

Exclusive

Tehran Times receives recent on-the-ground photos of highly-protected site damaged during Iran's June strikes

Weizmann Still in Iran's Sights: Eyes After Missiles



Scan this QR code to watch the video.

© Iran's eyes in Israel

Photo received by the Tehran Times shows one of the buildings of the Weizmann institute 6 months after attack by Iran.

Talks with US 'not realistic' without respect for norms, says foreign ministry

TEHRAN – Iran says the circumstances are not yet ripe for launching negotiations with the United States despite Iran's commitment to diplomacy, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said on Monday, amid reports that Iraq has offered to mediate between Tehran and Washington.

Baqaei said Iran appreciates Baghdad's concern for regional stability, but stressed that any negotiation process would require all parties to respect the basic norms of diplomacy, particularly in light of developments over the past several months. ▶ Page 2

Top female entrepreneurs honored

TEHRAN – During the third national congress on Iranian women, 60 of the most successful women entrepreneurs, who have played a key role in the country's social and economic development, were honored.

Held annually, the congress aims to empower women, improve their skills, and introduce the most successful women in social, cultural, and economic fields, IRIB reported.

The event involved specialized meetings, discussion sessions, and interactive programs. Establishing a network of empowered women, the event served as a great opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences, and offer effective strategies to enhance women's status in society.

The current administration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs. ▶ Page 7

Six countries, three seas, one voracious war machine

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – In 2025, Israel acted as a borderless war machine, unleashing over 10,631 military attacks across six nations—Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen, and Qatar—while extending its brutality to maritime terrorism against aid ships in the waters of Malta, Greece, and Tunisia.

Tel Aviv's military apparatus engaged in a doctrine of unrestricted, multi-theater aggression designed to enforce a permanent state of fear across the region.

By December, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) confirmed Israel was averaging nearly 30 strikes a day.

This campaign deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure, eroded sovereignty, and weaponized famine.

This wasn't mere escalation; it was a calculated doctrine of unrestricted aggression, prioritizing total degradation of adversaries over any semblance of international law or diplomacy.

Yemen and mirage of Somaliland: Sovereignty, deterrence, and battle over the Red Sea

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—The renewed focus on the so-called "Somaliland" is not an isolated African issue but a deliberate geopolitical maneuver tied to the security of the Red Sea and the balance of power in West Asia.

"Somaliland" represents a classic model of imposed fragmentation: a statelet promoted through external recognition, detached from historical legitimacy, and designed to serve foreign security interests.

Its strategic coastline, overlooking vital maritime corridors, renders it an attractive platform for hostile powers seeking leverage over the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea.

For Yemen, any such presence would collapse the distance between threat and homeland, transforming nearby shores into launchpads aimed directly at Yemeni security.

Al-Houthi's warning: A red line for Israel in Somaliland

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The leader of Yemen's Ansarullah has declared that any Israeli presence in Somaliland will be treated as a "military target," framing Israel's recent recognition of the breakaway region as an act of aggression against Somalia, Yemen, and the wider Red Sea corridor. Abdul-Malik al-Houthi's remarks underscore the seriousness with which Yemen's resistance movement views Tel Aviv's latest geopolitical maneuver, and highlight the broader struggle over sovereignty and control in one of the world's most strategic maritime zones.

Israel's recognition of Somaliland is not a neutral diplomatic gesture. It is a calculated attempt to secure influence in the Horn of Africa, a region that sits at the crossroads of global trade. Somaliland's position on the Gulf of Aden offers Israel potential access to the Red Sea, enabling it to monitor shipping routes and project military power against Ansarullah in Yemen. For Tel Aviv, this foothold would serve both intelligence and military purposes, particularly after the Ansarullah movement's attacks against Israeli-linked shipping in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

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Russia says Tehran showing 'maximum restraint' despite Western provocations

TEHRAN – Sergey Lavrov, in an interview with Russian media, said that Iran has shown the highest level of restraint and readiness for dialogue in response to all Western provocations.

The Russian foreign minister told the TASS news agency: "We have noticed that the Iranians are demonstrating maximum restraint, and that they respond to all Western provocations and blackmail with openness to dialogue, seeking ways to resolve the current contradictions through political means."

In 2025, five rounds of nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States, mediated by Oman, ended without results due to the launch of military operations by the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic and U.S. air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. ▶ Page 2

Iran, Turkey business groups seek to expand industrial, trade cooperation

TEHRAN – Business delegations from Turkey's Van province and Iranian industrial representatives held talks in Tehran on ways to remove trade barriers and expand bilateral industrial and commercial cooperation, officials said.

The meeting brought together members of a Van-based trade delegation, Iranian industrialists and the head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA)'s industry and mining committee.

Hervik Yarijanian, head of the committee, said the Iranian and Turkish economies are both on a path of growth and that closer links between private-sector players could boost trade, encourage joint investment and help both sides make better use of existing capacities. ▶ Page 4



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Tehran hosts conference to honor martyred general Soleimani

TEHRAN – The Conference on Diplomacy and Resistance opened in Tehran on Monday, commemorating the 6th anniversary of the martyrdom of senior Iranian commander Major General Qassem Soleimani.

The event brought together people from all walks of life, namely the late general's daughter Zeinab Soleimani, as well as dignitaries, among them Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani, the commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Addressing the event, the foreign minister described martyr Soleimani as the "axis of resistance" in the region, touching upon his "heritage" for the country's foreign policy. ▶ Page 3

Head of ICRO Hojjatoleslam Imanipour meets Malaysian officials, thinkers, religious leaders

TEHRAN – The head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) made a visit to Malaysia with the aim of strengthening cultural diplomacy, engaging with elites and intellectuals, supporting Iranians living abroad, and expanding Quranic and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

During his four-day visit, Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour had a meeting with activists in the field of Palestine as well as a meeting with the Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives, attended a gathering with Iranian elites, intellectuals, and cultural figures residing in Malaysia, and held meetings and discussions with Malaysian and Iranian thinkers and elites and religious leaders, ISNA reported. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran in the orbit of power and precision

Javan analyzed the successful launch and deployment of three Iranian satellites into space. According to the paper, the sky transformed into a historic, pride-inspiring spectacle as the satellites Kosar, Paya, and Zafar-2 were successfully launched from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome, once again etching Iran's name into the orbit of honor. This mission was not merely a space launch, but a symbol of the scientific and technological capabilities of the nation's youth, the national will to participate in strategic arenas, and a bold step toward Iran's future in space. The simultaneous launch of three satellites demonstrated that Iran today is not just a spectator but an active player in the global space arena—one that can consolidate its position in the orbit of progress through reliance on indigenous knowledge and international cooperation. The launch is regarded as one of the largest and most significant space missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, marking a new achievement for the country's space program. This historic mission serves as a reminder that the sky is no longer a boundary, but rather a launching pad for the ideas and capabilities of Iranian youth.

Etemad: Iran stands firm on its territorial legitimacy

Etemad offered an analysis of the statement issued by the Persian Gulf Arab leaders against Iran regarding its three islands. The paper noted that the statement condemned Iran's construction projects and military drills on the islands, described repeated visits by senior Iranian officials as provocative, and asserted that the islands belong to the United Arab Emirates. According to the analysis, the UAE issued this statement because it was backed by Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, who sought to extract concessions from Iran. The supportive policies of the U.S. and Israel aim to strengthen the UAE economically—both by encouraging the purchase of Western weapons and by reinforcing the cycle of oil revenues flowing back into the Western bloc—while simultaneously positioning the UAE against a powerful Iran. Western support for the UAE has thus become a geopolitical factor that, if the UAE's demands are realized in any form, could disrupt regional balance. The path the UAE has embarked upon is unlikely to end well. Iran, meanwhile, stands firm on its legitimacy, as the issue of the islands is tied to national security and authority. Consequently, Iran is left with no choice but to act in a way that forces the UAE to recognize that it must choose between continuing this course or damaging its relationship with Iran.

Tehran hosts conference to honor martyred general Soleimani

From page 1 ► Araghchi said the implications of the martyred general's heritage goes far beyond the current policies and executive approaches in the foreign policy arena. He said general Soleimani's thought should be aptly named “the diplomacy of the axis of resistance.”

Also in a speech, the general's daughter touched upon her late father's performance and accomplishments in the contemporary developments of Iran and the region.

She said general Soleimani set foot on the path to national defense and security since the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and served as one of the commanders of the Iranian military alongside thousands of other service-members. She said the late general also paid due regard to security within society.

General Soleimani, the former commander of the IRGC's Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and their companions were assassinated in a U.S. drone strike authorized by President Donald Trump near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

General Soleimani made great strides and secured numerous achievements in fighting terror, namely in the fight against the Daesh terrorist group during the 2010s.

He also countered the “Greater Middle East” plots orchestrated by the U.S. and the Israeli regime with the support of certain European countries aimed at dividing Syria and Iraq into small-

Hamshahri: Outlook for Iraq's initiative to mediate between Iran and US remains uncertain

Hamshahri reported on new mediation efforts between Iran and the United States. In recent days, Baghdad has announced attempts to mediate negotiations between Tehran and Washington, leveraging its close relations with both countries to play a balancing role. After the autumn passed in “negotiation silence” between Tehran and Washington, Iraq now appears to be using its good ties with both sides to initiate fresh efforts to restart talks. Baghdad's attempt to open a new diplomatic channel comes at a time when the visit of Israel's prime minister to the United States and his meeting with the American president are drawing intense attention from Hebrew and Western media, who seek to create a new atmosphere of threat around Iran. Given Washington's insistence on imposing nuclear and missile conditions on Tehran, the outlook for Baghdad's new initiative remains uncertain. Tehran has consistently declared its readiness to negotiate from a position of equality, based on respect and mutual interests. It is Washington, the paper argues, that must prepare itself for realistic negotiations.

Kayhan: The Zionist regime and the ‘threat project’

Kayhan analyzed what it called Israel's long-standing project of presenting Iran as a “threat-project”. Over the past years, the Zionist regime has carried out a series of terrorist operations against Iran. Casting Iran's military and nuclear capabilities as an existential threat, the paper argued, serves to justify these actions as “countering a looming danger” and to rally international support. This strategy pursues at least three major goals: Justifying increased military budgets and deflecting from domestic crises, building international consensus against Iran, and preparing psychological grounds for military action. By portraying Iran as an “existential threat,” Netanyahu's current hardline government seeks to expand the circle of Iran's opponents, drawing in Arab states and even extra-regional powers into an anti-Iran coalition. Through repeated claims of imminent danger, the Zionist regime attempts to condition international opinion to accept preemptive action as necessary and defensive. The ultimate aim of this project, Kayhan concluded, is to construct an imaginary monster in order to secure international backing and eventually pave the way for another military aggression, with the involvement and support of foreign powers including the United States.

er states. General Qassem Soleimani, as part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategy, worked to preserve and defend these nations' territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The boundaries General Soleimani established within the geography of Resistance thwarted the U.S. and Israeli regime's plots which were tied to the empowerment of Takfiri terrorists and Daesh.

