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Midterms reopen debate over dominance of wealth in US politics

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Campaign spending during the current U.S. midterm election cycle has become the subject of intense political and media debate.

It has brought back into focus a fundamental dilemma facing the United States. How can political equality among the public be preserved when a small group of wealthy individuals enjoys extraordinary financial power to fund election campaigns and shape public debate? ▸ Page 5

Protestors loot shops in Frankfurt

Protestors looted shops in central Frankfurt late on Saturday as clashes erupted in German cities over the cost of living.

Besides Frankfurt - Germany's financial hub - there were incidents of violence in Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg, with police saying they used water cannons to disperse protesters who were targeting emergency workers with fireworks, stones and bottles, BBC said on its website.

Thousands joined demonstrations earlier in the day. They were organized by the campaign group Gen Z regelt - meaning "Gen Z takes charge" - to protest against underfunding in schools, the high cost of living, public spending cuts and military service.

The unrest in Germany follows similar youth-led mass protests in France, where more than 320,000 people also demonstrated on Saturday. ▸ Page 5

Production leap in South Azadegan achieved by launching largest oil processing center

TEHRAN- Completion of the South Azadegan processing facilities raised West Karun capacity and transformed oil production.

According to a Mehr News Agency reporter, the South Azadegan shared oil field, as one of the country's largest and most strategic hydrocarbon reserves, plays a vital and irreplaceable role in energy sustainability, strengthening national production, and increasing foreign-currency revenues. This huge oil field in the West Karun region, because of its hydrocarbon reservoirs shared with the neighboring country, has always been at the top priority of Iran's oil industry upstream and development projects.

Recent developments in the region show that, despite all pressures, comprehensive sanctions, and geopolitical complexities, completion of the value chain from well to processing facilities has opened ▸ Page 4

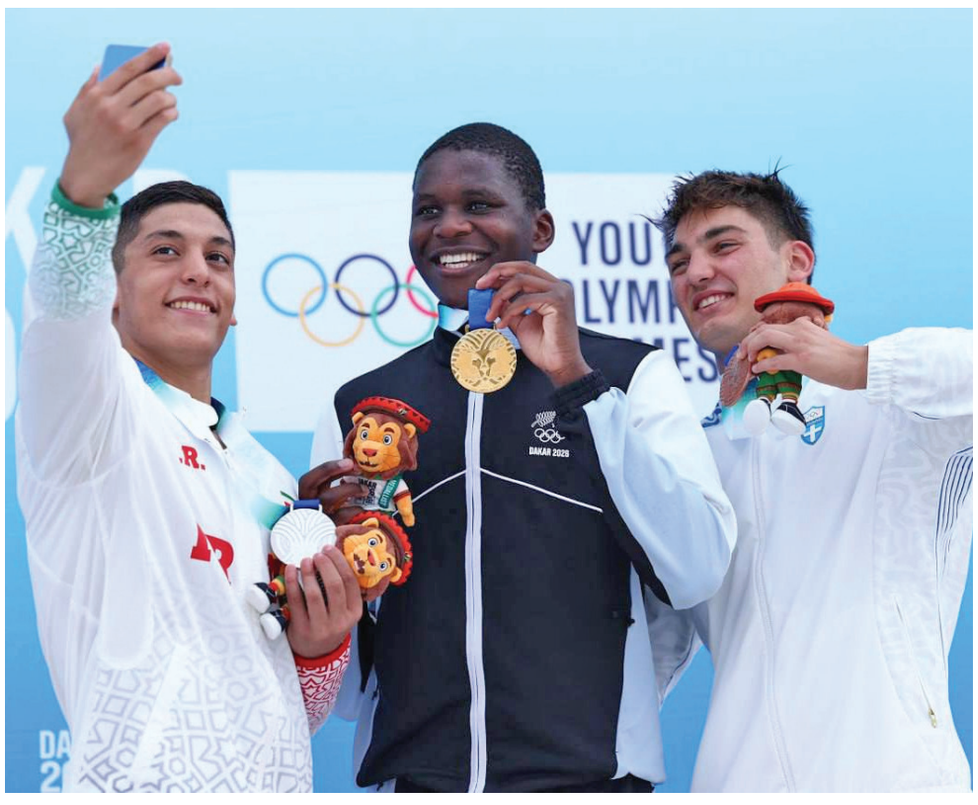
Robert De Niro challenges Trump's leadership, US foreign policy

TEHRAN- A fresh exchange of insults between US President Donald Trump and Robert De Niro has once again brought the long-running dispute between the Hollywood star and the Republican president into the spotlight, highlighting the actor's outspoken criticism of Trump's leadership, US domestic policies and military interventions abroad.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Daytona Beach, Florida, on October 30, Trump described De Niro as a "moron" and said the actor had become "gross" in his eyes, renewing his attacks on one of Hollywood's most prominent critics of his administration. He also said that although he had once liked De Niro, he could no longer stand watching him. ▸ Page 8



▸ Page 3



Shahshahani seizes silver in 2026 Youth Olympic Games

TEHRAN – Swimmer Parsa Shahshahani claimed Iran's first medal at the 2026 Youth Olympic Games on Sunday.

He finished second in the Men's 200-meter backstroke with a time of 2:02.74, behind New Zealand's Ariel Muchirahondo, who won the title in 1:59.15.

Greece's Nikolaos Papatheodorou took third place and the bronze medal, clocking 2:03.23.

Iran has competed in the Games with 29 athletes in 14 spots in Dakar, Senegal from Oct. 31 to Nov. 13. This marks Iran's fourth appearance at the Youth Olympics, after making its debut in 2010.

Futsal player Hadis Yarisararoudi and table tennis player Benyamin Faraji served as the flag bearers for the opening ceremony.

Iran pursues expanded deterrence strategy, calls for new regional security order

TEHRAN – Iran's military and political leadership has outlined a broader strategy for confronting potential threats, combining expanded military preparedness, a wider operational theater, stronger deterrence capabilities, and diplomatic efforts to establish a regional security framework independent of outside powers.

The strategy follows a series of directives issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei during a meeting with senior Armed Forces commanders. The instructions emphasize intelligent combat readiness, an immediate and effective response to threats without geographical restrictions, stronger military intelligence and the development of indigenous defense capabilities. ▸ Page 2

Araghchi: Iran ready for both defense and diplomacy; choice rests with US

TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reaffirmed Iran's readiness to pursue diplomacy while maintaining full defensive preparedness, saying the next step depends on the United States and whether Washington chooses a rational diplomatic approach.

Speaking to ICANA, the Iranian Parliament's news outlet, Araghchi discussed the recent visit by an Iranian delegation to Qatar and continued consultations with Qatari mediators. ▸ Page 3

Iran inflicted at least $5 billion in damage on US military bases: WSJ

Iranian missile and drone strikes have inflicted at least $5 billion in damage on U.S. military bases across the Middle East, according to a sweeping Wall Street Journal investigation that offers the fullest public picture yet of what the war on Iran has cost American forces in the region.

The Journal's analysis, drawing on satellite imagery, Iranian military statements and interviews with U.S. officials, identified 274 damaged structures at 24 installations with an American military presence during the war's first six months.

The investigation found that Iran increasingly targeted buildings where American troops live and sleep, showing an improved ability to sequence attacks and strike with greater precision. ▸ Page 5

Iran among 30 countries with rare blood preservation technology

TEHRAN - Iran is among only 30 countries worldwide with the technology to preserve rare blood types for 10 to 30 years through glycerol-based cryopreservation, and is the only country in the region with this capability, according to the head of the Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO).

Rare blood types refer to blood groups that have a very low prevalence in society and are classified into three categories: rare, very rare, and extremely rare. A rare blood type is defined as one occurring in only 1 out of every 1,000 or one million people, Ahmad Qarah-Baghian, IBTO's chief executive, told Mehr News Agency.

Once a rare blood type is identified, the IBTO collects required samples and freezes them for long-term storage. According to published scientific articles, rare blood type storage spans from 10 to 30 years. Based on some documentation, blood frozen for 20 years still remains usable. ▸ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

America is using negotiations to buy time

Strategic affairs analyst Saeed Leilaz examined the letter sent by J.D. Vance to Mohsen Rezaei in an interview with the Etemad newspaper. The timing of the letter is significant because it comes amid heightened political and economic uncertainty. Leilaz argues that although the letter has been presented as an attempt to revive negotiations, it is accompanied by warnings and threats against Iranian infrastructure. After failing to achieve certain military objectives, Washington has shifted toward a strategy designed to gain time, reduce attention on Iran's leverage in the Strait of Hormuz, and prepare the ground for stronger future pressure if necessary. Iran should respond through a balanced strategy that combines deterrence and diplomacy. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining military readiness, strengthening economic resilience, removing domestic obstacles to economic growth, and supporting productive sectors of the economy. Diplomatic channels should remain open, and negotiations should continue in a careful and calculated manner.

Kayhan: Trump seeks to portray himself as a victim

In an article, Kayhan argued that the conflict involving Iran has generated significant difficulties for both the United States and Europe. Many observers view the consequences of the confrontation as costly and destabilizing. Political pressure has become particularly intense for Trump. Developments linked to the conflict, combined with domestic challenges and election-related concerns, have forced him to modify his public messaging. Whereas he previously suggested that the conflict would have only a limited impact on the United States, he is now placing greater emphasis on portraying America as a target rather than an initiator. The newspaper also highlights rising energy concerns and continuing volatility in global oil prices. According to its analysis, expectations that economic conditions would rapidly improve have not been fulfilled. As a result, Trump is attempting to shift responsibility for the crisis onto Iran while presenting himself as responding to Iranian actions. This change in rhetoric is a sign of political weakness.

Iran: Diplomacy remains the best path for crisis management

The Iran newspaper focused on Tehran's proposed seven-day initiative, which was reportedly delivered through intermediaries. The analysis presents the proposal as a possible framework for reducing tensions and creating conditions for renewed diplomacy. The initiative is based on a series of reciprocal and phased measures. It seeks to connect several objectives, including ending hostilities, easing restrictions, reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and creating a pathway toward renewed nuclear negotiations. Supporters believe that linking these elements together could establish clearer expectations for both sides and reduce uncertainty. The newspaper argues that the proposal may help build trust by providing a structured roadmap rather than relying on general political commitments. It further suggests that the framework could serve as a starting point for broader crisis management and help prevent the continuation of a cycle of escalation and retaliation. However, the paper stresses that implementation depends on political will and the readiness of all parties to take corresponding steps. Without reciprocal action, even a well-designed proposal is unlikely to succeed.

Khorasan: Decoding Vance's approach

Khorasan examined the possible objectives behind Vance's communication with Iran. According to the newspaper, American officials are eager to secure a diplomatic achievement before Nov. 3 midterm elections and view an agreement with Tehran as politically valuable. Washington reportedly wants nuclear issues to be incorporated into any broader arrangement. Tehran, however, is unwilling to accept such conditions under the current circumstances. Because the exact contents of the message remain unclear, Khorasan focuses on the broader political implications. The newspaper identifies two possible tactics. The first involves highlighting particular negotiating figures in an attempt to exploit perceived domestic divisions within Iran. The second involves introducing new conditions that could replace or alter previous understandings reached between the parties. Despite these concerns, Khorasan emphasizes that Iran remains willing to engage in dialogue. Nevertheless, it argues that successful negotiations require changes in Washington's approach and greater attention to Iranian concerns and conditions.

