Straight Truth

WWW.TEHRANTIMES.COM

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 500,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 47th year | No. 15476 | Wednesday | November 18, 2026 | Aban 27, 1405 | Jumada al-Thani 8, 1448

Deutsche Bank processed $582 million for Epstein despite explicit warnings

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Deutsche Bank waved through about $582 million in payments it later called suspicious, all tied to Jeffrey Epstein, and its own files show that people inside the bank saw trouble coming.

A leak of more than 15 million internal records, reviewed by the Financial Times and a consortium of over 200 journalists, puts the figure at more than double the $250 million that U.S. Senator Ron Wyden's staff reported in August. ▸ Page **5**

Sanaa foils Saudi military plans

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – In a historic victory, the Yemeni Armed Forces consolidated control over a large swath of southern Yemen.

The battlefield advances also enabled the YAF to seize large numbers of military vehicles, including some U.S.-made, along with substantial quantities of weapons and ammunition. The Saudi-backed forces abandoned this equipment at the positions and military camps they fled.

Officials in Sanaa have said this milestone would not have been possible without the determination and resilience of the Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF), the Yemeni people, and their ability to sustain the fight despite the disadvantages and the imbalance of military power. ▸ Page **5**

Pezeshkian highlights role of scientific elites in national progress

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that no obstacle can prevent Iran from progressing or bring the country to its knees as long as it draws on the capabilities of its scientists, experts, and academic elites.

"We have invited universities, professors, and experts to help address the country's problems. Science can solve many of our challenges, particularly when combined with practical skills and directed toward serving the people. Once we recognize this, nothing will be able to stop us," dolat.ir quoted Pezeshkian as saying.

He made the remarks on Tuesday at a national ceremony honoring Iranian medalists at the 2026 international scientific Olympiads.

"They [The enemies] have already created numerous problems and placed obstacles in our way in an attempt to stop our progress and force us to submit to them. But they have failed, and they will never succeed, thanks to our scientists, academic elites, and entrepreneurs. ▸ Page **7**

Sangan: A village of history, tradition and natural beauty near Tehran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – About 30 kilometers northwest of Tehran, along the road to Imamzadeh Davoud and on the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains, Sangan offers a different perspective on life beyond the capital. Its historic religious buildings, traditional basketry, fruit orchards and mountain landscapes make it an appealing destination for visitors seeking a short escape from the city.

Yet Sangan is more than a place for a day trip. The village preserves traces of centuries-old traditions, local craftsmanship and agricultural practices that have shaped its identity. It also offers opportunities to explore rural architecture, learn about nomadic culture and discover the natural attractions of the surrounding mountains. ▸ Page **6**



EPA

The Karun-4 Dam in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province in Iran, near areas that were hit in strikes during the U.S .- Israeli war with Iran.

False Flags for a Failed War

CNN's "dirty bomb" and NYT's "military dams" seek to justify a war Americans reject

Araghchi dismissed US media reports of Iranian chemical plots and missile bases under dams as 'rubbish' and Iraq War-style propaganda. Ghalibaf called them false flags to justify war, saying Americans rejecting conflict are being guilt-tripped by blood-profiteers and captured media with Israeli fingerprints, nobody buying it.

By Seyyed Mohammad Torabi

TEHRAN – As public opposition inside the United States to war with Iran grows louder, a familiar machinery is grinding back into motion: anonymous intelligence leaks, sensational headlines and speculative investigations that, taken together, seek to do one thing — retroactively justify a war of aggression that has already failed, and preemptively justify the next round of it.

Two recent American media reports — one by CNN about an alleged Iranian "dirty bomb" plot in Washington, and one by The New York Times about Iran's dams — are not isolated stories. Read together, Iranian officials and independent experts say, they form a coordinated narrative operation: to tell Americans that the war, despite its enormous cost and failure, was necessary, and that Iran's civilian infrastructure must now be treated as a fair target.

Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi dismissed both narratives in a post on X: "In the past 72 hours, pro-Israel media have 'reported' that Iran is supposedly plotting to use chemical weapons in DC while building missile bases under dams. RUBBISH. Spare us the Iraq War-style propaganda, especially with Israeli fingerprints all over it. Nobody is buying it."

A plot without proof

On November 17, CNN reported, citing seven U.S. officials, that "new US intelligence indicates that Iran is developing plans to target senior Trump administration officials by detonating a so-called dirty bomb or a chemical weapon in Washington, DC."

In its own second sentence, the network conceded the crucial point: officials "continue to debate whether Iran can or will attempt to execute such a plot."

No names, no documents, no intercepted communications, no timeline, no evidence presented to the public. Only anonymous sourcing and a terrifying phrase — dirty bomb in Washington — placed directly above a debate about a war most Americans oppose. ▸ Page **3**



mfa.gov.ir

Araghchi meets Sultan of Oman in Muscat on bilateral ties, regional tensions

MUSCAT – Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi met with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman in Muscat on Tuesday during an official visit to the Sultanate.

Araghchi traveled to Muscat on Monday night from Islamabad, after attending the meeting of foreign ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Earlier on Tuesday, Araghchi held talks with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi. In the meeting, he congratulated the upcoming National Day of the Sultanate of Oman and stressed the importance of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries in all fields. ▸ Page **2**

Iran strikes US radar system in Bahrain as Iran downs more drones

TEHRAN- The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has announced the destruction of a US radar system at Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain, while Iranian forces have intercepted and captured additional US drones in separate operations. Meanwhile, two separate maritime incidents involving tankers have been reported in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, amid heightened tensions in the strategic waterway.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the IRGC said its forces had carried out a precision strike early in the day, destroying a radar system belonging to US forces stationed at Sheikh Isa Air Base on Bahrain Island. ▸ **Page 2**

Iran to drive US forces back as far as South Pole: top general

TEHRAN- The Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces, Major General Ali Abdollahi, has vowed that Iran will push American forces back from the region as far as the South Pole.

Speaking about the two wars of aggression launched by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran, Major General Abdollahi said that, from the outset, Washington and Tel Aviv had sought to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran, deploying their full military capabilities and resources to achieve that objective. ▸ Page **2**

Manufacturing consent to bomb civilian infrastructure

By Kurosh Alyani

TEHRAN - On November 16, 2026, in the middle of the U.S. and Israeli war on Iran, The New York Times published a report that used the locations of airstrikes to suggest why Iran had built dams. The headline began with "War" and presented a riddle about dams supposedly built for no clear reason. The accompanying photograph showed the wall of the Karun-4 Dam and openings in the rock on either side. Before reaching the first paragraph, the reader saw a real dam alongside a hypothesis about missile facilities. A correction at the end clarified that strikes had occurred nearby and that the dam itself had not been hit. ▸ Page **3**



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Beginning of a new phase of structural decline

Kayhan argued that recent disruptions in the US aviation system reflect deeper weaknesses within the country. The newspaper wrote that when a nation claiming global leadership struggles to manage a basic domestic function such as its air transportation network, and when senior officials openly acknowledge technological shortcomings, it points to the beginning of a new phase of structural decline. According to the paper, the Trump administration has neglected major domestic challenges, including economic problems, a large budget deficit, and aging infrastructure. Instead, it has devoted resources to costly confrontations abroad, particularly with Iran. Kayhan concluded that flight disruptions reveal more than technical failures. In its view, they highlight an empire whose priorities have been distorted by an unsuccessful pursuit of hegemony at the expense of internal stability and development.

Sobh-e-No: Moving beyond neither war nor peace

Sobh-e-No examined ways to escape the prolonged state of neither war nor peace. The answer lies neither in starting a new conflict nor in simply declaring a desire for peace. Instead, it requires a strategy that reduces the risk of future aggression, creates conditions for a credible agreement, and strengthens Iran's economic and social resilience against outside pressure. The paper stressed the distinction between advocating peace and designing policies capable of achieving it. While support for peace is a valuable aspiration, effective peacebuilding requires understanding threats, assessing power relations, and choosing tools that can influence an opponent's behavior. Peace is a national necessity for Iran, but lasting peace cannot be achieved by ignoring threats or accepting them permanently. Sustainable stability must be built through deterrence, political management, and stronger national capabilities. In this view, peace is not simply a demand but a result of deliberate strategy and policy.