General Soleimani defended Iraq's sovereignty, leading to the stabilization of Iraq's national authority.

The U.S. had sought to divide Iraq into three sections—Kurdish, Shia, and Sunni territories. Since the U.S. entered the region, discussions around Iraq's disintegration and violations of its sovereignty were pushed forward.

To prevent the spread and realization of this regional damage and defend the disintegration of Iraqi lands, which would undoubtedly create insecurity and numerous security and ethnic problems for their neighbors, especially for Iran, Martyr Soleimani tried to deal with this issue completely and comprehensively, using all the capacities, facilities, and various opportunities in the military, political, and diplomatic fields.

One of General Soleimani's significant achievements was uniting regional nations into a single front to safeguard the identity, existence, and integrity of the region. He successfully brought these countries together to form the Axis of Resistance.

Russia says Tehran showing ‘maximum restraint’ despite Western provocations

From page 1 ► The JCPOA has been largely defunct since 2018. Following the United States' illegal withdrawal from the agreement and the reimposition of sweeping sanctions, Europe failed to provide the promised economic relief that was central to the deal. After nearly 18 months of waiting in vain, Iran began gradually reducing its nuclear commitments in response to Western inaction — a move Tehran has said was fully consistent with Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.

Russia and China, the two remaining signatories that have stayed committed to the agreement, have repeatedly stated that the paralysis of the JCPOA is the result of Western non-compliance. Both have called on Europe and the United States to return to genuine diplomacy rather than coercion.

Adding to the tension, U.S. and Israeli air strikes in June targeted Iranian nuclear facilities — the very sites safeguarded under the JCPOA framework. The attacks were condemned worldwide as a blatant act of aggression. U.S. President Donald Trump later boasted that the strikes had “obliterated” Iran's nuclear infrastructure — remarks Tehran said amounted to an open admission of war crimes.

“Snapback” was a mechanism under UN Security Council Resolution 2231 designed to automatically reinstate UN sanctions against Iran if it violated the terms of the JCPOA, the nuclear agreement signed in 2015 by Iran, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China. Under the deal, Iran committed to limiting its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. However, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the agreement and reimposed sanctions in 2018. European signatories insisted Iran continue adhering to the JCPOA, despite their inability to compel Washington's return or mitigate the debilitating effects of U.S. sanctions.

The snapback mechanism was officially invoked by the European signatories to the JCPOA — Britain, Germany, and France — in late August. On September 19, the United Nations Security Council



Photo shows Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L). The Pezeshkian administration has made significant efforts to make diplomacy with the West work.

voted not to permanently lift the pre-JCPOA UN sanctions against Iran. On September 27, the Security Council also rejected a resolution brought forward by Russia and China — the remaining signatories to the JCPOA alongside Iran, after the U.S. withdrawal in 2018 — seeking to delay the snapback of sanctions. A day later, the E3 declared that UN sanctions against Iran had officially been reimposed.

While welcomed by Washington and Tel Aviv, the move failed to materialize in practice when Russia and China stated they would not recognize the snapback of UN sanctions. This stance was echoed by more than 120 other countries, which voiced support for Iran during a conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Uganda. The legal basis for reimposing pre-JCPOA UN sanctions was further undermined after Resolution 2231 officially expired in October. Iran, Russia, and China cited this expiration in a separate letter to the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary-General.

The Europeans stated that they invoked snapback due to concerns including Tehran's suspension of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after

the June war, and uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of Iran's enriched uranium — particularly its 60% enriched stockpile — reportedly stored at nuclear sites illegally struck by Israel and the United States.

In November, Iran sent Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to Cairo to sign a new cooperation agreement with the IAEA. This deal, which later became null, drew significant criticism inside Iran. The Iranian public's long-standing belief that the UN nuclear watchdog serves as a tool of the West, rather than a neutral technical body, was significantly exacerbated during the 12-day U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran, when the agency refused to condemn the illegal attacks on Iranian nuclear, civilian, and military infrastructure.

Between late August and late September, Iran also expressed readiness to address Western concerns regarding its enriched uranium stockpile, according to information previously revealed by the Tehran Times. Tehran initially planned to transfer its 60% enriched uranium to Russia. However, it later informed Europe and the United States that it was willing to transfer the uranium directly

to Western states if the snapback mechanism were scrapped. Both Europe and Washington welcomed this offer.

The United States later requested a trilateral summit in New York to publicly announce the breakthrough, involving a representative from Iran, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, and U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff. The meeting was planned to coincide with the Iranian delegation's trip for the annual UN General Assembly. Tehran agreed, and the summit was later expanded to include the E3.

However, just as Iranians were preparing to depart for New York, Witkoff notified Araghchi that Washington had unilaterally changed the terms of the agreement. The new condition, according to Tehran, was that the United States would only ask the Europeans to suspend or extend the snapback if Iran surrendered its uranium first. Araghchi rejected the demand outright, stating that Iran would not allow another party to dictate the terms of any agreement, and that Tehran would rather cancel the summit altogether. Despite European efforts to persuade Washington, the Trump administration did not budge.

Araghchi urges regional cooperation on Yemen in calls with UAE, Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held separate phone calls with his counterparts in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to discuss bilateral ties and regional developments, especially the conflict in Yemen.

In his call with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the two officials welcomed what they described as steadily improving relations between Tehran and Abu Dhabi and stressed the importance of following up on matters of mutual interest, according to Iran's Foreign Ministry.

Araghchi also raised recent developments in southern Yemen, urging regional countries to support Yemen's unity and territorial integrity and to help ensure the legitimate demands of the Yemeni people are met. He said Iran believes the Yemen crisis

can only be resolved through intra-Yemeni dialogue focused on preserving the country's territorial integrity.

Sheikh Abdullah, for his part, underscored the need to maintain peace and stability in Yemen and across the region, and outlined the UAE's efforts aimed at reducing tensions in Yemen.

The two ministers also agreed on the importance of stronger regional coordination to reinforce stability in Yemen and safeguard peace in the wider region.

Araghchi later spoke by phone with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, with the two discussing Iran-Saudi relations as well as regional and international issues, IRNA said.

During the call, Araghchi again pointed to developments in southern Yemen, emphasizing the need to preserve the country's unity and implement the



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan hold phone talks

agreed roadmap.

He also condemned what Iran described as Israeli attacks against Lebanon and said the international community — particularly the parties guaranteeing the ceasefire — bears responsibility for halting further aggression

and preventing continued harm to Lebanese civilians.

Prince Faisal, according to the report, stressed the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation among regional countries to preserve peace and stability, and called for Israel to be held accountable.

Talks with US ‘not realistic’ without respect for norms, says foreign ministry

From page 1 ► He noted Washington's use of diplomacy as cover during the most recent round of indirect talks, claiming that the process helped pave the way for Israeli-American attacks on Iran.

“So long as this prerequisite is not met,” he said, “talk of launching a negotiation process is not particularly realistic.”

Baqaei added, however, that Tehran remains committed to diplomacy and would not hesitate to pursue it whenever it determines negotiations can be effective.

For nearly two decades, Iran's peaceful nuclear program has been met with relentless opposition from the West. Pressure came in many forms, endless negotiations that went nowhere, punishing sanctions and even military aggression.

When the United States struck Iranian nuclear sites during the illegal U.S.-Israeli military aggression in June, the European trio, France, Germany and Britain, stepped in with their own strategy, activating the so-called snapback mechanism.

“Snapback” was a mechanism under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, designed to automati-

cally reinstate UN sanctions against Iran if it violated the terms of the JCPOA, a nuclear agreement signed by Iran, the U.S., UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China in 2015. Under its terms, Iran committed to limiting its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. However, the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the deal and re-imposed sanctions in 2018. European signatories said Iran must continue adhering to the JCPOA, despite their inability to compel Washington's return or mitigate the debilitating impact of its sanctions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Weizmann still in Iran’s sights: eyes after missiles

Tehran Times receives recent on-the-ground photos of highly-protected site damaged during Iran’s June strikes



Photos received by the Tehran Times show Weizmann institute months after attack by Iran.

By Staff Writer

TEHRAN – A review of Hebrew media reports in recent weeks shows that even the regime’s own outlets are uncertain about how to address what appears to be a large-scale Iranian infiltration of Israel’s most sensitive military and security sites.

Some have scrambled to downplay the situation, while those most distant from the current Israeli cabinet have raised concerns—though not with the bluntness of a number of former Israeli officials and military figures who have told independent podcasters and YouTube channels that Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security agency, has failed in countering Iran.

In Iranian media, aside from a months-old video address by Iran’s Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib—in which he only stated that Iran has many collaborators in Israel who assist for money—there have not been many reliable sources to clarify the exact level of infiltration, which has become evident from the growing number of Israelis arrested in the occupied territories on charges of

spying for Iran—at least 40 in 2025.

For the Tehran Times, however, the unprecedented extent of Iran’s infiltration was laid bare when we obtained never-before-seen pictures of a highly protected site in Israel: the Weizmann Institute, more than six months after it was attacked by Iran on June 15 during the 12-day war. Some of the pictures we are releasing today show one of the main buildings of the Weizmann Institute, as well as the area where the complex is located. The images are clear, high-quality, and were taken by a person on the ground.

Israel has imposed heavy restrictions on photographing and publishing the aftermath of Iranian attacks—a prohibition applied to both the public and the press during all three operations Iran carried out against Israel in 2024 and 2025. Furthermore, many of the sites Iran struck during the war are now closed off to the public. Iran’s attack on the Weizmann Institute damaged 65 of its buildings, one of which was completely destroyed and four severely damaged.

Israel and its stenographers in the West have portrayed the Weizmann Institute as a purely scientific and technological center serving humanity. For example, one piece published by The New York Post after the site was targeted claimed Israelis were close to finding “the cure for cancer” before their research was lost in the attack. What the regime and Western media outlets have deliberately omitted is that Iran targeted Weizmann not for its supposed cancer research, but because it functions as a hub for Israel’s military technology and is a core pillar of the regime’s military-industrial-academic complex. The attack followed Israel’s assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists during the war—a crime it has been committing repeatedly over the past 15 years.