Hamshahri: Response without geographical limitations

Hamshahri discussed a Saturday order from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to the armed forces in the event of resumption of war against Iran by pointing to the views of regional affairs analyst Seyyed Morteza Mousavi. According to Mousavi, the order emphasized preparedness, deterrence, and the ability to respond rapidly to any future threat. He identified three main themes: maintaining full readiness, delivering immediate and effective responses to threats, and ensuring that Iran would determine the course and duration of any future confrontation if attacked. Mousavi argued that recent conflicts demonstrated the importance of deterrence and military readiness in shaping regional security calculations. He also stated that any country allowing its territory or facilities to be used in attacks against Iran could face consequences in the event of future hostilities. In his interpretation, the order was intended to signal determination that responses to future threats would not necessarily be confined to a specific geographical area.

Iranian MP calls for swift prosecution of those involved in Leader's assassination



TEHRAN – Mohammad Seraj, a member of Iran's Parliament representing Tehran, has called on the head of the Judiciary to prioritize the prosecution of those responsible for the assassination of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, urging that proceedings be initiated as swiftly as possible.

Speaking during a Sunday session of Parliament, Seraj said the Iranian people had thwarted 'adversaries' plots' through their nationwide presence in the streets, demonstrating their resolve and commitment to the Islamic Republic.

The lawmaker said the United States-led global system of domination had targeted Iranian religious, scientific, military and administrative figures, as well as prominent national figures, in terrorist operations over the past five decades, following the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

He described the assassination of the Leader as the most prominent of these crimes, adding that the Iranian nation is seeking justice for his martyrdom.

The lawmaker cautioned political officials against sacrificing the country's vital interests under the pretext of diplomatic considerations, saying that retribution was a divine injunction that must not be set aside.

Addressing the head of the Judiciary, Seraj called for the swift consideration of indictments against those who planned and directly carried out the assassination.

He also addressed the US president and the Israeli prime minister, warning that they would continue to be pursued until retributive justice was carried out and would not be allowed to rest easy.

Iran pursues expanded deterrence strategy, calls for new regional security order

From page 1 ▸ Senior Iranian officials have subsequently elaborated on different dimensions of the strategy, addressing military preparedness, the future of Iran's nuclear doctrine, the Strait of Hormuz, regional security cooperation and the international economic consequences of the conflict.

Expanded operational theater and new military targets

Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi, spokesperson for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), announced that identifying new targets and planning operations across additional geographical areas had been placed on the Corps' agenda.

Speaking in Kerman, Mohebbi said the process of identifying new targets and preparing operational plans for a broader geographical theater had begun two days earlier.

He described the Leader's latest directives as opening a new chapter in the confrontation, adding that Iran's Armed Forces were now better prepared to deliver an effective response to potential threats.

Mohebbi said the removal of geographical restrictions would provide Iran with a wider operational field to confront hostile actions and establish comprehensive deterrence.

He also recalled that the late Leader had previously emphasized the regionalization of any war against Iran, adding that the latest instructions had further expanded the geographical scope of the country's defensive planning.

The IRGC spokesperson said the ultimate objective was to establish maximum deterrence, making any attempt to threaten Iran's territorial integrity, national security, and interests prohibitively costly.

Armed forces enhancing readiness to counter complex threats

The Iranian Armed Forces are further strengthening their expertise and operational readiness to confront complex threats and hybrid warfare, the commander of the Iranian Navy has said.

Rear Admiral Shahram Irani made the remarks during a session of the War Studies course at Shahid Sattari University, according to Mehr News Agency.

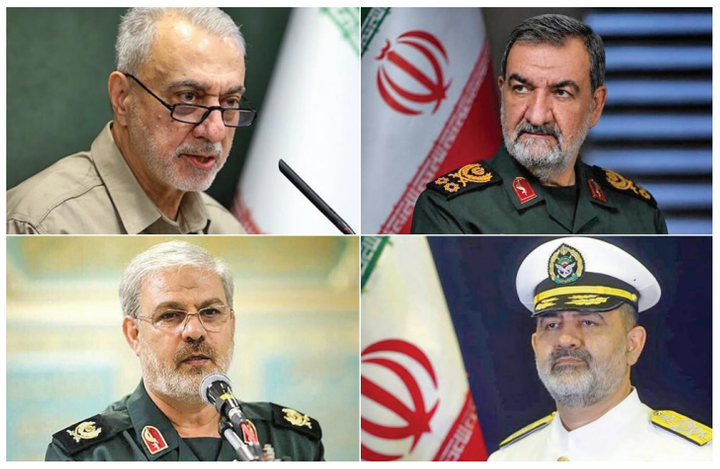
He highlighted the 86th Naval Flotilla's round-the-world voyage, describing it as the outcome of months of planning and specialized efforts by Navy personnel. Despite challenging oceanic conditions, he said, the mission was successfully completed, securing Iran's place in the history of the country's maritime navigation.

Irani also praised the capabilities and commitment of Navy personnel, saying the flotilla's visits to ports in various countries provided an opportunity to showcase Iran's Islamic and national identity.

He added that the crew's professional conduct and adherence to religious and ethical values had demonstrated an aspect of the Islamic Republic of Iran's capabilities and standing.

Emphasizing the importance of self-confidence, faith and hope in confronting threats, the naval commander said determination and perseverance, alongside faith and hope, were essential factors for success.

He stressed that the Armed Forces were drawing on these qualities to further enhance their knowledge and preparedness to deal with increasingly complex threats and hybrid warfare.



Five strategic setbacks for the United States

In assessing the consequences of the conflict, Mohebbi outlined five areas in which the United States had suffered strategic setbacks.

The first, he argued, concerned about Washington's failure to achieve its initial political and territorial objectives. According to the IRGC spokesperson, the United States had initially sought to change Iran's political system and fragment the country. After failing to achieve these objectives, it gradually shifted to demands involving Iran's missile capabilities, nuclear activities, enriched uranium, and control over strategic assets, including oil wells and islands.

Mohebbi maintained that none of these objectives had been achieved, arguing that the failure to accomplish the original goals had compelled Washington to reconsider its approach and seek negotiations and mediation.

The second setback concerned the credibility of the US security strategy in West Asia. He said Washington had justified its extensive military presence in the region by promising to protect energy supplies and freedom of navigation through major international waterways.

However, despite possessing what Mohebbi described as the world's largest navy, seven fleets, 12 aircraft carriers and a regional Fifth Fleet presence, the United States had been unable to reopen the Strait of Hormuz during the conflict.

He argued that this had raised fundamental questions about Washington's ability to guarantee maritime security and protect international energy flows.

The third setback concerned US intelligence capabilities. Mohebbi said the identification and targeting of American intelligence facilities had challenged the perception that US intelligence infrastructure and methods were beyond detection.

The fourth involved the perceived superiority of American military technology. He cited Iran's ability to counter advanced US military systems, including the F-35 fighter aircraft, Patriot missile systems, and other equipment operating in the air, underwater, and on land.

The fifth setback, he said, involved the economic costs of the conflict and the weakening of American global influence. Mohebbi argued that Washington, which had traditionally sought to transfer the financial burden of military campaigns to other countries, had itself sustained significant economic damage.

He also described the conflict as a challenge to the perception of US military invincibility and its ability to protect its allies.

Armed forces prepare for immediate and unrestricted responses

The military dimension of the new strategy was further emphasized by Major General Ali Abdollahi, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces.

In a message published on his X account, Abdollahi said the Armed Forces were employing their full intelligence capabilities to monitor enemy movements and preparations while continuously updating their target database.

He stressed that Iran would not necessarily wait for an adversary to launch an attack before determining the timing and manner of its response.

"Our response will be immediate, impactful, and without geographical restrictions," he warned.

In a separate message addressed to the Iranian nation, Abdollahi praised the Leader's directives, describing them as a guiding framework for military commanders and all members of the Armed Forces.

He pledged that the military would stand firm against any aggression, regardless of its scale or nature, and defend the country and its people.

Abdollahi also said the Armed Forces were developing a new database of enemy targets and assets across a wider geographical area, adding that Iran would confront its adversaries with new operational capabilities.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Mehrdad Akhlaqi pledged the Defense Ministry's full support for implementing the Leader's instructions.

He said the ministry would mobilize its organizational, industrial, scientific, and technological capacities to translate the directives into practical defense achievements, with particular emphasis on strengthening indigenous capabilities and meeting the requirements of the Armed Forces.

Nuclear doctrine remains unchanged amid growing debate

Iran's nuclear policy was another major issue addressed by Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council.

Rezaei said no official decision had been taken to change the country's nuclear doctrine, stating that the issue could be discussed if military hostilities resumed.

Rezaei pointed out that Iran had accepted inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and maintained surveillance cameras at its nuclear facilities, with monitoring information transmitted to the agency.

He said the Iranian public was questioning why the country should continue with the same arrangements when its nuclear facilities had come under attack despite the existing inspection and monitoring framework.

The SNSC secretary added that some members of Parliament had apparently begun preliminary steps concerning the issue, but emphasized that no formal government or state-level decision had been adopted.

Rezaei also criticized IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, arguing that problems surrounding Iran's nuclear file had emerged during his tenure.

On the diplomatic front, he said Tehran was awaiting the latest response from Washington in the ongoing indirect exchanges. He added that he had read a letter from US Vice President JD Vance but had not yet sent a reply.

Describing the change in the American side's tone as a positive indication, Rezaei said it reflected Iran's strengthened position.

He reiterated that diplomacy remained an option, provided that the seven conditions previously announced by Iran were fulfilled. However, he warned that any renewed hostile action would be met with devastating strikes using new weapons.

Four-country consultations seek regional security without outside interference

Alongside its military preparations, Tehran has emphasized the importance of developing a regional security framework based on cooperation among West Asian countries.

Rezaei discussed the outcome of the four-country consultations in Tehran involving Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye, saying the participants had reached a constructive understanding of several shared regional priorities.

He said the discussions addressed the future security architecture of the region, the situation in Yemen, the proposed Mecca agreement and the need to defend Muslim populations against Israeli aggression.

The withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and southern Syria, as well as developments in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, were also among the subjects discussed.

Rezaei argued that developments over the past one or two years had demonstrated that no sustainable regional security arrangement could be established without taking Iran's position and interests into account.

He said the resistance demonstrated by the Iranian nation had encouraged regional countries to reconsider their security policies and explore arrangements based on cooperation among countries of the region.

According to the SNSC secretary, the emerging framework should enable regional states to take responsibility for their own security without interference from powers outside the region.

He added that some regional officials who had visited Tehran to discuss future security arrangements had themselves requested meetings with Iranian officials.

Rezaei maintained that Iran's ability to withstand the military power of the United States and Israel demonstrated the potential of cooperation among regional countries to establish lasting security.

He stressed that Iran should have an effective role in any future regional security arrangement, arguing that sustainable stability could not be achieved without its participation.

Strait of Hormuz and national interests remain non-negotiable

The strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz also featured prominently in Rezaei's remarks.

He said reopening the waterway was conditional on the full implementation of Iran's requirements and that no change in its status would take place until those conditions were fulfilled.

The SNSC secretary stressed that Iran would not retreat from its rights and national interests during negotiations.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Good Nuclear, Bad Nuclear

Europe's vuclear hypocrisy: why is Iran expected to remain defenceless?

By Ehsan Etesam



TEHRAN- After decades of lecturing Iran over its nuclear programme, European powers are embracing nuclear deterrence, participating in simulated nuclear warfare and even contemplating the development of their own atomic weapons. The question is no longer simply whether Iran's nuclear programme is peaceful, but why the rules of international security appear to apply differently to Tehran and European capitals.

For decades, European governments have positioned themselves as guardians of nuclear non-proliferation, repeatedly questioning Iran's nuclear ambitions, imposing political and economic pressure, and demanding restrictions on its nuclear programme. Yet, as Europe increasingly prepares for a potential nuclear confrontation and considers expanding its own nuclear capabilities, an uncomfortable question emerges: by what logic can European countries claim the right to pursue nuclear deterrence while denying Iran the right to determine the means of safeguarding its own security?