Sazandegi: The integrated US and allied missile defense network

Sazandegi focused on the significance of Iranian drone strikes against the Al-Riffa base in Bahrain. The newspaper argued that the importance of the facility should be understood within Iran's broader effort to disrupt the integrated air and missile defense network maintained by the US and its regional allies in the Persian Gulf. Weakening early-warning radars and fire-control systems became a major objective of Iranian operations during the 40-day conflict. The rationale is straightforward: radar installations and surveillance centers function as the eyes of a defense network, and disrupting them can reduce the ability to detect and intercept future attacks. From this perspective, the strike on Al-Riffa represented part of a wider effort to impose costs on US military infrastructure across the region. Sazandegi argued that Tehran seeks to demonstrate that the presence of American forces in Persian Gulf Arab countries does not guarantee the safety of their facilities and equipment. The attack was portrayed as a signal that regional military assets remain vulnerable despite extensive defensive arrangements.

Arman-e-Melli: The Strait of Hormuz on the threshold of a new order

Arman-e-Melli described the Strait of Hormuz as one of Iran's most important strategic assets. The newspaper argued that Tehran understands both the significance of the waterway and the leverage it provides in regional and international affairs. According to the paper, the 40-day war involving Iran, the US, and Israel highlighted the strait's importance more clearly than ever. Without such a confrontation, it argued, neither Iran nor outside powers might have fully appreciated the extent of its strategic value. The conflict also forced regional neighbors as well as European and American actors to reassess the role of the waterway. Despite the losses and costs imposed on Iran, the conflict showcased the considerable influence associated with Hormuz. In its view, if Iran faces threats to its national security or territorial integrity, it possesses several means of response, including actions affecting the security and operation of the strait, thereby increasing pressure on other states.

Hamshahri: Europe on alert over fears of Iran

Hamshahri discussed Iran's deterrence capabilities and the concerns they have generated among the US and its allies. The newspaper argued that the evolution of Iran's deterrence doctrine, particularly the idea of responding without geographical limits, has created new security concerns for American military facilities in Europe. According to the paper, growing concern is reflected in increased security measures at US bases, the relocation of combat and refueling aircraft, warnings to military families, and efforts by European countries to strengthen air defense systems. Hamshahri interpreted these developments as evidence of anxiety over the possible expansion of threats against American military interests. Amid continuing tensions between Tehran and Washington, the newspaper argued, Iran's deterrent capability and the potential consequences of military action against the country have once again become central factors in international security calculations. This, it concluded, demonstrates the continuing influence of Iran on military planning across a broad geographic area.

Araghchi meets Sultan of Oman in Muscat on bilateral ties, regional tensions

MUSCAT – Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi met with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman in Muscat on Tuesday during an official visit to the Sultanate.

Araghchi traveled to Muscat on Monday night from Islamabad, after attending the meeting of foreign ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Earlier on Tuesday, Araghchi held talks with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi. In the meeting, he congratulated the upcoming National Day of the Sultanate of Oman and stressed the importance of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

The two ministers discussed Iran-Oman bilateral relations and exchanged views on the regional situation, underscoring the need to strengthen consultations and cooperation among regional countries to safeguard common interests and preserve regional peace and stability.

Albusaidi described the talks as constructive, writing on X:



"We reviewed the steady course of Oman–Iran relations and practical ways to deepen cooperation between our two countries. We also exchanged views on the latest diplomatic efforts underway to address regional challenges, and reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue and consultation in support of de-escalation and peaceful solutions."

In his meeting with the Sultan of Oman later in the day, Araghchi pointed to the long and positive history of Iran-Oman relations and reaffirmed Tehran's determination to further expand ties in all areas of mutual interest.

Referring to what he described as insecurity and tensions resulting from U.S. actions, Araghchi briefed the Sultan on the latest regional developments, including what he said was Iran's diplomatic initiative to end the imposed war. He thanked Oman for its good offices and mediation efforts, saying Iran has always been serious in using diplomacy, just as it has been firm and decisive in defending its territorial integrity and national interests.

Sultan Haitham, for his part, highlighted the importance of the historic and friendly Oman-Tehran relations, appreciated what he called Iran's responsible approach toward regional peace and stability, and stressed the need for continued consultations among regional countries to manage the current critical situation and prevent further escalation.

On the sidelines of the visit, Araghchi, Albusaidi and Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov also held a trilateral meeting in Muscat to discuss expanding regional cooperation, land transport and logistics services.

Iran strikes US radar system in Bahrain as Iran downs more drones

From page 1 ▶ The operation, according to the statement, was conducted in response to repeated violations of Iranian airspace by US military drones and formed part of the IRGC's ongoing air defense and electronic warfare operations.

The Corps said its forces had recently intercepted, destroyed, and captured several US-operated drones, including aircraft from the MQ series and the MQM-170 type.

It stressed that the continued violation of Iran's airspace, as well as the use of military bases and facilities in regional countries to conduct hostile operations against the Islamic Republic, would not go unanswered.

The IRGC warned that US military commanders would be held responsible for the consequences of such actions.

IRGC Captures Ninth US MQM-170 Drone

In a separate announcement, the IRGC said its Aerospace Division had captured another US-made MQM-170 drone through an electronic warfare operation south of Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.

According to the statement, Iranian specialists successfully took control of the unmanned aircraft and brought it down intact, without sustaining damage.

The latest operation brought the number of MQM-170 drones captured by the IRGC to nine, the statement said.

The Corps added that the repeated interception and seizure of advanced US military equipment demonstrated the extent of the losses sustained by US Central Command (CENTCOM), suggesting that the number of lost assets had become so considerable that even American commanders could no longer keep track of them.

The IRGC also rejected the notion that the United States' claimed technological superiority could guarantee the security of its military equipment, warning that Iranian airspace would not become a testing ground for aggressors.

It emphasized that any hostile action by the United States would be met with a decisive response from Iran's defenders.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Army's Public Relations Office announced that its Air Defense Force had shot down a US MQ-1 unmanned aerial vehicle over the Strait of Hormuz.

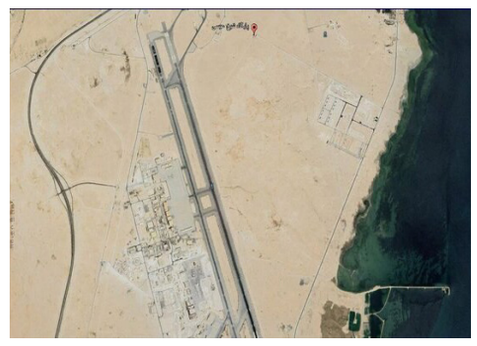
The drone was struck and destroyed by domestically developed air defense systems operating under the command of Iran's integrated air defense network, the statement said.

Tanker Incidents Reported in Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz

In a separate development, the Iranian Navy announced that an oil tanker had caught fire and sustained heavy damage after striking a sea mine while navigating a restricted area in the eastern Strait of Hormuz.

The Navy's Public Relations Office said on Tuesday that the incident had occurred several hours earlier, when the tanker was sailing through a prohibited maritime zone east of the strait with its navigation systems switched off and in violation of regulations announced by the Iranian authorities.

The vessel struck a sea mine, triggering a fire and causing extensive damage, according to the statement.



The Navy stressed that the incident underscored a new reality in the strategic waterway, declaring that the era of unilateral dominance and the imposition of political will through threats had come to an end.

It added that the Strait of Hormuz had become an arena governed by law and mutual respect, emphasizing that vessels seeking to navigate the waterway must coordinate their movements with the Iranian Armed Forces.

Separately, the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that a tanker had been struck by an unidentified projectile while sailing eastbound through the Persian Gulf, before entering the Strait of Hormuz.

In a notice issued on Tuesday, UKMTO said it had received a verified report of the incident. It added that all crew members were safe and accounted for, while the extent of damage to the vessel and any potential environmental impact remained unknown.

