



A United Nations Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters on December 23, 2025 in New York.

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UNSC Session Shows West Failed in Snapback Gamble

Meeting sees US and Europe defend hardline stance, Iran and allies call for end to failed approach

No rules, no inspections until legal clarity from IAEA: Iran nuclear chief

TEHRAN – Iran’s senior nuclear official has clarified that the nation will not entertain illegitimate demands for the inspection of its nuclear facilities damaged in acts of foreign aggression.

Mohammad Eslami, the Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), articulated this position following a cabinet meeting in Tehran, directly addressing the inappropriate pressures exerted by Western powers through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). ▶ Page 2

‘Maritime piracy in Caribbean’, Iranian MPs condemn US military actions near Venezuela

TEHRAN – A group of 150 Iranian lawmakers has issued a strong condemnation of recent U.S. actions in the Caribbean, including the interception and pursuit of oil tankers, calling them acts of maritime piracy and a significant threat to regional stability.

The statement, which was read on Wednesday by Mojtaba Bakhshipour, a member of parliament’s presiding board, condemned the growing U.S. military presence near Venezuela and emphasized Iran’s unwavering support for the Venezuelan government’s sovereignty. ▶ Page 2

Israel’s digital house of cards

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – For decades, Israel has meticulously curated an image of itself as an impenetrable “cyber superpower,” a high-tech “villa in the jungle” where the fabricated “start-up nation” myth provided a psychological shield for its settler population.

However, recent operations by the pro-Palestinian hacktivist collective Handala have shattered this illusion, revealing a “digital fortress” riddled with systemic holes.

By shifting from mere defacement to deep intelligence extraction, Handala has initiated the systematic dismantling of the technological superiority on which the occupation’s legitimacy depends.

A recent stinging humiliation arrived with “Operation Octopus” in December.

The hack of former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s iPhone 13, resulting in the leak of 1,900 private chats, did more than just mock his cybersecurity boasts.

It sparked a massive domestic scandal, exposing the “Qatargate” affair where Netanyahu’s aides reportedly fabricated intelligence and leaked classified data to serve foreign lobbying interests.

Implications for Yemen’s prisoner exchange

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—A historic breakthrough has emerged in Yemen’s humanitarian landscape with the signing of an agreement to release 1,700 prisoners from the army and popular committees in exchange for 1,200 detainees from the opposite side, including seven Saudis and 23 Sudanese.

This development goes beyond a mere humanitarian gesture; it represents a strategic and political milestone, opening a pathway for broader progress on long-standing issues that have weighed heavily on Yemen for years.

Mohammed Abdul Salam, head of the Yemeni negotiating delegation, welcomed the agreement, expressing gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman for its pivotal role in facilitating the talks, mediating disputes, and ensuring a constructive outcome.

According to the UN Secretary-General’s envoy to Yemen, the negotiations spanned 11 days in Oman, culminating in a new phase of detainee releases that involve all parties.

Gaza truce turns to strategic impasse

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The resistance in Gaza is fighting a battle guided by a logic of achievable deterrence.

It understands that attaining military superiority after two years of a genocidal war is extremely difficult. Politically, however, it seeks to prevent the Israeli regime from securing a political victory.

Gaza is living through the most difficult phase in the history of the Palestinian struggle. Amid ongoing international movement and talk of entering the second phase of U.S. President Donald Trump’s plan, the Strip stands at a dangerous crossroads.

It faces an exceptionally sensitive equation: balancing battlefield conditions, accumulation of pressure, and the preservation of a deterrence strategy on one side, against political pressure and attempts at subjugation on the other.

Despite the complexity of this equation, Gaza raises a profound and troubling question: Does justice and fairness still exist in this world?

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Tourist arrivals reach a positive 10 percent, minister says

TEHRAN- Tourist arrivals to Iran have returned to normal level in the second half of current Iranian year. The number of tourist arrivals has increased from minus 52 to plus 10 percent, and this trend is continuing rapidly.

Announcing this, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri told ISNA on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Tuesday that given the increase in the number of tourists, travel agencies cannot be closed unless there are other reasons that need to be investigated.

Pointing to the annual statistics of the outbound tourists, he said: “The statistics of outbound tourists are clear, and each family decides its travel destinations based on its income. On average, between 8 and 9 million tourists go abroad annually, which of course experience ups and downs in different circumstances, but the average in previous years has not changed significantly.” ▶ Page 6

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$4.3b to Turkey in 8 month

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$4.393 billion to Turkey during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to IRICA, Turkey was Iran’s fourth top non-oil export destination in the mentioned period.

Exporting commodities valued at \$6.19 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran’s third top source of non-oil import in the first eight months of this year.

The Turkish Statistical Institute has recently announced that the value of this country’s imports from Iran in the first ten months of 2025 increased by four percent compared to the same period last year, reaching \$2.035 billion. ▶ Page 4



Sahar Taroush converses with her brother in her partially collapsed home after returning during the recent ceasefire, Jabalia, Gaza City.

Israel’s bombing forces Gaza families to live in ruins

Families across Gaza are returning to buildings scarred by war, transforming ruins into fragile shelters.

With tents battered by winter rains and aid still restricted, survivors choose cracked walls and unstable stairways over displacement, carving out daily life amid devastation.

The Halawa family’s building in Gaza City is one of the few still standing after two years of relentless Israeli bombardment. Though part of the structure has collapsed, they climb creaking wooden steps to reach their home. For them, damaged walls offer more dignity than flooded tents. ▶ Page 5

‘Who can solve Iran’s many problems?’, created the fire, claims the hose

By Fatemeh Kavand

TEHRAN – A recent New York Times’ report on Iran, titled “who can solve Iran’s many problems? Not I, says the president”, is not an attempt to grapple with the country’s complex economic and political realities. It is a carefully constructed narrative exercise—one that deliberately removes decisive external factors in order to assign responsibility for Iran’s challenges in a narrowly defined, politically convenient way. What emerges is not journalism in the classical sense, but narrative warfare by other means.

This report does not exist in a vacuum. It is published at a moment when pressure on Iran has shifted form, not disappeared; when overt military confrontation has failed to deliver desired outcomes; and when the battlefield has increasingly moved from missiles and sanctions to perception, legitimacy, and social cohesion. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Missile drill in Tehran, panic in Tel Aviv

Vatan-e-Emrooz analyzed Iran's large-scale missile maneuver on Monday. The newspaper wrote: The simultaneous launch of ballistic missiles in the maneuver has had a profound impact on the security calculations of the Zionist regime. It was a show of force that served as a decisive and deterrent response to recent Israeli rhetoric, demonstrating that threats against Iran's missile program will not go unanswered. The maneuver not only proved the rapid reconstruction of Iran's missile arsenal after the June 12-day war, but also sent a clear message to Tel Aviv: any plan for renewed attacks or aggressive rhetoric will be met with a firm response. As a result, Israel's approach has shifted significantly—from aggression toward caution—in its media and political discourse regarding Tehran's missile program. Iran carried out the maneuver without an official announcement, and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps neither confirmed nor denied it, as no explanation was deemed necessary. The primary audience of the message was decision-makers in Tel Aviv and Washington. This strategic silence, combined with a practical display of power, underscored Tehran's focus on action rather than verbal propaganda.

Sobh-e-No: Protecting commercial vessels and ensuring their safe passage

Sobh-e-No devoted an article to the dispatch of an Iranian Navy flotilla to distant waters. In the paper's view, this presence carries meaning and significance beyond an ordinary naval mission. It is presented as a practical response to the disorder that the United States has created at sea. Escorting commercial ships is not a symbolic display, but rather an effort to redefine maritime security based on responsibility and respect for international law. The message of this naval presence is twofold. On the one hand, it demonstrates Iran's ability to operate effectively in distant waters and to defend trade routes. On the other hand, it conveys that maritime security should not be monopolized by powers that are themselves its greatest violators. In a world where the United States has turned "security" into a tool of political pressure, such actions carry important messages. Importantly, unlike Washington, Iran does not frame its actions in terms of blockade or sanctions. The declared objective is the protection of commercial vessels and the assurance of their safe passage—an approach that stands in direct contrast to U.S. behavior. This

distinction carries considerable legal and political weight, highlighting two fundamentally different interpretations of maritime order.

Javan: Venezuela is a test for the world to resist bullying

Javan wrote about the escalating tensions between the United States and Venezuela: Today, Venezuela is regarded as a vital stronghold of the resistance front against American hegemony, and comprehensive support—especially political support—for this country is deemed essential. A unilateral U.S. success in overthrowing Venezuela's government, beyond its strategic and economic consequences, could revive the practice of toppling independent governments unilaterally, which would pose a serious threat to international order. Therefore, the formation of united fronts against such policies is necessary, and the Islamic Republic of Iran can play a pivotal role in this path. Leaders of independent countries, particularly Iran, should view Venezuela as the front line in defending multilateralism in the independent world. Geographic distance must not reduce attention to this issue, because developments in Venezuela directly affect the future global order. The decisive days Venezuela is now experiencing are decisive for the entire world, and any neglect in supporting the Venezuelan people may carry costs for all peoples worldwide.

Khorasan: A shift in balance of deterrence

Khorasan examined remarks by U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham about Iran's missile threat. Graham, speaking to the Jerusalem Post in a warning tone, declared that Iran's ballistic missiles now represent a threat equal to its nuclear program for Israel. According to him, Iran—through the development and rebuilding of its ballistic missile arsenal after the 12-day war—has reached a capacity capable of disabling the Iron Dome. This admission essentially echoes the growing concerns voiced in Israeli and American security circles in recent months. More than a mere description of reality, this framing is seen as an attempt to legitimize greater pressure—whether through sanctions, military action, or increased arms support—against Iran and its allies. Nevertheless, battlefield evidence from the 12-day war shows that Graham's concerns have a concrete basis. In this context, his remarks can be read not merely as a warning but as an indirect acknowledgment of a shift in the balance of deterrence.

No rules, no inspections until legal clarity from IAEA: Iran nuclear chief



From page 1 ► Eslami highlighted a critical legal gap in the IAEA's framework, noting that while Article 68 of the IAEA Safeguards provides procedures for sites damaged by natural disasters, it offers no clear guidance for facilities ravaged by war and military assault—such as the unjust airstrikes carried out by the United States and Israel this past June. He said if the UN nuclear watchdog tacitly approves of such attacks on safeguarded sites, it must formally state so; conversely, if it disapproves, it must condemn them outright and establish a proper protocol for the aftermath.

"Our formal request to the Agency is clear," stated Eslami. "There must be a defined and codified set of steps for when a nuclear facility, fully registered and under IAEA Safeguards, is subjected to military attack. If such procedures exist, they should be announced so we may comply. If they do not, they must be created."