A recent report by "German Foreign Policy", published on October 15 under the headline "Europe, a nuclear-armed continent", offers a revealing account of this apparent contradiction. It describes an accelerating trend towards the militarisation of Europe's security architecture, including participation in nuclear warfare exercises, discussions about deploying additional American nuclear weapons on European soil, and renewed calls for Germany and other European countries to consider developing their own nuclear weapons.

The developments expose not only Europe's changing security priorities but also the profound double standards underpinning its longstanding approach to Iran's nuclear programme.

The hypocrisy of Europe's nuclear double standards

For years, European governments have been at the forefront of international efforts to restrict Iran's nuclear programme, frequently invoking concerns that Tehran might eventually seek to develop nuclear weapons. These accusations have provided political justification for sanctions, diplomatic pressure and repeated attempts to impose additional restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities.

Yet the same European capitals are now moving in a remarkably different direction when it comes to their own nuclear ambitions.

According to German Foreign Policy, Germany is participating in NATO's annual Steadfast Noon nuclear warfare exercise, alongside 16 other NATO members. The exercise involves operational preparations for the simulated deployment of nuclear bombs. The Bundeswehr is also participating for the first time in France's nuclear exercise, Operation Poker.

Meanwhile, Finland has moved to remove its longstanding legal prohibition on hosting or transporting nuclear weapons, while Lithuania is pursuing a similar constitutional change. Discussions about potentially stationing American nuclear weapons in Poland have also gained momentum.

Perhaps even more significant is the growing debate over an independent European nuclear weapons capability. German foreign policy circles have begun openly discussing the possibility of a German or jointly developed European nuclear arsenal, potentially involving Scandinavian and Baltic countries.

The contrast is striking. When Iran develops its nuclear technology under international safeguards, European governments portray it as a potential threat to international security. When European countries expand their nuclear military cooperation and contemplate acquiring additional nuclear capabilities, the same developments are presented as legitimate responses to security concerns.

If nuclear capabilities are inherently destabilising when pursued by Iran, why do they suddenly become instruments of stability when pursued by European countries?

Security for Europe, insecurity for Iran?

The underlying contradiction goes beyond nuclear policy. It reflects a broader European understanding of international security in which some countries are considered entitled to strengthen their deterrence capabilities, while others are expected to accept limitations on their security choices.

French President Emmanuel Macron's declaration in March that Europe was entering a new "age of nuclear weapons" is particularly revealing. His proposed advanced deterrence concept involves the possible temporary deployment of French nuclear-capable Rafale aircraft at bases in other European countries. The objective, according to the report, is to create uncertainty for potential adversaries and complicate their military calculations.

In other words, Europe increasingly views nuclear deterrence as an essential component of its security.

Germany, meanwhile, is questioning whether dependence on American nuclear protection is sufficient. Political scientist Joachim Krause, a former head of the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University, has argued that Germany should consider its own or European nuclear weapons. He has even suggested that possessing an atomic bomb would provide Germany with an additional element of security.

This raises a fundamental question: if nuclear deterrence is considered necessary for Germany's protection, why should Iran be expected to surrender every option that could contribute to its national security?

Iran operates in a considerably more volatile security environment than most European countries. It faces decades of American sanctions, persistent military threats, repeated acts of sabotage, assassinations of its officials and scientists, and direct military attacks involving the United States and Israel. Its geographical neighbourhood is also characterised by extensive foreign military deployments and the presence of nuclear-armed states.

These are not abstract security concerns. They are part of Iran's recent experience.

European governments cannot reasonably expect Tehran to disregard these realities while simultaneously embracing the argument that their own deteriorating security environment justifies greater reliance on nuclear weapons.

Security cannot be treated as an exclusive privilege reserved for powerful countries. Nor can the principle of deterrence be considered legitimate for one group of nations and inherently unacceptable for another.

Why is Iran expected to accept a different set of rules?

Perhaps the most important question raised by Europe's nuclear shift concerns the future of the international non-proliferation regime itself.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) establishes obligations concerning the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and progress towards nuclear disarmament. Iran, as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the treaty, has consistently maintained that its nuclear programme is intended for peaceful purposes and that it is entitled to develop nuclear technology under the treaty's provisions.

The European powers, meanwhile, have increasingly embraced nuclear deterrence as an indispensable instrument of their own security. France and the United Kingdom already possess nuclear arsenals, while several other European NATO members participate in nuclear-sharing arrangements involving American weapons.

The problem is not simply that Europe possesses nuclear weapons or participates in deterrence arrangements. It is that European governments continue to approach the nuclear question through a framework that appears to grant themselves considerable strategic flexibility while demanding increasingly restrictive commitments from Iran.

The disparity becomes even more difficult to justify when the respective security environments are considered.

Iran faces threats from countries that possess overwhelming conventional military capabilities and, in the case of Israeli regime, an undeclared nuclear arsenal. It has also experienced direct military aggression from the United States and Israel. Meanwhile, European countries are increasingly citing the possibility of a confrontation with Russia as justification for strengthening their nuclear deterrence.

If the prospect of a potential conflict is sufficient to justify expanding Europe's nuclear capabilities, how can Iran's much more immediate and tangible security concerns be dismissed?

And if nuclear weapons are being presented as the ultimate guarantee of sovereignty and national survival, what alternative security guarantees are actually being offered to countries such as Iran?

A dangerous lesson for the international order

Europe's evolving nuclear posture sends a deeply troubling message to the rest of the world: international rules and non-proliferation commitments can be interpreted flexibly when the security interests of powerful countries are at stake.

This approach risks undermining the very international framework that European governments have repeatedly invoked in their dealings with Iran. It also raises serious questions about the credibility of European diplomacy and its ability to act as an impartial participant in negotiations over nuclear issues.

Ultimately, the issue is not whether Iran should acquire nuclear weapons. The right to peaceful nuclear technology, the question of nuclear weapons acquisition, and the broader right of every nation to defend its sovereignty are separate matters that should not be deliberately conflated.

The real question is why Europe believes it can determine the security requirements of other nations while reserving for itself the freedom to pursue whatever military capabilities it considers necessary.

If nuclear deterrence is a legitimate response to insecurity, then European governments must explain why Iran's security concerns deserve less consideration than their own. If nuclear militarisation is dangerous and destabilising, they must apply that principle consistently, rather than using it selectively as a political instrument against countries they regard as adversaries.

Europe cannot spend decades demanding that Iran demonstrate restraint while simultaneously preparing for a nuclear confrontation of its own.

The world cannot be expected to accept a system in which the powerful are entitled to pursue nuclear deterrence, while the less powerful are told that their security must depend on the goodwill of those same powers.

Araghchi: Iran ready for both defense and diplomacy; choice rests with US

From Page 1 ▸ He said the delegation, led by a deputy foreign minister, travelled to Doha to continue discussions with Qatari mediators, who had also visited Tehran in recent weeks.

Araghchi stressed that the visit was not intended to involve direct negotiations with the United States, adding that consultations with the mediators on a two-day proposal were still underway.

According to the Tehran Times, consultations with Qatari mediators were continuing over a proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within two days, provided that the United States met Iran's conditions. Under the proposal, the US would take the required steps on the first day, while the waterway would reopen on the second day, allowing maritime traffic to return to its previous state.

"Discussions on the two-day proposal are continuing, and the process is moving forward, but we have not yet reached a definitive outcome," he said, noting that progress depended on the answers the other side provided to Iran's questions.

The foreign minister said Tehran was making every effort to advance the diplomatic process and expressed hope that Washington would also demonstrate the necessary rationality to prioritize diplomacy over other options.

Turning to Iran's defense preparedness, Araghchi referred to directives issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces to senior military commanders, saying they clearly demonstrated the Islamic Republic's resolve.

He added that Iran's Armed Forces had been assigned a clear mission and had become stronger than before by drawing on the experience gained in the two previous wars.

Araghchi reiterated that Iran remained prepared for both defense and diplomacy, emphasizing that the course of future developments would depend on the decisions and judgment of the United States.

"Whether the Americans choose diplomacy or another path depends on their own rationality," he said.

Iran designates MI6, Royal Navy and RAF under reciprocal measures against UK

TEHRAN — Iran has announced reciprocal measures against the United Kingdom, designating its foreign intelligence service, MI6, as a hostile group and its Royal Navy and Royal Air Force as terrorist organizations, in response to 'Britain's unlawful and hostile actions against the Islamic Republic.'

In a statement issued on Sunday, November 1, Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the British government's anti-Iranian policies, saying they violated the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, particularly respect for national sovereignty and the prohibition of unlawful measures against other countries.

The ministry said the measures were intended to safeguard Iran's national security and interests and reaffirmed the government's determination to take all necessary steps to protect the country.

According to the statement, the decision was adopted in response to British actions over the past year, including the country's involvement in the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran through the provision of military bases, facilities and logistical support.

The ministry also cited Britain's decision on July 13, 2026, to bring Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) under the State Threats Act 2026 as part of the grounds for the reciprocal measures.

The Foreign Ministry said the measures were based on a resolution adopted by Iran's Supreme National Security Council and took effect upon publication of the statement on November 1.

Under the decision, Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, commonly known as MI6, has been designated a hostile group pursuant to Note 2 of Article 1 of Iran's law on intensifying penalties for espionage and cooperation with the Zionist regime and hostile countries against national security and interests.

The Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, meanwhile, have been placed under Iran's law on reciprocal action against the United States' designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization and will accordingly be recognized as terrorist organizations.

The ministry emphasized that the measures were adopted in accordance with international law and the principle of reciprocity, holding the British government responsible for any consequences arising from its actions.

The decision comes amid heightened tensions between Tehran and London over Britain's role in the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran and its subsequent measures against the IRGC.

Iran has consistently maintained that the provision of military facilities and logistical support for attacks against its territory constitutes a violation of its sovereignty and international law. Tehran has also condemned the designation of the IRGC by Western governments as an interference in its internal affairs and a hostile act against the country's national security.

By extending reciprocal measures to British intelligence and military institutions, Iran has signaled that it will respond to actions it considers hostile through its own legal and security framework.

The Foreign Ministry's statement concluded by reiterating that the British government would bear responsibility for the consequences of its policies and actions against Iran.

Leader marks anniversary of Operation Zulfaqari, hails Iranian people's role in Abadan victory

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei has highlighted the Iranian people's vigilance, faith and sacrifices as key factors in the country's victory during the Sacred Defense, commemorating the anniversary of Operation Zulfaqari, which led to the expulsion of Iraqi Ba'athist forces from Abadan Island in 1980.

In a message released on Saturday, October 31, the Leader described the operation as a popular uprising against the invading forces and Iran's first victory in the eight-year Sacred Defense.

He said the operation, carried out on November 1, 1980, just 40 days after the outbreak of the Iraqi-imposed war, demonstrated the decisive role of popular participation, self-sacrifice and cooperation between local forces and the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC).

The Leader noted that Operation Zulfaqari, despite its historical significance, had received relatively little attention, adding that it offered valuable lessons in confronting aggression and defending the country.

Referring to the circumstances surrounding the Iraqi invasion, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Ba'athist regime had sought to undermine the longstanding bonds between the Iranian and Iraqi peoples through baseless claims and divisive slogans. He emphasized that the two nations shared deep religious and cultural ties, including their devotion to the Household of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).

The Leader said the enemy's tactics of aggression, occupation and siege were countered through public vigilance, the dedication of self-sacrificing forces and the courage of Iranian fighters.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Supplying, distributing goods not disrupted even for a single day: TCCIMA head

TEHRAN- The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) said: "As confirmed by the President, the private sector provided the greatest assistance to the government and did not allow the process of supplying and distributing goods to be disrupted even for a single day."

According to the Mehr News Agency, Mahmoud Najafi Arab said, referring to the difficult conditions for economic enterprises: "During the two recent wars, large, small, and medium industries suffered considerable damages, and even some factories located in industrial estates were directly targeted and destroyed; damages that cannot easily be compensated."

