "removing pretexts" that Israel could use to justify deeper incursions—potentially as far as the Awali River.

Yet behind the façade of mediation lies a deeper truth: Israel's ambitions are unapologetically maximalist. Its goal is not compromise but to rewrite the legacies of 2000 and 2006, imposing a vision of "border security" rooted in the ideology of Greater Israel.

Such ambitions are invariably facilitated by the U.S., transforming Israel into a regional instrument for reshaping the Middle East according to Washington's strategic blueprint.

Meanwhile, three variables, indeed, define Lebanon's current vulnerability:

1. Internal division: Lebanon's fragmented political landscape weakens its negotiating



position, exposing state institutions to U.S.–Israeli pressure for sovereign concessions, while domestic factions compete to reshape internal power balances under the guise of reform. This plays directly into an external objective: eroding the resistance's popular base and steering Lebanon toward a settlement of weakness.

2. The latest conflict: While critics emphasize losses in southern communities, they understate the military achievements: for 66 days, Israeli forces were unable to hold strategic points, and rocket deterrence was reasserted.

3. Regional mediation: Arab involvement, particularly Egypt's, increasingly echoes U.S. messaging, warning Lebanon of collapse and isolation should it refuse Israeli "guarantees." Rather than shielding Lebanon, this integrates the region into a broader U.S.–Israeli project aimed at redefining the Middle East at the expense of Arab sovereignty.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump's Venezuela war drums: Drug fight or oil grab?

From page 1 ► have described the operations as extrajudicial killings. Washington has not provided evidence that the targeted vessels were actually carrying drugs. Reports from the region say many of those killed were fishermen, not traffickers. This absence of proof is central to understanding why Trump's threats of expanding the campaign onto land have generated such alarm.

The U.S. government's claim that high-ranking Venezuelan officials are part of a drug-trafficking network known as the "Cartel de los Soles" is also contested. Experts

say this term is more a political label than a structured criminal organization, and U.S. authorities have not produced clear evidence linking the Venezuelan state to major drug flows. Even the U.S. Justice Department, in private briefings to lawmakers, has said its legal opinion only covers strikes on suspected drug boats in international waters and does not justify attacks on land inside Venezuela. This makes Trump's suggestion of upcoming ground action even more legally questionable.

For many observers, the drug-trafficking narrative func-

tions as a political pretext. They argue that Washington's broader objective is to topple the government of President Nicolas Maduro and gain leverage over Venezuela's vast oil resources—the largest proven reserves in the world. U.S. policy toward Venezuela has long been shaped by the strategic value of these energy assets, and critics believe the current military posture fits into a wider pattern of pressure aimed at achieving regime change. Maduro has publicly accused the United States of using drug allegations as an excuse to prepare for military intervention, a

claim that finds resonance among regional governments wary of U.S. action.

The combination of Trump's public language, the large-scale U.S. military deployment, and the record of lethal strikes at sea has created a dangerous moment. Without transparent evidence to support Washington's accusations, the impression grows that this campaign is motivated more by geopolitical goals than by counter-narcotics efforts. A ground operation would not only violate Venezuelan sovereignty but also risk triggering a wider regional crisis.

Lufthansa to resume flights to Iran from January 16, 2026

TEHRAN – Lufthansa said it is set to resume flights to Iran on Jan. 16, 2026, following security and operational assessments carried out in coordination with Iranian aviation authorities.

Preparations for the German carrier's return began several weeks ago with visits by Lufthansa's regional manager in Iran, the company's senior aviation security and risk management officer, and the Austrian Airlines country manager.

The team held meetings with Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, Imam Khomeini International Airport and other operational centers. They inspected facilities, systems and management processes, and reviewed technical requirements with Iranian officials before Lufthansa finalized its decision to restart flights.

Iran's Civil Aviation Organization said the resumption of Lufthansa services reflects demand for international travel and Iran's extensive ties with other countries. It added that the move could encourage other European airlines to re-enter the Iranian market, strengthening links with Europe and expanding Iran's global connections.

In addition, the organization said coordination with neighboring countries, expanding regional routes and opening new destinations remain priorities for Iranian carriers.

It said operational and technical issues affecting Kuala Lumpur flights by Iranian



airlines have been resolved, allowing Iran Airtour to begin services to Malaysia this week.

In regional markets, Kish Air resumed flights to Tajikistan last month, with plans to add destinations including Shiraz, Kish and other Iranian cities. Growing demand from Tajik tourists has driven the expansion.