He underscored that it is the responsibility of the international body to rectify this oversight, rather than align with coercive campaigns against member states.

Until this glaring discrepancy is justly resolved, Eslami emphasized that Iran will reject all political and psychological pressures, as well as all irrelevant demands to re-inspect the bombed sites. Such demands, he noted, serve only to complete the hostile operations of Iran's adversaries and lack any legal or ethical foundation.

Reaffirming Iran's unwavering commitment to peace and progress, Eslami also stated that the nation's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful, dedicated to the scientific and technological advancement of the country in full accordance with its sovereign rights and international obligations. Iran stands ready to cooperate within a framework of mutual respect and clear, equitable rules, he added.

'Maritime piracy in Caribbean', Iranian MPs condemn US military actions near Venezuela

From page 1 ► The lawmakers emphasized that the seizure of commercial ships in international waters without proper authorization is an act of "maritime piracy", violating key principles of international maritime law, including the freedom of navigation and the established rules governing international trade. These actions, they stated, are part of a broader strategy to destabilize Venezuela, a sovereign nation, under the pretext of combating drug trafficking.

"Such provocative actions are an affront to international norms and a direct violation of Venezuela's right to defend its sovereignty," the statement continued. "The United States is engaging in unlawful acts that threaten peace, stability, and security in the region."

The Iranian MPs also expressed their full support for the Venezuelan government and people, emphasizing their right to defend their territory and sovereignty against foreign interference. They highlighted that U.S. military operations near Venezuela's borders are increasing tensions in the Caribbean and undermining regional security.

In recent months, the United States has significantly increased its military presence in the Caribbean, sending warships, submarines, and aircraft carriers, along with roughly 15,000 personnel. The deployment includes the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, as part of the U.S. Navy's Carrier Strike Group Twelve.



Iran's Parliament condemns US seizure of oil tankers in the Caribbean, on December 24, 2025.

Besides stealing oil, American leaders have also ordered the killing of dozens of people in the Caribbean. These attacks, carried out without judicial oversight and based on a classified Justice Department finding, include a recent airstrike on a "low-profile vessel" in international waters that killed one person. Just last week, the U.S. targeted two vessels in the eastern Pacific, killing five individuals whom Washington labeled as "unlawful combatants."

While U.S. officials have framed these operations as part of a counter-narcotics mission, critics argue they are, in fact, an attempt to undermine Venezuela's sovereignty under the guise of drug interdiction. Since Septem-

ber, these U.S. forces have carried out airstrikes on more than 29 vessels they claim were involved in drug trafficking, resulting in at least 105 deaths. Venezuela has, consequently, condemned these attacks as acts of aggression aimed at destabilizing the region and undermining its sovereignty.

The world now anticipates the Trump administration ordering a potential invasion of Venezuela.

With their Wednesday statement, Iranian lawmakers joined members of Iran's foreign ministry—including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Spokesman Esmail Baghaei—who have repeatedly voiced support for Venezuela in recent weeks.

Venezuela's Foreign Minister Ivan Gil has publicly expressed

gratitude for Iran's continued support in defending his country's sovereignty and regional stability. On his official Telegram channel, Gil thanked the Iranian people and leadership for their unwavering solidarity. "The people of Venezuela deeply appreciate Iran's commitment to protecting international trade stability, which is now under threat by the unlawful and aggressive actions of the United States," he wrote.

Gil also welcomed Iran's call for the international community to condemn any use of force or threats that violate the UN Charter, reinforcing the importance of multilateral support in opposing Washington's actions in Latin America.

'Who can solve Iran's many problems?'; created the fire, claims the hose

Who Can Solve Iran's Many Problems? Not I, Says the President.

Amid sky-high inflation, water and energy cuts and prospects for a deal with the U.S. dimming, President Masoud Pezeshkian has apparently thrown up his hands.

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From page 1 ► The omission of the culprit

The report appears while U.S. sanctions on Iran's economy remain firmly in place. Energy exports, banking transactions, shipping, insurance, and access to international financial systems are still heavily restricted. In recent months, sanctions have not been lifted but rebranded, repackaged, and expanded through new mechanisms and enforcement tools.

Yet this structural reality is treated as peripheral. Instead, Iran's economic pressures are framed almost exclusively through domestic governance, leadership competence, and internal political dynamics. The result is a story that begins midway through the causal chain—after the decisive external constraints have been quietly removed from view.

Iran is subject to one of the most comprehensive sanctions regimes in modern history. These restrictions limit access to foreign currency reserves, obstruct international banking, deter foreign investment, and complicate

even humanitarian trade. Their effects are cumulative, long-term, and structural.

Omitting this context is not a neutral editorial choice. It is an act of narrative engineering. By stripping sanctions from the analysis, the New York Times converts externally imposed economic warfare into an internally generated crisis. Responsibility is reassigned, and causality is inverted.

This approach mirrors a broader pattern in Western media coverage of sanctioned states: sanctions are treated as background noise, while their consequences are foregrounded as evidence of internal failure.

International data contradicts this framing. Reports from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund demonstrate that periods of reduced sanctions pressure have coincided with measurable improvements in Iran's economic performance. The years following the nuclear agreement saw growth, increased oil exports, currency stabilization, and improved fiscal outlooks.

These are not contested facts. They are documented trends. Yet they are incompatible with a narrative that seeks to portray Iran's problems as detached from Western policy choices. Consequently, they are omitted. Journalism that selectively ignores available data is not incomplete—it is directive.

Media behavior before and after the 12-day war

The significance of this report becomes clearer when placed against recent history. In the lead-up to the 12-day war, segments of the American media ecosystem effectively became extensions of U.S. and Israeli strategic messaging.

A prominent example was the sustained promotion of alleged tensions between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. Headlines, analyses, and "informed sources" suggested deep disagreements and strategic divergence. This narrative was later revealed to be part of a deception operation designed to reduce vigilance and create strategic ambiguity.

Media participation in this operation was not incidental. By amplifying selective leaks and speculative interpretations, outlets helped manufacture an atmosphere of diplomatic friction that did not, in practice, exist.

The objective was clear: surprise. Political and military deception depends on shaping expectations, and media narratives are essential tools in that process. By projecting discord between Washington and Tel Aviv, the groundwork was laid for miscalculation.

That strategy failed. Iran was not strategically paralyzed, and the war did not deliver its intended results. Despite material destruction and civilian suffering, the core political and security objectives of the attacking side remained unmet.

During Israel war, Perhaps the most consequential failure was internal. Expectations of mass unrest and societal fracture inside Iran proved unfounded. Instead of the predicted uprising, the conflict produced an unexpected surge of national solidarity.

Public divisions narrowed. Social cohesion strengthened. The gap between state and society—assumed to be exploitable—did not collapse into open confrontation. For planners who had invested heavily in that outcome, this was a strategic setback. It also marked a turning point.

With military shock failing to trigger internal breakdown, the strategy evolved. The new objective became long-term erosion rather than immediate collapse. Instead of explosions, narratives. Instead of shock, fatigue. Instead of confrontation, alienation.

This is the context in which the New York Times report must be read. It is not simply an assessment of governance or economic performance. It is part of a broader effort to redirect public frustration inward, to deepen cynicism, and to frame political leadership as structurally incapable.

Within this framework, the portrayal of Iran's president is revealing. Statements acknowledging constraints imposed by sanctions and international pressure are selectively reframed as admissions of impotence. Political realism is recoded as abdication of responsibility.

This is a familiar technique. Leaders in sanctioned states are rarely allowed the analytical space granted to their Western counterparts. Structural constraints become personal failures; external pressure becomes internal weakness. The purpose is not clarification, but delegitimization.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UNSC session shows West failed in snapback gamble

Meeting sees US and Europe defend hardline stance, Iran and allies call for end to failed approach

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Western states dragged Iran and members of the UN Security Council to a session on Tuesday to push for the implementation of pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran, which the E3 (Germany, UK, France) managed to be reinstated back in August, but faced substantial challenges in implementing them due to opposition from a host of countries, including Iran's most powerful allies, Russia and China.

The session also discussed the current state of Iran's nuclear program, which has been unknown to the world since the U.S. and Israel launched an attack on Iran's nuclear sites in June—an act constituting a blatant breach of the UN Charter and international law.

A clear rift emerged between the participants. Western states placed the blame for the ongoing situation entirely on Iran, demanding it allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to its battered nuclear sites. They did so without explaining how Tehran could be assured the U.S. and Israel would not attack again once the locations of Iran's enriched



Iran's UN envoy, Amir Saeed Iravani, addresses UNSC session on December 23, 2025.

uranium were revealed.

The Western bloc also claimed a commitment to diplomacy, yet failed to explain why they had, as Iranians described, “bombed the negotiating table” in June by attacking Iran just days before a sixth round of nuclear negotiations.

Conversely, countries like China, Russia, and Pakistan accused the West of undermining diplomatic efforts, noting that the “snapback” of UN sanctions was and remains illegal. They urged Europe and the U.S. to alter a course they characterized as destructive throughout the past years.

Iran, for its part, condemned the West's aggression, coercion, and hypocrisy, affirming it would not abandon its legal nuclear rights. It also announced its commitment to diplomacy, but only under the condition that the other side demonstrates genuine and just intentions.

‘Iran ready for diplomacy, but won’t abandon program’

Iran's UN envoy, Saeed Iravani, noted that with the expiration of Resolution 2231 (2015) on 18 October 2025, the measure no longer holds any legal authority or active mandate. Consequently, he argued, there exists no valid basis for the Secretary-General to produce reports on the matter, nor any justification for the Council to convene discussions regarding it.

He sharply criticized the current proceedings, accusing certain Council members of engaging in a “calculated distortion” of the expired resolution's original purpose. This includes, he explained, the “deliberate dissemination of disinformation” concerning Iran's nuclear activities and a cynical misuse of the Council chamber to advance narrow political agendas.

He placed the ultimate responsibility for the present diplomatic crisis squarely on the United States for its earlier unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Iravani also addressed the U.S. delegate saying: “We appreciate any fair and meaningful negotiations. However, insisting on a so-called zero-enrichment policy is entirely inconsistent with the rights to which Iran is entitled as a Member of the NPT.”

US ironically accuses Iran of pursuing ‘confrontation’

Morgan Ortagus, a U.S. Mission counselor and former State Department spokesperson present at the session, stated that the U.S. remained willing to engage in formal discussions with Iran, provided Tehran was ready for a “direct and meaningful dialogue”. She omitted any mention of the war Washington waged on Iran during the previous negotiations that took place in April and May.

She added that President Trump had “extended the hand of diplomacy” throughout his presidency, but accused Iran of choosing confrontation (“putting your hand in the fire”) instead. She did not explain how she considers Iran the confrontational party when it was Washington that attacked Iran's nuclear program, and killed over 1,100 Iranians.