The institute conducts advanced research in artificial intelligence (AI), which the regime has employed extensively to kill civilians in Gaza, as well as in drone technologies, autonomous systems, encryption, and nuclear weapons. It maintains formal collaborations with major Israeli military contractors, most

notably Elbit Systems. It also funnels top students directly into military research careers through programs like Talpiot (run by the IDF) and Havatzalot, which are designed to transition graduates from academic labs to the defense industry. Many of these activities have, of course, been obstructed since the Iranian offensive.

Beyond the crisis of Israelis working for Iranian intelligence for small sums of money, Israel is currently grappling with significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities. The pro-Palestinian hacker group Handala, for instance, recently breached the mobile phone of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s chief of staff, Tzachi Braverman, gaining access to its information. This followed a similar successful breach of former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett’s phone.

A source familiar with Iranian intelligence operations in Israel informed the Tehran Times that the extent of data accessed by Iran and pro-Palestine groups like Handala is far greater than what Israeli authorities likely realize.

If Iran had sought nuclear arms, Trump ‘gave the best pretext through war’: Zarif

TEHRAN – Iran’s former foreign minister and chief negotiator of the 2015 nuclear deal said on Monday that Tehran has never sought nuclear weapons, arguing that U.S. President Donald Trump’s attacks on Iran would have provided the clearest justification if it had.

In an interview with Al Jazeera on the sidelines of the Doha Forum, Zarif said Iran’s religious principles and defense doctrine opposing nuclear arms remain unchanged. “If we had wanted to build a nuclear weapon, Trump’s attacks would have been the best justification for doing so,” he said.

Zarif argued that Iran has never sought a nuclear weapons program, adding that if Tehran had ever needed a pretext, the policies and actions of the Trump administration would have provided it. He said U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities could have been used as an excuse to shift course, but maintained that Iran continues to use its nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

For nearly two decades, Iran’s nuclear program has been the target of sustained international pressure. Comprehensive multilateral sanctions first emerged in 2006 and grew increasingly punitive as Western governments accused Tehran of seeking nuclear weapons. In 2013, Iran and the P5+1 — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China — launched intensive negotiations that lasted about 18 months, culminating in the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015.

Under the agreement, Iran accepted major restrictions on its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief, which many hoped would ease pressure on the Iranian economy and improve living standards.

Diplomacy damaged by strikes,

but still the only path’

Zarif also addressed the collapse of diplomacy in recent negotiations, saying Israeli strikes on Iran’s nuclear sites during the talks severely undermined public confidence in diplomacy inside Iran. Still, he insisted that diplomacy remains the only viable solution and said Iran would continue to resist threats and pressure while keeping the door open to political engagement.

Reflecting on the JCPOA — the agreement reached in 2015 between Iran and the world powers — Zarif said the deal showed that cooperation was possible, but that it was easier for parties to fall back into old patterns than to remain committed to a new framework. He said he expected the United States to honor its obligations, but Washington ultimately withdrew from the agreement in 2018, setting off years of renewed pressure and what he described as repeated violations of commitments.

The deal’s promise of relief collapsed after U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the JCPOA, reimposed sanctions, and expanded what Washington called a “maximum pressure” campaign. Over time, the sanctions sharply intensified economic hardship, particularly for Iran’s middle class, fueling inflation and steadily eroding purchasing power.

After the U.S. withdrawal, Iran held multiple rounds of talks with American and European officials in an effort to revive the agreement, but Tehran says it faced continued pressure to accept conditions beyond the original framework.

‘Technology exists in our scientists’ minds’

Asked about the current state of Iran’s nuclear program, Zarif



Former Iranian FM Javad Zarif talks to Al Jazeera on the sidelines of the Doha Forum.

said Iran possesses the scientific and technical knowledge to rebuild whatever is damaged. “Whatever the situation may be, it exists in the minds of Iranian scientists,” he said. “We have the technology, we own it, and we can rebuild it.”

He added that the best way to ensure the peaceful nature of nuclear technology is greater transparency and openness.

His comments come after the June 2025 conflict, when the United States and Israel launched a 12-day bombing campaign targeting Iran’s nuclear, civilian, and military infrastructure — strikes that occurred just ahead of a planned sixth round of negotiations with Washington.

‘Israel is the biggest threat to the region’

Zarif described Israel as the biggest threat to the region and said Tehran’s support for resistance groups was aimed at preventing further Israeli aggression against Palestinians.

He noted that “the resistance” existed before Iran’s Islamic Revolution

and was not created solely for Iran’s self-defense.

Zarif also suggested that peace and stability in the region pose a strategic threat to Israel — especially to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “The greatest existential threat to Israel, and particularly to Netanyahu, is peace and calm in this region,” he said. He added that if regional and international actors remain alert to actions aimed at undermining peace, “we can certainly find a way.”

‘Iran remains ready to engage in dialogue with regional Arab countries’

Zarif said Iran remains ready to engage in dialogue with regional Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. He said he had proposed several initiatives during his time as foreign minister to improve relations and continues to work on those ideas. “We are certainly ready for dialogue with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar,” he said, adding that Iran currently has strong relations with Qatar.

Rezaeian’s departure from Esteghlal confirmed

TEHRAN – Esteghlal head coach Ricardo Sa Pinto has officially confirmed that the club’s controversial player, Ramin Rezaeian, will part ways with the team during the midseason break.

Speaking at a press conference after Esteghlal’s match against Gol Gohar on Sunday night, Sa Pinto addressed Rezaeian’s absence from the 18-man squad in the team’s last two matches.

Rezaeian was left out of the squad for both the AFC Champions League Two match against Al-Muharraq and Sunday night’s league game against Gol Gohar.

“Ramin spoke with me this week. I have a very good relationship with him and I like him. He asked to leave the team so he could increase his chances of reaching the national team, but I wanted him to stay in Esteghlal,” the Portuguese coach said.

“He has made this decision himself, and these are his final days at Esteghlal. That’s why he is not part of the team. We couldn’t say no to him. It’s fair to give him this opportunity so he can be happy and have a chance to play in the 2026 FIFA World Cup,” Sa Pinto said.

Based on Sa Pinto’s remarks, which place the decision to leave squarely with Rezaeian, attention now turns to the player’s own reaction to the situation.

Safi wins silver at M15 Antalya 2025 doubles

TEHRAN – Meshkatolzahra Safi of Iran won a silver medal at the M15 Antalya 2025 doubles.

Safi and her Chinese teammate Jiayu Xu lost to Morocco’s Diae El Jardi and Romanian Maria Sara Popa 6-4 3-6 [13-11] in the final.

The ITF M15 Antalya is a prominent professional tennis tournament held annually in Antalya, Turkey.

Part of the International Tennis Federation’s World Tennis Tour, this event attracts rising stars and seasoned players competing for valuable ranking points and prize money.

Persepolis to hold training camp in Doha

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Persepolis will hold their winter training camp in Doha, Qatar.

The Reds are set to hold a 10-day camp at the Aspire Zone from January 5.

Persepolis, headed by Brazilian coach Osmar Loss, are a contender to win 2025–26 Iran football league.

Persepolis sit second in the table two points behind leaders Sepahan.

Aspire Zone, also known as Doha Sports City, is a 250-hectare (2.5 km²) sporting complex located in the Baaya district of Al Rayyan, Qatar.

FIFA bans Iran’s Esteghlal from transfer window

TEHRAN – FIFA has banned Iran’s Esteghlal football club from registering new players in two transfer windows.

The ban was imposed due to unpaid debts owed to Iraqi midfielder Muntadher Mohammed.

As a result, Esteghlal will not be allowed to sign any players during the upcoming January transfer window and the summer transfer window next year.

The ban could be a major setback for the Blues, as the team is a strong contender for the 2025–26 Iranian league title and has already

advanced to the knockout stage of the 2025–26 AFC Champions League Two.

Handball to play friendlies with Bahrain

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s handball team will play two friendly matches with Bahrain in Manama.

Team Melli have traveled to Bahrain and will meet Bahrain in two friendly matches on Tuesday and Thursday.

The training camp serves as preparation for the 2026 Asian Men’s Handball Championship.

Iran have been drawn in Group D along with Japan, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

The Persians are scheduled to face Saudi Arabia on January 15.

The Asian Handball Championship will be held in Kuwait from January 15 to 29.

Ricardo Sa Pinto to remain Esteghlal head coach

TEHRAN – Ricardo Sa Pinto will remain as head coach of Esteghlal after the club’s board of directors decided to give the Portuguese manager more time despite recent poor results.

Esteghlal, who were leading the Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) several weeks ago, have slipped to sixth place and now trail leaders Sepahan by eight points.

The club held a key meeting on Monday to review Sa Pinto’s future following a series of disappointing performances. After discussions, the board opted to continue their cooperation with the coach, believing stability is necessary at this stage of the season.

Esteghlal officials hope Sa Pinto can turn results around and guide the Blues back into the title race.

Esteghlal will face Sepahan in a crucial match on Thursday.

Nouri elected as head of National University Sports Federation of Iran

TEHRAN – Reza Nouri was elected as new president of the National University Sports Federation of Iran on Monday.

In the first round of the election, Mostafa Afshari received 21 votes, Reza Nouri 10 votes, Ebrahim Alidoust 8 votes, Jamshid Hemmati 4 votes, Reza Farzizadeh 2 votes, and Mehdi Talebpour received one vote.

As a result, Mostafa Afshari and Reza Nouri advanced to the second round of the election and Nouri won with 27 votes, while Afshari received 20 votes.

Nouri was elected as president of the National University Sports Federation of Iran for a four-year term.

A total of 47 members were present at the federation’s electoral assembly.

Moghanlou scores as Kalba share spoils with Al Jazira

TEHRAN – Ittihad Kalba forward Shahriar Moghanlou was on target in a 1–1 draw against Al Jazira in the UAE Pro League on Monday.

Moghanlou opened the scoring early at the Ittihad Kalba Club Stadium, but Nabil Fekir equalized for the visitors in the 27th minute.

The result moved Ittihad Kalba up one place to ninth in the standings with 12 points, while Al Jazira remained fourth with 18 points, six behind leaders Al Ain.

Moghanlou, meanwhile, is reportedly a candidate to join Iran’s Persepolis during the upcoming January transfer window.

Iran's private sector eyes technical, engineering co-op with Indonesia



TEHRAN – Iran's private sector is ready to participate in large-scale technical and engineering projects in Indonesia, the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) said, calling for closer cooperation between the chambers of commerce of the two countries to facilitate joint business activity.