The Civil Aviation Organization said talks are under way to increase flights between Iran and Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, with proposals submitted by Iranian and foreign airlines.

It added that rising demand from Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain and other Arab countries for travel to northern Iran has prompted preparations for VIP and non-scheduled flights in the region.

Moreover, negotiations to expand the Tehran-Paris route remain active, the organization said, with any outcome dependent on completing international procedures and ongoing discussions.

Groundbreaking research reveals two-thirds of Babylonian Bisotun inscription may be lost

A new study published in the journal IRAQ has cast doubt on the long-accepted completeness of the Babylonian version of the famous Bisotun (Behistun) Inscription, one of the most important trilingual records of the ancient world. The research, led by Dr. Johannes Hackl of Friedrich Schiller University Jena and conducted with the support of the Bisotun World Heritage Base and Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, suggests that nearly two-thirds of the Babylonian text—carved on a rock face in western Iran—may be irrecoverably lost, contrary to what has been widely believed for decades.

The Bisotun Inscription, commissioned by the Achaemenid King Darius I in the late 6th century BCE, records his rise to power and suppression of rebellions across the Persian Empire. Its Babylonian version has long been studied alongside the Old Persian and Elamite texts as a key to understanding the period. Since 1978, the standard reference for this version has been the edition by Elizabeth N. Von Voigtlander, which claimed to present nearly the entire text.

However, Dr. Hackl's on-site examination—made possible through collaboration with Iranian authorities—and his analysis of earlier records reveal that the inscription is far more damaged than Von Voigtlander's edition suggests. The study concludes that the current condition of the Babylonian version largely corresponds to what 19th-century scholars like Henry Rawlinson and Leonard King documented, with large portions of the text simply missing. The research indicates that Von Voigtlander's edition, over a monumental effort, appears to have overestimated what could be read from the eroded surface and the late-20th-century latex squeezes she used.

The findings have significant implications for historians and linguists, as many unique passages attributed to the Babylonian version may be based on unverifiable data. Dr. Hackl urges scholars to treat these sections as reconstructions rather than confirmed text.



Commenting on the essential role of local collaboration, Dr. Hackl stated, "This research underscores the vital importance of on-site verification and the invaluable role of local heritage custodians in preserving and interpreting Iran's rich history."

Despite the academic significance of the research and its official approvals, the study's initial lack of explicit acknowledgment in the publication drew criticism from some quarters. Iranian archaeologist Fereidoun Biglari noted on social media:

"A significant paper, but its value is diminished by the complete lack of acknowledgment for the Bisotun World Heritage Base, without whose collaboration and permission this research could not have proceeded. Our local institutions and experts deserve due credit."

The Bisotun Inscription was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2006 and remains one of Iran's most treasured archaeological landmarks. This new research not only revises our understanding of a key historical document but also highlights the ongoing need for transparent and collaborative international scholarship.

Tourism minister delivers Pezeshkian's message calling for enhanced ties with China

From Page 1 ▶ "I am carrying Dr. Pezeshkian's message for you and for the President of China. The President of Iran emphasizes that our economic, political, and cultural relations are already strong, and this strength should also be reinforced in the areas of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts. The expectation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is that our cultural cooperation will move into a practical and more deeply developed phase," Salehi-Amiri said.

He added that the Culture Ministries of both countries possess the necessary capabilities to enhance ties, noting that Iran's sustainable security and tourism capacities can lay the groundwork for deeper cooperation.

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen cultural collaboration, he proposed the creation of an Asian framework for heritage cooperation aimed at boosting the region's soft power.

Salehi-Amiri also highlighted Iran's readiness to work with China on museum technologies and artificial intelligence to better showcase the country's rich cultural heritage.

He referred to the 55th anniversary of official relations between Iran and China, suggesting that 2026 be designated as the Year of Cooperation in various cultural fields.

The minister invited his Chinese counterpart to attend the Tehran International Tourism Exhibition scheduled for February, as well as the Nowruz celebrations, which will see participation from 13 countries.

In response, Sun Yeli expressed strong support for Iran's initiatives, emphasizing the potential for expanded cooperation, particularly in tourism and cultural exchange.

Emphasis on civilizational, historical capacities of Iran, Tajikistan

In a meeting between Salehi-Amiri and Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan Matlubakhon Sattoriyon, which was held on the sidelines of the Second General Assembly of ACHA in Chongqing, the two sides emphasized strengthening cultural cooperation, preserving common heritage, and expanding research and tourism interactions.