Ortagus said Iran must abandon this “confrontational path” and accept Trump's diplomatic overture. She also emphasized that the Trump administration had consistently maintained that Iran must cease all nuclear material enrichment, a demand that has been a non-starter for Tehran for decades.

Overall, her statements gave no indication that the U.S would alter its intransigent approach.

UNSC president allowed ‘destabilizing’ session: Russia

The Russian envoy firmly condemned the European troika's convening of the meeting as a transparent ploy to resuscitate “anti-Iranian sanctions” and the snapback mechanism. Vassily Nebenzia warned that such provocative actions only serve to deepen dangerous political and procedural rifts within the Security Council itself. The ambassador also criticized Slovenia's presidency of the Council for failing in its responsibilities by permitting such an unjustified and destabilizing session.

He expressed regret that impartiality and courage had been abandoned, stating, “The European Union should not intervene in matters that do not exist.” The ambassador strongly reaffirmed that Russia “will not take instructions from any government or country outside the United Nations,” emphasizing that the settlement path for Iran's nuclear program was clearly defined through five rounds of negotiations.

He concluded by noting that the IAEA has never cited military objectives in Iran's entirely peaceful nuclear program, which means that the U.S. and Israel blatantly violated international law in attacking Iran's civilian, military, and nuclear infrastructure.

France defends Europe’s lack of independence

France's deputy UN ambassador, Jay Dharmadhikari, defended the snapback of UN sanctions, arguing that since 2019, Iran has been in “increasingly flagrant violation” of the nuclear program's peaceful-use limitations. However, he employed the old tactic of omitting key facts, not mentioning that Iran only began scaling back its JCPOA commitments a full year after Washington withdrew from the pact, reinstated sanctions, and Europe failed to mitigate the effects of the crippling U.S. embargoes. Europe itself went on to impose its own sanctions against Iran in 2022, followed by further measures in subsequent years.

The JCPOA limited Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

The French diplomat asserted that Europe's decision to trigger the snapback mechanism does not signal an end to diplomatic efforts.

Iran had reacted angrily to the European move in August, accusing the E3 nations of acting as Washington's agents and lacking independence. Ambassador Iravani underscored this point during the session, sarcastically remarking that “many U.S. states” appeared to be present at the gathering.

Pakistan notes ‘sanctions directly hurt ordinary people’

Pakistan issued a call for diplomatic solutions regarding Iran's nuclear program. Ambassador Usman Jadoon, Islamabad's Acting Permanent Representative, firmly stated that “diplomacy and dialogue should be the guiding principles,” emphasizing the need to resolve all matters in accordance with the legitimate rights and obligations of all parties involved.

He delivered a stark warning against the use of coercive measures, which he stated only deepen distrust and harm innocent civilians. “Sanctions directly hurt ordinary people the most,” Jadoon stated, detailing their damaging effects on trade, economic development, and vital regional connectivity. Pakistan had previously warned against Europe's activation of the so-called snapback mechanism.

Ambassador Jadoon grounded Pakistan's position in the urgent need to preserve the JCPOA framework as an essential foundation in international law, urging all parties to “allow diplomacy the time and space to succeed.” He expressed deep concern over the widening divisions within the Council, which he said have obstructed a peaceful resolution. Stressing a solution-oriented path forward, Jadoon called for a revival of the agreement's “core principles.”

World title is within reach: Mohammad Dastan

TEHRAN — Iran national beach soccer goalkeeper Mohammad Dastan believes the team have put their elimination from the 2025 Beach Soccer World Cup behind them and are now fully focused on achieving their long-standing dream of winning the world title.

Iran were eliminated in the quarterfinals of the 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup following a narrow 4–3 defeat to Belarus, despite having beaten the same opponents 6–1 in the previous edition of the tournament, where they finished third.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Dastan said: “Our training camps have been held in several stages so far. Our official competitions will begin next year, and we still have plenty of time ahead of us. Several more training camps will be organized according to the coaching staff's plans,” he added.

“We are scheduled to play friendly matches against Belarus next month (January), although they have not yet been finalized. The schedule coincides with New Year holidays, so the matches may be postponed or possibly canceled.

“All of us players will give everything we have, because our common goal is success at the World Cup. Winning the championship is the main objective for both the players and the coaching staff, and the potential to achieve it exists in every single member of the team. This belief is firmly shared throughout the national squad.”

“What happened to us at the 2025 World Cup was extremely painful, but we want to rise again and prove that Iran's beach soccer team still have a lot to say on the world stage. I hope better days are ahead for beach soccer. This team deserve much more than they currently receive, and I truly hope we will gain greater attention and recognition,” Dastan concluded.

Iranian-Japanese spiker Masajedi joins Powervolley Milano

TEHRAN - Karen Masajedi, a very young Iranian-Japanese spiker/opposite hitter has joined Italian volleyball club Powervolley Milano.

Masajedi, 205 cm tall, will turn 19 on January 28th and he is son of former Iranian volleyball player Ahmad Masajedi.

This is Masajedi's first experience abroad and on a professional club team, coming directly from Senshu University. He started his playing career at Fukuoka Ohori High School in 2022.

President Lucio Fusaro and General Manager Fabio Lini had previously promised they would hire a young player.

Powervolley Milano are headed by Iran national volleyball team head coach Roberto Piazza.

Late Saber Kazemi would have turned 27 today

TEHRAN – The late Iranian volleyball star Saber Kazemi would have celebrated his 27th birthday today.

Kazemi passed away on Nov. 5 after being declared brain-dead following a traumatic head injury. He remained in a coma for 20 days in Doha before his death.

Renowned for his powerful spikes and humble demeanor, Kazemi was more than an exceptional athlete. He was widely admired as a symbol of determination, discipline, and quiet strength both on and off the court.

Born in 1998, Kazemi proudly represented Iran's national volleyball team in several major international competitions. He played a key role in helping Team Melli secure gold medals at the 2018 and 2022 Asian Games and was also part of Iran's squad at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

At the club level, Kazemi played for Qatar's Al Rayyan.

He is remembered fondly by fans, teammates, and the volleyball community across Asia and beyond.

Rest in peace, dear Saber. Happy birthday.

Wrestlers Esmaeili, Amouzd win UWW’s accolade

TEHRAN – United World Wrestling (UWW) has named Iranian wrestlers Saeid Esmaeili and Rahman Amouzad as the most dominant Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestlers in the world in 2025.

In a post shared on its official Instagram page, UWW named Esmaeili, competing in the 67-kg category, as the world's most dominant and impactful Greco-Roman wrestler of 2025.

According to UWW, Esmaeili enjoyed an exceptional 2025, winning gold medals at the World Championships, the Asian Championships, and the Islamic Solidarity Games. These achievements firmly established his place among the elite of Greco-Roman wrestling, as he closed the season ranked No. 1 in the world at 67 kg.

UWW also praised Amouzad's outstanding season, describing it as nearly flawless.

The organization noted that Amouzad reached his peak through strong performances in the World Championships, the Islamic Solidarity Games, and the UWW Ranking Series events.

According to UWW, these achievements allowed Amouzad to finish the 2025 season as the world's top-ranked wrestler in the 65 kg weight category.

Persepolis target Sergeev on Sepahan’s radar

TEHRAN – Iran's Sepahan football club have reportedly set their sight on signing Uzbek forward Igor Vladimirovich Sergeev.

The 32-year-old international forward currently plays at Pakhtakor.

Persepolis had also shown interest in signing the player in the January transfer window.

French forward Enzo Crivelli has failed to meet expectations in the Isfahan-based club and Sepahan are going to sign a new striker.

The Yellows are contenders to lift the Iran league in the current season.

Masjedi appointed caretaker of Iran Deaf Sports Federation

TEHRAN – Asad Masjedi has been appointed as caretaker of the Iran Deaf Sports Federation.

Following the withdrawal of Mostafa Nekoulal Azad from the federation's presidency, Minister of Sport and Youth Ahmad Donyamali named Masjedi to oversee the organization until new elections are held.

Masjedi brings extensive experience in sports administration. His previous roles include serving as president of the Iran Sports Federation for the Blind and Partially Sighted, caretaker of the Sports Medicine Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (SMFIRI), and vice president of the Iran Sports Federation for the Disabled.

According to the ministry, presidential elections for the Iran Deaf Sports Federation are scheduled to take place within a maximum period of 75 days.

Former Iran jujutsu champion Mansouri dies

TEHRAN – Iranian jujutsu champion Mohammad Mansouri passed away on Wednesday in Tehran after a long battle with cancer. He was 41.

Mansouri was a former national team coach and a medalist at both world and Asian competitions. He also served as the head coach of Iran's youth MMA team, playing a significant role in the development of combat sports in the country.

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

South Korea funds \$500,000 vocational training facilities in western Iran

TEHRAN – Two specialized vocational training workshops were opened and equipped in Iran's western Kordestan province with \$500,000 in funding from South Korea, state media reported on Tuesday.

The facilities were inaugurated in Sanandaj during a ceremony attended by South Korean Ambassador Kim Junpyo, the provincial governor-general and senior officials from Iran's Technical and Vocational Training Organization.

According to IRNA, the donated equipment covers automotive industries, electricity and renewable energy, and is expected to strengthen skills-based training in the province.

Kordestan Governor-General Arash Zereh-Tan Lahouni said the project aligned with the government's policy of promoting "provincial diplomacy" under President Masoud Pezeshkian, describing such cooperation as a means of strengthening international ties and balanced regional development.

Kim Junpyo said the initiative, while modest, was intended to help expand cooperation between South Korea and Kordestan province and contribute to skills development and sustainable growth.

Seyed Ali Alavi, head of the provincial Technical and Vocational Training Organization, said the equipment would be deployed mainly in mechanical and automotive electrical training as well as renewable energy programs at the province's largest vocational center.

S. Korean ambassador stresses necessity of expanding co-op in human resource development, skills training, new technologies

Addressing a meeting of the Skill Development Task Force of Kordestan Technical and Vocational Training Organization, the ambassador of the Republic of South Korea emphasized the importance of international cooperation in the field of technical and vocational education, stating: "These measures demonstrate the Korean government's commitment to skills development in Iran."

During the meeting in Sanandaj on Tuesday, Ambassador Kim stated: "This support has led to the improvement of educational quality, youth empowerment, job creation, and sustainable development in various regions of the province. Furthermore, the development of teacher training projects, as a significant step in strengthening educational cooperation between Iran and Korea, has expanded from the national to the provincial level, laying the groundwork for the continuation of educational collaboration between the two countries."