The maritime monitoring agency advised vessels operating in the area to exercise caution and report any suspicious activity as authorities investigate the incident.

Iran to drive US forces back as far as South Pole: top general

From page 1 ▶ However, the experience of the two wars has demonstrated that military hardware is only one factor in determining the outcome of a conflict, while the decisive elements on the battlefield are national will, faith, and confidence in divine promises, the senior commander said.

"We were able to drive the Americans back across the seas. By God's grace, we will drive American forces out of this region and as far as the South Pole. The Americans should await this move," Abdollahi said.

He stressed that this course of action would continue until the enemy regretted its aggression.

The senior commander also said that avenging the blood of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, those killed in the war, and the Iranian children who were martyred remained a firm demand that Iran would pursue with reliance on divine grace.

Iran calls for condemnation of US-Israeli attacks on peaceful facilities

TEHRAN- Iran's ambassador to the United Nations has called for unequivocal condemnation of US-Israeli attacks on Iran's peaceful nuclear, chemical and biological facilities, warning that international silence over such actions threatens the credibility of global disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Addressing the seventh session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in New York on Monday, November 16, Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran's ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the UN, said the attacks violated the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law.

Darzi said more than 5,000 Iranians had been martyred in the acts of aggression, including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, senior military and political officials, 168 schoolgirls in Minab, and civilians attending a wedding. He stressed that responsibility also extended to states that had provided territory, military bases and logistical support for the attacks.

The Iranian envoy criticized 'double standards' by countries that raise concerns about Iran's peaceful nuclear program while refusing to condemn attacks on its facilities.



He identified the Israeli regime's refusal to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon state and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as the principal obstacle to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Darzi reaffirmed Iran's commitment to a UN-facilitated, consensus-based process to establish a legally binding regional zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Iran condemns Bahrain's sentencing of Shiite clerics, citizens

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned Bahrain's sentencing of Shiite religious scholars and citizens to lengthy prison terms, calling the rulings a systematic violation of human rights and an abuse of the judicial system to suppress legitimate demands.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, November 17, the ministry denounced life sentences, lengthy prison terms and the confiscation of religious scholars' property on 'baseless charges.' It said allegations of links to Iran were being used to justify collective punishment and political repression.

The ministry also rejected the accusations against Iran, urging Bahrain's rulers to end the persecution of religious scholars and citizens and respect their human and civil rights. It stressed that intimidation and repression would not deter the Bahraini people from pursuing their legitimate demands.

The statement followed a Bahraini court ruling sentencing 167 people arrested during a 2017 sit-in outside the home of prominent Shiite cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim to prison terms ranging from six months to 10 years. The crackdown on the protest left five people dead and hundreds arrested.



Grand Ayatollah Vahid Khorasani passes away at 105

TEHRAN- Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Hossein Vahid Khorasani, one of the most prominent Shiite religious authorities and Islamic scholars, has passed away at the age of 105.

His office announced his death in a statement expressing profound sorrow, describing him as an eminent jurist of the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of Prophet Muhammad, PBUH), a distinguished Shiite religious authority, a devout scholar and a renowned teacher at Islamic seminaries.

Born on January 1, 1921, Ayatollah Vahid Khorasani devoted decades to the study, research and teaching of Islamic sciences. Over the course of his scholarly career, he educated generations of prominent religious scholars and played a significant role in preserving Islamic traditions and religious ceremonies.

The senior cleric had recently been hospitalized in Tehran. Representatives of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei had visited him during his hospitalization.

His passing marks the loss of a highly influential figure in contemporary Shiite scholarship and religious learning.

False flags for a failed war

CNN's "dirty bomb" and NYT's "military dams" seek to justify a war Americans reject

From Page 1 ▶ Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Ghalibaf called it precisely what it is: "False flags are back in the air. Blood-profiteers are on the mic. This is a guilt-and-blackmail campaign to shame Americans for rejecting Iran war and saying NO to Israel-first politics."

The logic is old and familiar. When a war cannot be justified by its results, it must be justified by the enemy's alleged intentions. An unprovable, undated future plot in D.C. is invoked to legitimize very real, already-committed acts of aggression thousands of miles away.

Selling necessity after failure

The political function of the dirty-bomb story is not to inform, but to reframe.

The U.S.-Israeli war against Iran did not achieve its declared objectives. It did not break Iran's will, did not fracture Iranian society, and drew the United States deeper into a regional confrontation with incalculable economic and strategic costs. Inside America, the dominant question is growing: why was this war fought at all, and why should it continue?

The answer now being manufactured is: because Iran left Washington no choice. Because Tehran was allegedly planning something so horrific — a radiological or chemical attack on the American capital — that the war, however costly and illegal, becomes "necessary."

As Ghalibaf noted in another post, "Same false flags, same war mongering, new logos. The right's credibility deficit is maxed out, so the messaging operation pivoted to NYT and CNN." Iranian observers also point to the unprecedented concentration of media ownership, including Larry Ellison — described by Tehran as Israel's largest private donor — emerging as CNN's new owner, as a textbook case of media capture.

From water to warfare: criminalizing civilian infrastructure

If the CNN report criminalizes Iran's intentions, The New York Times report of November 16 criminalizes Iran's geography.


CNN Politics Elections 2026 Trump Facts First CNN Polls Redistricting Tracker Epstein Files Watch Listen Sign in

POLITICS · 7 MIN READ

Exclusive: US intel indicates Iran developing plans to potentially detonate a dirty bomb in Washington, sources say

UPDATED 1 HR 41 MIN AGO

By Katie Bo Lillis, Zachary Cohen, Nataaha Bertrand, Kristen Holmes

An aerial view of Washington, DC is seen on October 13. *(Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)*

Under the headline "War May Answer Longtime Riddle of Iranian Dams Built for No Clear Reason," reporters Sanam Mahoozi and Erika Solomon suggest that Iran's vast network of dams and water transfer projects — at least 533 dams, according to water expert Nima Shokri of Hamburg University of Technology — may have been built to support secret missile cities.

The article itself admits: "Given the secrecy surrounding Iran's missile program, any connection between it and Iran's ambitious, decades-old initiative to develop water infrastructure remains speculative."

Speculative is an understatement. The evidentiary chain is this: Dr. Shokri looked at a map of airstrikes on suspected military sites and noticed it roughly resembled his own map of dams. Seven water and military experts, including former Israeli military intelligence analyst Danny Citrinowicz and Washington Institute fellow Farzin Nadimi, then told the Times it would be "logical" for missile sites to be near water and power.

Map overlay plus "would be logical" equals a 2,000-word insinuation that hundreds of civilian dams are dual-use military assets.

As Ghalibaf responded: "Prepping the next round on civilian infra, their 'experts' tell NYT: 'dams near Iran's missile sites are dual-use.' Cool. New rule: Any dam, port, or power plant near a US or Israeli base is dual-use."

Even experts hostile to Tehran rejected the story. Esfandyar Batmanghelidj noted that fewer than 50 of Iran's 500+ large dams even have turbines to generate electricity, demolishing the idea that they were built to power military facilities. "If you want redundancy for a clandestine military site, you install cheap diesel generators underground and drill a well. Why would you build tens or hundreds of expensive dams that can be easily blown up?"

He added the obvious third variable the Times ignored: to the extent that there is a pattern of missile strikes near dams, it is because dams are built in mountainous areas and military sites are located in mountainous areas.

Former Iranian environment official Kaveh Madani was blunter: "Speculation is not evidence. Spatial proximity is not causality. Even those who attacked Iran have not made such claims linking dams to missiles! This reductionist, sensational narrative is irresponsible journalism with potentially dangerous consequences for civilian water infrastructure."