Tourism investors exempt from land use change fees, deputy minister says

TEHRAN-- Deputy Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian has announced the exemption of investors from paying land use change fees.

Speaking in the specialized tourism panel of the Ardabil International Investment Conference on Friday, he told IRNA that previously, paying fees, which were equivalent to 80 percent of the original value of the land, was an obstacle to the investment, but with the new resolution, tourism projects are exempt from it.

He explained the government's development policies in the field of tourism, adding that the campaign of not charging construction permit fees for tourism-related projects has also been widely welcomed in 13 provinces and more than 40 cities, and Sarein county in Ardabil province is a successful model and the initiator of this plan.

He listed the reduction of project start-up costs, including the Engineering Organization tariff, as other supportive policies being pursued by the government, adding that tourism investment is a cross-sectoral issue, and the government will fully support the private sector participation, environmental considerations, and the implementation of sustainable tourism policies.

He mentioned the granting of licenses for



ism interactions.

Salehi-Amiri explained the cultural capacities of Iran and Tajikistan and the role of common heritage in strengthening mutual relations, adding: "Based on the President's emphasis, cooperation with Tajikistan is our priority, and we are happy that today the opportunity has been provided to open a new chapter in cultural relations between the two countries."

At the beginning of the meeting, he officially invited Sattoriyon to attend the Nowruz celebration in Tehran and said: "We plan to invite the ministers of culture and tourism of the countries in the Nowruz region and some special guests to Tehran to attend the Nowruz ritual and to upgrade this capacity to the level of a summit in the coming years."

Referring to the five shared intangible heritages of Iran and Tajikistan registered by UNESCO, Salehi-Amiri described these elements as civilizational capitals of the two countries and said: "Each of these heritages acts as a cultural connection between the two nations and a plan should be made for their joint preservation and introduction."

Pointing to the importance of protecting manuscripts, historical documents, and endangered monuments, he suggested that Iran is ready to raise the idea of creating a joint mechanism for the preservation of heritage at the summit.

If agreed, regular meetings can be held at various ministerial and specialized levels to strengthen the path of practical cooperation such as the restitution of artifacts, joint world

registration, and cultural counteraction to trafficking.

Salehi-Amiri also announced that Iran is ready to provide Tajikistan with its knowledge and restoration experience, and considered Tajikistan's success in the field of heritage as Iran's success.

Stating that the Cultural Heritage Ministry's Research Institute has five research institutes and 400 expert researchers, he proposed holding the first specialized conference on cultural heritage, manuscripts, archaeology, linguistics, and inscription reading between Iran and Tajikistan in Tehran and the second round of this conference in Dushanbe.

In another part of his speech, he referred to the development of tourism cooperation and said: "We have not placed any restrictions on expanding tourism exchanges with Tajikistan and have facilitated travel conditions by establishing a direct flight to Kish."

Tajik Minister of Culture also expressed her appreciation for Iran's invitation to attend the Nowruz celebration and the preparation of the joint cultural meeting, saying: "Iran and Tajikistan are two nations and one culture. We have a common language, common roots, and common understanding, and this is a great asset for the future of our cooperation."

She pointed to the Tajik President's emphasis on strengthening relations with Iran, adding: "We support all the proposals put forward by the Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage and are ready to start the first meeting of the Joint Cultural Commission during my first official visit to Tehran."

Tourism investors exempt from land use change fees, deputy minister says



mixed tourism facilities as one of the important incentive measures in recent years, saying that the new model, with the possibility of issuing separate licenses for the sale of tourism goods, has been approved by the legislator.

Shalbafian said that 2,748 tourism projects are under construction across the country, adding that all job-generating projects in handicrafts, ecotourism, and tourism can be covered from various sources of facilities.

Referring to the important position of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage as the third agency in job creation, he emphasized that the job realization rate in the tourism sector has reached more than 90 percent in the past

Sattoriyon also referred to the global registration of the Cyrus Cylinder and the role of the shared heritage in the cultural diplomacy of the two countries and said: "In the field of Persian language and Persian literature, we must also fight against cultural threats and benefit from the capacity of the cultural research institutes of the two countries."

Iran ready to transfer experiences to Maldives

Also, Salehi-Amiri met and discussed with Maldives Minister of Dhivehi Language, Culture and Heritage Adam Nasir Ibrahim on the sidelines of the Second General Assembly of (ACHA) in Chongqing on Friday morning. In this meeting, Salehi-Amiri emphasized Iran's civilizational position and the extensive potential for mutual cooperation and said that Iran has more than one million identified historical monuments, thousands of which have been nationally registered. "So far, 29 tangible and 26 intangible monuments have been registered on the UNESCO list, and we have prepared provisional registration files for 58 monuments."