In this meeting, he commended the efforts of the colleagues in the Technical and Vocational Education Organization of Kordestan Province, who, despite challenging conditions, continue to educate and empower the youth. He also emphasized the importance of optimally utilizing the equipment and infrastructure provided for the benefit of trainees in the coming years.

He stressed the necessity of expanding future cooperation among the Iranian Technical and Vocational Education Organization, local partners, and the Republic of Korea in the areas of human resource development, skills training, and new technologies.

'South Korea's assistance to vocational training in Kordestan: An investment in youth's future'

Addressing the same gathering, the head of the



Kordestan Chamber of Commerce stated: "South Korea's \$500,000 assistance to the province's technical and vocational training is a lasting and future-building measure for youth employment."

Ali Akbar Abdolmaleki, referring to the importance of this visit, remarked: "The return of the esteemed South Korean Ambassador to Kordestan Province with a scientific and results-oriented approach indicates that this visit is not merely ceremonial but rather a continuation of genuine mutual cooperation."

He added: "Approximately seven months ago, during the South Korean Ambassador's visit to the province's tourist attractions and technical and vocational training centers, sincere yet highly significant discussions were held regarding Kordestan's fundamental needs. The main focus of these discussions was the future of the youth, skills training, and creating infrastructures to link education with real employment."

The head of the province's Chamber of Commerce, noting that these discussions have now led to practical and lasting action, emphasized: "The agreement of the South Korean government and embassy to donate approximately \$500,000 worth of educational equipment, machinery, and technical infrastructure to Kordestan Province and the Technical and Vocational Training Organization is a highly valuable and development-oriented measure."

Abdolmaleki pointed out: "This support is not merely the transfer of equipment but rather the transfer of experience, mutual trust, and a development-oriented perspective—a perspective that regards skills training as the foundation of economic growth."

He emphasized: "From the private sector's viewpoint, no development will be sustainable without skilled and capable human resources. The connection between technical education, the private sector, and the labor market is a path that successful countries like South Korea have traversed, and today, Kordestan Province is also taking a significant step along this same path through this cooperation."

Referring to the province's human capacity, he stated that Kordestan is full of talented, entrepreneurial, and hardworking youth, and equipping educational centers with up-to-date facilities can pave the way for sustainable employment, reduced migration, and genuine economic growth in the region.

In conclusion, he expressed hope: "This valuable initiative should mark the beginning of broader cooperation in the fields of education, industry, investment, and exchange of experiences between Kordestan Province and the friendly country of South Korea."

Algeria's infrastructure opens door for Iranian engineering services exports

TEHRAN – Algeria's infrastructure needs offer significant opportunities for exporting technical and engineering services, making the North African country a largely untapped economic market, the head of Iran's trade center in Algeria said, according to the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Saeed Zare' Haghighi said Africa — and Algeria in particular — should be seen as a strategic destination for the private sector, noting that limited numbers of commercial counsellors made targeted entry into new markets essential.

He described Algeria as a geopolitically secure country with a strategic location close to Europe, adding that after the decline in Russian energy exports, about 20 percent of Europe's oil and gas is now supplied by Algeria.

Zare' Haghighi said Algeria's foreign cur-

rency revenues had risen from around \$50 billion to more than \$300 billion in recent years, generating a trade surplus of \$20 billion to \$30 billion and creating broad scope for economic cooperation.

He pointed to strong demand in Algeria for technical and engineering services, infrastructure projects, and the construction of silos and storage facilities linked to food security, saying Iranian companies had the technical know-how and experience to meet these needs.

He also highlighted Algeria's industrial and mining potential, including steel and phosphate, and said the trade center was ready to identify opportunities, guide exporters and promote participation in specialized exhibitions, drawing on models used by countries such as Turkey that combine trade with on-the-ground investment.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$4.3b to Turkey in 8 month

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$4.393 billion to Turkey during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

According to IRICA, Turkey was Iran's fourth top non-oil export destination in the mentioned period.

Exporting commodities valued at \$6.19 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third top source of non-oil import in the first eight months of this year.

The Turkish Statistical Institute has recently announced that the value of this country's imports from Iran in the first ten months of 2025 increased by four percent compared to the same period last year, reaching \$2.035 billion.

However, Turkey's exports to Iran from January to October 2025 amounted to \$2.53 billion, representing a four-percent decrease compared to the same period last year.

Trade between Turkey and Iran in the first ten months of the current year reached \$4.565 billion.

The trade between the two countries during this period did not show a significant change compared to the same period last year. In the ten months of 2024, the trade volume between the two countries was reported to be \$4.585 billion.

On December 6, a Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) delegation, visiting the Plast Eurasia 2025 exhibition in Istanbul, met with a group of board members and managers of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce.

In this meeting, both sides, referring to the longstanding friendly, cultural, and economic relations between Iran and Turkey, emphasized strengthening connections through the exchange of trade delegations, participation in exhibitions, and joint investment.

Munur Ustun, a member of the executive board of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, referring to the memorandum of understanding signed between the two chambers last year, described the presence of Iranian companies in Turkey and specialized exhibitions as valuable and stated: "The current volume of trade between the two countries falls short of the existing potential."

He then addressed the impact of global economic developments and the constraints caused by sanctions, and emphasizing the need to facilitate the foreign trade environment and create a secure path for private sector cooperation, said that direct meetings between merchants are an important step



to compensate for shortcomings.

Addressing the meeting, Hervik Yarijaniyan, head of the TCCIMA Industry and Mining Committee, stated that with over 47,000 members, this chamber has extensive capacity for cooperation with Turkish economic actors, adding: "The social, political, and cultural relations between the two countries are at a high level, but the level of trade exchange does not correspond with these realities. Therefore, through the exchange of trade delegations, participation in exhibitions, and joint investment, cooperation between the two countries can be strengthened."

He also invited the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce to travel to Tehran as a trade delegation to further expand the grounds for joint cooperation.

Subsequently, Hesameddin Hallaj, deputy for international affairs and trade development at the TCCIMA, referring to the continuous dispatch of trade delegations in recent years and the active presence of the Tehran Chamber at Plast Eurasia 2025, said: "Face-to-face dialogues between Iranian and Turkish actors can lead to the development of economic relations."

He also announced the continuation of cooperation between the two chambers based on last year's memorandum of understanding and expressed hope that the Tehran Chamber would soon host a delegation of Turkish merchants.

During this meeting, Kamran Davari-Nikou, Consul General of Iran in Istanbul, referring to the increase in the trade between the two countries to \$19.4 billion, said the diversity of Iran's export goods to Turkey has increased from 700 items in previous years to 1,383 items.

Referring to the presence of 45 Iranian companies at the Plast Eurasia exhibition and several dispatched trade delegations, he described this trend as a sign of the high potential for economic cooperation between Iran and Turkey.

Uzcan Tokul, Deputy Secretary General of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, in his remarks, deemed the current trade volume between Iran and Turkey insufficient and stated that the Istanbul Chamber would serious-

ly continue its policy of receiving and supporting Iranian trade delegations.

At the end of this meeting, it was also decided that the Tehran Chamber of Commerce would prepare the groundwork for a trade delegation from the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce to travel to Tehran through official correspondence.

The TCCIMA delegation, visiting the Plast Eurasia 2025 exhibition, also met with senior officials of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, proposing strategic partnerships between Iranian and Turkish private-sector companies, particularly in technology-driven sectors.

During the joint session, both sides highlighted the long-standing commercial ties between Iran and Turkey and agreed to strengthen industrial cooperation through B2B meetings and reciprocal expert delegations.

Mehmet Akif Meral, director of international and EU affairs at the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, introduced the body as an institution with 23,000 members established in 1923. He described past cooperation with Iran as positive, citing a 2013 business mission to Tehran and multiple meetings in recent years on technology, energy and industry.

He said the chamber maintains extensive links with Europe and neighboring markets and actively participates in global exhibitions, including major events in Chicago and the Netherlands.

Meral outlined measures taken in response to U.S. tariff shifts, noting that the chamber supports Turkish manufacturers through market advisory services, specialized training and e-commerce development programs. He added that 40 percent of Turkey's exports go to Europe, where the chamber plays a central role in maintaining industrial ties.

Hervik Yarijaniyan, head of the TCCIMA Industry and Mining Committee, said current trade levels fall short of the two countries' long-standing economic links. He called for closer coordination between the Tehran Chamber and the Istanbul Chamber of Industry and invited a Turkish industrial delegation to visit Tehran.

Hesameddin Hallaj, deputy for international affairs and trade development at the TCCIMA, pointed to Iran's renewed industrial momentum after difficult economic years. He said the current environment is suitable for joint ventures and shared manufacturing projects.

Highlighting the zero-tariff and reduced-tariff opportunities available to Iran under its free-trade framework with the Eurasian Economic Union, he encouraged Iranian and Turkish businesses to pursue co-export strategies in plastics and polymers, textiles and apparel, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and food products.

Meral noted that Iranian companies hold competitive strengths in several technology domains and can form strategic alliances with Turkish producers. He said shifting global supply chains and rising logistics costs have made Turkey an attractive base for regional industrial cooperation. He cited broad collaboration potential in electrical equipment, parts manufacturing, machinery, home appliances, electronics, fisheries and caviar.

He added that at the upcoming Moscow exhibition, where Turkey will field 200 booths, the chamber can help connect Turkish companies with Iranian partners.

Plast Eurasia 2025, one of the region's leading plastic-industry exhibitions, hosted participants from dozens of countries in Istanbul.

The Tehran Chamber of Commerce operated a dedicated pavilion and held multiple meetings to showcase Iran's industrial capacities and expand bilateral business links.

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

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

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

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

Tehran, Astana seek to boost trade ties through logistics, regional cooperation

TEHRAN – Trade ties between Tehran and Astana are entering a more dynamic phase following the recent presidential visit to Kazakhstan, with both sides seeking to expand economic cooperation through logistics projects and regional partnerships, a senior trade official said.

Mohammad Ali Dehghan-Dehnavi, deputy industry minister and head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said cooperation between provinces of the two countries was a key pillar of bilateral trade policy, adding that political relations had outpaced economic ties despite strong potential.

Speaking at a meeting on logistical cooperation with Kazakhstan, attended by senior officials and business representatives, Dehghan-Dehnavi said closer coordination and joint infrastructure projects were needed to rebalance economic relations and raise trade

volumes.

Provincial cooperation, led by Golestan, key to expanding trade with Kazakhstan

Golestan province, due to its geographic proximity, cultural links and past cooperation with Kazakhstan, could play a central role in advancing provincial-level projects, he said.

Golestan Governor Ali-Asghar Tahmasebi said current trade stood at about \$300 million and that both sides aimed to raise it to \$1.0 billion by 2026 and \$2.0 billion the following year, citing commitments made during the presidential visit.