Speaking at a meeting with Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Rolliansyah Soemirat, ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh said the chamber is determined to expand trade ties with Indonesia and has placed the exchange of business delegations and commercial information between the two private sectors high on its agenda.

Hassanzadeh described Iran and Indonesia, with a combined population of nearly 400 million people, as natural partners, particularly in halal industries.

He said Iran is interested in hosting Indonesian trade delegations at specialized exhibitions and dispatching Iranian business groups to Indonesia.

He noted Iran's unilateral visa waiver for Indonesian citizens and said facilitating business visas for Iranian traders would help boost bilateral trade, tourism and medical tourism.

Despite international sanctions, Hassanzadeh said Iran has developed significant do-

mestic capabilities in advanced technologies, including petrochemicals, food processing, agriculture and artificial intelligence, meeting international standards.

He added that Iran has strong expertise in exporting technical and engineering services, including refinery, oil and petrochemical projects, which could support development programs in Indonesia and other Islamic countries.

The official said Iran can supply competitive products such as steel, bitumen, chemicals, power plant equipment, dried fruits, carpets, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, aluminum and construction materials, while Indonesia could meet Iran's needs for timber, motorcycles, seafood, vegetable oils and industrial machinery.

He said trade could be expanded through preferential trade arrangements or barter mechanisms.

Ambassador Soemirat said Jakarta is seeking to elevate economic ties with Tehran and narrow the gap toward a long-term trade target of \$20 billion.

He urged faster finalization of a preferential trade agreement and said Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises are keen to cooperate with Iranian partners, particularly in agriculture, energy and healthcare.

Shrimp production increases 37%

TEHRAN- Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) announced that shrimp production has reached 50,000 tons, a 37-percent increase compared to last year.

Mehrdad Mohammadidoust, Director General of the Shrimp and Saltwater Aquatics Office, referring to the ongoing shrimp harvest from farms across the country, stated: "This year, the shrimp cultivation area in the country's breeding ponds has reached 17,890 hectares, from which 13,638 hectares have been harvested so far."

He added that shrimp farmers have so far obtained over 50,000 tons of product from this area.

The official continued that during this period, Bushehr province, with a harvest of approximately 28,170 tons of shrimp, has ranked first in production and recorded the highest production growth with a 71-percent increase compared to the same period last year.

The Director General of the Shrimp and Saltwater Aquatics Office of Iran Fisheries Organization further stated that there are still about 200 hectares of shrimp farms remaining in Bushehr province, which will be harvested in the coming days.

According to him, in Hormozgan province, 10,142 tons of shrimp have been produced so far, and about 4,000 additional hectares of breeding ponds in this province are in the harvest stage.

Mohammadidoust said: "Sistan-Baluchestan province, with a production of 4,834 tons of shrimp and a recorded 61 percent production growth compared to the same period in the last year, has taken the third rank in the country. Khuzestan province with 2,580 tons and Golestan province with 4,310 tons of production are in the subsequent ranks."

Iran's fishery sector is a vital component of its non-oil economy and food security, strategically leveraging its access to the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf and

Oman Sea in the south. The sector is broadly divided into two categories: capture fisheries (wild catch) and aquaculture (farming). In recent years, aquaculture has become the dominant force, driving overall growth and now accounting for the majority of Iran's total fishery production.

The southern waters are far more productive than the Caspian, providing a diverse catch including various species of tuna, sardines, pomfrets, and groupers. However, the iconic Caspian Sea sturgeon, once the source of the world's finest caviar, has seen its populations crash due to overfishing, pollution, and habitat loss. Consequently, Iran has shifted to strict conservation and the development of sophisticated sturgeon hatcheries and farms to produce caviar sustainably.

The most dynamic segment is aquaculture, which focuses on high-value species for both domestic consumption and export. The primary cultured species are rainbow trout (in cold northern waters), a variety of cyprinids (like common carp), and most notably, white-leg shrimp.

Shrimp production has emerged as a stand-out success story and a major export commodity. Concentrated in the coastal provinces of Bushehr, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan, shrimp farming has seen rapid technological advancement and area expansion. Annual production often exceeds 50,000 tons, with Bushehr province alone contributing over half of this total. Production has consistently grown year-on-year, with increases of 30-40 percent not uncommon, driven by improved hatchery outputs, better feed management, and enhanced farm practices. Iranian shrimp, particularly from the southern regions, is known for its quality and is a key export to markets in Southeast Asia, Russia, and the Persian Gulf states. The government and private sector actively promote shrimp farming as a path to regional economic development, job creation, and foreign currency earnings.

Iran, Turkey business groups seek to expand industrial, trade cooperation

From Page 1 ► He proposed exchanges of industrial experts and engineers, the removal of customs obstacles and a stronger role for Van as a transit hub for goods moving between the two countries.

Mehrdad Saadat Dehghan, head of the Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce, said the two countries have nearly three decades of experience in cross-border trade but that the scale of exchanges has fallen short of expectations. He said broader cooperation, with the Tehran chamber playing a central role, could help unlock new opportunities.

Ali Sadri, vice head of the Tehran chamber's industry and mining committee, said Tehran province is home to around 19,000 industrial and mining operators, including companies active in agro-processing, metals and non-metallic minerals. He said there is scope to connect Turkish traders and industrialists from Van with Iranian companies based in Tehran's industrial zones.

Mehmet Tashan, head of the Van branch of the HAKSIAD industrialists and traders association, said businesses in the province, Turkey's closest region to Iran, are keen to raise trade volumes with Iranian partners.

He stressed the need to address transport and connectivity challenges and said commercial ties could be expanded through HAKSIAD's representation in Iran.

The meeting concluded with further exchanges of views between Iranian and Turkish businesspeople on potential areas of cooperation.

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 seriously 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 Eco-

nomic 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."

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

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

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

Export from Kordestan province rises 3%

TEHRAN- The supervisor of Kordestan province's Customs Department said that the value of export from the province increased by three percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

Faramarz Omid announced that 770,000 tons of non-oil commodities worth \$331 million were exported from the province in the eight-month period, indicating two percent growth in weight, year on year.

He pointed out that the main export goods include horticultural and agricultural prod-

ucts, metal and plastic products, dairy products, and tractors, and stated: "Iraq has been the main export destination for Kordestan's goods, with a share of 98.83 percent."

The official further announced that 67,000 tons of goods valued at \$237 million were imported to the province in the first eight months of the present year, indicating 58 percent rise in worth, and 255 percent growth in weight, as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

Located in western Iran, bordering Iraq, Kordestan possesses unique advantages.

The province's economy is predominantly

agricultural with a growing industrial base centered on mining and light manufacturing.

Agriculture and livestock are the backbone of the provincial economy, employing a large portion of the population.

The industrial sector is growing but remains relatively small-scale.

Trade is dominated by its cross-border dynamics with Iraq's Kurdistan Region.

Kordestan is positioned to become a key link in North-South and East-West transit corridors, connecting Turkey and Europe to Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia.

Over 500 roadside service complexes under construction across Iran

Iran, while over 1,160 such facilities are already operational.

Yazdan Khosravi, acting head of the organization's economic affairs office, said 561 roadside

complexes are being built nationwide, adding that permits are also being processed for a further 2,278 projects that are at the stage of receiving preliminary approvals.

He said that in the first nine months of the current year, 37 new roadside service complexes became operational, while construction work began on 32 additional facilities.

The masked voice lives on: Abu Obaida and Gaza’s unyielding resistance

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has confirmed that its armed wing spokesperson, Abu Obaida, and then Gaza chief Mohammed Sinwar were martyred in Israel’s genocidal war earlier this year. The announcement came in a prerecorded address by the newly appointed spokesman of the Izz al Din al Qassam Brigades, who vowed that the blood of the martyrs would only strengthen the resolve of the resistance.

Abu Obaida, whose real name was Huthaifa Samir al Kahlout, served as the masked voice of the Brigades for nearly two decades. His speeches, delivered behind a red keffiyeh, became iconic across the Arab world, projecting defiance, resilience, and the unbroken will of the Palestinian people. From his first public appearance in 2004 during an Israeli ground assault in northern Gaza, he became the sole military spokesman of the Brigades, embodying the steadfastness of the resistance.

His prominence grew after



Hamas’ surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7, 2023—dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm— and the subsequent war in Gaza, when his words galvanized Palestinian morale and drew attention to the humanitarian catastrophe caused by Israel’s bombardments.

He was the first to announce the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in 2006, and later Shaul Aron in 2014, victories that symbolized the ability of the resistance to challenge Israel militarily. In 2024,

he condemned Arab governments for failing to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, declaring “God forbid Palestinians ask Arab rulers to intervene militarily, but their failure to even provide relief supplies shocked Hamas.” That phrase quickly became a slogan across the Arab world, symbolizing frustration with regional passivity.

The confirmation of Mohammed Sinwar’s martyrdom further highlights the heavy toll of Israel’s campaign of assassinations. Yet Hamas emphasized that these kill-

ings have not weakened its organizational strength. On the contrary, they have elevated fallen leaders into eternal symbols of resistance, deepened the resolve of Palestinians, and reinforced the legitimacy of the struggle for liberation.

Israel has long pursued a policy of assassinating Palestinian leaders, from Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz al Rantisi in 2004 to Saleh al Arouri in Beirut and Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in 2024. But Palestinian analysts stress that this policy has consistently failed. Each assassination fuels anger at the occupation and siege, ensures new leaders emerge, and strengthens the collective identity of resistance.

The swift appointment of a new spokesman after Abu Obaida’s martyrdom demonstrates Hamas’s resilience. Despite Israel’s campaign of assassinations, the movement continues to adapt, inspire, and mobilize. Abu Obaida’s masked voice may no longer echo on screens, but his legacy endures. His successors carry forward the message that resistance cannot be assassinated, and Palestine will never bow to occupation.

Six countries, three seas, one voracious war machine

A year of unchecked aggression, where Tel Aviv’s doctrine of fear dismantled sovereignty across six nations and weaponized maritime terror against humanitarian aid

From page 1 ▶ At the heart of this horror was a systematic objective to render Gaza unlivable, engineering conditions for a mass displacement reminiscent of the Nakba.

As the American political scientist Norman Finkelstein observes, when initial plans to expel the population into the Sinai were blocked by regional opposition, the strategy shifted toward making the territory uninhabitable so that the population would “disappear by a trickle” rather than a stampede.

After two years of bombardment, which had razed 63% of buildings, Tel Aviv implemented a “privatized aid model” via the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), replacing UNRWA’s 400 distribution points with just four militarized hubs.