Referring to Iran's strategic priorities in developing marine-based tourism, he stated that Iran, with its seven coastal provinces, has launched a national project based on a sea-based economy. "This orientation is based on the country's macro policies, and we are ready to provide our scientific, research and management experiences to Maldives."

Salehi-Amiri stated that Iran has significant scientific capacity in the field of cultural heritage, adding: "Many experts in the fields of archaeology, restoration, Iranology, and cultural studies are active in the country. We are fully prepared to provide this knowledge and experience to the Maldives through joint courses, specialized training, and scientific projects."

Pointing to Iran's position in the world's handicrafts, he continued that out of 400 known handicrafts, 299 are produced in Iran. Holding an Iranian handicrafts exhibition in Male, the capital of Maldives, could be the beginning of a new chapter in cultural and artistic cooperation between the two countries, he added.

four years.

Shalbafian also announced the exemption of the import of tourism equipment from customs duties.

Respecting the support of domestic production, he emphasized that supporting the investors is supporting the future of Iran, and supporting investment in Ardabil is supporting the future of Ardabil.

The conference was held on the sidelines of the Ardabil Expo 2025 during November 26-28 with the presence of foreign and domestic economic delegations to introduce the province's capacities.

Currently, 1,415 industrial units employing more than 40,000 people are operating in different parts of Ardabil province.

Ardabil is located on a high plateau in northwest Iran, bordering the Republic of Azerbaijan and neighboring the provinces of Gilan, East Azarbaijan, and Zanjan.

The province, with 12 counties, is known for its natural landscape, hospitality and long-standing silk and carpet trade. It is home to the UNESCO-listed Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble and attracts large numbers of visitors, particularly in summer.

Rayan intl. Al, programming contest wraps up

From Page 1 ► Enhancing algorithmic thinking, problem-solving skills, teamwork, developing innovative ideas, starting new businesses, and expanding AI engineering and programming were among the other objectives of the contest.

In the first edition of the contest, held last year, around 30,000 individuals from 137 countries took part. There were 46 countries from Europe, 38 from Asia, 24 from Africa, 18 from America, and 11 from Oceania.

The number of participants in the event highlights the global standing of the competition and its key role in developing scientific interactions among different countries.

International Combinatorics Olympiad (ICO), the Iranian Geometry Olympiad, and international technology Olympics are among other competitions held annually in Iran at the country's initiative.

The fifth ICO took place in Tehran on October 30 and 31, bringing together approximately 5,000 competitors from over 70 countries both in person and online.

Combinatorics is an area of mathematics primarily concerned with counting, both as a means and an end in obtaining results, and certain properties of finite structures.

ICO is an annual competition focusing on high-quality problems related to combinatorics. The primary objective is to help students become familiar with combinatorics as a creative, broad, and enjoyable topic in a fun and engaging manner, and provide them with



the opportunity to compete with students from other countries.

ICO is the first competition in the field of combinatorics, which includes online scoring and ranking. Participation is open to anyone interested in mathematics or computer science, from high school students to any other educational level.

The Iranian Geometry Olympiad is an annual international competition that assesses students' skills in solving geometry problems. It enhances logical thinking, imagination, and analytical thinking by using creative and innovative issues in geometry

Over 1,100 participants from 65 countries,

including Pakistan, Oman, Vietnam, Tunisia, India, Turkey, Bangladesh, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Romania, attended the second international technology Olympics, held from October 27 to 30, at Pardis Technology Park, Tehran.

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

Japan ready to implement environmental projects in Khuzestan

TEHRAN – Japanese Ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, has voiced his country's readiness to implement environmental protection projects in the southwestern Khuzestan Province, particularly in areas related to water and waste management.

The environmental challenges, such as waste accumulation, water scarcity, and high sediment transport to urban and rural areas in Khuzestan, can be managed, Mehr News Agency quoted Tsukada as saying on Tuesday during a meeting with Khuzestan Governor General Mohammad-Reza Mavalizadeh.

Utilizing modern technologies and successful experiences in the environmental engineering field, Japan can provide sustainable, low-cost, and feasible solutions to improve the situation in the province, he added.

Environmental cooperation between Iran and Japan is among the top priorities of the two nations. Japan is ready to support collaborations in water resources management, pollution management, and recycling. The country welcomes active participation in sustainable development programs in Khuzestan province, the official further noted.