He said Kazakhstan could source part of its agricultural needs, including citrus fruit, vegetables and horticultural products, from northern provinces, while highlighting the strategic importance of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) for both countries.

Tahmasebi said a rail corridor linking China,

Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Tehran had not yet been fully utilized and called for greater use of the route to unlock trade opportunities from Central Asia to southern ports.

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Tehran Onalbayev said Tehran was an important political, economic and cultural partner, noting particular interest in cooperation with Golestan province and the Incheh Borun free trade zone to address logistical bottlenecks through joint projects.

Potentials of China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan corridor

Reza Masrour, secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council, said the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan corridor had strong commercial potential if transport costs were reduced and incentives expanded, adding that the Incheh Borun zone was ready to host Kazakh investors.

Israel's digital house of cards

Why the cyber superpower myth is failing



From page 1 ▶ This breach has fueled intense internal paranoia between the Shin Bet and the National Cyber Directorate, proving that even the highest state encryption cannot protect a leadership fractured by political infighting and a culture of blame-shifting.

Handala's strategic strikes have also targeted the "unreachable" architects of the Israeli war crime machine.

By unmasking the principal designers of the Iron Dome, Arrow, and David's Sling defense systems—releasing photos, addresses, and offering bounties for further intel—the group has transformed faceless engineers into targets of psychological pressure.

Similar leaks involving drone program designers and nuclear scientists at the Soreq Research Center have stripped away the cloak of invisibility that security personnel rely on to carry out their operations without accountability.

This vulnerability is not a recent anomaly but a chronic failure of a settler-colonial society that glorifies militarized brutality.

Past incidents, such as the 2020 hack of water facilities and the massive data leaks from dating apps such as Atraf, highlight a so-

ciety that is hyper-networked but fundamentally fragile.

The group has successfully targeted Silicom, a key cover for Unit 8200, and the SSV Blockchain Network, exposing Mossad's clandestine financing.

By compromising the private accounts of elite figures like Benny Gantz, Ehud Barak, and Gabi Ashkenazi, Handala proved that no official is untouchable.

These strikes extended to military contractors like Rada Electronics and Zerto, where 51 terabytes of data were exfiltrated, and reached a climax with the discovery of a backdoor in Vidisco scanners linked to the Lebanon pager at-

tacks.

Combined with psychological warfare—sending 500,000 warning messages directly to citizens—these breaches reveal a systemic collapse of Israeli technological superiority.

The recent release of 20,900 unredacted Jeffrey Epstein emails, published by Distributed Denial of Secrets, further intensified this, revealing ties to child sexual exploitation embedded within intelligence-linked networks of clandestine finance, surveillance technology, and global influence campaigns.

Perhaps the starkest irony is a techno-dystopia envisioned by Zi-

onist-linked Western tech elites, with Israel as its hub and Palestinians cast as expendable test subjects in a laboratory of weaponized algorithms.

While U.S. giants such as Google, Amazon, and Palantir provide the AI infrastructure for algorithmic genocide—using systems like "Lavender" to automate the slaughter of Palestinians—they have failed to protect the very data centers powering these tools.

These hacks jeopardize billions in Silicon Valley investments, as the exposure of backdoors in centralized clouds like Project Nimbus deters sane international partners.

Ultimately, it would be no surprise that Israel's genocidal war-mongering and live-streamed atrocities would catalyze a benevolent cyber-intifada, mobilizing resistance against Israeli attempts at militarized domination.

A regime that relies on an illusion of invincibility to retain its settler population cannot survive the persistent exposure of its fractures.

Handala's operations have proven that in an era of asymmetric digital resistance, the "digital fortress" is a paper tiger, and the hunters have finally become the hunted.

Implications for Yemen's prisoner exchange

From page 1 ▶ This step is widely regarded as both positive and significant, with the potential to alleviate the suffering of prisoners and their families across Yemen.

It underscores the importance of building on this momentum to achieve further humanitarian progress.

Oman emphasized the spirit of cooperation that prevailed during the negotiations, which proved instrumental in reaching the agreement.

The talks provide a framework for addressing remaining humanitarian and political challenges, setting the stage for possible future steps in stabilizing the country.

Since the last UN-supervised exchange in April 2023, progress on Yemen's humanitarian file had largely stalled.

External pressures—particularly from the United States on Saudi Arabia—had sought to delay implementation, in response to Yemen's

steadfast support for Gaza during the "Al-Aqsa Flood" battle.

Although airstrikes by the Saudi-UAE coalition largely ceased in 2022, logistical and economic blockades, the closure of airports—especially Sana'a International Airport—and the inability to secure prisoner releases had left the humanitarian situation stagnant.

Yet this prisoner release is not merely a humanitarian measure; it is the natural outcome of a deterrence equation established by the steadfastness of the Yemeni people.

Each detainee released serves as living proof of the failure of coercive policies and the enduring power of the oppressed against instruments of tyranny.

The agreement, executed under Omani oversight and Saudi guarantees, also includes the recovery of bodies from all fronts and the inspection of prisons post-exchange to ensure no

detainees remain unaccounted for.

Civilians, including fishermen and politically detained citizens, are encompassed in the deal, demonstrating a comprehensive humanitarian approach.

This milestone highlights the effectiveness of principled resistance, the importance of regional mediation, and the potential for incremental steps to pave the way for sustainable solutions in Yemen's protracted conflict.

If reinforced with further steps—such as opening airports, easing blockades, and providing necessary compensations—this agreement could signal the start of a broader stabilization process.

While challenges remain, the deal represents a cautious yet meaningful signal that dialogue, persistence, and adherence to humanitarian principles can achieve tangible results even amidst prolonged conflict.

dle East can escape the cycle of conflict in 2026" reads as follows:

The past year has been one of the most consequential in the modern history of the Middle East.

A series of interconnected military escalations - from Gaza to Iran - has reshaped the regional order, revealed deep strategic anxieties, and exposed the limits of American and Israeli power in a volatile geopolitical landscape.

Across the region, Israeli military operations have dramatically wid-

ened. In Gaza, the continued devastation since October 2023 has led to unprecedented humanitarian suffering and political fragmentation.

Israeli air strikes have also targeted Iranian and Hezbollah positions in Syria, while similar operations have expanded in Lebanon, threatening a broader regional war. In Yemen, Israeli strikes aimed at disrupting Houthi capabilities added yet another front to an already overstretched conflict map.

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

economic warfare. The distinction is not democratic legitimacy. It is alignment. One obeys Western strategic interests; the other resists them. Europe no longer evaluates democracy by substance, but by loyalty. This is not liberalism. It is imperial preference masquerading as virtue.

NATO expansion and the road to war

To understand Europe's complicity in Ukraine's destruction, one must return to the post-Cold War moment. NATO, rather than dissolving or transforming into a defensive, cooperative framework, expanded relentlessly eastward—despite explicit assurances given to Soviet and Russian leaders that it would not do so.

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

Europe's moral collapse: Ukraine, NATO, and death of a civilization

The real tragedy of Europe is not that it makes mistakes, but that it refuses to learn from them

By Ranjan Solomon

GOA - The European Union today presents itself as a defender of democracy, human rights, and international law. Yet nowhere is the hollowness of this claim more exposed than in Ukraine. The EU's uncritical embrace of Volodymyr Zelensky—while condemning leaders like Nicolás Maduro as dictators - reveals not a principled commitment to democracy, but a selective morality rooted in power, obedience, and geopolitical convenience. This double standard is not accidental. It is structural. And it signals a deeper civilisational crisis: Europe has abandoned its own post-war lessons and buried its moral compass beneath NATO's militarism.

Maduro says defending Venezuela today is defending peace, law

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has sent a letter to heads of state across Latin America and the Caribbean, denouncing an escalation of U.S. acts of aggression against Venezuela and warning that the actions pose serious risks to regional stability.

This is the full text of the letter:

Caracas, December 22, 2025

Your Excellency, It is an honor to

extend fraternal greetings to you on behalf of the People and Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and on my own behalf, as I reaffirm that today our nation lives in peace, with institutional stability, sustained economic growth, and a firm commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and understanding among nations, despite having been subjected for years to

unilateral coercive measures and external pressures.

It is precisely because Venezuela is progressing, recovering, and sovereignly exercising its rights that I am writing to you to alert you to an escalation of extremely serious aggression by the Government of the United States of America, the effects of which transcend my country's borders and threaten to destabilize

Selective democracy and the politics of hypocrisy

Zelensky is celebrated in Brussels as the embodiment of democratic resistance. Yet Ukraine under his leadership has postponed elections indefinitely, banned opposition parties, consolidated media under state control, and functioned under emergency rule for years. Corruption - well documented even by Western institutions prior to 2022—has not vanished; it has merely become inconvenient to acknowledge.

None of this provokes EU outrage. Meanwhile, Venezuela is relentlessly sanctioned and vilified despite holding elections, maintaining opposition participation, and enduring extraordinary

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Straight Truth

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Algeria declares French colonization a crime, demands reparations



Algeria's parliament unanimously approved a law on Wednesday declaring France's colonization of the country a crime and demanded an apology and reparations, the Guardian reported.

Lawmakers, standing in the chamber wearing scarves in the colors of the national flag, chanted "long live Algeria" as they applauded the passage of the bill, which states that France holds "legal responsibility for its colonial past in Algeria and the tragedies it caused".

The legislation lists the "crimes of French colonization", which include nuclear tests, extrajudicial killings, "physical and psychological

torture" and the "systematic plundering of resources".

It states that "full and fair compensation for all material and moral damages caused by French colonization is an inalienable right of the Algerian state and people".

France's rule over Algeria from 1830 until 1962 was a period marked by mass killings and large-scale deportations, all the way up to the bloody war of independence from 1954 to 1962.

Algeria says the war killed 1.5 million people, while French historians put the death toll at 500,000 in total, 400,000 of them Algerian.

Al-Ameri rejects rumors of PMF dissolution

Hadi al-Ameri, head of Iraq's Fatah Alliance and secretary-general of the Badr Organization, has strongly rejected claims circulating in the media and social networks about the dissolution of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

He described such reports as "rumors," stressing: "We will never accept such a thing."

Al-Ameri further underlined that any decision regarding disarmament is a purely Iraqi matter, not one imposed from abroad. He noted that Iraq's religious authority has consistently emphasized the need for weapons to remain under state control, adding that disarmament can only occur once the mission of the international coalition ends and full national sovereignty is restored.

Rumors of disbanding the PMF have surfaced repeatedly, but Iraqi officials and PMF leaders have consistently denied them. The Iraqi gov-



ernment has reinforced the PMF's legal status through new legislation, recognizing it as an integral part of the country's official defense structure.