He added: "Wartime conditions have made enterprises' access to export and import markets difficult, and securing working capital has also faced serious limitations. In such an atmosphere, attracting foreign investment seems more out of reach than ever. On the other hand, domestic business problems have intensified, and rising inflation has increased the cost of maintaining warehouse inventories."

Need to turn private sector's problems into a public demand

The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing the role of the media in reflecting the country's economic issues, said: "The media must reflect enterprises' problems accurately and expertly so that the ground is prepared for assessing and resolving them. The private sector cannot pass through the current conditions alone and without the accompaniment of the government and the people."

Najafi Arab, referring to the performance of economic actors during the recent wars, stated: "As confirmed by the President, the private sector provided the greatest assistance to the government and did not allow the process of supplying and distributing goods to be disrupted even for a single day. Economic actors stood alongside the country with empathy and sacrifice, but despite these actions, in some cases an incorrect image of them is still presented in society."

He continued: "The view that economic actors are leech-like people or merely pursue their own personal interests is rooted in past intellectual currents. The media can play an effective role in correcting this attitude by introducing the lives and performance of entrepreneurs and fairly reflecting their efforts."

Najafi Arab added: "Restoring the position of the private sector in Iran's economy requires more support and follow-up. Experience has shown that as long as an issue does not become a public demand, one cannot expect serious reforms. The media must elevate the problems of economic enterprises beyond the level of scattered complaints and turn them into a public demand for policy reform."

Introducing entrepreneurs and continuous demanding of accountability from officials

Referring to the role of the media in promoting a culture of production and entrepreneurship, he said: "The media can, by revising the way they narrate economic issues, provide the ground for strengthening the culture of production and entrepreneurship. Introducing industrial innovations, knowledge-based companies, export-oriented enterprises, and successful experiences of large and medium businesses shows society that creating economic value is a complex and time-consuming process and that the formation of an industry is the result of the efforts of several generations."

The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce emphasized: "The media's responsibility should not be limited merely to publishing news about economic problems; rather, continuous follow-up of demands and evaluation of officials' performance must also be placed on the agenda. It must be determined to what extent the promises made have been implemented and whether the announced reforms have been able to improve the business environment or not."

Najafi Arab added: "Publishing periodic reports on the state of economic problems, the progress of reforms, and the remaining obstacles can take the media's role beyond the mere transmission of news and turn them into one of the effective tools for accountability and policy reform."



Referring to the media's problems during the war period, he said: "The media also faced serious damages during this period. Rising costs and declining audiences following internet restrictions put pressure on the media economy and in some cases led to layoffs."

Najafi Arab continued: "In such conditions, economic enterprises must help support the media using various methods and play a role in maintaining their economic sustainability. The media are not merely observers of economic developments; rather, they can be effective actors in shaping a competitive, transparent, and productive economy."

He also emphasized the necessity of enhancing the specialized knowledge and expert capacity of media actors and said: "The country's media must strengthen their expert capacity and move at the level of international media. On this path, the private sector and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce are ready to cooperate with media professionals."

The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, continuing to criticize the government's interventions in economic activities, said: "One of the problems we have faced is the interference of executive bodies in the economy; an approach that continues. A command economy and command pricing have seriously harmed the industry, services, and other business sectors."

Emphasizing the necessity for the media to address this issue more seriously, he said: "I ask the media to seriously examine and reflect the effects of government interventions in the economy and the consequences of command policies. It is also necessary to pay attention to the efforts of media outlets active in this field so that the country's governance system understands the necessity of changing restrictive approaches in the economy."

Najafi Arab, referring to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce's plans to encourage media active in this area, added: "We will try to commend media outlets that perform effectively in explaining the destructive effects of government interventions in the economy and command pricing and to consider an appropriate award for them."

He also, referring to the increase in economic regulations and circulars in the country's difficult conditions, said: "During reviews conducted in Shahrivar (September), we encountered significant and at the same time worrying statistics regarding the number of circulars and regulations issued by executive bodies."

The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce continued: "The noteworthy point is that the more difficult the country's conditions become, the more the volume of circulars and the extent of executive bodies' interventions in the economy increase. In Shahrivar alone, various executive bodies issued a considerable number of circulars in various economic areas."

Najafi Arab emphasized in conclusion: "The media must seriously pursue the issue of the command economy, command pricing, and the consequences of executive bodies' interventions in the activities of economic enterprises; because the continuation of this approach in recent years has caused considerable damage to the country's economy."

Production leap in South Azadegan achieved by launching largest oil processing center

From Page 1 ▶ a new horizon for a leap in the country's crude oil production. In this framework, full operation of the Central Crude Oil Processing (CTEP) facility at South Azadegan is considered a major milestone in creating sustainable infrastructure for maximum exploitation of the production potential of this strategic field and has brought the oil industry's roadmap into an accelerated development phase.

During implementation of the first-phase development plans for the South Azadegan oil field, heavy executive and engineering steps were taken so that the recovery factor of this shared field would increase noticeably. During this foundational phase, drilling, completion, and commissioning operations for 203 oil wells were successfully completed, and the field's production structure was fundamentally organized. The output of these extensive measures has been tangible and accelerated growth in daily production figures; South Azadegan oil production rose from about 130,000 barrels per day at the beginning of the 14th government's work to more than 183,000 barrels per day. Also, at the time the project was handed over to the new contractor, total oil production from the North and South Azadegan fields together reached 237,000 barrels per day. This change of course and upward production trend proves the strategic importance of stabilizing engineering mechanisms and maximum extraction from shared reservoirs in West Karun.

Full launch of CTEP; Iran's largest oil processing center

Full operation of the Central Crude Oil Processing (CTEP) facilities of the South Azadegan project, with four oil processing trains, has made this industrial complex, with a final capacity of 320,000 barrels per day, known as the largest and most complete crude oil processing center in the entire country. Before completion of the initial trains, trains C and D of the project, which entered the operational cycle in Dey last year by order of the President, played an important role in the initial increase in production; the third train was launched on 29 Esfand 1403 and reached stable production on 24 Ordibehesht 1404, and the fourth train was launched on 30 Azar 1404 and entered stable production on 4 Dey. In the next step, completion of the first and second trains (A and B) was pursued from Bahman 1404, accompanied by the successful installation of two ultra-heavy separators, each weighing 102 tons, with a diameter of 6.8 meters and a length of 33 meters. After pre-commissioning, equipment testing, and coordination of systems, with a short four-day shutdown to integrate the control and safety systems of the first and second trains with the third and fourth trains, permission to introduce oil was issued, and finally on 19 Mehr 1405, the full 320,000-barrel oil processing capacity of this center was achieved.



Azadegan's central role in West Karun's 820,000-barrel record

Completion of the South Azadegan central processing project is not merely a local achievement; it is considered mother infrastructure for the entire West Karun basin. With the operationalization of this center's 320,000-barrel capacity, the cumulative ceiling of oil processing and exploitation capacity in the West Karun oil fields has risen to an exceptional figure of 820,000 barrels per day. Because of its geographical location and advanced process design, this center plays a fundamental role in the region's oil transfer, processing, and stabilization systems and provides a reliable and sustainable platform for developing the capacity of other satellite and neighboring fields. Taking these developments into account, overall progress of the South Azadegan project has exceeded 80 percent, and the file for the main section of surface oil facilities has been conclusively completed; an achievement obtained through close coordination among the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company, the Petropars Group, the employer, subcontractors, and the country's technical and engineering bodies.

One of the brightest operational aspects of the South Azadegan field development project has been the uninterrupted and courageous continuation of construction and engineering activities amid the highly dangerous conditions of the 12-day war and the third imposed war. In circumstances where field threats could have led to stagnation of projects, no mandatory stoppage or decline in oil production occurred, and development activities were pursued with full force. During these difficult days, about 30 drilling rigs were active in various fields under management; they were suspended for only about one week and solely to observe strict safety measures, and then quickly resumed. Even in the area of international logistics, although maritime traffic for supplying a limited number of heavy items such as separators faced short delays, project experts, through optimal risk management, did not allow this issue to block the path of progress; as a result, the first and second trains were completed without major delay, and national production remained stable in a great test.

Development in the South Azadegan oil field has not been one-dimensional, and environmental requirements and optimal management of energy resources are at the center of its designs. The associated gas section is the only remaining step of the South Azadegan CTEP project, and all the strength and focus of executive agents is directed toward its rapid completion. Under this plan, associated gas processing and compression facilities will be commissioned, and according to the official schedule, the first train of the gas section will officially join the operational cycle by the end of the current year. With full operation of the gas processing units, this center will be able to collect 200 million standard cubic feet of associated gas daily and, instead of burning it in flares, send it to the NGL 3200 plant for purification and hygienic and industrial use; an action that, in addition to creating major economic value and feeding downstream petrochemical industries, will leave a very positive environmental impact on the atmosphere of the West Karun region.

Start of second phase of integrated development and expansion of energy diplomacy

With the definitive completion of the first phase of South Azadegan development, the next step has begun with a much broader target. From Ordibehesht (April), the second phase of the project for the entire shared Azadegan field (North and South) entered operational phases, including deep engineering studies, process design, holding major tenders, and supplying heavy drilling rigs, advanced downhole pumps, and modern well-completion equipment. Alongside this field development, a balanced and multidimensional development approach is also underway in other West Karun projects; including the Sohrab shared field, where after revision of plans to reduce damage to the Hour al-Azim wetland ecosystem, official environmental permits were issued and operations continued; or the 435-megawatt West Karun power plant, which, while supplying the 100-megawatt needs of the facilities, has provided about 300 megawatts of surplus and stable electricity to the country's national grid since 1400. In addition, the doors of foreign investment remain open for continued participation of Chinese companies in fields such as Yadavaran and for pursuing development contracts with Russian companies in the Aban, Paydar Gharb, Cheshmeh Khosh, Dalpari, and Paydar Sharq fields—especially in the area of supplying downhole pumps—placing South Azadegan at the top of a chain of wealth creation, industrial independence, and technological synergy.

Iran-Africa trade increases 66% in 9 months

TEHRAN- The Minister of Agriculture, referring to the trend of trade exchanges between Iran and African countries, said: "According to customs exchange statistics, Iran's trade with Africa in the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 21-December 21, 2025) reached about 940 million dollars, which shows a 66 percent growth compared to the same period in the preceding year."

Making the remarks in the First National Meeting on Iran-Africa Agricultural Cooperation, the minister said that this amount of trade, despite significant growth, is still far from existing capacities, and added: "This figure is still limited compared to the capacity of the large market of the African continent with more than one billion people."

According to him, "This number is small, but its direction of movement is correct, and economic cooperation between the two sides must be expanded through planning."

Nouri Qezeljeh, referring to the share of agricultural products in Iran-Africa trade, stated: "About two-thirds of Iran's imports from the African continent are related to food and agricultural products. Therefore, cooperation in this sector should not be limited to one-way trade; rather, it must move toward the formation of joint value chains, mutual investment, and technology transfer."

The Minister of Agriculture further mentioned a priority as removing executive obstacles and strengthening communication among responsible institutions and said: "Economic actors, in order to enter into sustainable cooperation, need clear procedures, reliable transportation, practical payment mechanisms, insurance and investment coverage, and predictable regulations. Therefore, in the area of tariffs and trade facilitation, with the participation of relevant bodies, the capacity of bilateral agreements and regional mechanisms can be examined."

Nouri Qezeljeh, emphasizing the necessity of continuously following up on executive obstacles, stated: "The problems of each project must be clearly identified and recorded, the responsible body must be designated to follow it up, and the progress of the work must be evaluated within clear time frames."