Law on paper, impunity in practice

The danger is not theoretical. During the recent aggression, Iranian officials say water reservoirs in Khomeyn in Markazi Province, Haftkel in Khuzestan, and Bamani in Sirik, as well as desalination facilities on Qeshm Island, in Nikshahr and Tis in Sistan and Baluchestan, and in the village of Banji in Jask, were already targeted — cutting off water to civilian populations.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei warned that portraying geographical proximity of civilian infrastructure to military facilities as grounds for designating it a legitimate military target is neither a credible argument nor a substantiated claim. Rather, he said, it is a sinister fallacy intended to legitimize attacks against civilian infrastructure and normalize grave violations of international humanitarian law.

He specifically cited Article 56 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which provides special protection for dams, dikes and nuclear electrical generating stations precisely because attacks on them unleash severe civilian losses.

The NYT piece even dredges up the 2018 arrests of wildlife conservationists to suggest they may have accidentally happened upon sensitive military sites in protected areas like Hormozgan's Tarom, hit by U.S. airstrikes on July 14. A storage shed for hay for Laristan wild sheep thus becomes, by implication, a missile clue.

A correction appended to the Times story is revealing: an earlier version imprecisely implied the Karun-4 Dam itself was hit. In fact, strikes hit areas near it. The distinction matters — and shows exactly where this logic leads.

The real audience: Americans who said no

Why now? Because the real audience is not in Tehran. It is in Michigan, Texas and California.

Americans, across party lines, increasingly reject another endless Middle East war fought in the name of Israel-first politics. That rejection is the single biggest obstacle to escalation.

Hence the two-step operation: CNN frightens Americans with a dirty bomb in their capital to make them feel like potential victims rather than reluctant funders of aggression; the NYT reassures them that the next targets — dams, tunnels, pipelines — are not civilian lifelines in a water-scarce country, but secret military nodes.

Together they deliver the message Washington needs: the last war, however disastrous, was necessary, and the next war will be clean, precise and aimed only at military targets.

Iran has made clear it knows how to respond to any act of aggression. But as Baqaei warned, silence in the face of campaigns to normalize attacks on protected civilian objects will have devastating consequences — not merely for the region, but for humanity as a whole.

Spatial coincidence is not proof. Anonymous fear is not intelligence. And journalism that paves the way for bombing dams is not reporting. It is targeting.

Manufacturing consent to bomb civilian infrastructure

From Page 1 ▶ The correction fixed an error in the caption. A larger question remained. Why was Karun-4 pictured at all? The reporters never examine whether that dam serves a military facility. The photograph shows a dam. The corrected caption places it near an area that was struck. The headline invites the reader to connect the two. That gap between what the evidence establishes and what the presentation suggests runs through the article.

Sanam Mahoozi and Erika Solomon's report runs to thirty paragraphs and fewer than 1,500 words. It opens with a question about dams, extends the inquiry to pipelines and water-transfer tunnels, and devotes a substantial part of the text to the detention of conservationists. It asks why water projects were built, whether military facilities use them and why conservationists were detained. It looks to the same set of airstrikes for answers to all three questions.

The material at the heart of the story is a researcher's impression that two maps look alike. That observation could provide material for a few posts or give a reporter a lead to pursue. A newspaper report that asks why Iran built its dams has to show how the reporters tested that lead. The Times published the piece without showing the maps side by side, measuring the supposed overlap or documenting military use of a single dam. Publishing it in the form of a reported investigation was an unprofessional editorial decision. It gave an untested hypothesis the authority of completed reporting.

The article begins from the premise that some areas had no apparent need for these water projects. It provides no list of the projects in question, no estimates of their users' needs and no account of the reasons given for approving them. The omission is especially consequential for water-transfer projects. A pipeline may cross an area with little demand on its way to a city with acute shortages. Before judging the rationale for building it, a reporter has to establish who was meant to receive the water, where, for what purpose and in what quantities.

The criteria for justifying dams have also changed substantially over the past few decades. A project once approved on the strength of how much water it could store, how much electricity it could generate and how much land it could irrigate might fail an assessment today that accounts for downstream water rights, displacement, environmental damage and changes in river flows. "Built under now-obsolete criteria" is a more precise description where the records support it. It identifies what needs investigating. Which criteria governed approval? Which costs were left out or given too little weight? How would the project fare under today's standards?

Assessing a decision by present-day standards and explaining how it was made are separate tasks. A government may also continue to approve projects using old calculations after the basis for those calculations has changed. That raises questions about who kept the old criteria in place and who stood to benefit from proceeding. The Times treats the apparent inadequacy of the rationale as an opening for a theory about hidden military motives. It first needed to establish how the projects were justified and what those justifications actually left unexplained.

The main evidence comes from Nima Shokri, a water researcher at Hamburg University of Technology. He says he saw a map of strikes on suspected military sites whose overall pattern resembled his map of dams. His team had recorded at least 533 dams. Farzin Nadimi, a Washington-based military analyst, estimates that Iran has at least thirty missile sites. Those figures describe the size of two sets. The article never says how many dams were near a strike location, how far apart they were or what counted as near.

Even with a distance threshold and a count, the question of significance would remain. When two types of installation are concentrated in some of the same parts of a country, that concentration can explain a visual resemblance between the maps. To call the overlap striking, one would need some basis for judging how much proximity would ordinarily be expected in that geography. The article offers no such baseline, no side-by-side maps and no comparison with the distribution of other kinds of infrastructure.

There is a further problem with the strike map. By Shokri's own account, it plots strikes on suspected military sites. The article does not identify the source of the map, explain which strikes it covers or say which targets were independently verified as military. Once the map stands in for an inventory of military facilities, the attacker's targeting decisions become part of the evidence. The resulting pattern is then used to infer why the country under attack built its dams.

Seven experts told the reporters that it made sense for large military facilities to have reliable water and electricity. Hospitals, factories, universities and cities have the same needs. Reliable utilities can explain why a military facility would benefit from a particular location. To explain why a dam was built, one has to establish whether the facility actually drew water or power from that dam and whether its needs influenced the decision to build it. Even proof of military use today would leave that second question open. A facility could have connected to the network years after the project was approved.

Yazd gave the reporters an opportunity to test the idea in one specific case. Amir AghaKouchak, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, says he had long been puzzled by a major project to transfer water to Yazd. After the strikes and subsequent reporting on a missile facility in the region, he began to suspect that military considerations might have influenced the project. The Times cites the Financial Times on the existence of a missile facility. Its account of the water project ends with AghaKouchak's suspicion. There is no record of the construction decision, no chronology linking the two projects, no allocation data and no evidence that the military facility received water from the project.

The identities and roles of the sources matter because the article asks readers to give their judgments weight. The Times does not identify all seven experts. It identifies Danny Citrinowicz, who argues that access to water and power helps military facilities keep operating, as a former Israeli military intelligence analyst. In a separate interview, he said he favored overthrowing Iran's government in principle and doubted the war could achieve it. AghaKouchak publicly expressed hope that Iran's rulers would be removed from power and brought to trial. He was also identified as an environmental adviser to a project planning for the period after the fall of the Islamic Republic. The Times article does not disclose that role.

Nadimi has written that Washington should be prepared to support a change of government if Iranians choose it. His estimate of the number of missile sites still has to be assessed on its own merits. There is also a relationship closer to the reporting itself. Mahoozi and Shokri had previously co-written an article about Tehran's water shortage. Both were among the authors of a paper on Iranian water policy that also included Kaveh Madani, another source in the Times article.

Readers assessing how independently the sources arrived at their views were given no account of those collaborations.

Both reporters had experience that made the omissions consequential. Mahoozi studied journalism and wrote her doctoral thesis on how the media framed Iran's water protests.



The Karun-4 Dam in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province in Iran, near areas that were hit in strikes during the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran. Abedin Taherkenareh/EPA, via Shutterstock

Solomon covered the wars in Syria and Iraq before becoming the Times bureau chief for Iran and Iraq. During the current war, she had already reported on what U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iranian infrastructure did to the people who depended on it. In the dams story, the focus shifts. The strikes become a way to interpret the infrastructure itself. The reporting needed to show what warranted that inference.