Japan supports national efforts

Over the past 10 years, Japan



has made generous contributions to help Iran address environmental issues. The country's financial aid has supported the implementation of different projects to restore wetlands and Lake Urmia.

In October, with the financial support of the Government of Japan, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a cooperation document, aiming to help revive the drying Lake Urmia in north-western Iran.

Lake Urmia in West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s. The lake was once the largest in West Asia and the sixth-largest salt lake in the world, with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

The signing ceremony was

held during President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to West Azarbaijan, FAO's website announced in a press release on October 23.

The document was signed by Reza Rahmani, the Secretary of the Urmia Lake Rescue National Committee, and Ali Nazaridoust, Officer-in-Charge (on behalf of the FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran).

Titled "Enhancing Restoration Activities in Lake Urmia through the Effective Use of Agricultural Water," the initiative aims to promote sustainable agriculture and support the restoration of one of the country's most vital ecosystems — Lake Urmia.

The Urmia Lake Basin plays a critical role in ensuring Iran's food security and agricultural productivity. However, in recent years, the Basin's water resources have significantly declined due

to rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and unsustainable water use.

Recognizing the urgency of these challenges, FAO is implementing this project to promote integrated water resource management and climate-smart agricultural practices across the Basin.

The Urmia Lake component of the project will be jointly implemented by FAO and the Urmia Lake Rescue National Committee (ULRNC). It aims to scale up and operationalize improvements in agricultural water efficiency and productivity, safeguarding livelihoods and reducing pressure on water resources.

Through capacity development, the introduction of efficient irrigation technologies, and the promotion of sustainable farming methods, the project will help farmers and rural communities build resilience to water scarcity while contributing to the restoration of the lake's ecological balance.

The project represents a strong example of collaboration between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, FAO, UNDP, and the Government of Japan in supporting national efforts toward sustainable agriculture, water management, and environmental conservation.

SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 29, 2025

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

Over 1,140 Iranians among world's 1% most-cited researchers

TEHRAN – A total of 1,142 Iranian researchers have been recognized among the world's top one percent most-cited researchers in 2025, compared to 1,056 identified researchers in 2024, according to the Islamic World Science Citation (ISC) Institute.

The Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education (with 603 entries) accounts for 52.77 percent, and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (with 427 researchers) represents 37.43 percent of the most-cited Iranian researchers, isc.ir reported.

Clinical medicine, with 446 entries, Engineering with 219 entries, Pharmacology and Toxicology with 163 entries, Chemistry with 140 entries, Neuroscience and Behavior with 115 entries, Agriculture Sciences with 100 entries, and Social Sciences with 77 entries held the highest shares of the most-cited researchers.

Three Iranian researchers have been among the highly cited award recipients.

Essential Science Indicators (ESI) data covers a 10-year period and includes bimonthly updates to rankings and citation counts.

Clarivate regularly publishes research impact metrics through the ESI, identifying top-performing research indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection. Each journal indexed in the WoS Core Collection is assigned to one of the 22 research fields. Author rankings are calculated based on the citations received by an author in a 10-year period in each research field. Among all authors producing research in the same research field, those ranking in the top one percent by citations would be regarded as top one percent scholars.

Over 2,770 Iranians among world's top 2%

Stanford University, in collaboration with Elsevier, has placed a total of 2,772 Iranian researchers among the top two percent of the most-cited scientists' annual list, based on career-long impact.

This version is based on the August 2025 snapshot from Scopus, updated to the end of citation year 2024.

This work uses Scopus data. Calculations were performed using all Scopus author profiles as of August 1, 2025.

Scientists are classified into 22 scientific fields and 174 sub-fields according to the standard Science-Metrix classification. Field- and subfield-specific percentiles are also provided for all scientists with at least 5 papers.

Career-long data are updated to end-of-2024, and single recent year data pertain to citations received during calendar year 2024.

The selection is based on the top 100,000 scientists by c-score (with and without self-citations) or a percentile rank of 2 percent or above in the sub-field.

The career-long assessment captures the cumulative research influence of a scientist over their entire career up to the end of the



previous calendar year (the end of 2024).

The ranking uses a composite citation indicator (c-score), which combines several bibliometric criteria to provide a comprehensive measure of a scientist's sustained impact, focusing on quality and significance over mere publication volume.

The criteria used to calculate the c-score include total number of citations (NC), H-index (H), Co-authorship-adjusted hm-index, Citations to single-author papers (NCS), Citations to single or first-author papers (NCSF), Citations to single, first, or last-author papers (NCFSL).