Finkelstein characterizes this GHF structure as a “mousetrap,” noting that by placing the majority of distribution sites directly on the Sinai border, the model served to lure a starving population toward the frontier.

This forced Palestinians to trek through war zones for meager rations, turning aid sites into death traps where 583 were killed by June alone.

By August, famine gripped the enclave as 84% of healthcare facilities lay in ruins and water access plummeted to five liters daily.

This environment of relentless bombing and engineered depriva-

tion—which Amnesty International labeled “damning evidence” of genocidal intent—was designed to break the population “by hook or by crook,” leaving 80% of Gazans with crippling anxiety and children scarred by as many as 12 separate displacements.

In the West Bank, “Operation Iron Wall” marked the largest offensive in decades, forcibly displacing 32,000 from camps like Jenin and Nur Shams.

Satellite imagery revealed 1,460 buildings flattened, not for security, but to widen military routes and render areas “uninhabitable ruins,” as Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich brazenly declared.

The ethnic cleansing, condemned by many rights organizations as a war crime, fit a broader pattern of demographic engineering, accelerating settler violence that surged to five attacks daily.

Israel’s reach extended far beyond Palestine. In Lebanon, despite a November 2024 ceasefire, 1,653 strikes averaged five daily, flattening southern villages and violating withdrawal commitments.

Even following Assad’s ouster in December 2024, Syria was subjected to 207 attacks and clandestine militia arming, resulting in the annexation of 155 square miles.

Israel tried to dismantle Yemen’s civilian infrastructure through 48 strikes that disabled Sanaa Airport and vital aid ports, leaving 61 dead



and 463 wounded.

The “12-Day War” on Iran in June saw hundreds of strikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities, civilian areas, and military infrastructure, killing over 1,060 people, including civilians, commanders, and nuclear scientists.

The September 9 Doha strike on a Qatari compound during ceasefire talks, targeting Hamas officials, killed six people — including a Qatari government employee — in what was seen as an attempt to torpedo diplomacy, underscoring Israel as a direct threat to Persian Gulf stability.

Maritime terrorism added a surreal layer of cruelty. Israeli forces targeted vessels of the Global Sumud Flotilla, including the Conscience — drone-struck off Malta, causing a hull breach — and the Madleen, which was chemi-

cal-sprayed before detaining activists such as Greta Thunberg.

Jammers mocked crews with ABBA songs while dropping explosives, violating UNCLOS and criminalizing humanitarianism.

These acts in foreign waters weren’t isolated; they enforced a siege mentality, intercepting 50 vessels to starve Gaza further and make an example of any solidarity missions that dared to challenge the blockade.

Ultimately, 2025 will be etched in history as the year Israel transformed into an unchecked force of regional domination—one that has forsaken diplomacy and proportionality, pursuing instead the relentless subjugation and devastation of the Middle East through calculated, multi-front warfare and engineered human suffering.

This Saudi-UAE divergence has opened space for regional recalibration. Iran, reading the fractures, appears to be engaging diplomatically to prevent a Jolani-style scenario in Yemen—one that would plunge the country into endless turmoil and splinter it into weak, dependent enclaves.

Recent Iranian-Saudi contacts reportedly explored ways to counter UAE-backed factions and preserve Yemen’s territorial integrity, underscoring that the battle over statelets is as diplomatic as it is military.

When Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi stated that Sana’a “considers any Israeli presence in Somaliland a military target for our forces,” he articulated a comprehensive strategic vision.

It was a declaration grounded in geography, history, and deterrence logic. The message to the Israeli enemy is clear: expansion through manufactured entities will be confronted, not accommodated.

Once again, Sana’a asserts itself as a decisive regional actor—one that shapes equations rather than reacting to them, and that defends sovereignty not only within its borders, but across the shared security space of the region.

When negotiation is unavoidable: Strategies of engagement and resistance

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON - Lebanon’s government is under severe pressure. It is in a phase of accommodating imposed American demands, within the limits of what it is capable of achieving. Accommodating the American demands is one of the rare skills that Lebanon happens to master. The Lebanese state does not aim to benefit from the latent capabilities the resistance presents.

If utilized, these capabilities would greatly improve the conditions of negotiation. It would shorten the time needed to convince the Western camp of the useless nature of what it is doing. It would convey that the latent damage the resistance can inflict on the entity establishes a new deterrence equation, albeit at a lower level than during the Gaza support war. It would allow the resistance to act as a pressure tool to improve negotiation terms.

On the contrary, the official Lebanese state operates on the principle of doing what is unnecessary, tying its diplomatic movement to the broader regional movement followed by Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia. The resistance reminds it that if negotiation is unavoidable, then negotiate and resist.

This is whilst the Israeli occupation entity is negotiating whilst striking, violating and occupying.

The resistance’s goal is a liberation goal that aligns with the state and enhances the possibility of the state becoming sovereign. Why does the Lebanese state not exploit and activate it? The resistance’s only goal is sovereignty and freedom for Lebanon and the region.

The goal is neither to sit at the head of the state

nor to seek power. Rather, the goal is a transformative process in the region towards sovereignty for its nations. They rule themselves by themselves, and this serves all existing governments.

The resistance, as a liberation movement allied with all liberation movements in the region, works to serve and assist regional authorities to free themselves and preserve their states’ sovereignty. This is what all forces in the Axis of Resistance have done.

They are liberation forces within states, not forces seeking to compete with anyone for governance. The aim is to provide support and assistance in establishing genuine states with true sovereignty.

America does not object to outsourcing the country to any regional power that serves its general policies. The Lebanese state is excluded from this because its status is that of a subordinate, not an original actor.

Those intended to be entrusted with the situation in Lebanon lie between the Israeli occupation entity and Syria. This threat cannot be protected against by the state and the army, because the limits of their capabilities are defined by the American administration.

This project, explicitly expressed by Tom Barrack, involves annexing Lebanon to Syria and granting the entity absolute upper hand to do whatever it wants. That is the same as in Syria, treating them on the basis of sects, ethnicities, and tribes. This project poses an existential threat to Lebanon, dispersing anti-Western currents into a broader environment and diminishing their influence.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Al-Houthi’s warning: A red line for Israel in Somaliland

From page 1 ▶ Ansarullah’s response reflects a doctrine of deterrence. By declaring Somaliland and off-limits to Israeli expansion, al-Houthi is signaling that Yemen’s resistance will not allow foreign powers to militarize the Red Sea. The warning is designed to raise the cost of Israeli involvement and to assert that any attempt to establish bases in Somaliland will provoke confrontation. In this sense, Ansarullah is positioning itself not only as a defender of Yemen’s sovereignty but also as a guardian of regional independence.

The United Arab Emirates plays a critical role in this dynamic. Since normalizing relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords, the UAE has facilitated Israeli influence in the Horn of Africa. Emirati investments in Somaliland’s port of Berbera provide Israel with indirect access to maritime infrastructure, while military bases established by Abu Dhabi in Eritrea and Somaliland serve as potential staging grounds for Israeli operations. The UAE presents these projects as a means of economic development, but in reality, they serve as a cover for strategic expansion.

Heavy rain and fierce winds uproot Gaza tents, forcing families into the cold

Heavy rain and strong winds flooded and uprooted tents in the Gaza Strip on Monday, worsening already dire living conditions for Palestinians after two years of Israeli genocide.

The Palestinian health ministry reported that two-month-old Arkan Firas Musleh died from the cold on Monday, as harsh winter conditions were exacerbated by Israel’s blockade on supplies of shelters, the Middle East Eye reported.

Since the start of the rainy season earlier this month, at least three children have died from the cold, while 17 others have been killed by buildings collapsing due to storms and strong winds.

China launches military drills around Taiwan

Multiple forces of the Eastern Theater Command of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) started drills code-named “Justice Mission 2025” around Taiwan Island Monday, said Shi Yi, spokesperson for the theater command, Xinhua reported on Monday.

Citing Shi, the Xinhua report said the PLA Eastern Theater Command was dispatching its Army, Navy, Air Force and Rocket Force troops to conduct drills in the Taiwan Strait and areas to the north, southwest, southeast and east of

Taiwan Island.

The official said the drills would focus on subjects of sea-air combat readiness patrol, joint seizure of comprehensive superiority, blockade on key ports and areas, as well as all-dimensional deterrence outside the island chain.

“With vessels and aircraft approaching Taiwan Island in close proximity from different directions, troops of multiple services engage in joint assaults to test their joint operations capabilities,” he said.

Yemen and mirage of Somaliland: Sovereignty, deterrence, and battle over the Red Sea

From page 1 ▶ Yemen’s leadership has treated this development not as distant diplomacy, but as a direct strategic threat.

At the center of this response stands the clear and uncompromising position articulated by the leader of Ansarallah, Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, whose recent statements signal a decisive shift from denunciation to deterrence.

Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi was explicit: any presence of the Israeli enemy in Somaliland would be treated as a legitimate military target.

“We will not accept any part of Somalia becoming a foothold for the Israeli enemy at the expense of Somalia’s independence and sovereignty, the security of the Somali people, or the security of the region and the Red Sea.”

This declaration reflects a sober assessment of intentions in the Horn of Africa and an understanding that proximity translates into operational advantage.

Sana’a’s message is unmistakable: Somaliland is not strategic depth for the Israeli enemy, but a liability under direct scrutiny.

What distinguishes this position is not its rhetoric but its posture. By assuming responsibility for obstructing the project, Sa-

na’a signaled a transition from verbal opposition to active deterrence.

Sayyed al-Houthi’s recent statement on this regard is not merely a warning; it has redefined the rules of engagement.

In doing so, Yemen positioned itself beyond the prevailing pattern among Arab and Islamic regimes that confine their responses to statements and summits.

Here, the confrontation is framed at the roots—where projects are incubated, not after they mature.

Externally driven fragmentation is not unfamiliar to Yemen. The country faces Zionist-engineered turmoil internally, with the United States and the Israeli enemy backing a separatist project in the south under the label “South Arabia.”

The United Arab Emirates has emerged as a principal sponsor of this fake statelet, while Saudi Arabia’s relationship with Abu Dhabi in Yemen has grown increasingly strained.

Reports of Saudi strikes against UAE-backed factions reveal a fractured camp, lacking unity or coherent purpose, just as the Quran describes: “You suppose them to be united, but their hearts are divided” (59:14).

Cultural Heritage Ministry establishes AI department

TEHRAN – The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has established a new department dedicated to artificial intelligence (AI), aiming to integrate emerging technologies into its operations in a gradual, practical and goal-oriented manner.