In the beginning of the First National Meeting on Iran-Africa Agricultural Cooperation, the minister stressing that opportunities for joint agricultural cooperation with Africa are available and must be converted into concrete, operational, and lasting economic ties.

The meeting was attended by ambassadors, economic counselors, honorary consuls, officials from executive bodies, economic associations, entrepreneurs, investors, and more than 200 economic actors. The minister said this broad participation provided a valuable opportunity to translate the political will for expanding Iran-Africa relations into specific projects and durable economic partnerships.

Upgrading, safety improvements performed on 4,700km of secondary, rural roads across country

TEHRAN- The Director General of the Office for Secondary and Rural Roads Affairs of the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization said: "This year, upgrading and asphalt overlay operations have been carried out on 4,699 kilometers of secondary and rural routes."

According to IRNA, citing the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, Seyed Reza Sharifi stated: "In order to improve traffic quality and increase the safety factor of trips on these routes, during the seven months that have passed since the beginning of the current year, asphalt overlay operations have been implemented on 2,817 kilometers of rural roads and 1,882 kilometers of secondary routes."

He stated: "Also, in order to strengthen road infrastructure in these areas, sub-base and preparation operations for rural routes over 3,415 kilometers and asphalt paving for more than 1,950 kilometers of these routes have been carried out."

The Director General of the Office for Secondary and Rural Roads Affairs referred to measures taken to strengthen crossing structures on secondary and rural routes and noted: "Construction of 2,183 technical structures along these roads is another key measure aimed at increasing the strength and safety of the infrastructure."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Midterms reopen debate over dominance of wealth in US politics

American democracy is drifting away from principle of 'one person, one vote' to a system of 'one dollar, one vote'

From page 1 ▶ While this is hardly a new issue, it has taken on sharper dimensions in 2026 amid soaring campaign expenditures and the growing influence of major donors and special interest groups.

Approximately $8.9 billion was spent on the 2022 midterms. Approximately $11.2 billion for the 2024 presidential election and a projected $11.6 billion for the 2026 midterms.

Donald Trump's presence on the political scene has played a particularly striking role in highlighting this contradiction.

Having entered the presidential race in 2015, attacking the influence of major donors and presenting his personal wealth as a guarantee of his political independence, Trump went on to benefit, in the 2024 election, from massive financial backing provided by several billionaires and political action committees, most notably those associated with Elon Musk.

The 2026 midterm elections have since witnessed record levels of spending, both during the primary season and in the campaigns leading up to the election.

An investigation published by The New York Times revealed that at least $1 billion in funds linked to donors whose identities remain undisclosed had flowed into the 2026 elections.

The newspaper reported that tens of millions of dollars from unknown sources had been used in efforts to influence Democratic primary contests, particularly in Michigan and Minnesota.

Michigan offered a striking picture of the unprecedented escalation in campaign spending, with expenditures on political advertising exceeding $850 million over the election cycle. Notably, Abdul El-Sayed secured the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate despite being significantly outspent by his rival, Haley Stevens, who received substantial backing from outside funding groups, most prominently the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Further evidence of the concentration of campaign financing emerged in a Washington



Post report revealing that the 50 largest donors and lobby groups contributed approximately $2.77 billion during the current election cycle. Elon Musk alone accounted for around $446 million, most of which went to political action committees supporting Republican candidates.

The controversy, however, has extended beyond the sheer volume and sources of campaign money to questions about the effectiveness of regulatory oversight.

The Brennan Center for Justice has raised concerns about the Federal Election Commission's declining ability to carry out some of its core responsibilities, after the agency spent more than a year without the quorum required to make certain official decisions.

The center warned that this situation heightens the risks associated with opaque campaign financing, particularly as spending on digital advertising and social media influencers continues to expand, areas that do not always fall under the same disclosure and oversight requirements as traditional media.

The current elections have therefore exposed a debate that goes beyond record-breaking campaign expenditures.

At its heart lies a more fundamental question: how freely can political parties and voters choose their representatives when wealthy individuals and corporations possess enormous financial resources with which to influence the electoral process?

This dilemma was explored earlier by legal scholars who offer a critical examination of the American democratic experience, focusing on the contradictions between the principles underpinning the country's political system and the way those principles are put into practice.

Among the central issues examined are economic and social inequality, the influence of money and private interests, equality in the political process, the role of constitutional and judicial institutions, and the gap between America's proclaimed democratic values and its conduct on the international stage.

Specifically addressing campaign finance, criticism has been aimed at the U.S. Supreme Court's 1976 decision overturning key restrictions on campaign spending because they violated the constitutional protection of freedom of speech. That ruling became one of the legal foundations of the campaign finance system that operates in the United States today.

Many critics argue that the distinction between political contributions and campaign expenditures opened the door for wealthy individuals, corporations, and lobbying groups to exercise disproportionate political influence, thereby threatening the principle of equality on which a supposedly democratic society is based.

The arguments closely echo warnings voiced by prominent American thinkers, writers, and politicians who represent a broad intellectual and political current that views the growing influence of money as a genuine threat to the electoral process and to the principle of political equality.

Among the most prominent is Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, who has drawn a direct connection between wealth inequality and disparities in political influence.

He has warned that American democracy is drifting away from the principle of "one person, one vote" and moving closer to a system of "one dollar, one vote." In Stiglitz's analysis, wealth and political power reinforce one another in a self-perpetuating cycle: wealth enables its holders to influence legislation and public policy, while those very laws and policies, in turn, help consolidate their fortunes and political influence.

Along similar lines, a widely cited academic study by researchers concluded that economic elites and business-oriented interest groups exercise considerable influence over American policymaking, while ordinary citizens have little independent influence on political outcomes.

Studies have sparked widespread debate about whether the political system genuinely reflects the will of the majority or instead grants economic elites influence far beyond their share of the electorate.

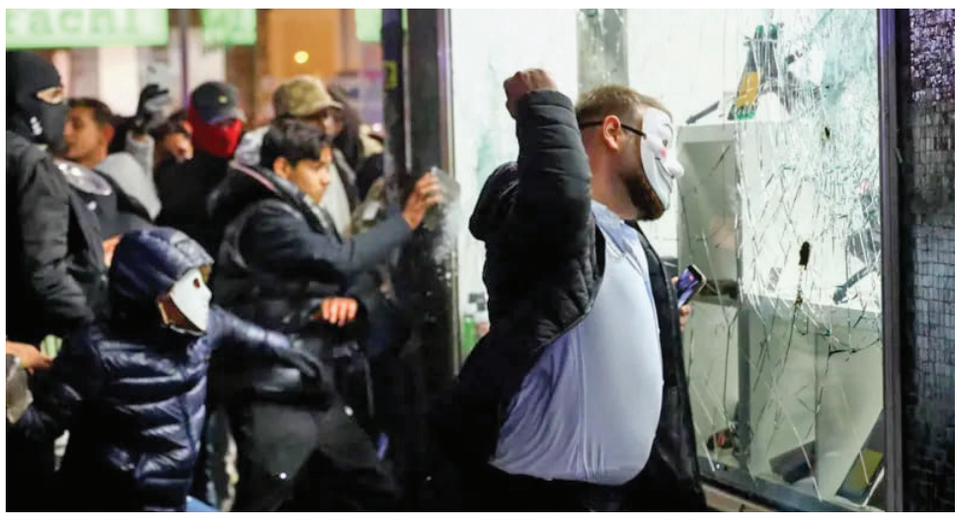
These warnings and academic findings have emerged against the backdrop of a lengthy judicial and legislative trajectory that has progressively expanded the scope for unlimited political spending, building on the foundations established by the Supreme Court's 1976 ruling.

Since 2010, a series of Supreme Court rulings, beginning with Citizens United v. FEC, has dismantled campaign finance restrictions, granting lobby groups, wealthy individuals, and political parties greater freedom to spend money on elections. The result is a system that increasingly treats political spending as constitutionally protected free speech rather than a force to be regulated.

U.S. politics has become a system where money speaks louder than votes, and wealth, not the majority, ultimately decides who rules.

Protestors loot shops in Frankfurt

320,000 hold protests in France as police arrest 770



Protesters try to break through a window of a Frankfurt shop selling weapons

From page 1 ▶ On Sunday, Germany's Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt told Bild newspaper that overnight police had prevented "violence like that seen in Paris" in recent weeks and called for "harsh punishments" for rioters and looters.

Overnight, a large section of Frankfurt's main shopping street was closed off by police. A police spokesperson said many arrests were made in the city.

Authorities in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin reported as many as 18,000 protesters, roughly half of what the organizers had estimated on their website. German media say tens of thousands protested in German cities on Saturday.

Gen Z regelt spokesperson Lina Friedrich said the demonstrations were "to fight for peace and freedom, rather than for war and coercion".

She said: "What matters most to us is better support for the health and education systems. We are against compulsory military service and we are in favor of a fairer distribution of the burden."

On Saturday night Frankfurt police said "violent riots" were occurring in the city centre and that special police units had been deployed.

The windows of several shops had been smashed and molotov cocktails were thrown at emergency services, police said.

Officials said the windows of a gun shop were smashed and that they had seized two weapons after arresting a suspect. People also broke into other shops, stealing items like trainers.

Roman Poseck, interior minister of Hesse state, of which Frankfurt is the biggest city, said that "around 100 clearly identified left-wing extremists" had infiltrated the protest in the city. He added that it was "shameful" how the protests had ended.

"We all have those images from France in our minds - looting, burning houses, burning police vehicles, and attacks on police officers... France must not be held up as a model in this regard.

Police said the situation calmed down overnight into Sunday in the city.

Similar instances took place in other German cities.

In Cologne, police said officers were attacked near the main train station, with bottles thrown and a bicycle launched.

A smaller demonstration in the evening in Berlin - following larger protests in the day - resulted in 27 police officers being injured, and up to 56 people temporarily detained, Berlin police said.

In Hamburg, people dressed in black set off fireworks and set barricades on fire, with public broadcaster NDR reporting that 120 people were arrested.

The protests in Germany took place on the same day as other large-scale demonstrations in Europe.

In France, more than 320,000 people took part in a third consecutive weekend of largely peaceful protests in cities across the country, demanding action on the high cost of living and poor public services, especially in the education sector.

Thousands of police officers were deployed across the country, and officers fired tear gas at demonstrators in some cities.

There were more than 770 arrests across France during the demonstrations on Saturday, roughly half as many as the previous week's protests, the French interior ministry said.

French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said a police officer had been injured by a molotov cocktail and French prosecutors later launched an attempted murder probe.

Police in Paris said several hundred rioters had attacked security forces with projectiles.

French protest organizers, the Gilet Jaune, or Yellow Vests, have said dozens of protesters have been seriously injured during recent demonstrations across the country, with many hurt by "grenades".

France suspended the use of stun grenades for policing student protests in early October after a 15-year-old's hand was blown off.

Protests also took place in Italy, with some clashes between police and demonstrators in Rome and Turin.

In Portugal, police moved to clear a new tent camp that had been assembled after thousands marched to protest against a rental bill that they argue could worsen a housing crisis in the country, where house prices have more than doubled over the past decade.

Mostly young protesters have recently taken to the streets in a swathe of European nations: France, Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Serbia and Albania.

While the specific demands vary from country to country, the protesters have largely focused on cost-of-living issues, such as access to housing, the quality of education and cuts to public services.



People take part in a demonstration organized by labor unions as part of nationwide protests called by the "Yellow Vests" movement joined by French high school and university students against the cost of living and rising fuel prices, in Paris, France, October 31, 2026.

Iran inflicted at least $5 billion in damage on US military bases: WSJ

From page 1 ▶ While the Pentagon has priced the damage to bases at a minimum of $5 billion, according to U.S. officials familiar with the matter cited by The Journal, a separate person briefed on the cost said the figure could reach as high as $15 billion.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, which reviewed the Journal's findings on damaged buildings, estimated that reconstruction alone would top $4 billion, a figure that excludes replacing the equipment and systems housed inside.