The latest international data shows that the presence of Iranian researchers in the top two percent list of the world based on citation indicators continues to trend upward, indicating an improvement in the quality of the country's scientific production.

The reputable "updated science-wide author databases of standardized citation indicators", which provides updated versions of scientist rankings based on standardized indicators, reported on September 19 that Iran has experienced an unprecedented growth in both one-year performance and scientific career-long indicators, IRNA quoted Peyman Salehi, deputy science minister, as saying.

Based on the report, the number of highly cited Iranian researchers in the one-year performance index has increased from 2,326 in the Iranian year 1403 (2024-2025) to 2,533 in 1404 (2025-2026).

This figure represents an increase of 207 persons compared to the previous year and clearly demonstrates the improvement in the quality and impact of the country's scientific production in 2024, he explained.

In one-year performance, the medical field (with 853 researchers), and in career-long performance, the engineering field (with 287 researchers) has the highest number of Iranian most-cited researchers.

Also, the number of highly cited Iranian researchers in the career-long index has grown significantly from 1,018 in 1403 to 1,021 in 1404. A five-year trend analysis shows that Iran has achieved this remarkable achievement from 433 in 1399.

The single-year index focuses on the citations received by articles in a specific year.

Over 600 earthquakes shake Iran in a month

TEHRAN – A total of 602 earthquakes were recorded across the country in a month from October 23 to November 21, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 528 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 65 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4; nine earthquakes with a magnitude between 4 and 5, and no earthquake with a magnitude over 5 have occurred in the country.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4.7 on the Richter scale, which occurred on November 1 in Yazd Province .

Among the provinces of the country, Yazd, with 63 earthquakes, experienced the highest number of earthquakes, followed by South Khorasan with 54 earthquakes, and Fars with 53 earthquakes.

During the same period, six earthquakes were recorded in Tehran, the biggest had a magnitude of 2.8 on the Richter scale.

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

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

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

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

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Special plan prepared to attract overseas Iranian researchers

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has prepared a special plan to attract scientists and researchers living abroad, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

The project aims to promote "supporting technological activities and startups", "postdoctoral facilities", "supporting employment in innovation centers and accelerators as a trainer and consultant", "providing facilities for opportunity studies", "providing housing facilities", "supporting employment in reputable domestic companies", "support for lectures and specialized workshops" and "support for cooperation as invited and appointed professors".

It is estimated that about one percent of all Iranian students are studying abroad, which is not above the international average of around 3 percent.

طرح ویژه برای جذب پژوهشگران ایرانی مقیم خارج

جذب محققان و پژوهشگران خارج از کشور یکی از اولویت‌های کشور محسوب می‌شود و در این راستا معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری طرحی ویژه پیشنهاد کرده است.

به گزارش ایرنا، معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، این طرح شامل «حمایت از فعالیت‌های فناورانه و ایجاد شرکت‌های نوپا»، «تسهیلات پسا دکتری»، «حمایت از اشتغال در مراکز نوآوری و شتابدهنده‌ها به عنوان مربی و مشاور»، «تسهیلات دوره فرصت مطالعاتی»، «تسهیلات مسکن»، «حمایت از اشتغال در شرکت‌های معتبر داخلی»، «حمایت از برگزاری سخنرانی و کارگاه‌های تخصصی» و «حمایت از همکاری به عنوان اساتید مدعو و معین» است.

بر اساس برآوردها نزدیک یک درصد از کل مجموع دانشجویان ایرانی در خارج از کشور تحصیل می‌کنند. این رقم در مقایسه با میانگین بین‌المللی که حدود ۳ درصد است، رقم بالایی محسوب نمی‌شود.



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 29, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Poverty often disables an intelligent man from arguing his case; a poor man is a stranger in his own town.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:53 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:26 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:55 (tomorrow)

Majid Majidi receives award for outstanding contribution to cinema in Moscow

TEHRAN – Globally-renowned Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi received an award for outstanding contribution to cinema at the first Diamond Butterfly Open Eurasian Film Award in Moscow, Russia on November 27.

The ceremony of the event was held Thursday evening at the Nikita Mikhalkov Workshop 12 Theater in Moscow with the attendance of Russia's Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova, presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, and Iran's ambassador Kazem Jalali, IRNA reported.

Russian filmmaker Nikita Mikhalkov presented Majidi with the festival's "Diamond Butterfly" honor, praising his body of work.