The reporters say they sought comment from Iran's Foreign Ministry, Energy Ministry and Revolutionary Guards and received no response. The article quotes no project designer, operator or specialist based in Iran who could speak to how the projects were approved or how their water was actually used. Public planning records, allocation data or an assessment of demand at the destination could also have helped test the claim. The unanswered requests for official comment leave those reporting questions open.

A substantial part of the article concerns the detention of conservationists in 2018. Morad Tahbaz, who was convicted of cooperating with the United States as a hostile state and sentenced to ten years in prison, gives his own account of his interrogators' interest in the group's work in Hormozgan. The Times offers no independent corroboration of his account. It places a later strike alongside his recollection to suggest that the group may have been working near a sensitive site. That possibility leaves several questions unanswered. What, if anything, did the group find? Did any information reach a foreign government? And what does the episode establish about the decision to build any water project? The article raises a second mystery and uses the war to suggest an answer to it, too.

There is a precedent for this way of presenting a suspected military use. Before Israeli forces entered Gaza's Al-Shifa Hospital in November 2023, the Israeli military released a three-dimensional model of what it portrayed as an extensive Hamas command center beneath the hospital. A tunnel was found after the troops entered, and U.S. intelligence agencies said the complex had been used for military purposes.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Economy minister outlines shift from resilience to building at IFEX 2026



TEHRAN- At the opening of Iran's 18th International Exhibition of Financial Systems, Investment and Digital Infrastructure, known as the Iran Finance and Banking Exhibition (IFEX 2026), Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh declared that the country has moved past the phase of economic resilience and entered a new era focused on building.

He emphasized that the main strategy now is to develop production through investment, productivity gains, and participation of the people and private sector. The exhibition, held at the venue of the Tehran International Exhibitions, features over 100 organizations including 11 banks, 9 insurance companies, and more than 50 capital market entities, under the slogan "We Will Build."

Madanizadeh recalled the severe economic challenges of the past two years: pre-existing imbalances that could have caused recession and inflation even without war, plus the consequences of a 40-day imposed war, a "neither war, nor peace" atmosphere, and a currency coup designed by enemies. Despite predictions of hyperinflation and lost economic control, the 14th government focused all programs on economic resilience to prevent negative outcomes. He noted that while many expected severe recession and inflation, the government's active measures averted the worst. Now, with relative stability restored, the focus shifts to production and growth.

From resilience to building: a new economic strategy

The minister stressed that economic stability and predictability require fiscal sustainability, monetary policy reform, and curbing excessive liquidity growth. He highlighted that part of the currency reforms aimed to create stability and predictability, and that returning growth requires investment and higher productivity. Economic justice—equal opportunities and distributive and livelihood fairness—remains central to the ministry's plans.

Acknowledging wartime conditions and border restrictions, he reported that trade flows have been rising in the past two months, and efforts to preserve employment and keep firms operating have shown signs of improvement in some macroeconomic indicators. "Today we have the slogan 'We Will Build' on our agenda; now is the season of building, and this cannot be achieved except by focusing the government's main attention on production," he said.

Investment facilitation and obstacle removal are priorities; the Foreign Investment Organization has been restructured into the Iran Investment Organization, to be unveiled within two weeks, tasked with steering major strategic investments. Madanizadeh also noted that the financing system must guide resources toward more productive, efficient, and profitable activities, and banks have been tasked with directing economic actors toward higher-yield projects.

Moving away from a mandated economy—where resources are procured at 23–30% and lent at 18%, or firms are forced into uneconomic projects—is essential. Divestment and proper management of state companies should aim to place them in private hands and boost productivity.

Key initiatives: investment, digital economy and trade facilitation

The minister outlined several concrete programs. The "Ruyesh" plan provides currency instruments to return foreign-currency resources to the economic cycle; a foreign-currency investment fund opened last month, and obstacles to FX project funds and FX deposits are being removed. A Monetization Fund for idle assets will be unveiled next week, and the National Guarantee Fund will act as guarantor for major projects, with the Iran Investment Organization offering 800 foreign-exchange-earning opportunities to investors.

On the digital economy, Madanizadeh emphasized that artificial intelligence and digital technologies should be integrated into industries like steel, mining, and oil to raise productivity, rather than seen as replacing them. While Iran may not compete with China and the US in core AI, it can excel in applying AI and digital transformation across sectors.

The second digital economy company was recently admitted to the stock exchange, with more to follow. A data-driven economy is the second axis: infrastructure must be provided for economic actors, and data should be used to cut government waste and empower businesses. Credit scoring systems can replace collateral-based lending, and a major digital transformation project in the insurance industry, including health insurance, has begun.

The Stock Exchange Organization is also reforming processes to make financing easier and cheaper. On trade, the minister noted that the dominant view has not been export-oriented, but legal and economic barriers are being removed, and a bill will go to parliament to facilitate trade. A seamless cargo transport project at the border was implemented in the past two weeks so that borders become transit points rather than storage sites.

Currency, debt market, and monetary policies have been reformed, and markets related to governance are fully prepared for economic activity. "What we must do in this economic war is to start building Iran and set aside resilience with a focus on production," Madanizadeh concluded, urging all financial sector participants to help elevate production.

Financing and digital economy; two main Axes of IFEX 2026

This edition of the exhibition is being held under the slogan "We Will Build" and with a focus on developing financing instruments, expanding investment capacities, and using new technologies in financial services.

Financing and the digital economy are among the axes emphasized by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance in economic policymaking, and the holding of this exhibition provides an opportunity to introduce existing capacities in the banking network, capital market, and insurance industry and to examine solutions for developing interaction among these sectors.

In this framework, introducing new financing instruments, developing supply chain financing, financing major projects, expanding digital banking services, developing financial technologies, and introducing new investment solutions are among the topics of interest in this event.

IFEX 2026 will continue until November 19 at the permanent venue of the Tehran International Exhibitions and is considered a platform for interaction among economic policymakers, managers of financial institutions, investors, and private-sector activists, and for introducing new capacities of the country's financial system.

Iran, Armenia discuss ways to develop energy, infrastructure co-op



TEHRAN- The Vice President of Iran and the Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia, emphasizing the development of bilateral cooperation, called for increasing electricity exchange and energy exports between Tehran and Yerevan.

According to IRNA, citing the Planning and Budget Organization of the country, ways to develop bilateral cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia, with a focus on energy and infrastructure, were discussed and examined in a meeting between Davit Khudatyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia, and Seyyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of Iran.

In this meeting, held on November 17, with the presence of Iranian Energy Minister and Acting Oil Minister, Seyyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of the country, declared the development of cooperation with the Republic of Armenia to be among the priorities of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and said: "We and Armenia are two friend and brother countries, and we have proven this in practice."

The Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of the country, referring to the holding of the 19th meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee in Armenia last week, said: "Fortunately, this committee was held successfully, and the two countries reached good agreements in areas of mutual interest."

He added: "Last week in Armenia, we signed a comprehensive document with the Armenian side, one of whose important axes was infrastructure cooperation in the fields of roads, transportation, and energy."

Pourmohammadi, stating that less than a week after the signing of this document, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia has traveled to Tehran, said: "In today's meeting, with the presence of the Minister of Energy and Acting Oil Minister, the grounds for expanding energy cooperation were examined."

The Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of the country further addressed the meeting held yesterday at this organization with the presence of senior managers of executive bodies to examine solutions for improving performance and increasing the capacity for accepting and moving goods at the Nourdouz border terminal, and added: "The serious determination of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to turn the Nourdouz border terminal into an exemplary border terminal and the most important and busiest land trade border of Iran within the next year."

The Vice President, referring to the facilitation of truck traffic between Iran and Armenia, said: "The Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Border Guard, and the Governorate of East Azarbaijan have been activated to facilitate traffic at the border, and during this period 297 trucks have crossed, and we hope this number will increase." Pourmohammadi announced planning for further facilitation of border traffic and added: "We are trying, by removing obstacles and coordinating responsible bodies, to make the conditions for truck traffic between the two countries smoother and easier over the next two months."

The Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of the country, referring to the increase in energy exchanges between the two countries, said: "In addition to goods exchanges, the development of cooperation in the energy field is also on the agenda, and the export and import of energy between Iran and Armenia is increasing, and given the existence of the electricity transmission line, there is capacity to develop this cooperation." Pourmohammadi added: "In the long-term cooperation between the two countries, the issue of transferring oil to the border and constructing a joint refinery between the two countries has been raised. Also, given the approaching winter and the climatic conditions of the two countries, the development of energy exchanges in the short term is being pursued with the aim of meeting mutual needs." Stating that the list of topics and agreements is to be finalized through the relevant ministries within one week, he said: "When the will of the two countries is to develop cooperation, the executive bodies also come on board."

Davit Khudatyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia, also said at this meeting: "This is my second working trip to the Islamic Republic of Iran and my fourth working meeting with the Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization of the country, which shows the firm determination of the Republic of Armenia to develop and prosper relations between the two countries."

At this meeting, Abbas Aliabadi, Minister of Energy, and Hamid Bovard, Acting Oil Minister, also expressed points regarding the development of cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy exchanges.

The 19th meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee concluded with the signing of a cooperation document, and Tehran and Yerevan emphasized the development of economic relations and trade exchanges.

According to an IRNA report, the 19th meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee was hosted by Yerevan, and its document was signed on November 10, by Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, Vice President and Head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization, and Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

The main axes of the document of the 19th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee concern the development of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of transport, energy, infrastructure, and cultural cooperation.

At the signing ceremony of the document of the 19th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Committee, Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization, thanked the Armenian government for hosting and all members of the specialized committees for their efforts, and said: "Both countries are determined to expand relations."

He added: "The cultural and social ties between the two nations provide the grounds for developing economic relations between Iran and Armenia."

The Vice President and Head of the Planning and Budget Organization, on the sidelines of his trip to Armenia, said at a meeting with economic actors in Yerevan: "Relations between Iran and Armenia are in a very favorable condition, and both governments are focused on developing relations."

Pourmohammadi added: "To facilitate trade between Iran and Armenia, it was decided that, in addition to the existing bridge over the Aras River that connects the two countries, another bridge should be built by the Islamic Republic of Iran; its studies have been carried out, and construction operations will begin within the next month."

Pourmohammadi, stating that to smooth the route between the two countries, in addition to the Tabriz–Nordooz route, the Jolfa–Nordooz route is also on the agenda and will be ready by the end of the year, said: "The border terminal of the two countries will also be expanded, and by next year several hectares will be added to its area so that terminal services improve."

The Head of the Planning and Budget Organization added: "To solve the fuel problem for trucks at the border, the fuel station for Iranian trucks has been moved twenty kilometers farther from the border so that traffic and queues are not created, and within the next six months a suitable station will also be provided for Armenian trucks."

Stating that the Iranian side is carrying out many measures itself to improve the work, he said: "Many customs formalities are being carried out at the Iranian border, and this shows Iran's determination to bring the work to a result."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRAN METAFO 2026 hosting participants from 16 countries in Tehran

TEHRAN- The 23rd International Exhibition of Steel Industries, Metallurgy, Casting, Forging, Metal Mines, Machinery and Related Industries of Iran (IRAN METAFO 2026) began work with the participation of about 450 domestic and foreign companies from Iran and 16 countries worldwide at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground.

According to IRNA, about 420 domestic companies and 25 foreign representative and brand companies are participating in this edition of the event. The foreign companies present at the exhibition are from Sweden, Italy, France, Finland, Spain, China, Turkey, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Brazil, the UK, Russia, the Czech Republic, India, and Turkmenistan, presenting their latest products, achievements, technologies, and services.

In this edition, a wide range of industries, including iron and steel, mining industries, non-ferrous metals including copper, aluminum, and zinc, casting, mold making, machining, forging, heat treatment, raw materials, refractories and refractory products, and related equipment and industries, are displaying their latest achievements.

Producers in the field of non-ferrous metals, especially aluminum, producers of raw materials, refractories and refractory products, as well as those active in the casting industry, are among other participating groups in this edition of the exhibition.

Simultaneously with the holding of this edition of the exhibition, numerous conferences, specialized panels, and training workshops will be held with the aim of exchanging knowledge, transferring experiences, and examining current issues and challenges of the metallurgy industry.

The 23rd International Exhibition of Steel Industries, Metallurgy, Casting, Forging, Metal Mines, Machinery and Related Industries of Iran (IRAN METAFO 2026), is running at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground during November 17-20.

Last week, Abdolkarim Jalali, Head of the Metallurgy Exhibition Organizing Committee, said: "This exhibition covers a wide range of industries and activities related to the metal production and processing chain, including iron and steel, mining industries, non-ferrous metals including copper, aluminum, and zinc, casting, mold-making, machining, forging, heat treatment, raw materials, refractories and refractory products, and related equipment and industries."

He added: "The 23rd International Metallurgy Exhibition is being held with the aim of maximizing the use of the capabilities and capacities of knowledge-based companies and seeks to provide a suitable ground for introducing new technologies, products, and achievements of this industry."

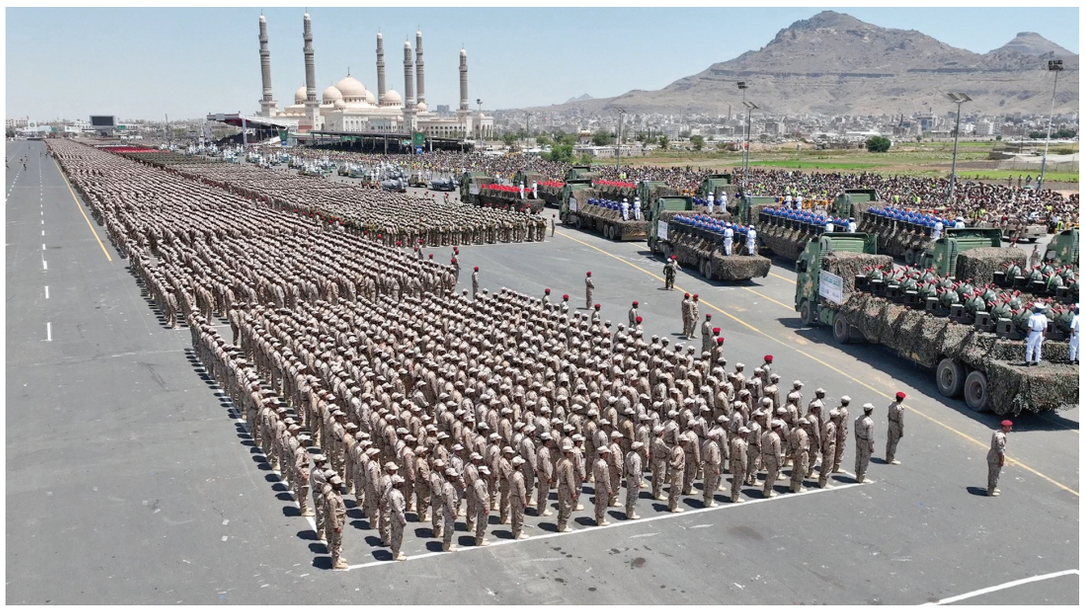
The CEO of Namanegar Company, explaining the composition of participants in this edition, added: "Iron and steel industrial groups are among the main sections of the exhibition, and as in previous years, they will have a broad and impressive presence."

He said: "Also, producers and actors in the field of non-ferrous metals, especially aluminum, producers of raw materials, refractories and refractory products, as well as actors in the casting industry, are among other important and highly participating groups in this event."

The Head of the Organizing Committee of the 23rd IRAN METAFO noted: "Despite the difficult conditions prevailing in the country, this year there has been significant interest in this international event; in such a way that the capacity of the exhibition halls was filled months in advance, and due to limited available space, it was not possible to allocate booths to some applicant companies."

Jalali emphasized: "Concurrent with the holding of this event, numerous conferences, specialized panels, and training workshops will be held with the aim of exchanging knowledge, transferring experience, and examining current issues and challenges of the metallurgy industry."