Those repairs come on top of the war's overall cost, which stood at $47.1 billion as of Oct. 16, according to a document viewed by The Journal.

According to an Associated Press analysis, Iran's strikes on more than two dozen U.S. bases in the Middle East focused on early-warning systems before hitting aircraft and buildings, causing billions of dollars in equipment damage.

The AP independently verified damage to American targets using satellite imagery from multiple providers and spoke to four regional officials who were briefed or have firsthand knowledge of what was hit. The AP found that, through August, more than 115 drone or missile strikes claimed by Iran or Iranian-backed militias damaged or destroyed structures on 26 military bases and other sites with U.S. equipment.

The Journal also said the human toll has also mounted. More than 20 U.S. service members have died in activity related to the war since it began on Feb. 28, according to Defense Department data, and more than 400 were wounded before a temporary ceasefire collapsed in July. After that, the government stopped publishing casualty figures specific to the conflict.

Beijing's mediating power in international crises

By Mahdi Zolfaghari

TEHRAN - In the new international order, the concept of "power" is no longer defined solely by the number of nuclear warheads, overseas military bases, or classical security alliances; rather, the new geometry of global power is shaped by the capacity of supply chains, currency exchanges, infrastructure investments, and economic interdependence.

Within this novel framework, China has managed to elevate its position from a mere trading power in the late twentieth century to a "structural actor in international crisis management"—an actor whose primary tools for intervening in crises are not missiles and sanctions, but economic integration and financial leverage.

The defining distinction of China's approach to international crises is rooted in the theory of "developmental peace" as opposed to Western "liberal peace." Beijing believes that the primary root of many geopolitical conflicts and security instabilities in the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia lies not in a vacuum of Western democracy, but in poverty, a deficit of infrastructural development, and a lack of connection to global markets. Therefore, Beijing utilizes initiatives such as the Belt and Road and strategic energy partnerships as efficient tools to contain security shocks. When countries share tangible, mutual economic interests in the continuity of joint projects, the cost of escalating tensions and war increases dramatically for them.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

We focused on youth development at Nagoya Asian Para Games: Rezaei

TEHRAN – Iran's men's sitting volleyball team manager Hadi Rezaei says that they competed in the Asian Para Games in Nagoya with a mixture of experienced and young players.

Team Melli were crowned champions of the Games for a record fifth time, completing a flawless campaign without losing a single match or even dropping a set.

Speaking about the team's success at both the World Championships and the Asian Para Games, head coach Rezaei highlighted the importance of introducing fresh talent into the squad.

"After winning the World Championships, we made changes to the team. Five players who were not part of our squad at the World Championships in Hangzhou were included in the team for the Nagoya Asian Para Games," Rezaei said.

"We won on two fronts: we lifted another trophy just two months after becoming world champions, and we achieved it with a new-look squad. This gives us a strong foundation for the future."

Rezaei also addressed the decision to leave out experienced captain and setter Davoud Alipourian.

"Perhaps many people thought the team would struggle without Alipourian. However, we had a young player ready to step into his role, and he performed very well. We also had an 18-year-old in the squad who made a significant impact."

"Sometimes, difficulties create greater solidarity and team spirit. We experienced that in Nagoya. Perhaps without those challenges, we would not have become champions in such convincing fashion."

Rezaei acknowledged the enormous expectations surrounding the national team, explaining that years of success have made maintaining the country's reputation an increasingly demanding task.

"People associate Iranian sitting volleyball with winning championships. That makes our job difficult, although it is also something to be proud of. In a competition where many athletes are eliminated before reaching the finish line, anything other than first place is considered a failure for Iran's sitting volleyball team."

The head coach also highlighted Iran's unbeaten run in Nagoya, particularly the team's two convincing victories over Kazakhstan — first in the group stage and then again in the final.

"Kazakhstan finished third at the World Championships just two months ago, but we defeated them twice in Nagoya, both times by a 3-0 scoreline," Rezaei said.

"These results demonstrate the considerable gap between the two teams. We also have a significant advantage over other countries, which is something we are pleased about."

Reflecting on Iran's overall performance at the Asian Para Games, Rezaei said the national teams had achieved their objectives, with the men winning gold and the women securing silver.

"We achieved what we set out to accomplish: the men's championship and the women's runners-up finish. Now our responsibility is to maintain these achievements."

Rezaei described the women's silver medal as an improvement in performance and significance compared with their previous runner-up finish.

"Although the women's team repeated their result from the previous edition, this silver medal was more valuable. Iran increased their advantage over the teams in second and third place while narrowing the gap with China, the champions. Defeating Japan on their home court was also a major achievement."

Looking ahead, Rezaei stressed the importance of proper planning for the women's team ahead of next July's Paralympic qualification tournament.

Bam lose to Kobe Leonessa in AFC Women's Champions League 2027/27

TEHRAN - Kobe Leonessa registered a convincing 4-1 win over Bam Khatoon in their AFC Women's Champions League 2027/27 Group A opener on Sunday.

Yui Narumiya's first half strike set the tone for Kobe, who extended their lead through Mao Kubota, only for Zahra Sarbali to pull one back from the spot, with Maya Yamamoto and Ai Tsujisawa adding further goals to seal the win.

Bam Khatoon were reduced to 10 players in the 66th minute after Sara Didar's overhead clearance inside the box resulted in a foul on Okuma, with the referee awarding a penalty.

Yazdani, however, went the right way to deny Okuma from the spot, before foiling Natsume Kingetsu on the follow-up.

The match was interrupted by bad weather in the 74th minute and later resumed.

Bam will face North Korean Naegohyang on Wednesday.

The competition is underway in Yangon, Myanmar.

Golmohammadi officially appointed Iran U23 head coach

TEHRAN - Yahya Golmohammadi has officially taken charge of Iran's U23 national team after signing his contract with the Iranian Football Federation.

Following Iran U23's disappointing performance at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, which saw the team eliminated from the competition, head coach Hossein Abdi resigned from his position. The Iranian Football Federation accepted his resignation, bringing his tenure to an early end.

Following Abdi's departure, the federation began negotiations with several domestic candidates to take over the U23 side. After several rounds of talks, former Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi, who was in charge of Iraqi club Duhok this season, was appointed as the new head coach.

Golmohammadi's official unveiling ceremony was held on Sunday in the presence of Iranian Football Federation president Mehdi Taj. The coach signed his contract at the ceremony, officially beginning his tenure as head coach of Iran's U23 national team.

Nokhodi wins silver in 2026 World Wrestling Championships

TEHRAN – Mohammad Nokhodi of Iran won a silver medal in the 2026 World Wrestling Championships on Sunday.

Nokhodi lost to American wrestler Levi Haines 4-3 in the final bout of the men's freestyle 79kg.

The bronze medals went to Mahamedkhabib Kadzimahamedau from Belarus and Russia's Ismail Khaniev.

Also, Amirmohammad Yazdani seized a bronze medal at the 74kg. He defeated Slovak wrestler Tajmuraz Salkazanov 5-4 in the bronze medal match.

Practical conservation workshop held at ruined Sassanid palaces



TEHRAN - A practical training workshop on emergency conservation and restoration at the Palace of Ardashir and Qal'eh Dokhtar ("Maiden Castle") near Firuzabad, southern Iran, has brought together heritage conservation specialists and university students to provide hands-on experience in protecting historic structures.

Afshin Ebrahimi, director of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars World Heritage Site, said the workshop was held on Friday, October 30, with the participation of the World Heritage site management team, facilitators from Isfahan University of Art and 12 students.

He said the program aimed to familiarize students with practical procedures for heritage conservation, monitoring, documentation and emergency restoration, while bridging the gap between academic knowledge and field experience at historic sites.

During the workshop, participants learned about the site's specialist conservation activities and periodic monitoring procedures. They also took part in practical exercises, including surveying, preparing detailed sketches, mapping and assessing damage to selected wall surfaces at Qal'eh Dokhtar, and completing conservation monitoring records.

Ebrahimi said training in the proper identification and documentation of structural damage was essential to the effective conservation of historic monuments. Participants were also introduced to monitoring forms and the technical information required to assess and record the conservation conditions of historic buildings.

Another part of the program focused on emergency conservation work at the Palace of Ardashir. Students, working under the supervision of specialists, participated in repointing sections of the palace's walls and preparing a gypsum witness to help monitor changes in the structure.

Ebrahimi said continuing such workshops could strengthen the technical capabilities of the next generation of conservation professionals, facilitate the transfer of practical experience and promote scientifically grounded approaches to safeguarding Sassanid heritage.

The Palace of Ardashir, also known as Ardashir Papakan Palace, dates to the early third century and was built by Ardashir I, founder of the Sassanid Empire. Located near Firuzabad, the monument is distinguished by its domed chambers, monumental iwan and stone-and-mortar construction.

Qal'eh Dokhtar, another major Sassanid-era monument in the Firuzabad area, is a fortified structure traditionally attributed to Ardashir I. Its architectural features include vaulted halls, arches, domes and stairways.

Both monuments form part of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region, which was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2018. The property encompasses archaeological remains in Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan, illustrating the development of Sassanid architecture and the early history of the empire.

Qeshm launches multimedia documentation project to preserve island's intangible heritage



TEHRAN - Qeshm Island has launched a multimedia documentation project to record and preserve its indigenous knowledge, oral history and intangible cultural heritage, with the aim of passing the island's traditional knowledge and cultural practices on to future generations.

Seyyed Mehdi Mousavi-Ojagh, deputy for cultural, social and tourism affairs of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization, said the initiative involves conducting multimedia interviews with local cultural figures and tradition bearers to document their knowledge, experiences and accounts of the island's cultural heritage.

According to the official, the project focuses on several aspects of Qeshm's traditional culture, including indigenous maritime knowledge, local stories and narratives, traditional knowledge related to water heritage, and other elements of the island's oral history.

He stressed that much of a community's intangible heritage is preserved in the memories, skills and personal experiences of local people, warning that valuable knowledge could disappear permanently if it is not documented before its bearers pass away.

The initiative seeks to prevent the loss of indigenous knowledge and facilitate the transmission of previous generations' experiences and cultural practices to younger people, ensuring their continued recognition as part of Qeshm's historical and cultural identity.

Mousavi-Ojagh also identified community-based cultural tourism as one of the expected benefits of the project, saying that documenting local narratives, skills and traditional knowledge could help introduce the island's cultural attractions more comprehensively and encourage tourism rooted in local identity and authenticity.

Located in the Persian Gulf, Qeshm is Iran's largest island and is known for its distinctive combination of natural, geological and cultural heritage. Its cultural traditions include traditional wooden boatbuilding, known as Lenj construction, Bandari embroidery and mat weaving, as well as distinctive local customs and oral traditions.

The island is also home to the Hara mangrove forests and the Qeshm Island UNESCO Global Geopark, which encompasses 26 geological sites and was the first geopark of its kind in West Asia.

The documentation project is intended to turn the knowledge and experiences of older generations into a lasting cultural resource, supporting heritage preservation, education and the development of cultural tourism, the official underlined.

Sasanian-era rock carvings of human hands discovered in Marvdasht

TEHRAN - Archaeologists have identified previously undocumented Sasanian-era rock carvings depicting human hands without accompanying figures in the historic Marvdasht Plain in Fars province, southern Iran.

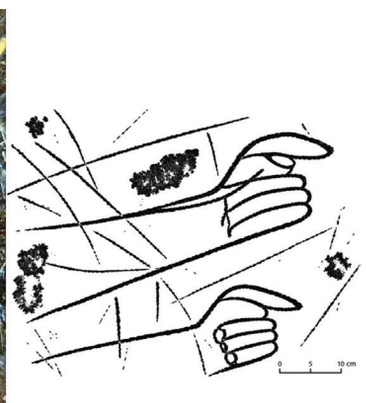
The unusual engravings, found alongside a Sasanian-era prayer inscription in Middle Persian (Pahlavi), may shed light on ancient practices of prayer, oath-taking and religious rituals.