Before presenting award, scenes from Majidi's films, including "Muhammad (PBUH), The Messenger of God" were shown in the hall, accompanied by Iranian music. The screening was followed by a minutes-long standing ovation.

During his acceptance speech, Majidi highlighted his long-standing focus on children and paid tribute to the "innocent children of Gaza," expressing hope for peace for all children affected by war.

Majid Majidi, 66, has touched on many themes and genres in his films and has won numerous international awards. He has brought the Iranian cinema to the attention of the world's film viewers.

His film "Children of Heaven" (1997), the story of two children who share one set of shoes, was the first Iranian film ever to be nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Foreign Language Film category. Iranian cinema became famous in Hollywood after the nomination and demonstrated its capacity to touch universal audiences

with stories of poverty, dignity, and love.

Majidi continued to direct films like "The Color of Paradise" (1999) and "Baran" (2001), which topped prizes on film festival circuits from Montreal to Moscow.

The principal purpose of the Diamond Butterfly Open Eurasian Film Award is to remind the world of the true mission of cinema: to address values, culture, and universal essences, leaving commercial success in the background. The Eurasian Film Award is intended for all countries that strive to protect traditional values and respect their national culture.

A new international film award established by Russia's Ministry of Culture, the Russian Cultural Foundation, and the Eurasian Academy of Cinematic Arts, the Eurasian Film Award is already being compared to the Oscars in scale and significance.

The event aims to promote films with traditional, spiritual, and moral values that unite peoples, with the main prize being a diamond-encrusted butterfly statue designed by Yuri Kuper.

The inaugural award ceremony featured participation from 17 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America with 34 movies, offering a diverse and vibrant global platform for cinematic exchange.

Films from countries with shared cultural and spiritual traditions participated in the competition, including Russia, Iran, China, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Serbia, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Cuba, Senegal, South Africa, Pakistan, Belarus, Indonesia, Vietnam, and others.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza & Sudan

Cartoonist: Osama Hajjaj from Jordan

Veteran Gilan folk music singer Nasser Masoudi passes away at 90

TEHRAN- Nasser Masoudi, a legendary figure in Iranian folk music, particularly the traditional music of the northern province of Gilan, died on Thursday at the Arya Hospital in Rasht after months of illness and advancing age. He was 90.

His son, Ali Masoudi Nia, a renowned literary critic and writer, announced the sad news, expressing deep sorrow over the loss of this iconic artist, Mehr reported.

Born in 1935, in Rasht, Nasser Masoudi was a prominent singer whose voice became a symbol of Gilan's rich musical heritage. In 1949 he migrated with his family to Tehran, where he began his journey into music, initially studying under the tutelage of Ali Akbar Khan Shahnazi, a renowned maestro of Persian classical music. However, Masoudi's true calling lay in the traditional music of his homeland, and he returned to Gilan in 1955 to immerse himself in the local folk traditions.

His pioneering work as a singer began in the mid-1950s when he joined Radio Gilan in 1956, becoming one of its earliest vocal performers. His unique voice and heartfelt renditions quickly made him a household name across northern Iran. Over the course of more than 50 years, Masoudi recorded over 500 songs across various genres including traditional, pop, and orchestral music. His vast repertoire includes more than 200 Persian songs—many arranged with orchestras—as well as nearly 50 popular melodies broadcast on programs like "Golha," a legendary radio series that showcased Iran's musical talents.

However, it was his performance of over 250 Gilaki folk songs that cemented his reputation as a cultural icon. Many of these tracks, composed by himself, captured the essence of



Gilan's poetic and musical traditions. His collaborations with renowned musicians such as Ahmad Ebadi, Jalil Shahnaz, Reza Varzandeh, Asghar Bahari, and Morteza Hannaneh contributed significantly to the preservation and promotion of Iran's traditional music. Masoudi's voice became an emblem of Gilan's cultural identity, resonating with audiences both domestically and abroad.

Throughout his career, Masoudi worked with outstanding figures in Iran's musical landscape, including master instrumentalists like Farhang Sharif, Esfandiar Monfaredzadeh, and Farhad Fakhreddini, as well as celebrated poets such as Simin Behbahani, Nozar Parang, and Turaj Negahban. He also toured internationally, giving concerts in numerous countries to showcase Iran's musical heritage.

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Masoudi continued his artistic pursuits, notably recording the theme song for the

popular television series "Rebel in the Jungle"—the story of the legendary freedom fighter Mirza Koochak Khan Jangali— which introduced his voice to a new generation. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was among the first Iranian musicians to perform concerts abroad, defying restrictions and continuing to promote Iran's traditional music culture.