The move is intended to harness AI's potential to enhance planning, management and innovation across the ministry's cultural, tourism and handicrafts sectors.

Speaking on the sidelines of the fourth exhibition of achievements of creative and knowledge-based companies in the field of artificial intelligence on Sunday, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri emphasized the role of soft technologies and artificial intelligence in the development of the country and said that the Government has seriously entered the field of artificial intelligence and all agencies are obliged to structure and utilize this strategic capacity, Mehr news agency reported.

Salehi-Amiri referred to the impact of artificial intelligence in content production and development, adding that If artificial intelligence enters the content of the ministry's mission areas, it can become a driving force for leaps in the three areas of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts; but the starting point of this path is universities, and research, knowledge production, and capacity building must take place in universities and science and technology parks.

Stating that the ministry will benefit from the capacity of universities and science and technology parks, he noted: "Fortunately, there is good interaction between the Cultural Heritage Ministry and universities and science and technology parks, and we will develop these cooperations."

He continued by appreciating the Universi-



ty of Science and Culture, saying: "The University of Science and Culture is one of the universities we have chosen for cooperation, because it is very active in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, and we are interested in strengthening our scientific and executive relations with this university."

The minister emphasized: "We need to activate the capacity of artificial intelligence in all three mission areas of the ministry so that we can transfer the existing opportunities and capacities to people's homes, cellphones, the young generation, and domestic and foreign audiences; something that is not possible without access to new technologies."

He expressed hope that with the joint cooperation of the Cultural Heritage Ministry, the University of Science and Culture, and the Science and Technology Park of Soft and Cultural Industries, effective steps will be taken towards utilizing soft technologies and artificial intelligence. "The National Science and Technology Park of Soft and Cultural Industries is one of the golden opportunities located at the University of Science and Culture, and we are committed to its future."

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Island of Gorée

Island of Gorée lies off the coast of Senegal, opposite Dakar. It was the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast from the 15th to the 19th century.

The UNESCO-designated property testifies to an unprecedented human experience in the history of humanity.

Indeed, for the universal conscience, this "memory island" is the symbol of the slave trade with its cortege of suffering, tears and death.

The painful memories of the Atlantic slave trade are crystallized in this small island of 28 hectares lying 3.5 km off the coast from Dakar. Gorée owes its singular destiny to the extreme centrality of its geographical position between the North and the South, and to its excellent strategic position offering a safe haven for anchoring ships, hence the name "Good Rade".

Thus, since the 15th century it has been prized by various European nations that have successively used it as a stopover or slave market.

First terminus of the "homeoducs" who

drained the slaves from the hinterland, Gorée was at the centre of the rivalry between European nations for control of the slave trade. Until the abolition of the trade in the French colonies, the Island was a warehouse consisting of over a dozen slave houses.

Amongst the tangible elements that reflect Gorée's universal value are, notably, the Castle, a rocky plateau covered with fortifications which dominate the Island; the Relais de l'Espadon, former residence of the French governor; etc...

The Island of Gorée is now a pilgrimage destination for the African diaspora, a foyer for contact between the West and Africa, and a space for exchange and dialogue between cultures through the confrontation of ideals of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Listed as a historic site by the colonial administration in 1944, with specific safeguarding measures, Gorée has recorded no major construction since then that might adversely affect the authenticity of the site, the major components of which have remained almost intact.

(Source: UNESCO)

Ors, green symbol of Alborz and a living legacy of Iranian history

TEHRAN--Ors tree is known as the green symbol of Alborz province and, by being present in the protected areas, has preserved a living legacy of Iranian history in the heart of the mountains.

Head of Alborz Department of Environmental Hamzeh Mashayekhi said that Ors is not only one of the most valuable plant species in Alborz province, but it is also known as the plant symbol of the province, CHTN reported.

Referring to the natural distribution of Ors trees across the province, he said that the presence of old Ors trees in the protected areas shows the high importance of this species in the Alborz ecosystem.

He added that Alborz province, with its high altitudes, flood plains, and diverse climatic conditions, is one of the richest regions in terms of plant diversity in the country, and this feature has provided the opportunity for growth of valuable species such as Ors.

Mashayekhi stated that according to the studies, about 65 percent of the area of Alborz is made up of rangelands, and 17 types of rangelands have been identified in this province. This rangeland diversity provides the basis for the life of numerous animal and plant species, he added.

The official explained that the forest cover of the province, which is located in the vegetation area of Iran,

is mainly scattered and sparse and is mostly observed in the northern regions. However, valuable tree and shrub species such as linden, hawthorn, barberry, mountain almond, and especially Ors, grow in these areas and play an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the ecosystem.

Referring to the South Alborz Protected Area, he said that this region, with an area of 64,000 hectares, is mainly pastureland, but valuable tree and shrub species can also be seen in it, both naturally and artificially planted. The presence of the Ors in this area is not only ecologically important, but also a natural and unique attraction for nature-loving tourists, he added.

Ilam province expands handicraft exports to Persian Gulf markets

TEHRAN – Iran's western province of Ilam has begun exporting its handicrafts to the Persian Gulf littoral countries, marking a new phase in efforts to expand international markets for locally made products, a provincial official said on Sunday.

Farzad Sharifi, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Ilam province, said exports of handicrafts to Arab countries along the Persian Gulf had entered a "promising new stage," citing the recent shipment of locally made products to the United Arab Emirates.

He said about 200 items of traditional woven handicrafts produced by an artisan from Abadan county had been exported to Dubai, describing the move as a sign of the growing competitiveness of Ilam's traditional crafts in regional markets.

"Exporting indigenous products not only showcases the capabilities of Ilam's artisans but also contributes to economic and cultural development in the province," Sharifi said.

He added that the shipment demonstrated the quality, originality and creativity of local artisans, noting that handicrafts from Ilam were capable of securing a sustainable share of international markets.

Sharifi said handicrafts should be viewed not only as cultural products but also as economic opportunities that support



women's empowerment and local development. He added that expanding support for production, packaging and exports remained a priority for the provincial administration.

Ilam, located in western Iran, shares a 425-kilometre border with Iraq and borders the provinces of Kermanshah, Lorestan and Khuzestan. The province takes its name from the ancient civilization of Elam, which flourished in southwestern Iran from around 2700 BC to 539 BC.

Nationally, Iran exported \$223 million worth of handicrafts in the last Iranian calendar year

ending March 20, 2025, according to official data, with an additional similar amount estimated to have been exported informally by travelers.

Farzad Ojani, director general of the marketing and commercialization office at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said Iran has around 7,000 handicraft shops, in addition to permanent and seasonal bazaars, and that online platforms have become an increasingly important sales channel.

Ojani said Iran leads the world with 299 recognized branches of handicrafts across 18 categories

and has 14 cities and three villages registered internationally for their handicrafts. He added that family-based production, environmentally friendly methods and high value-added output give Iranian handicrafts a strong competitive edge in global markets.

"Handicraft products exported from Iran are well received abroad and have many buyers," Ojani said. "With proper planning and stronger cooperation between the public and private sectors, exports can increase significantly."

Chabahar airport to resume intl. flights in mid-January



TEHRAN – International flights from Chabahar Airport in southeastern Iran will resume in January, 2026 with services to Muscat,

Karachi and Sharjah, the head of the Chabahar Free Trade-Industrial Zone said on Monday.

Mohammad-Saeed Arbabi

said the resumption follows new planning to expand air transport links as part of the government's broader strategy to develop the vast Makran coast.

According to Arbabi, Iran's Kish Air and Vares Airlines will operate three international routes under agreements reached between the Chabahar Free Zone Organization and Oghab Asaluyeh airport company.

Kish Air will launch flights on the Chabahar-Muscat route from Jan. 9 and on the Chabahar-Karachi route from Jan. 16, while Vares Airlines will begin operating flights between Chabahar

and Sharjah from Jan. 5, he said.

Arbabi said the resumption of international flights would facilitate access to Chabahar, help attract foreign tourists, boost trade exchanges and strengthen regional connectivity.

He added that as Iran's only oceanic port, Chabahar has significant potential in tourism, transit, international trade and investment, and that expanding air routes is essential to realizing these capacities.

Makkoran, aka Makran or Mokran, is a semi-desert coastal strip, along the coast of the Sea of Oman.

Sightseeing along ancient spice route added to Iran's tourism calendar

TEHRAN – Sightseeing tours along sections of the ancient spice route located in Iran have been officially added to the country's tourism calendar, a move aimed at highlighting Iran's historical role in regional and global trade networks, a local tourism official said on Sunday.

The official said the historic spice route is among the world's oldest trade corridors and played a key role in economic, cultural and civilizational exchanges between East and West. Hormozgan province, due to its strategic geographic location and historic ports, has long been one of the main hubs along this route.

The registration is expected to help promote the historical, cultural and tourism capacities of Hormozgan at national and international levels, and to support the development of cultural, maritime and route-based tourism in the province, CHTN reported.

The event focuses on reviving historical trade routes and will include programs introducing coastal cities and ports, traditional rituals, local cuisine, music and handicrafts linked to the historic spice trade, creating opportunities for participation by local communities and tourism stakeholders.

According to the official, developing event-

based tourism centered on historical routes is a key policy of the provincial tourism authority, and the "historic spice route" is expected to play a significant role in presenting Hormozgan as a gateway of Iran's historical interactions with the wider world.

Iran's southern coast historically formed part of major maritime trade networks linking Asia, Africa and Europe. Historical records show that combined land and sea routes connecting Iran with India, Sri Lanka and other regions were active more than 2,000 years ago, later expanding into what became known as the maritime spice routes, which facilitated the exchange of goods, cultures and technologies across the Indian Ocean.

lights the need to protect it more than ever.

The official continued that educating local people and tourists about the environmental and historical values of the Ors is a requirement for protection of this rare species. "Only with awareness and adherence to the environmental principles can we ensure that these ancient trees are preserved for future generations."

He concluded that the Ors trees of Alborz stand like green guardians in the heart of the mountains, and if their principled protection continues, they will remain a symbol of sustainability, patience, and the deep connection of nature with Iranian history for centuries to come.

Iranian, Iraqi universities discuss ways to expand co-op

TEHRAN – Mohammad-Hossein Omid, the chancellor of University of Tehran, and Osama Ismail Al-Mashhadani, the president of the University of Nineveh, have explored the potential to boost collaborations between the two universities.

An Iraqi delegation led by Al-Mashhadani paid a visit to the University of Tehran on Sunday, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, the Iraqi official highlighted developing ties in the fields of information technology (IT), artificial intelligence (AI), engineering, and traditional medicine.