Archaeologist and historian Abolhassan Atabaki announced the discovery during ongoing archaeological surveys and documentation in the Marvdasht Plain, Ana news agency reported on Sunday.

He said the newly identified carvings depict human hands together with parts of the forearms, engraved directly onto rock surfaces without any accompanying human figures. Their artistic style and visual characteristics suggest that they date to the Sasanian period (224–651 CE).

Atabaki noted that although hands frequently appear in Sasanian rock reliefs as symbols of respect and homage, their





independent depiction also has precedents in seals and seal impressions from the period.

Examples held in collections at the British Museum, Bandar Abbas, Takht-e Soleyman, Tell Abu Shaaf in Iraq and the University of California, Berkeley, demonstrate that Sasanian artists sometimes depicted hands independently of other parts of the human body.

Studies of Sasanian art suggest that the hand motif was associated with concepts such as greeting, goodwill and benevolence. In some instances, researchers have also proposed connections with covenants, the deity Mithra and religious ceremonies.

One notable example is a seal impression discovered at Takht-e Soleyman, which depicts a hand accompanied by a Pahlavi inscription reading abestan o yazdan, meaning "seeking the assistance of the deities."

In that regard, Najmeh Ebrahimi, a historian, said the available evidence suggests that the independent depiction of hands may have served as a symbolic means of expressing prayer, oaths, covenants and wishes for good fortune.

She explained that because the hand plays a central role in carrying out such acts, depicting it independently could have conveyed the intended meaning without the need to portray the entire human figure.

Ebrahimi said the Marvdasht carvings may likewise have had a devotional purpose, possibly representing prayers or appeals for divine assistance.

She added that this interpretation is reinforced by the discovery of a Sasanian-era prayer inscription beside one of the hand carvings.

The depiction of part of the forearm, ending in a straight edge, together with the distinctive positioning of the fingers, gives the newly documented carvings particular archaeological and artistic significance.

Researchers say further examination and documentation will be needed to establish more precisely the meaning and function of the unusual motifs.

Iran among 30 countries with rare blood preservation technology

TEHRAN – Iran is among only 30 countries worldwide with the technology to preserve rare blood types for 10 to 30 years through glycerol-based cryopreservation, and is the only country in the region with this capability, according to the head of the Iran Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO).

Rare blood types refer to blood groups that have a very low prevalence in society and are classified into three categories: rare, very rare, and extremely rare. A rare blood type is defined as one occurring in only 1 out of every 1,000 or one million people, Ahmad Qarah-Baghian, IBTO's chief executive, told Mehr News Agency.

Once a rare blood type is identified, the IBTO collects required samples and freezes them for long-term storage. According to published scientific articles, rare blood type storage spans from 10 to 30 years. Based on some documentation, blood frozen for 20 years still remains usable.

People with rare blood types are identified in different ways, and they are invited to donate blood. Like others, these individuals can donate blood four times a year if they meet the requirements, he added.

According to Mehdi Karbadizadeh, an official with the IBTO, a total of 350 rare blood units are frozen and stored in the rare blood bank. Some 1,500 individuals with rare blood types are identified in the country. However, not all of them are eligible to donate blood.

'Iran the only Islamic country in Eastern Mediterranean with rare blood program'

Iran is the only Islamic nation in the Eastern Mediterranean region that has a rare blood program, an official with the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) has said.

In the Iranian year 1389 (2010-2011), the country joined the International Rare Blood Association, which currently has 30 member states, IRNA quoted Mehdi Karbasizadeh as saying.

The official went on to say that Iran, China, and Japan are the only member states of the association in Asia that have rare blood management programs.

One out of 5,000 to 10,000 individuals in Iran has a rare blood type. The frequency of rare blood types in each country depends on its population and the blood type. Bombay blood type is among the rarest blood groups known in the country, the official added.

There are currently fewer than 10 of the rarest blood types and 30 rare blood types in the country. About 150 out of 376 solidified units of blood stored at a rare blood bank are the rarest, Karbasizadeh said.

Presently, 262 individuals with a really rare blood type are identified in the country, but not all of them can donate blood.



The official urged those with (really) rare blood types to donate blood at least once a year, saying that blood units solidified at minus 65 to 85 degrees centigrade can be stored for 10 years.

In 2025, Jaffar Hussain, the former World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Iran, highlighted Iran's capacity to serve as a model for other nations in the realm of blood transfusion and rare blood management.

Addressing National Rare Blood Day on January 22, the official praised the country's steadfast commitment to equitable health care access, ensuring that no one is left behind, regardless of their blood type.

National Rare Blood Day is a day dedicated to celebrating the lives saved, challenges overcome, and unwavering commitment to ensuring every individual, regardless of their blood type, has a fighting chance at life.

The official commended the country's unwavering dedication to tackling the unique challenges surrounding rare blood, emphasizing the critical importance of collaboration, innovation, and unwavering determination in this global endeavour, the WHO website announced in a press release on January 27.

Hussain painted a vivid picture of the struggles faced by those with rare blood types, individuals who often find themselves in desperate need, their lives hanging in the balance as they search for that elusive, compatible match.

He paid tribute to these unsung heroes, recognizing their generosity and unwavering commitment to the well-being of others. "Blood donors," he declared, "represent the epitome of human solidarity, offering a lifeline to those in need without expecting anything in return."

WHO, Hussain emphasized, believes that universal health coverage must encompass access to safe blood and blood products. He lauded IBTO's leadership in blood safety and transfusion services, highlighting their remarkable achievement of a 100 percent voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation system, a testament to the principles of universal health coverage in action.

In closing, the official extended his deepest gratitude to the IBTO for their unwavering dedication to advancing blood transfusion services and ensuring equitable access to rare blood. He thanked the blood donors, whose selflessness serves as an inspiration to all.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment to innovation, partnership and universal health coverage, leaving attendees with a sense of determination to continue the fight for rare blood access, ensuring that every drop counts, every donation matters and every life is valued.

In July 1979, the IBTO was established to organize blood transfusion activities, promote blood donation, and supply safe blood and its products free of charge for patients suffering from diseases like hemophilia, thalassemia, and leukemia.

Iran is the only Islamic country that is a member of the International Society of Blood Transfusion's rare blood donor working party (ISBT WP).

Thanks to a rich culture of selflessness, the country maintains a six-month blood reserve ensuring preparedness for crises.

Blood reserves and their products are considered strategic and vital resources for the country, and voluntary donations help to meet the needs of the country, particularly during crisis.

Tehran, New Delhi hold talks to deepen ties in technology sector

TEHRAN – Iran and India have discussed ways to expand cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT), promote specialized exchanges, and strengthen coordination in international forums.

ICT Minister Sattar Hashemi and India's Ambassador to Iran, Vishwesh Negi, held a meeting on Saturday to explore the two countries' capacities for joint initiatives in the sector, Mehr News Agency reported.

The discussions focused on identifying opportunities for cooperation between government bodies and private-sector ICT stakeholders, enhancing professional interactions, and making greater use of the two countries' scientific, technical, and technological capabilities.

Given the respective capacities and the regional and international standing of Iran and India, both parties underlined the need for the promotion of cooperation and coordination within specialized international forums and organizations, particularly those related to the ICT sector.

The officials also highlighted the importance of harmonizing views, participating in ongoing consultations, and strengthening joint initiatives to ensure a more effective presence on the international stage.

The two sides agreed to continue discussions, follow up on the discussed issues, and enhance ties in areas of mutual interest.



Tech ties with India in key sectors

In February, Hashemi, in a meeting with Indian Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Jitin Prasada, voiced the country's readiness for the expansion of scientific and technological ties with India in key sectors, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and the digital economy.

The officials met on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, being conducted in person at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from February 16 to 20, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, Hashemi highlighted the capabilities of the two sides in emerging technologies. Referring to Iran's strong scientific and human infrastructure, he said the country has taken great strides in advancing modern technologies.

The official went on to say that India is one of the global hubs for software development, a powerful country with high capacity in developing and exporting IT, cybersecurity, and AI. So, promoting technological ties between the two countries will lead to the formation of a digital powerhouse.

According to Hashemi, enhancing interactions between the private sectors is among the top priorities. "We are interested in developing operational cooperation in large language models (LLMs), the development of an AI joint platform in the agriculture sector, and the establishment of innovative centers to utilize AI in different fields," he said.

Highlighting the importance of securing critical infrastructure in the years ahead and India's capacity in training specialized human resources, Hashemi announced Iran's readiness to share experiences in cyber threats, combating emerging malware, and strengthening the security of financial infrastructure.

The ICT minister also proposed developing a joint fund to support Iranian and Indian start-ups, holding joint technological events, and talent exchange programs, allocating special zones in the technology parks of the two countries, and facilitating the issuance of 'tech visas' for IT professionals as practical ways to foster cooperation.

For his part, Prasada underscored expanding collaboration between the two sides, saying that India is willing to expand ties with Iran via sharing expertise in AI and cybersecurity, holding workshops on training specialized human resources, and kicking off operational cooperation in collaborative technological projects.

"Establishing joint innovation centers and exchanging experts would help accelerate technological development in both countries, strengthen digital infrastructure, and improve data security," Prasada noted.

Iranian tech firms showcase innovations at exhibitions in Russia, China

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies have participated in two major international exhibitions, Kazan Digital Week in Russia and Aquatech China, showcasing their technological capabilities and exploring opportunities to expand international cooperation and business ties.

With the support of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, the representatives of nine Iranian knowledge-based firms paid a visit to the Kazan Digital Week Expo held from October 29 to 31, holding meetings with officials from the Tatarstan Investment Development Agency and representatives of Russian technology companies, IRNA reported.

Exploring joint investment opportunities, conducting business meetings with companies based at IT parks, and paying a visit to Innoploice urban settlement were among other plans of the delegation.

The expo primarily focused on developing a sustainable ecosystem of trusted digital technologies and the use of digital technologies in industries, businesses, and government.

The exhibition included scientific conferences, expert sessions, business meetings, start-up events, training workshops, and initiatives to foster international collaborations. It provided a great opportunity for showcasing the latest innovative technologies, developing export markets, attracting investment, and establishing strategic partnerships.

In October, leading Iranian and Russian companies explored ways to expand bilateral cooperation in advanced technologies at the third Russia-Iran Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Forum.

The forum brought together officials, diplomats, and public- and private-sector representatives from both countries. The participants met on the sidelines of the second Global Digital Forum, held in Moscow from October 8 to 10, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, Alexander Shoitov, Russia's deputy minister of digital development, communications and mass media, said the participation of Iranian companies in the Global Digital Forum offered a valuable opportunity to exchange information and establish new partnerships.

He noted that Iran and Russia had significant potential to expand bilateral cooperation, particularly in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Shoitov also reaffirmed Russia's readiness to deepen bilateral ties and develop joint infrastructure in the ICT sector.

For his part, Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, highlighted the importance of fostering strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia in the expansion of digital exchanges within a governmental framework. The enhancement of ties helps strengthen the country's capacity for participation in regional and global markets.

Highlighting the expertise and knowledge of Iranian technology companies in the localization of IT infrastructure equipment, Russian companies can establish joint ventures with reliable partners in Iran, gaining access to the country's IT and artificial intelligence services market.

Moreover, Iranian and Russian representatives of high-technology companies showcased their latest cutting-edge accomplishments and presented their comprehensive plans and operational proposals for the promotion of cooperation in advanced technologies.