In the 2000s, Masoudi released several acclaimed albums, including "Hala Chera," produced in collaboration with Masoud Lahiji and Majid Derakhshani. His album "Hala Chera" received the Best Traditional Music Album Award at Our Music Festival, a testament to his enduring influence and artistic excellence.

His return to the stage after decades of absence came in 2000s when he performed at the Vahdat Hall in Tehran with the National Orchestra under the baton of conductor Farhad Fakhreddini. In 2016 he held a grand concert in Rasht, his

hometown, which was met with widespread acclaim and affection from fans and cultural figures alike.

Among his hits, before 1979, are "Banafsheh Gol," "Divoonam," "Allah Titi," and "Mosafar." His works, after 1979, include albums like "Qalandar," "Parchin," and "Koorashim," which further enriched Iran's musical landscape.

The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi issued a statement mourning his passing, emphasizing that Masoudi's work embodies the authenticity of indigenous music and the cultural soul of Gilan. The statement read: "His melodies are a testament to the rich musical heritage of Iran and will remain a lasting legacy for future generations."

Seyyed Abbas Salehi, in a message of condolence, expressed grief over the loss of this "noble artist," highlighting that his voice and songs are part of Iran's cultural treasure.

Melodies from Persia: Iranian music builds bridges of soul at Vietnam's cultural festival



melody weaves a story, and the artist acts as a messenger, disseminating this rich cultural identity across the globe.

Its sounds are unique, enchanting, and mysterious, echoing from a deep, ancestral past.

Iran is the land of timeless harmonies and the cradle of a brilliant civilization that has endured for millennia.

Here, traditional arts like music are far more than mere enter-

tainment; they are a language of the soul, articulating the narratives of its people, their beliefs, and the sublime beauty of nature."

During the broadcast, the group's leader sat for an interview with VTV3, offering insight into the diverse and intricate instruments of Iran. One of the musicians beautifully noted, "Music still has the power to connect hearts and build bridges, allowing our two nations to forge a deeper understanding."

The segment concluded with the host speaking to Vietnamese audience members, who were captivated by the performance and shared their heartfelt admiration for Iran's musical artistry.

21 short, mid-length films from 19 countries will compete in Cinema Vêrité



TEHRAN – Twenty-one short and mid-length documentary films will compete in the international competition section of the 19th Iran International Documentary Film Festival "Cinema Vêrité," set to be held from December 10 to 16 in Tehran.

According to the public relations department of the Documentary, Experimental, and Animation Film Center (DEFC), which organizes

the festival, the titles in competition are productions of 2024 and 2025 from 19 countries.

The line-up includes "Where is Home?" directed by Lamtiar Simorangkir from Indonesia, "Walvis Tale by Tim Huebschle" from Namibia, "Ceasefire" by Jakob Krese from Slovenia, "Climate Art – From Protest to Utopia by Mathias Frick" from Austria and Germany, "When I Came to your Door" by Antonio Paoletti from Ethiopia, "Voices from the Abyss" by Irving Serrano and Victor Rejón from Mexico, and "Photo Developer ST-1" by Dmitrii Fetisov from Russia.

"Love Among Ruins" by Jacek Komorowski from Poland, "The Great Thaw" by Michaela Grill and Karl Leimuex from Canada, "My Gray World" by Petro Aleksowski from Poland, "Gamemaster" by Magda Wyszynska from Denmark, "Between Planes" by Med Amine Elkadhi from Tunisia, "A Little Fact" by Polina Pribytkova and Maxim Pechersky from Russia, "Refugees"

by Adam Knott from Australia, and "White Veil" by Ziga Ciber from Ireland are also on the list.

The rest of the films in the section are "Women's Treasure" by Haythem & Mohamed Mghuirbi & Ben Romdhane from Tunisia, "The Vestiges - Following the Echoes of the Train" by Luis Manuel from Columbia, "Terra Battuta" by Marzio Breglia from Italy, "The Gringo Diary" by Rodrigo Farias from Chile, "Draw me a Homeland" by Nour Alkheder from the Netherlands, and "October 17, 1691" by Pascot Sébastien from France.

Cinema Vêrité tries to express the relationship between reality and truth through documentary films.

The 19th edition of the festival will be held at Mellat Cineplex under the director of MoThe 19th edition of the festival will be held at Mellat Cineplex under the direction of Mohammad Hamidi Moghadam.