Sanaa foils Saudi military plans



From page 1 ▶ The YAF advance unfolded on three connected axes. In the west, forces pushed along the Red Sea coast from the Bab al-Mandab district and Dhubab in Taiz.

Inland, they moved through Wazi'iya and the Kahboub mountains toward al-Maqatira in Lahj. In the south, they advanced along the Gulf of Aden coast from al-Mudaraba to Khor Umaira and the Kharrz mountains.

The result was a linked coastal corridor stretching from Bab al-Mandab to Khor Umaira, with Saudi-backed forces fleeing toward Aden. The siege on the YAF at Bab al-Mandab and Mayun Island was broken by removing the pincers at Dhubab in the north and Kahboub in the east.

The Sanaa government forces there had been squeezed between Saudi-backed mobilizations at Dhubab airport to the north and others advancing from Lahj toward Kahboub to the east; breaking the siege ended that encirclement and reconnected them to the newly captured coastal corridor.

Losses by Saudi-backed forces were recorded across the entire theater of operations.

Initial footage released by Yemen's military media offered a glimpse of the losses suffered. The footage showed that neither the scale of the Saudi military deployment nor the extensive air cover provided for it could secure victory.

Once again, the battle demonstrated that Saudi air power and shock-and-awe tactics are no longer enough to determine territorial control or impose a new reality. The YAF demonstrated this on the ground.

Saudi-backed forces lost their positions and rear supply lines along the coastlines, forcing them to retreat toward Aden under the guise of "redeployment."

According to military experts and analysts, the latest battlefield advances enabled the YAF to capture more than 3,000 square kilometers.

Overall, the victory allowed Sanaa to consolidate control over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the vital maritime gateway linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and separating Asia from Africa.

It is one of the most strategically important chokepoints in the conflict.

Messages undermine attempts to divide

The Saudis had sought to turn the civilian population of southern Yemen against the Sanaa government and drag them into the war, potentially bringing the conflict to their own doorstep.

This helps explain why Sanaa's leaders have made a concerted effort to reassure residents of the southern governorates in the immediate aftermath of this strategic victory.

The government's highest political, military, and administrative authorities issued a series of messages reassuring the people of the southern governorates, regardless of their political, social, or religious backgrounds.

They stressed that "the people of the southern governorates are not targets of the YAF; they are our family, brothers, and our partners in the homeland and in our shared destiny."

Sanaa also made clear that it had no intention of "advancing toward Aden or any other areas in the south." At the same time, it called on southerners to stand "united alongside the YAF to expel the Saudi occupier and its forces" from all of Yemen.

It warned that it will not allow the "Saudi enemy to turn their southern regions into a launching pad for its aggression."

There has been a sharp increase in Saudi Arabian air strikes targeting civilians in Yemen.

The Ministry of Health stated on Tuesday that the number of people injured in Saudi airstrikes targeting a factory in the Al-Thawra district of the capital Sanaa had risen to nine.

In a statement, the ministry pointed out that Saudi warplanes targeted a footwear and textile factory belonging to the Al-Yateem (orphans) Development Foundation in the neighborhood, injuring nine civilians and destroying the factory. The attack followed seven Saudi airstrikes on the site.

Meanwhile, reports have emerged that another four Saudi airstrikes targeted the Bani Jarmouz area in the Bani Al-Harith district, north of Sanaa.

The Human Rights Commission in Sanaa condemned "the crime of the Saudi enemy targeting the footwear and textile factory in the residential Al-Nahda neighborhood of the Al-Thawra district in the capital, Sana'a."

It said: "We hold Saudi Arabia fully responsible for this crime and for depriving every orphan of their source of livelihood. This crime will not be erased by the passage of time."

Saudi warplanes also launched four airstrikes early Tuesday on the Al-Misrakh district in Taiz governorate.

YAF spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree announced on Monday that Saudi warplanes had carried out 88 airstrikes on civilian sites across Sanaa, and three other governorates over 24 hours.

As Saudi Arabia continues airstrikes against civilian sites, residential homes, and essential infrastructure across Yemen, the YAF maintains that its legitimate response will continue through attacks targeting Saudi airports and vital facilities.

The latest geopolitical shift on the ground in Yemen has dealt a major blow to Saudi Arabia's ambitions in its neighboring country.

It also carries a clear and powerful message: no foreign project can establish a lasting foothold in Yemen.

Bahrain's Sheikh Qassim calls jailing scholars 'spur for jihad,' vows resistance

TEHRAN — Sheikh Isa Qassim responded to his life sentence with defiance rather than a plea for leniency.

Hours after Bahrain's High Criminal Court handed down life imprisonment to him and 63 other Shia scholars and religious activists on Monday, the island kingdom's highest Shia spiritual authority said that the ruling Al Khalifa monarchy is trying to turn Bahrain into a captive country populated by humiliated subjects.

Jailing religious scholars and seminary students, he wrote in a statement, acts as "a spur on the path of jihad for Islam, honorable freedom, dignity, and the attainment of rights in full."

The scale of Monday's ruling is unprecedented in modern Bahraini legal history. Of the 69 defendants convicted on charges of forming a "terrorist cell" allegedly linked to Iran, 64 received life sentences, including 57 clerics. Five others were sentenced to 15 years.

13 defendants, among them Sheikh Qassim, who has lived in exile since Manama stripped him of his citizenship in 2016, were tried in absentia.

Prosecutors moved the verdict forward from November 22 to November 16 without explanation, wrapping up the mass sentencing in a single morning.



Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei, advocacy director at the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, said the prosecution effectively dictates the court's calendar, adding that the severity of the punishments was designed to spread public fear.

Most of the 56 detainees in custody vanished during pre-dawn raids across Shia neighborhoods in May and June, when security forces abducted over 50 scholars without warrants and held them in undisclosed facilities.

Human Rights Watch and 19 other rights groups have documented credible accounts of detainees being blindfolded, shackled for prolonged periods, deprived of sleep, and threatened with sexual violence against their relatives to extract confessions.

None of those abuses prevented the court from convicting prominent community figures such as Sheikh Raed al-Sitri, Sheikh Hussein Mahrous, and Sheikh Baqir al-Hawaj, while handing 15-year terms to Sheikh Ali al-Mustarshid and Mahdi Sahwan.

Bahrain's outlawed main opposition bloc, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, labeled November 16 a "day of catastrophe" and condemned the verdicts as collective punishment against the country's Shia majority.

The clampdown escalated sharply following the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran that erupted in late February.

Because Bahrain hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet and was involved in attacks against Iran, the island absorbed heavy retaliatory strikes, and Manama used the regional war as a pretext to crush domestic dissent, revoking the nationality of 69 citizens in April and leaving dozens stateless.

In March, detainee Mohamed al-Mousawi was returned to his family dead, with burns and slash marks across his body.

Sustained by Washington's military presence and its collusion with Israel under the Abraham Accords, the Al Khalifa dynasty continues to answer demands for political representation with mass incarceration.

Sheikh Qassim, however, insisted that the strategy will backfire on the palace. Bahrainis, he concluded, will never surrender their rights or abandon leaders who sacrifice for their faith and dignity.

300 arrested as thousands protest Trump's visit to Philippines

Philippine authorities arrested nearly 300 people as thousands of demonstrators take to the streets of Manila to protest U.S. President Donald Trump's visit, prompting a heavy security crackdown across the capital.

Trump arrived in Manila on Tuesday to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, drawing protests over his administration's policies, the economic fallout from the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, and a U.S.-led initiative on artificial intelligence and critical minerals.

Organizers said up to 10,000 people were expected to join the protests, with demonstrators planning to march toward the Philippine International Convention Center, where the summit is being held, Press TV reported.

On Tuesday, police blocked protesters attempting to reach the venue, while security measures for the summit led to the closure of large sections of central Manila.

Demonstrators repeatedly chanted the slogan "Trump Out," demanding that the U.S. president leave the country.

On Monday, protesters burned effigies of Trump and clashed with police officers carrying batons and shields. They also held placards describing the U.S. president as the world's "No. 1 terrorist."