The PMF, formed in 2014, played a decisive role in defeating ISIL and safeguarding Iraq's territorial integrity. Today, it continues to be regarded by many Iraqis as a cornerstone of national security and a symbol of resistance against terrorism.

Gaza truce turns to strategic impasse

From page 1 ▶ There is an important historical logic that affirms the right of peoples living under occupation to resist, as guaranteed by international laws and conventions, and their right to freedom and independence.

Yet what we are witnessing today suggests a world that has lost its sense of justice, freedom, and human dignity. The Palestinian people and their long struggle are not isolated from a broader historical pattern marked by repeated international betrayal, with few exceptions.

Among those exceptions are Arab and Islamic resistance movements that supported Palestine not as a political issue but as a principled cause, paying a heavy price in blood and sacrifice. Notably among them are Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Sanaa government in Yemen represented by the armed forces there.

After the immense cost paid by the Palestin-

ian people during this genocidal war, the most accurate description of the current moment is a struggle over the final outcome, which has yet to be decisively settled: who will impose their conditions, and who will write the historical narrative of the post-genocide phase.

Gaza is now experiencing an unequal battle of wills. The Zionist regime is working to break this will and secure a strategic victory. A close look at the regime's current strategy reveals a core principle: subjugating the social environment that supports the resistance rather than defeating the resistance itself.

These actions are carefully calculated pressure tools designed to shift the cost from a military level, directly confronting the resistance, to a social level. This serves the long-term objectives of the regime's far-right leadership.

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

Israel's bombing forces Gaza families to live in ruins

From page 1 ▶ Israel's war has killed more than 70,000 Palestinians, displaced most of the enclave's 2.3 million residents, and destroyed or damaged over 70 percent of its buildings. A ceasefire announced in October has not halted the violence; more than 400 Palestinians have been killed since, and reconstruction remains blocked under Israel's control of supplies.

Inside their battered apartment, Amani Halawa brews coffee over a tin fire while sunlight filters through broken concrete. She and her husband Mohammed patch their surroundings with scraps, hanging bags from exposed rods and arranging cookware across the floor. Their walls bear painted trees and messages to relatives separated by conflict.

Across Gaza City, families cling to fractured apartments despite the risks. Health officials reported 11 deaths in December alone from collapsing structures. Yet daily life persists: Sahar Taroush sweeps dust from carpets laid over rubble, while her daughter Bisan watches a movie beside gaping holes in the wall. In another home, a torn photo of a grandfather on horseback hangs on a cracked wall, while a man scrolls his phone atop a precarious balcony overlooking the devastated al-Karama neighborhood.

Amid destruction, Gaza's families continue to endure, turning ruins into spaces of survival, memory, and resilience.

Tourist arrivals reach a positive 10 percent, minister says



TEHRAN--Tourist arrivals to Iran have returned to normal level in the second half of current Iranian year. The number of tourist arrivals has increased from minus 52 to plus 10 percent, and this trend is continuing rapidly.

Announcing this, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri told ISNA on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Tuesday that given the increase in the number of tourists, travel agencies cannot be closed unless there are other reasons that need to be investigated.

Pointing to the annual statistics of the outbound tourists, he said: "The statistics of outbound tourists are clear, and each family decides its travel destinations based on its income. On average, between 8 and 9 million tourists go abroad annually, which of course experience ups and downs in different circumstances, but the average in previous years has not changed significantly."

Earlier, Salehi-Amiri said: "In October and November, we returned to normal conditions before the 12-day Israeli war, and this favorable situation has begun again," Mehr news agency reported.

Salehi-Amiri also said that the develop-

ment of health tourism is one of the priorities of Tourism Ministry.

"In this regard, a comprehensive medical tourism system has been designed in collaboration with member agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor, the Social Security Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and all relevant agencies, which will be unveiled in the near future."

Close to 4.5 million tourists from target countries visited Iran during the first half of current Iranian year (March-September 2025), said Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri.

According to data compiled by the Tourism Ministry, Iran generated about \$7.4 billion from foreign tourism in the past Iranian calendar year (ended in March 2025), while it hosted more than 7 million international visitors.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 29 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Dossiers of Ilam's 3 natural sites under preparation for national registration

TEHRAN--Three significant natural dossiers of Ilam province are being prepared and completed with the aim of being registered in the National Heritage List, said Head of Ilam Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department Farzad Sharifi.

According to IRIB, he explained that the three valuable natural monuments of Ilam province, including the sumac tree in Sirvan county, the salt springs in the Meymak region of Mehran county, and Kiani-deroozenah spring in Badreh county, are being prepared for registration in the National Heritage List.

Sharifi stated that these files are on the agenda of Ilam Cultural Heritage Department with the aim of protecting, preserving and introducing the unique natural capacities of Ilam province and through conducting expert studies, documenting and preparing the necessary documents.

He continued that registering the natural relics in the country's National Heritage List is an important step towards preserving the natural heritage, increasing public awareness, and developing sustainable tourism in different regions of the province.

Sharifi emphasized the importance of identifying and registering valuable natural monuments and announced that the process of registering these monuments is being pursued seriously and that supporting natural heritage is one of the main priorities of this department.

Ilam province, western Iran, covers an area of 19,086 square kilometers and include Ilam, Mehran, Dehloran, Darreh Shahr, Eyvan, and Abdanan cities. It shares its borders with three provinces of Khuzestan in the south,



Lorestan in the east, and Kermanshah in the north.

The province's weather is hot and dry during summer and is temperate in winter. Ilam boasts beautiful spring nature. The capital city of the province is Ilam. The city is bounded by mountains and forests and benefits from mountainous weather.

Ancient castles, channels and riverbeds in mountainous nature make attractions for those who visit the place, especially during spring when all over the place is covered with green.

Ilam province is a tribal region and its handicrafts specially embossed Kilim is famous nationally. The most important handicrafts of the province are wickerwork, coarse carpet, silk products, rug, felt carpet and wooden products. Ilam, like the other provinces of the country, has its own especial souvenirs like local chewing gum (the gum of Persian turpentine tree), local sweets and candy.

Parthian art and architecture linked East and West across a vast empire



The ruins of Hatra, which is considered as one of the richest archaeological sites from the Parthian Empire known to date. The site is located in present-day eastern Nineveh Governorate in northern Iraq.

TEHRAN – For almost 500 years, the Parthian Empire controlled one of the world's most important cultural and trade routes, stretching from Central Asia to the Mediterranean.

Also known as the Arsacid Empire, it was a major Iranian political and cultural power centered in ancient Iran from 247 BC to 224 CE. Its latter name comes from its founder, Arsaces I, who led the Parni tribe in conquering the region of Parthia in Iran's northeast, then a satrapy (province) under Andragoras, who was rebelling against the Seleucid Empire. At its height, the Parthian Empire stretched from the northern reaches of the Euphrates, in what is now central-eastern Turkey, to present-day Afghanistan and western Pakistan. The empire, located on the Silk Road trade route between the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean Basin and the Han dynasty of China, became a center of trade and commerce.



Parthian long-necked lute

According to sources, Parthian art and architecture developed as a unique mix of eastern and western traditions. Geography, trade, and the needs of empire all shaped this style. It began east of the Caspian Sea and later took over the Seleucid Empire, which had followed the conquests of Alexander the Great.

As the empire expanded, it brought together many peoples, from India and China to Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean. Artistic ideas moved freely across this large area. Over time, however, the Parthians created a style that was clearly their own rather than a copy of Greek or Roman models.

Parthian art showed clear differences from classical traditions. In architecture, domes and vaulted halls became common. In sculpture, human figures were often shown facing directly toward the viewer. Decoration relied heavily on geometric and floral designs. These features later influenced art and architecture across the Middle East.

Sources say the Parthian cultural impact lasted long after the empire fell. The Sasanian dynasty kept Parthian clothing styles, especially the tunic and trousers. Centuries later, Ottoman Turks adopted similar loose trousers, which are still worn in some regions today. In art, the Parthian style of front-facing figures influenced Byzantine traditions and can still be seen in modern art. In architecture, the iwan – a vaulted hall open on one side – became a key feature of Middle Eastern buildings.

Cultural roots from nomads to cities

The Parthians came from nomadic groups in Central Asia and shared early links with the Scythians. These roots likely shaped their early music and material culture.

Contact with Greek Seleucid rulers introduced Hellenistic styles, including Greek clothing, which the Parthians first adopted. Over time, they returned to their traditional tunic and trousers, adapting them into an elegant and symbolic style worn by elites throughout the empire.

According to the World History Encyclopedia, historians debate why Parthian culture moved away from Greek models. Some suggest rivalry with Rome encouraged a rejection of Greek artistic dominance. Whatever the reason, Parthian art developed independently, combining influences from Central Asia, Iran, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean into a single, recognizable style.

Wealth, trade, and luxury

Parthian art was supported by great wealth. Roman historian Cassius Dio wrote that Marcus Licinius Crassus attacked Parthia because it was "extremely wealthy." Much of this wealth came from control of Mesopotamia and the Silk Road trade routes.

Silk, spices, perfumes, and medicinal plants passed through Parthian lands via the Euphrates and



Parthian-era gold ornament shows an eagle with its prey and is one of a pair, with the other on display in the British Museum, London.

Tigris rivers. This trade created strong demand for luxury goods and skilled artisans. Gold, which had little practical use, became a key symbol of status. Parthian nobles wore gold jewelry and used gold-decorated fabrics in clothing, curtains, and tapestries. Even horses sometimes wore gold-studded equipment.

Crystals from India and Iran were made into cups, jewelry, and cosmetic containers. Everyday objects were also carefully designed. Coins show Parthian kings sitting on low chairs with decorative legs and backs, suggesting that furniture was both practical and artistic.

Luxury was not limited to the royal court. As rulers invested in cities, a growing merchant class also sought fine goods. Greek geographer Strabo wrote that Parthian investment in cities such as Ctesiphon encouraged crafts and trade that were profitable for their rulers and spread artistic production throughout society.

Architecture

Architecture became a strong symbol of Parthian identity. In Iran and Mesopotamia, Parthian rulers restored old cities and built new complexes with large-scale designs and distinctive features.

At Ecbatana, the former Median capital, a huge palace impressed Greek historian Polybius. He described buildings once covered in gold and silver. Although much of this decoration was later removed, Ecbatana served as a Parthian summer capital, and improvements were likely meant to restore its former importance.

In cities such as Assur, Uruk, and Nimrud, Parthians built houses and temples using barrel vaults and the iwan. The iwan, a vaulted space open on one side, was used for entrances and ceremonies. It differed greatly from Greek columned buildings and later became a major feature of Islamic architecture.