For his part, Omid announced the readiness of the university of Tehran for sharing knowledge and experience, exchanging professors and students, as well as participating in the 'Construct Iraq' project.

The University will provide teachers for postgraduate courses in all fields, but medicine, offer sabbatical leaves in advanced centers of the University, and cooperate in establishing a science and technology park, Omid noted.

Al-Mashhadani called for the implementation of the reached agreements between the two



universities.

Iraq seeks Iran's expertise in establishing sci-tech parks

In January, Iraqi Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Naeem Al-Aboudi, in a meeting with Science, Research, and Technology Minister, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, announced Iraq's interest in benefiting from Iran's experience and knowledge in establishing science and technology parks.

Highlighting Iran's high capabilities in technology sectors, the official said, "Regulations have been passed to found technology parks in the country, and we are willing to use Iran's expertise," IRNA reported.

"Enhancing cooperation between Iraqi and Iranian universities will boost the scientific capacities of the two countries and help solve their problems," Al-Aboudi noted.

He also stressed that scientific cooperation between Iran and Iraq should be on par with political and cultural relations.

Simaei-Sarraf, for his part, underscored Iran's extensive experience in founding technological and knowledge-based companies, saying that Iran is prepared to share its experience in establishing science and technology parks and help Iraq either through providing consultation or investment opportunities.

The official also announced

Iranian universities, namely Iran University of Science and Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, to open branches in Iraq.

Referring to the shared interests and commonalities between Iran and Iraq, he said the two countries are interested in developing relations in science and technology, hence existing agreements and memorandums should be implemented.

In December 2024, Simaei-Sarraf announced the country's readiness to establish a joint science and technology park in Iraq.

The official also expressed Iran's interest in attracting talented and motivated Iraqi students, particularly to the universities of border cities.

The Iraqi students are required to study in Persian, Simaei-Sarraf said, adding that the Iraqi administration has welcomed the idea, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Haider Abd Dahed, the Iraqi deputy minister of higher education. Both officials emphasized their interest in expanding scientific ties through exchanging students, research, and technology.

Top female entrepreneurs honored

From page 1 ► Addressing the National Women's Day ceremony, President Masoud Pezeshkian, along with other key figures, reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality, justice, and the empowerment of women, both in domestic policy and international diplomacy.

In Iran, the birthday of Hazrat Fatima (SA), the daughter of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), is marked as National Women's Day.

This year, the day fell on December 22. On National Women's Day, Iranian officials highlighted the critical role of women in shaping the country's progress and called for the unwavering protection of human rights.

The official also stated that violations of human rights, no matter who commits them or their position, must be addressed through dialogue, legal action, or other appropriate measures.

In his address, President Pezeshkian reflected on societal norms during the time of Prophet Muhammad, when the birth of daughters was often viewed as shameful.

He highlighted the transformative significance of Lady Fatimah Zahra's birth, calling her a beacon of dignity and progress in Islamic history. He quoted the Quran extensively to underscore



the importance of justice, equity, and the defense of human rights, stressing that these principles are universal and foundational.

Addressing the audience, Pezeshkian reaffirmed women's equality, praising their potential to lead and excel. He called for creating more opportunities for women and girls to participate in the country's development, emphasizing that their contributions are vital for a just society.

"Women are not only equal to men but often excel in many areas," he said. "Superiority lies in piety, not in gender." He highlighted the role of mothers in shaping future generations and stressed that no nation can thrive without the support of capable and dedicated women.

pable and dedicated women.

Concluding his speech, Pezeshkian called for greater inclusion of women in leadership roles and a renewed commitment to addressing the nation's challenges. "Women have a unique ability to nurture and shape the next generation," he said. "This must be recognized as a cornerstone of national progress."

According to Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by ob-

serving the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings.

Referring to Iran's remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields, Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying in November 2024.

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Men with obese wives at higher risk of cardiovascular disease

The results of a 16-year study at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran showed that men whose wives were obese or overweight had a higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

Farzad Hadaegh, the lead researcher of the study, said that couples share socioeconomic status, dietary patterns, and other environmental and lifestyle factors, but are genetically unrelated.

The results of this study emphasize the role of environmental factors, especially lifestyle behaviors of family members in the incidence of cardiovascular disease, and this may help to identify early at-risk individuals in the community and family to implement prevention programs, he explained.

خطر ابتلا به بیماری‌های قلبی در مردان با همسران چاق بیشتر است

نتیجه یک پژوهش ۱۶ ساله در دانشگاه علوم پزشکی شهید بهشتی تهران نشان داد خطر ابتلا به بیماری‌های قلبی عروقی در مردانی که همسران آنها چاق یا دارای اضافه وزن بودند، نسبت به مردانی که همسران شان وزن طبیعی داشت، بیشتر است.

فرزاد حدائق، مدیر این تحقیق، می‌گوید: زوجین در موقعیت‌های اقتصادی - اجتماعی، الگوهای غذایی و سایر عوامل محیطی و سبک زندگی مشترک اند، اما از نظر ژنتیکی بی‌ارتباط هستند.

نتایج این مطالعه به نقش عوامل محیطی به ویژه رفتارهای مربوط به سبک زندگی اعضای خانواده در بروز بیماری‌های قلبی عروقی تأکید می‌کند و این موضوع ممکن است به شناسایی زودهنگام افراد در معرض خطر در جامعه و خانواده برای اجرای برنامه‌های پیشگیری کمک موثری کند.

SOCIETY

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Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

Health ministry underlines need to implement clean air law

TEHRAN – The deputy health minister, Alireza Raeisi, has urged the implementation of the clean air law as air pollution accounts for 57,000 deaths in the country annually.

The clean air law has clarified the duties of each government body, but there are still problems in law enforcement. Public health should be prioritized in macro-decisions, and funds generated from environmental crimes should be spent on reducing pollutants and compensating for health damages, the health ministry's website quoted Raeisi as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing a meeting titled 'polluted air; causes, consequences, and solutions'.

He also stressed the importance of scientific and systematic management of air pollution, saying that the current crisis, which has developed over decades, is threatening the health of people, particularly vulnerable groups.

Air pollution is not limited to Iran; it is a global issue. However, it requires serious ongoing measures, scientific governance, comprehensive planning, and precise implication of policies to manage the challenge, the official added.

The official noted that industrial development and employment are important, but do not justify ignoring people's health.

In Iran, a significant portion of air pollution is caused by motorcycles and old cars. Although programs have been implemented to scrap old cars, the pace of replacing them is still not fast enough.

Referring to experiences of developed countries, Raeisi said cities like Shanghai have phased out gasoline-powered motorcycles and increased the share of electric vehicles in urban transportation.

He went on to say that the measures of the government, such as increasing the number of electric vehicles, scrapping old ones, as well as utilizing clean energy, will significantly contribute to reducing air pollution.

With more than 250 sunny days per year, Iran has a high capacity for solar energy production, and moving towards clean energy, which will simultaneously help reduce air pollution and strengthen the green economy, Raeisi added.

Air pollution

Emission sources of fine particles include a



variety of combustion activities (motor vehicles, power plants, wood burning, etc.) as well as specific industrial processes. These particles are emitted directly or as secondary pollutants in the atmosphere.

In general, the main sources of particulate matter emissions are fuel combustion, such as burning coal and wood, diesel engines, industrial and agricultural processes, and vehicle emissions. Suspended particles generally affect the air quality during the cold months.

Numerous scientific studies on particles show that exposure to the particles causes many health problems, including premature death in patients with heart and lung diseases, non-fatal heart attacks, irregular heartbeats, lung cancer, exacerbation of asthma, decreased lung function, increased respiratory symptoms, reduction in fertility rates, and ultimately leads to a decrease in life expectancy.

Air pollution also accounts for 2,029 and 661 deaths in Isfahan and Arak, respectively. The costs of air pollution on the health system in Isfahan amount to 796 million dollars, and in Arak, it is equal to 2 million 564 thousand dollars.

Environmental regulations, the enforcement of strict laws, and the development of renewable energy are essential to curb air pollution.

Raising public awareness of the harmful effects of pollution and training the ways to deal with it, improving waste management systems, sewage, and water treatment, and improving public health via the development of health services in deprived areas are some other effective measures to address air pollution.

UNODC, Russia hold training course for Iran's anti-narcotics police

TEHRAN – Iran's anti-narcotics police have attended a training course organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in cooperation with the Siberian Law Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation.

The five-day specialized training course for law enforcement experts and officers was held from November 24 to 28 in Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

The comprehensive curriculum of this training encompassed topics, inter alia: tactics of conducting certain investigative actions in the investigation of crimes related to drug trafficking; methods of investigating organized criminal activities related to drug trafficking; methods of crime investigation in the sphere of illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs; psychotropic substances and their analogues, new types of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their derivatives, analogues and precursors; technical means of detecting narcotic drugs, etc. the UNODC website reported on December 3.

In addition to various lectures and specialized seminars and classes envisaged under the curriculum of this training, practical visits and training were foreseen for the members of the delegation, which significantly enriched the courses and complemented the theoretical section.

On the last day of the event, an international round-table was held on "Countering drug trafficking in the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran", in which the instructors and members of the Iranian delegation took the opportunity to share information and ideas.

In a message, the Deputy Regional Representative for Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, and Pakistan, Alexander Fedulov, highlighted

the threats posed by drugs and organized crime as well as the effects they have on all aspects of societies, from security and safety to health and development, which need broader international cooperation. In his message, it was stated that due to its unique geographical location, Iran bears a great responsibility, and at the same time, it has shown great commitment in the fight against drugs and crimes.

At the graduation ceremony, the certificates of the participants from the Islamic Republic of Iran were handed over by the Police Colonel Alexei Kalugin, the Acting Head of the Siberian Law Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, in Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation. Cooperation of UNODC Iran and academies and academia in and from the Russian Federation lies under the UNODC Country Partnership Program of UNODC Iran in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The advanced training was made possible with generous funding received from the Russian Federation, and invaluable support and coordination extended to UNODC from the Russian Embassy in Tehran.

The UNODC Iran has been actively present in the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1999 and considers Iran as one of the strategic partners for drug control and crime prevention in the region, and has been supporting the Islamic Republic of Iran by providing technical assistance and training for years, ever since its establishment.

UNODC Iran has a longstanding record of cooperation with the Government of the Russian Federation, one of the key donors supporting its activities. This training marked the second programme conducted at this Institute with the valuable contributions of Russian experts and senior instructors.