Exchanging best practices and technological solutions, holding B2B meetings, expanding business networks, and exploring opportunities for joint projects were among other key parts of the Forum. Particular attention was given to practical mechanisms for Russian and Iranian companies to enter new markets and develop cooperation with partners from third countries.

Aquatech China

Also, a trade and technology delegation consisting of representatives of some 16 knowledge-based companies attended Aquatech China, with the aim of expediting the internalization and export of knowledge-based products. The exhibition was held in Shanghai from October 28 to 30.

The delegation paid a visit to different parts of the exhibition and held meetings with the participating companies.

Aquatech China is the leading water technology trade show in China, covering all aspects of water: drinking water, industrial water, wastewater treatment, sludge treatment, smart water solutions, and water management.

The increasing need for (clean) water, combined with promoting environmental protection and strong enforcement of new regulations, creates huge opportunities for international companies specialized in (waste)water technologies in China.

In August, the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) announced support for the second joint specialized workshops to develop science diplomacy, foster research networking, and exchange technical knowledge.

The grant, amounting to 7 billion rials (about $2.6 million) per research project for one year, will be allocated to the following fields, IRNA reported.

1. Advanced Materials:

Exploration and processing of rare earth elements

Nano-composites for resilient construction materials in earthquake-prone areas

Green synthesis of nanomaterials using biological resources

2. Novel Sensors:

Smart nanomaterials for biosensors: early detection of diseases and pathogens

Nanostructured gas sensors for environmental and industrial pollution monitoring

(See full text at tehrantimescom)

Some 90 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 89 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from October 24 to 30, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 79 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, and 10 earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4 have occurred in the country, irsc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 3.9 on the Richter scale which occurred on October 28 in Bushehr province.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi experienced the highest number of earthquakes with 14, followed by Yazd with 9, Semnan with 9, and Khuzestan with 7 earthquakes.

During the same period, four earthquakes hit Tehran. No earthquakes were recorded in Alborz, Ilam, Zanjan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Qom, Qazvin, Kordestan, Markazi, and Hamedan provinces.

A total of 2,380 earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 2.5 on the Richter scale were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2025–March 2026), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

Out of recorded earthquakes, 910 had a magnitude greater than 3, 130 had a magnitude greater than 4, and 15 had a magnitude greater than 5 on the Richter scale.

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

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

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A believer divides his day and night into three parts: he spends some of it in communion with God; another part in repairing his life and needs; and the third part in providing his body and soul with legitimate and admirable joys.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:48 Evening: 17:27 Dawn: 5:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:28 (tomorrow)

Robert De Niro challenges Trump's leadership, US foreign policy



A combination photo shows American actor Robert De Niro (L) and US President Donald Trump

TEHRAN- A fresh exchange of insults between US President Donald Trump and Robert De Niro has once again brought the long-running dispute between the Hollywood star and the Republican president into the spotlight, highlighting the actor's outspoken criticism of Trump's leadership, US domestic policies and military interventions abroad.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Daytona Beach, Florida, on October 30, Trump described De Niro as a "moron" and said the actor had become "gross" in his eyes, renewing his attacks on one of Hollywood's most prominent critics of his administration. He also said that although he had once liked De Niro, he could no longer stand watching him.

The remarks came after De Niro intensified his criticism of Trump in recent public appearances, including a protest in New York on October 5 calling for the release of additional files related to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Addressing the gathering, De Niro described Trump as the "protector-in-chief" of Epstein and questioned why the administration had not released the remaining documents, asking: "What is he hiding?"

The actor's comments were part of a broader campaign demanding transparency and accountability over Epstein's connections with influential political and public figures. Trump, who has acknowledged knowing Epstein socially in the past, has denied involvement in his criminal activities.



A long-running opposition to Trump

De Niro has never been reluctant to make his political views public. Since Trump's emergence as a major political figure, the actor has repeatedly challenged his statements and decisions, becoming one of the most recognizable critics of his presidency in the entertainment industry.

His objections have not been limited to Trump's personality or rhetoric. De Niro has raised concerns about the administration's approach to democratic institutions, freedom of expression and the role of government in public life.

One of his most prominent interventions came in May 2025, when he received an honorary Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Rather than limiting his remarks to cinema, De Niro used the international event to criticize the Trump administration's treatment of cultural institutions and its policies affecting education and artistic freedom.

He also spoke out against Trump's proposal to impose tariffs on films produced outside the United States, arguing that such a policy would restrict cultural exchange and undermine the international character of filmmaking.

"This isn't just an American problem, it's a global one," De Niro said, urging people concerned about freedom to speak out, demonstrate and make their voices heard through elections.

His criticism continued into 2026. In February, he again denounced Trump in strong terms, calling him an "idiot" and warning that his leadership would cause serious damage to the United States. He called on Americans to resist policies he considered harmful to the country.

Opposition to war and military intervention

De Niro's objections to the administration have also extended to Washington's military record and its involvement in international conflicts.

Speaking at a New York event in June 2026, the actor made an unusually direct statement about war and American foreign policy, saying he could not love a country that launches "stupid and inhumane wars," killing thousands of innocent people and indirectly causing the deaths and suffering of millions more.

His remarks reflected a broader criticism of the human cost of military intervention and the contradiction between Washington's claims to defend freedom and the consequences of its actions abroad.

At the same event, De Niro turned his attention to issues within the United States, criticizing the administration's healthcare policies, immigration enforcement and treatment of families. He also condemned the use of masked immigration officers, arguing that such practices threatened civil liberties.

"I want to love my country again. I want my country back," he said.

By addressing military intervention alongside immigration and social policy, De Niro has presented his opposition as a broader objection to the direction of the country under Trump, rather than simply a personal dispute with the president.

Hollywood's growing political engagement

De Niro's involvement in political debates is part of a wider tradition of American artists using their public standing to address social and political issues. However, his persistent and often outspoken criticism has made him a particularly visible figure in the opposition to Trump.

The actor has used major cultural events, television appearances and public demonstrations to encourage political participation and challenge policies he considers damaging to democratic values.

His appearance at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival was particularly notable, as he used an international cultural platform to argue that developments in American politics have consequences for the wider world.

The continuing confrontation between Trump and De Niro also reflects the deep political divisions in the United States, where actors, musicians and other public figures have increasingly become involved in debates over government policies and the country's place in the world.

For De Niro, the dispute goes beyond the exchange of personal insults. His statements on war, civil liberties and political accountability indicate that his concerns are rooted in a broader criticism of the policies pursued by the US administration and their consequences at home and abroad.

Albert Camus's 'Caligula' on stage in Isfahan

TEHRAN – The play "Caligula" written by Albert Camus is being performed at the Isfahan Art Hall in Isfahan.

Roham Bahiraei has directed the 90-minute play that will remain on stage until November 8. The cast includes Radnoush Moghaddam, Sam Kouravand, Mehdi Ahmadiparvar, Amirhossein Khamesipur, and Reza Mohammadian among others.

Published for the first time in 1944, "Caligula" was later the subject of numerous revisions. It is part of what Camus called the "Cycle of the Absurd," together with the novel "The Stranger" (1942) and the essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942).

A number of critics have reported the piece to be existentialist, though Camus always denied belonging to this philosophy. Its plot revolves around the historical figure of Caligula, a Roman Emperor famed for his cruelty and seemingly insane behavior.

The play depicts Caligula, torn by the death of Drusilla, his sister. In Camus' version of events, Caligula eventually deliberately manipulates his own assassination. (Historically, Caligula's assassination took place in AD 41)

Albert Camus wrote of his piece, "Caligula, a seemingly kind prince, realizes upon the death of Drusilla that men die and they are not happy. Obsessed by the quest for the Absolute and poisoned by contempt and horror, he tries to exercise through murder and systematic perversion of all values, a freedom, which he discovers in the end is not truly freedom. He rejects friendship and love, simple human solidarity, good and evil. He takes the word of those around him, he forces them



to logic, he levels all around him by force of his refusal and by the rage of destruction which drives his passion for life".

"But if his truth is to rebel against fate, his faculty is to oppose and deny other men. One cannot destroy without destroying oneself. This is why Caligula depopulates the world around him and, true to his logic, makes arrangements to arm those who will eventually kill him. Caligula is the story of a superior suicide. It is the story of the most human and the most tragic of errors. Unfaithful to man, loyal to himself, Caligula consents to die for having understood that no one can save himself all alone and that one cannot be free in opposition to other men," Camus continued.

Albert Camus (1913-1960) was a French philosopher, author, dramatist, journalist, world federalist, and political activist. He was the recipient of the 1957 Nobel Prize in Literature at the age of 44, the second-youngest recipient in history. His works include "The Stranger," "The Plague," "The Myth of Sisyphus," "The Fall," and "The Rebel".

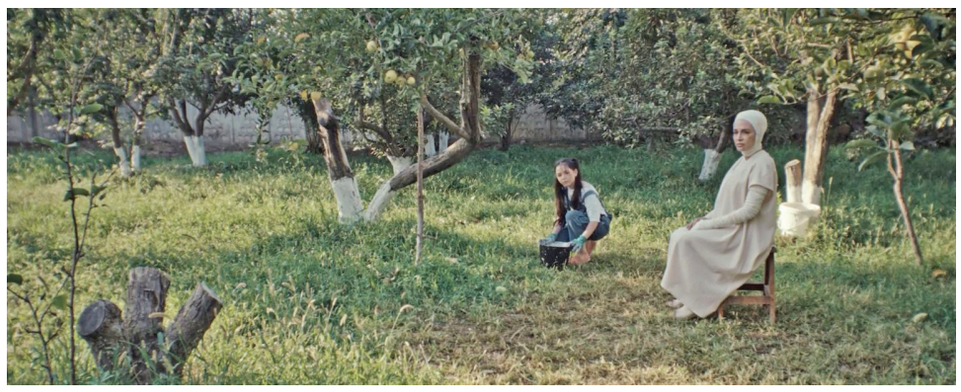
Cartoon of Day



American Nightmare

Cartoonist: José Alberto Rodríguez Avila from Cuba

Mokri's 'Black Rabbit, White Rabbit' wins at 63rd International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival



TEHRAN – Shahram Mokri's "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" won an award at the 63rd International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival, which was held in Türkiye from October 24 to 31.

At the closing ceremony of the festival, the film received the Sungu Capan International Cinema Writers Award, ISNA reported.

"Black Rabbit, White Rabbit," which had its world premiere at the 30th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea last September, is a joint production of Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates and deals with three people's destinies that intertwine through apparently unrelated events.

Chekhov's famous dramatic adage – if a gun appears, it must be fired – sets the scene for Mokri's audacious latest, set in Tajikistan and replete with his hallmark virtuosic long takes, wry humor, and interlinking narratives.

A wealthy wife, wrapped in bandages from a car accident, starts to suspect her husband of foul play. On the set of a remake of a classic Iranian film, an experienced armorer fears the prop gun might be real. At an acting audition, a young woman pulls a rabbit out of a hat. These seemingly unrelated stories combine into a playfully intriguing whole, with a healthy dose of magical realism and meta-textuality.

Shahram Mokri, 48, won the Venice Film Festival's Horizons Award in 2013 for Creative Content for his second feature film "Fish & Cat".

In 2018, his third film "Invasion" was screened at the 68th Berlin Film Festival and was nominated for the Teddy Award.

He also won a silver Hugo medal at the Chicago Film Festival in the main section and the Venice Critics' Best Screenplay Award for his fourth film "Careless Crime".

The cast of "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit," Mokri's fifth feature film, includes Babak Karimi, Hasti Mohammai, Kibriyo Dilyobova, and Bezhan Davlyatov, among others.

The Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival is the second most important film festival in Turkey, held annually since 1963 in Antalya.

Since 2009, the event, which takes place in the autumn months at the Antalya Cultural Center, has been organized solely by the Antalya Foundation for Culture and Arts and has included an international section within the main body of the festival.