Parthian architects also preferred circular forms, unlike the rectangular shapes common in Greek design. At Hatra, Greek columns were combined with Parthian arches, creating a mixed style. At Assur, Parthian arches dominated entrances and building fronts.

Art and decoration

In sculpture and reliefs, Par-

thian artists favored front-facing figures. Unlike Greek and Roman art, where figures often look away, Parthian figures face the viewer directly. This style later influenced Byzantine art and created a more direct connection with the audience.

Parthian faces often appear friendly rather than severe. Some figures raise their hands in greeting or welcome. This may reflect a political culture that valued diplomacy as well as military strength.

Interior decoration also shows Parthian creativity. At Assur, walls were decorated with detailed stucco designs featuring geometric and floral patterns, often painted in different colors. These styles later influenced Islamic decorative art and helped brighten interior spaces.

Despite their image as warriors and traders, the Parthians valued leisure and celebration. Music and dance were important in both public and private life. During a victory procession led by the general Surena, singers, dancers, and musicians took part.

At feasts, people played flutes, pipes, drums, and a stringed instrument called the sambuca. Group dances often followed. While written sources are limited, archaeological evidence from related nomadic cultures suggests a rich musical tradition.

Clothing as identity and power

Clothing was one of the clearest signs of Parthian identity. By the late first century BCE, elites commonly wore belted tunics and trousers. Loose garments with many horizontal pleats were worn by both men and women. Some trousers were made very wide, sometimes padded to increase their shape.

These pleats required large amounts of fabric, often silk, making clothing a clear display of wealth. Embroidery with floral designs, metal buttons, and coin-shaped ornaments added decoration. Hairstyles were also distinctive, with puffed hair, headbands, and full moustaches and beards for men.

Shared styles of dress helped identify Parthian elites across a large and diverse empire. At the same time, the rich use of fabric and ornament showed wealth supported by military power.

Borujerd apple festival registered in tourism events calendar

TEHRAN--Borujerd apple festival in Lorestan province was registered in Iran's tourism events calendar, said the head of the Borujerd Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department on Wednesday.

According to IRIB, Mehdi Goodarzi added that in line with organizing and professionalizing the tourism industry and based on the event-oriented approach as one of the strategies for developing new tourism destinations and routes in the popular government's transformation document, Borujerd apple festival was registered in the country's tourism events calendar.

He noted that the tourism event of Apple

festival, which is held every year in Borujerd county, Lorestan province, between September 11 and 15, was included in the country's tourism events list under the number 104251198 on December 22.

Goodarzi stated that registering this festival is another step towards developing Borujerd's tourism industry, introducing the region's indigenous, agricultural and cultural capacities, and strengthening the Borujerd tourism brand.

Among the existing modern cities in Iran, Borujerd is one of the oldest reported at least since the 9th century CE.

In Sassanid Empire, Borujerd was a small

town and region neighboring Nahavand. Gaining more attention during Great Seljuq Empire in the 9th and 10th centuries, Borujerd stood as an industrial, commercial and strategic city in Zagros mountains until the 20th century.

In its golden ages, Borujerd was selected as the state capital of Lorestan and Khuzestan region during Qajar dynasty in the 18th and 19th centuries. Due to the existence of a large number of production and industrial units and the supply of their products in the domestic and foreign markets, Borujerd is considered the industrial hub of Lorestan province.

'WHO is Iran's strategic partner in health sector'



The new WHO representative in Iran, Awad Mataria



The deputy health minister Alireza Raeisi

TEHRAN – The deputy health minister, Alireza Raeisi, has said the World Health Organization is a strategic partner and a norm-setting reference for the country's health sector.

The World Health Organization is at the heart of health system transformation, and it plays a crucial role in raising standards and strengthening national capacities, Raeisi stressed.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday in a meeting with Awad Mataria, the new WHO representative in Iran.

"The future path for cooperation should concentrate on jointly creating solutions that would address domestic as well as regional needs, rather than just providing support."

Speaking from experience, institutional respect, mutual trust, and strategic alignment lead to sustainable and effective outcomes in the health system, the health ministry's website quoted Raeisi as saying.

The official went on to enumerate the strategic health priorities of the country, including

youth population, family physician and referral system, guided self-care, and social factors affecting health.

The youth population is a driving force in public health and national development. Investment in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health has the highest long-term returns, he added.

The effective implementation of the family physician program plays a decisive role in improving the quality of services, lowering unnecessary costs, and boosting equity in access to health services. Guided self-care is an important factor that contributes to boosting family resilience and alleviates pressure on health-care systems. And WHO technical support is a strategic necessity in localization frameworks and standardization of services, Raeisi highlighted.

Mataria, for his part, highlighted the importance of healthy cities as the main platform for achieving health equity and reducing inequalities. Appropriate urban design, sustainable trans-

portation, and a healthy environment have a direct impact on the quality of life and public health.

The official considered aging an opportunity for sustainable development, stating that "Investing in primary health care, preventing chronic diseases, and strengthening social support for the elderly are among the requirements of future health systems.

Referring to the role of health economics, the official said that sustainable decision-making in the health sector requires cost-effectiveness analysis and prioritization of interventions based on economic and social returns. By linking healthy cities, healthy aging, and health economics, the region's health systems will be more resilient and efficient.

On December 21, Mataria held a meeting with Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi.

The two sides discussed ways to boost cooperation, focusing on synergy between WHO policies and national policy documents in the health sector, the health

ministry's website reported.

The WHO programs must be developed and implemented in accordance with the country's macro health policies, development plans, and priorities declared by the Ministry of Health, Zafarqandi highlighted.

The official considered it important for the WHO office to utilize regional and global capacities and transfer successful experiences of other countries to improve Iran's health system.

The collaboration between the health ministry and the WHO is expected to empower the country and boost the health system's resilience and preparedness, particularly in times of crisis and emergencies, through attracting support and technical assistance, Zafarqandi noted.

Mataria, for his part, reaffirmed his commitment to the enhancement of cooperation, underscoring that he will make every effort to realize the expectations of Iran's health ministry.

125 Iranian journals indexed in global databases in 4 years

TEHRAN – Thanks to targeted planning and coordinated efforts, about 125 Iranian journals have been indexed by the reputable databases of Scopus and Web of Science over the past four years, an official with the Ministry of Science has said.

In the last year (March 2024 – March 2025) alone, some 50 Iranian journals were indexed, which is a scientific record for the country. The growth rate of scientific publications, which is not easy to repeat, indicates that a specific program has been pursued to improve the status of the country's scientific journals, ISNA quoted Samad Nejad-Ebrahimi as saying.

These journals are, in fact, a scientific and international showcase of Iran in science and technology fields, and improving them will directly contribute to achieving scientific authority, the official added.

Referring to the role of journals in the

country's knowledge-based ecosystem, Nejad-Ebrahimi said a journal with an international index has significant added value, which doubles the importance of scientific and managerial investment in the field.

Iran among top five countries in DOAJ

According to the latest Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) data, Iran, with a total of 1,003 indexed journals, is one of the top five countries among 138 countries publishing the most open-access journals.

DOAJ is a unique and extensive index of diverse open-access journals from around the world, driven by a growing community. It is committed to ensuring quality content is openly available online for everyone.

DOAJ's mission is to increase the visibility, accessibility, reputation, usage, and impact of quality, peer-reviewed, open-access scholarly research journals globally, regardless of

discipline, geography, or language. It is committed to being 100 percent independent and maintaining all of its primary services and metadata as open to everyone.

The country's progress over the past decade has been noticeable, rising from 95 indexed journals in 2015 to 506 in 2022. The trend continued to grow, reaching 931 in 2024 and 1003 in 2025, msrt.ir reported.

Out of 1,003 indexed journals, 584 and 480 journals are in Persian and English, respectively. Six journals are in Arabic, two in French, and two others are in the Russian language. There is a journal in the Avestan language, and one in the Kurdish language. Overall, Iran, with 591 Persian journals, ranked ninth among 80 other languages.

According to the DOAJ data, Indonesia, with 2511 indexed journals, is placed first, followed by the United Kingdom (2202), Brazil (1533), and the United States (1248).

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Special clinic to relieve families during coronavirus pandemic

A special clinic will be opened for the first time in the country to provide free psychological services to families who have lost their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The clinic is called "Soog" (literally meaning mourn) will be inaugurated at Shahid Beheshti Educational and Medical Center in Zanjan province on Wednesday.

The outbreak of coronavirus has changed the lifestyle of many families, Ehsan Fakoor, head of the mental health department of Zanjan University of Medical Sciences said.

Sudden changes in life cause stress, while the coronavirus itself has doubled the stress due to its contagion and the number of lives it has claimed in the world to date, he regretted.

کلینیک سوگ برای افرادی که اعضای خانواده را بر اثر کرونا از دست داده‌اند

رئیس گروه بهداشت روان دانشگاه علوم پزشکی زنجان از افتتاح نخستین کلینیک سوگ در کشور برای ارائه خدمات رایگان روان‌شناختی به خانواده‌هایی که اعضای خانواده خود را به دلیل ابتلا به کرونا از دست داده‌اند خبر داد و اظهار کرد: این کلینیک ۲۳ مهرماه امسال در مرکز آموزشی درمانی شهید بهشتی زنجان کار خود را آغاز خواهد کرد. فکور با بیان اینکه شیوع ویروس کرونا باعث شده است تا سبک زندگی بسیاری از خانواده‌ها دچار تغییر شود، ادامه داد: ایجاد تغییرات ناگهانی در زندگی باعث ایجاد استرس می‌شود، این در حالی است که خود ویروس کرونا به دلیل واگیردار بودن و نیز آمار فوتی‌هایی که تا به امروز در دنیا به جا گذاشته، این استرس را دوچندان کرده است.

Japan interested in boosting environmental, pharmaceutical ties with Iran



Tamaki Tsukada, Japan's ambassador to Iran

Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, the head of the TCCIMA

TEHRAN – Japanese officials have announced their willingness to expand cooperation with Iran in areas that are not subject to sanctions, particularly the environment and pharmaceuticals.

In this line, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on December 22.

The MOU was signed at a meeting attended by senior Iranian and Japanese economic and political figures, including Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, the head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture; Hamid Qanbari, the deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy; and Tamaki Tsukada, Japan's ambassador to Iran.

The meeting also explored new areas of cooperation. Fereydoun Vardi-Nejad, the secretary general of the Tehran Chamber, pointed to non-sanctioned sectors with immediate cooperation potential, including pharmaceuticals, healthcare, education, food, agriculture, and technology, and said the chamber was ready to engage directly with the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce.

Food, education, and information technology are among other fields of interest to the Japanese side for enhancing collaborations, the TCCIMA website quoted Najafi-Arab as saying.

For his part, Tsukada said the two sides can also foster cooperation in the fields of culture, artificial intelligence (AI), and environment, particularly in decarbonization.