DECEMBER 30, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When a husband and wife look at each other with love, Allah looks at both of them with mercy.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:07 Evening: 17:20 Dawn: 5:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

Arasbaran Cultural Center screens “Caught Stealing”

TEHRAN- “Caught Stealing,” a 2025 black comedy film by prominent American filmmaker Darren Aronofsky, went on screen at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday.

Film critic Kourosh Jahed attended a screening of the film followed by a review session.

“Caught Stealing” delves into the seedy underbelly of New York City, where the pursuit of the American Dream can quickly turn into a nightmare. Starring Austin Butler as a former baseball star turned hapless bartender, this black comedy crime thriller is a wild ride that explores the consequences of getting caught up in the wrong crowd.

Butler’s protagonist, a charming but aimless young man, finds himself in a series of increasingly absurd and precarious situations when he agrees to pet-sit for his neighbor. What starts as a simple favor quickly spirals out of control as he unwittingly becomes embroiled in a world of organized crime. As he navigates this treacherous landscape, Butler’s character must confront the harsh realities of the city’s underworld and the true cost of his own ambition.

Supporting Butler in this gripping drama are a talented ensemble cast, including Regina King, Zoë Kravitz, Matt Smith, Liev Schreiber, Vincent D’Onofrio, Benito Martinez Ocasio, Griffin Dunne, and Carol Kane. Each brings their unique brand of intensity and nuance to their respective roles, elevating the film to a level of sophistication and complexity that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

The screenplay, adapted from Charlie Huston’s 2004 novel, is a masterclass in suspense and tension, expertly ratcheting up the stakes with each twist and turn. Aronofsky, known for his visceral and unflinching approach to storytelling, brings a level of grit and realism to the film that is both captivating and unsettling.

Musically, “Caught Stealing” is a true standout, with a score written by Rob Simonson and performed by the British post-punk



band Idles. The music perfectly captures the film’s frenetic energy and dark humor, adding an extra layer of depth and atmosphere to the narrative.

Produced by Columbia Pictures in association with Protozoa Pictures, “Caught Stealing” is a high-stakes, high-reward thriller that will keep viewers guessing until the very end. With its talented cast, expertly crafted screenplay, and pulse-pounding score, this film is a must-see for fans of crime thrillers and anyone looking for a cinematic experience that will leave them breathless and inspired.

Born in 1969, Darren Aronofsky is an acclaimed American filmmaker known for his surreal, intense, and psychologically driven films. His work often explores dark, disturbing themes rooted in realism. Aronofsky studied film and social anthropology at Harvard University before honing his directing skills at the AFI Conservatory.

His early success came with his senior thesis film, “Supermarket Sweep,” which was a National Student Academy Award finalist. In 1997, he founded Protozoa Pictures. His debut feature, “Pi” (1998), won him Best Director at Sundance and an Independent Spirit Award.

He gained further recognition with films like “Requiem for a Dream” (2000), “The Fountain” (2006), and “The Wrestler” (2008). His acclaimed “Black Swan” (2010) earned him Oscar, BAFTA, and Golden Globe nominations. Aronofsky’s diverse filmography includes “Noah,” “Mother!,” and “The Whale.”

Head of ICRO Hojjatoleslam Imanipour meets Malaysian officials, thinkers, religious leaders

TEHRAN – The head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) made a visit to Malaysia with the aim of strengthening cultural diplomacy, engaging with elites and intellectuals, supporting Iranians living abroad, and expanding Quranic and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

During his four-day visit, Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour had a meeting with activists in the field of Palestine as well as a meeting with the Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives, attended a gathering with Iranian elites, intellectuals, and cultural figures residing in Malaysia, and held meetings and discussions with Malaysian and Iranian thinkers and elites and religious leaders, ISNA reported.

One of the programs of this visit was a meeting with Palestinian activists, non-governmental organizations, and influential Malaysian elites. In this meeting, the issue of Palestine, as one of the most important points of common ground between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Malaysia was discussed.

Malaysian intellectuals, while expressing their views, emphasized their pride in the firm positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in supporting the Palestinian people and standing against the Zionist regime.

Noting that in today’s world there are only two paths: compromise or resistance, Hojjatoleslam Imanipour stated: “The discourse of resistance has now found its place at the global level and that nations around the world are moving within the framework of this discourse. The greatest achievement of standing against the Zionist regime has been the strengthening and consolidation of the discourse of resistance on the global stage”.

Another program of the visit was delivering a speech at the Cultural Attaché’s Office of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Malaysia. He explained the role of ethics



and moral values in contemporary human life and emphasized the importance of ethics-based relationships in strengthening cultural ties between Iranian and Malaysian societies. This program was attended by the Iranian and Persian-speaking residents of Malaysia.

Hojjatoleslam Imanipour also visited the museum and complex of the Restu Foundation. This foundation is the second-largest Quran printing complex in the world, after the King Fahd Complex in Saudi Arabia, and prints about one million copies of the Holy Quran annually. During the visit, he described these activities as highly valuable and emphasized their role in strengthening Quranic diplomacy as one of the most important means of communication with the Islamic world.

During this visit, a precious Quranic collection calligraphed by Master Akrami, a prominent Iranian calligrapher, was presented on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Restu Foundation.

Another program of the visit was a meeting with Iranian elites, intellectuals, and cultur-

al figures residing in Malaysia. This meeting was held as part of the mission of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization to strengthen ties with Iranians abroad and to support their cultural and artistic capacities. During the session, selected Iranian participants were honored with certificates of appreciation and gifts.

In this meeting, the Iranian participants presented their suggestions and viewpoints and emphasized Malaysia’s strong potential to become a cultural hub in Southeast Asia for introducing Iranian-Islamic culture and art.

Topics such as Iranian cinema, the Iranian Film Festival in Malaysia, Quranic activities, scientific achievements and inventions by Iranians, and their active presence in Malaysian universities were among the issues discussed.

In his concluding remarks, while welcoming the proposals presented, Hojjatoleslam Imanipour described Iranians living abroad as one of the great assets of the Islamic Republic of Iran and emphasized that efforts would be made to strengthen

cultural and artistic programs in order to better introduce Iran and present a realistic and valuable image of the country, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Also, during his visit, Hojjatoleslam Imanipour met and held talks with Tan Sri Dato’ Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives.

In this meeting, the two sides exchanged views on issues of mutual interest between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Malaysia, among the most important of which was support for Palestine and the people of Gaza.

Both sides also emphasized the shared values of the Islamic world and expressed hope for a better and more stable future for all Muslims. They stressed that by strengthening unity and solidarity, the position of Muslims at the international level could be enhanced, as Muslim unity can lead them to a special and influential status in the world. This, they noted, can only be achieved through resistance and perseverance, such as the steadfastness of the brave people of Iran, which serves as an example to the world.

Taranto Film Festival, Gaza International Festival for Women’s Cinema sign partnership agreement

The Gaza International Festival for Women’s Cinema, represented by its President and Founder Dr. Ezzaldeen Shalh, signed a partnership agreement with the Taranto Film Festival, within the framework of the festival’s 9th edition, held under the theme “Levante: Where the East Meets the West.”

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Gaza Festival by Ms. Milena Fiore, and on behalf of the Taranto Festival by its Director Mr. Mimmo Mongelli.

This partnership carries significant symbolic and political value. It reflects a cultural alliance at the heart of the Mediterranean, aimed at strengthening the international presence of Palestinian cinema.

The collaboration is also part of a new

three-year program launched by the Italian festival, with a strong focus on Palestine as a central theme. The partnership is grounded in a shared vision of cinema as a tool of testimony, resistance, and the preservation of memory—especially in light of the harsh conditions endured by the Palestinian people in Gaza.

The first outcome of this partnership was the “Palestine” event, held on December 18 at the MUDIT Museum in Taranto, where a selected program of short films by Palestinian filmmakers was screened. Among them was the short film “Exception” by director Ezzaldeen Shalh, along with works by filmmaker Mustafa Al-Nabih, followed by an open public discussion.

The initiative continued on December 19 in the city of Lecce, hosted by Astragali Theater, through the event “Eyes of Gaza” and the experience of the Gaza International Festival for Women’s Cinema. The program combined screenings and dialogue, highlighting the urgent need to safeguard images and to continue producing cinema under bombardment and siege.

Both festivals emphasized that this partnership represents a mutual commitment to the circulation of films, the exchange of expertise, and the creation of international platforms for Palestinian cinema produced under extraordinary circumstances—within a broader cultural and ethical responsibility toward memory and humanity.

Cartoon of Day



Winter in Gaza

Cartoonist: Sherif Arafa from Egypt

Tehran concert to honor Martyr Soleimani with symphonic tribute

TEHRAN- Tehran Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nasir Heidarian, will perform the concert “Iran-Mard” at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on Tuesday, in memory of Martyr General Qassem Soleimani.

The event is a part of a commemorative effort to pay tribute to the revered martyr, celebrating the legendary commander while reinforcing themes of national identity, sacrifice, and cultural solidarity, Mehr reported on Sunday.

Sayed Abbas Salehi, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, will also deliver a speech at the event, the report added.

Organized in collaboration with the Foundation for Preserv-

ing and Publishing the Works of Martyr Soleimani and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the event is described as a cultural artistic endeavor to revisit the enduring legacy of a national figure etched in Iran’s collective memory. Through the universal language of symphonic music and artistic expression, the concert aims to portray concepts of resistance, compassion, responsibility, and cultural ties.

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, a highly esteemed Iranian military strategist and prominent figure in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), left an indelible mark on Iran’s defense efforts. Born in 1957 in Qanat-e Malek, Iran,

Soleimani devoted his entire life to safeguarding his country’s interests. He gained widespread recognition for his crucial role in leading successful military campaigns, particularly in the battle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. His exceptional strategic planning, exemplary leadership abilities, and unwavering commitment to preserving Iran’s security earned him profound respect both within the military and among the Iranian populace.

General Soleimani, with his remarkable charm and fearless demeanor, commanded immense admiration from his comrades as well as the general public. His resolute dedication to safeguarding Iran’s sovereignty and

ensuring its security solidified his position as an emblem of fortitude and perseverance.

Despite facing numerous hurdles, such as international sanctions and political tensions, Soleimani remained an indispensable figure in Iran’s military and foreign policies. His assassination in January 2020 had a seismic impact on the region, profoundly grieving the Iranian people and intensifying tensions between Iran and the United States. General Qassem Soleimani’s impactful contributions to Iran’s defense will forever be etched in the nation’s memory, serving as a testament to his enduring influence on the geopolitical landscape of the region.