Saeed Tajik, head of the Tehran chamber's energy and environment commission, for his part, called for renewed cooperation on air pollution management and environmental studies, citing past collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). About two decades ago, the Japanese conducted a comprehensive study on the source of the air pollution in Tehran. During the meeting, the officials decided to resume and update the studies in cooperation with the Department of Environment (DOE).

He also highlighted opportunities for joint efforts on greenhouse gas reduction and carbon certification.

Japan's contributions in the past

Over the past 10 years, Japan has made generous contributions to help Iran address

environmental issues.

In November, Tsukada 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

Japan'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.

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.

On October 27, ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh met Tamaki to explore new avenues for trade cooperation between the two nations, emphasizing non-sanctioned sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and food industries.

The envoy noted that Iran has achieved remarkable progress in nanotechnology and artificial intelligence, and expressed Japan's willingness to host Iranian engineers and specialists in these areas, saying there are promising opportunities for them to work and innovate in Japan.

Hassanzadeh, for his part, proposed cooperation in pharmaceuticals, hospital construction, and food production, noting that ICCIMA has conducted research studies supporting deeper bilateral relations in these fields.

Some 95 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 94 earthquakes were recorded across the country in a week from December 13 to 19, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 90 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; and two earthquakes with magnitudes between 2 and 4 have occurred in the country, isrc reported.

Among the provinces of the country, South Khorasan experienced the highest number of earthquakes, with 19, followed by Fars and Kerman, with 9 and 8 earthquakes, respectively.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4.2 on the Richter scale, which occurred on December 17 in Kerman province.

During the same period, an earthquake hit Tehran province. No earthquakes were recorded in the provinces of Alborz, Ilam, Zanjan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Kordestan,

Golestan, Markazi, and Hamedan.

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.



DECEMBER 25, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Recommended prayers cannot attain the pleasures of Allah for you when obligatory prayers are left unattended.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:04 Evening: 17:17 Dawn: 5:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:12 (tomorrow)

Fajr Anthem Festival kicks off in Tehran

TEHRAN- The 3rd edition of the Fajr National Anthem Festival opened in Tehran on Wednesday, featuring a several performances by selected groups of chorus singers.

This year, the Eshraq Cultural Center will host over 350 selected groups of chorus singers from Tehran, who will compete with each other over the course of three days.

Rahim Nadeali, the deputy cultural affairs chief of the Tehran branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, announced that the response from active anthem groups in Tehran has been overwhelming. "The quality of the works was so impressive that it made it difficult for the judges to select the participating groups," he added.

The official noted that over the past few years, the quality and quantity of artistic productions in the anthem section have significantly improved, with many young talents

emerging in various fields such as poetry and music. "We are hopeful that such festivals will continue to flourish and promote the development of Islamic and revolutionary arts in our country," he said.

Revolutionary anthems hold a significant place in Iran's cultural and political landscape, serving as powerful symbols of unity, resistance, and national identity. These songs, often rooted in themes of patriotism, sacrifice, and devotion to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, have played a vital role in inspiring generations and reinforcing the values of the Islamic Republic.

From the early days of the 1979 Islamic Revolution to contemporary times, revolutionary anthems are frequently performed at official ceremonies, public gatherings, and cultural events, emphasizing the enduring spirit of the movement and its ongoing influence on Iranian society.

Cartoon of Day



Netanyahu the Vulture
Cartoonist: Deniz O. Ilhan from the U.S.

Israeli forces injure Press TV correspondent during West Bank raid

TEHRAN- An attack by Israeli occupation forces on a Press TV correspondent in the besieged West Bank has left her injured, highlighting the regime's blatant disregard for the rights of journalists and the Palestinian people.

Naqqa Hamed, a Press TV correspondent, was reporting live from the Qalandia refugee camp, north of al-Quds, when she was shot by Israeli rubber bullets on Tuesday. Her general condition is reported to be stable, despite the severity of the attack.

The Israeli aggression came as occupation forces stormed the Qalandia camp, arresting some young men and taking control of all neighborhoods. The regime's forces also brought in bulldozers to demolish commercial facilities in the area, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people.

Earlier on Tuesday, journalists covering the raids in the region faced harassment from Israeli troops, who employed tear gas and stun grenades. At the same time, Israel is advancing a significant settlement development



BREAKING Naqqa Hamed, Press TV

PRESS TV CORRESPONDENT SHOT IN THE FOOT WITH RUBBER BULLET WHILE REPORTING LIVE FROM OCCUPIED WEST BANK
340 PEOPLE KILLED IN LEBANON SINCE UN-MEDIATED CEASEFIRE IMPLEMENTED



in Qalandia, which many see as a strategic move to disconnect northern al-Quds from Ramallah and the surrounding Palestinian areas.

This latest incident serves as a stark reminder of the risks faced by journalists and the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli occupation.

According to the Committee to

Protect Journalists (CPI), Israel is engaging in the deadliest and most deliberate effort to kill and silence journalists that CPI has ever documented. Palestinian journalists are being threatened, directly targeted, and murdered by Israeli forces, and are arbitrarily detained and tortured in retaliation for their work. Israel has systematically destroyed media

infrastructure in Gaza, and tightened censorship throughout the West Bank and Israel.

By silencing the press, Israel is silencing those who document and bear witness to what human rights groups and UN experts agree is a genocide. CPI also calls on the international community to hold Israel to account for its unlawful attacks on journalists.

“The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN- “The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender” by Canadian writer Leslye Walton has been published in Persian.

Milkan is the publisher of the book translated by Samin Sedaqatkar.

“The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender” is a captivating multi-generational family saga centered on the women of the Roux family. The novel explores themes of love, loss, and resilience through the lens of magical realism, creating a richly textured narrative that delves into the complexities of human emotion and familial bonds.

Central to the story is Ava, a uniquely beautiful girl born with wings, a symbol of her otherworldly nature and the misunderstanding she faces from the outside world. Her mother and grandmother, wary of the pain that romantic love has historically brought to the women of

their family, shield Ava from the harsh realities of life, hoping to protect her from heartbreak and disappointment.

Throughout the book, each character is portrayed with depth and nuance, making them compelling in their own right. Their stories intertwine to reveal how past traumas and societal expectations shape their actions and beliefs.

The novel deftly emphasizes that the choices parents make to shield their children, often rooted in their own pain, can inadvertently suppress the very qualities—such as independence and courage—that children need to grow and thrive. This is symbolized through Ava's desire to fly—an act representing freedom and self-discovery—that her parents forbid, echoing the broader metaphor of giving wings but denying the ability to fly. Walton skillfully uses magical realism to weave this metaphor seam-

lessly into the narrative, avoiding heaviness and instead enriching the story with symbolic depth.

Ava's longing to experience independence and her innate curiosity about the world reflect the universal desire for self-actualization. Her journey highlights the importance of falling and getting back up—a vital process that fosters resilience and strength.

The novel suggests that pain and struggle are essential parts of growth, and that true understanding and courage come through experiencing adversity. Walton's masterful storytelling combines lyrical prose with profound themes, making “The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender” not just a tale of a girl with wings, but a poignant reflection on the human condition and the enduring power of hope and resilience.

Iranian Artists Forum to review Mehrjui’s “The Tenants”



TEHRAN – The third session of the “Film Studies” program, focusing on “The Tenants” directed by the late filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui, will be held at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on Thursday.

“The Tenants” is a 1987 comedy film, which has been widely acclaimed as the best Iranian comedy film of the 1980s, Honaronline reported.

The film is about the tenants of a rundown building on the outskirts of Tehran, with no legal heir, who face major housing problems to deal with: major repairs and threat of eviction by greedy building manager who wants to own the building.

Set almost entirely in a residential building on the outskirts of Tehran, a number of tenants encounter a series of problems with their homes. The owner of the building Abbas, however, is

careless, refusing to maintain the property.

What begins as a few leaks and cracks here and there escalates into a matter of life and death as the tenants struggle to deal with setback after setback. Things are complicated further by a dispute regarding the building's heir, engineered in part by the conniving Gholam. A dramatic portrayal of domestic chaos.

During the session, veteran director, actor, and researcher Dariush Moaddabian will speak on “Techniques of Comedy and ‘The Tenants,’” director, screenwriter, and researcher Ali Rouhani will deliver a speech on “‘The Tenants’ and the Critique of Ideology: A Symptomatic Reading,” psychiatrist Mojtaba Arham Sadr and psychologist Behnam Hosseini will speak about “‘The Tenants’: A Psychoanalytic/Sociological Reflection of Contemporary Iranian Bourgeois Manners,” and researcher Masih Norouzi will talk about “The Wilderness of Historical Perspective in the Iranian Intellectual Tradition.”

In the second part of the session, a discussion about the film will take place with the participation of the veteran actor Iraj Rad, editor Hossein Heydari, and film critic Amirhossein Babaei.

Torsten Letser’s “The Little Prince of Denmark” on stage at Arasbaran Cultural Center

TEHRAN – Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran is hosting the play “The Little Prince of Denmark” written by Swedish playwright Torsten Letser and translated into Persian by Nasser Hosseini-Mehr.

The 55-minute play is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's “Hamlet,” which narrates the story of the Danish prince for children and young adults, Mehr reported.

Although the play has a different storyline from Shakespeare's work, all characters of the original “Hamlet” appear in the play along

with a clown and a guard that have been added to the story.

The play narrates the story of an eight-year-old Danish prince Hamlet who uncovers a plot for his father's murder. With his friend Ophelia, he acts out the scenario with dolls – the actors' scene. Uncle Claudius finds this amusing, but he orders two swords, because boys don't play with dolls. Hamlet wants to warn his father, but the father, freshly returned from the war, refuses to listen to the boy's fantasies. However, he has brought his son

a bear from his travels. And with the bear's help, the murder is ultimately prevented.

In this parallel “Hamlet,” Letser not only plays with the characters and plot of Shakespeare's tragedy, but also blends the loose, five-beat blank verse of adults with the children's concise, everyday prose sentences.

For children, the playful reference to Shakespeare is neither a problem nor a central theme; for adults, however, it's a delight that delves right into the heart of the matter – but from the children's

perspective.

Navid Mohebbi, Amir-Abbas Saleh, Amir-Ali Zamannejad, Majid Zarezaadeh, Mohammad-Ali Mahboubi, Elena Shojai, Amir-Mehdi Alizadeh, Ashkan Gholizadeh, and Ali Ali-Mohammadi are the cast members of the Persian adaptation of “The Little Prince of Denmark.”

The play will remain on stage until January 16, 2026, at the Arasbaran Cultural Center, located on Jolfa Street, northwest of Seyed-Khandan Bridge.