Deutsche Bank processed $582 million for Epstein despite explicit warnings

Meanwhile, Western outlets abruptly amplify an expert's claim that Epstein was strangled, raising questions over the timing



From page 1 ▶ The German multinational bank took Epstein on in August 2013, five years after his conviction for soliciting a minor and after JPMorgan had dropped him.

Its own staff rated him high risk. Senior wealth management leaders approved him anyway, with sign-off from the head of compliance and the general counsel for its Americas arm. A relationship manager pitched $2 million to $4 million a year in revenue.

Warnings kept coming. A 2015 email called Ghislaine Maxwell an alleged "co-conspirator in Epstein's illegal activities," then cleared a trust naming her as beneficiary because she was not a client.

The bank told Epstein in December 2018 it would close his accounts, yet two reference letters went to foreign banks in spring 2019, one saying an account had no anti-money-laundering problems. The suspicious activity reports came only after his July 2019 arrest.

Billionaire financiers Leon Black, co-founder of Apollo Global Management, and Glenn Dubin, co-founder of Highbridge Capital Management, appear in the records as apparent sources of Epstein's money.

The same banks, the same names

JPMorgan paid $290 million to Epstein's victims and $75 million to the Virgin Islands, admitting nothing. Both banks judged a client worth more than the risk.

Only Ghislaine Maxwell has been prosecuted. Prosecutors are reportedly now examining lawyer Darren Indyke and accountant Richard Kahn, who told House investigators in March that no federal authority had ever questioned them.

The leak also shows Deutsche accidentally disclosed Trump's tax information in 2017.

An FBI memo in the Epstein files repeats one source's claim that Epstein worked with Israeli intelligence and that prosecutor Alexander Acosta was told he "belonged to intelligence."

Epstein's ties to Ehud Barak, the former prime minister and defense minister of Israel, are documented, and the lenient 2008 deal remains unexplained.

A strangulation claim with a timing problem

On Monday, a forensic specialist presented a different reading of the 2019 autopsy.

The claim that Epstein was strangled comes from Michael Freeman, a forensic epidemiologist who holds a tenured associate professorship in forensic medicine and epidemiology at Maastricht University (a public Dutch university primarily funded by the Dutch government) and who serves as editor-in-chief of the Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine.

Working from autopsy files supplied by Epstein's brother Mark, he says a ragged, Y-shaped neck mark, apparent fingernail marks above it, and a left-shoulder hemorrhage fit strangulation from behind better than hanging. New York's medical examiner "stands by its determination" of suicide.

Freeman is not a board-certified forensic pathologist, never examined the body, and says journals have rejected his work so far.

Mark Epstein, who long insisted on murder, posted the photos himself, and Michael Baden made similar claims for the same family in 2019.

So why are the BBC, CBS and the New York Times pushing it now, after years of treating it as fringe, on the day a bank leak implicates Wall Street and Congress reopens the files?

A theory can be sincere and still conveniently timed. Following the November 2026 midterm elections, House Democrats prepare to take over leadership of the House Oversight Committee in the 120th Congress in January, promising public hearings into powerful men linked to Epstein, including Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department's releases under the Epstein Files Transparency Act still withhold records on national security grounds.

Whether this media pivot reflects genuine scrutiny or a way to steer upcoming congressional hearings away from intelligence complicity and Wall Street impunity, Epstein's wealth, protection, and death remain shielded by the institutions that profited from him.

UNCTAD chief Rebeca Grynspan may win the contest for UN leadership

In straw poll after straw poll among members of the United Nations Security Council to choose the organization's next leader, one name keeps emerging ahead of all others: Costa Rican diplomat Rebeca Grynspan.

If Grynspan, 70, beats out the other candidates, the current head of the UN's top trade body would become the world's first woman and the first Jewish person to hold the post of UN secretary-general.

But as the December 31 deadline to pick UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' successor rapidly approaches, Grynspan continues to struggle to convert her frontrunner status into a win, because of at least one veto against her candidature.

With secret ballots, geopolitical rivalries and multiple – eight in all – candidates vying for the world's top diplomatic job, there is no public confirmation of just which of the five permanent members of the Security Council are opposed to Grynspan's election.

Yet her background as a UN insider, and her work on Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and Russia's war on Ukraine, mean that Grynspan carries baggage that she will need to overcome in order to win the support of the world's most powerful nations, say analysts. And she'll need to win over one leader above all, who has demonstrated his desire to dismantle the very UN Grynspan hopes to lead: United States President Donald Trump.

What Grynspan does have in her favor, she says, is a proven track record in diplomacy and a willingness to take risks, both personally and on behalf of the organization.

"The UN must become less risk-averse. Its biggest risk today is the risk of not trying," she told Al Jazeera. "I have listened to people who need the UN but increasingly doubt it can act. They want leadership willing to take risks for peace."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Naderi confident for securing FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup spot

TEHRAN - Iran national beach soccer team head coach Ali Naderi said he hopes the players will be able to showcase their abilities at the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup and secure qualification for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Iran will face Afghanistan on Thursday in their opening match of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup.

Speaking at a pre-match press conference ahead of Iran's group-stage encounter against Afghanistan, Naderi said: "We are delighted to be taking part in this competition. We have come to Asia with the aim of securing one of the World Cup qualification spots. We are well prepared for this tournament and hope to demonstrate our capabilities."

Commenting on the squad selected for the competition, Naderi added: "We have maintained almost the entire core of the team, while also bringing in several young players to make the squad younger."

"A beach soccer league is held in our country every year, and new talents are identified and introduced to the sport through these competitions. We currently have a very good and young team, and we hope our players will be able to demonstrate their abilities throughout this tournament."

Iran will play their second group-stage match against Vietnam on Nov. 21, before facing Lebanon in their final group match on Nov. 23.

Four Iranians join Besiktas wheelchair basketball team

TEHRAN – Besiktas wheelchair basketball team have strengthened their squad with the signing of four Iranian players ahead of the new season.

The Turkish top-flight club have brought in Mohsen Tolouei, Morteza Abedi, Mohammadhassan Sayari and Mohammad Mohammadnezhad, adding significant Iranian talent to their roster.

Among the new arrivals, Morteza Abedi is one of the most experienced players, having been a member of Iran's national wheelchair basketball team since 2013. He currently serves as captain of Team Melli and has represented his country in several major international competitions.

Abedi has enjoyed an impressive club career, having previously played for Turkish sides Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Balikesir. During his time in Turkey, he won four Turkish Super League titles and established himself as a successful player in European club competitions.

His honors on the European stage include championship titles in EuroLeague 1, EuroLeague 2 and EuroLeague 3.

Abedi also boasts an impressive international record. He helped Iran finish second and third at the Asian Championships and played a key role in the national team's third-place finish at the 2022 World Championships.

The arrival of the four Iranian players marks a new chapter in their club careers as they prepare to represent Besiktas in Turkey's wheelchair basketball top flight. Their experience and international achievements are expected to add depth and quality to the Turkish club's squad.

Iran volleyball federation decides not to renew Piazza's deal

TEHRAN – Milad Taghavi, president of the Iran Volleyball Federation, has opted not to renew the contract of Italian head coach Roberto Piazza. He has been tasked by the federation's board of directors with appointing a world-class coach who can arrive in Iran earlier and dedicate more time to the national team.

Following the conclusion of the initial two-year term of Piazza's contract as head coach of Iran's men's national volleyball team, a series of meetings and negotiations were held to assess the possibility of extending the partnership for another two years. However, following consultations with the federation's board, Taghavi decided against renewing the Italian coach's contract, bringing his two-year tenure in Iran to an end.

Piazza officially took charge of Iran's men's national team in January 2025. His contract was structured as a two-year agreement with an option for a further two-year extension (2+2), with any renewal subject to the federation's approval.

Following the Asian Games in Nagoya, where Iran claimed the gold medal, Taghavi and Piazza held talks to review the team's performance over the previous two years, discuss future plans and outline Iran's roadmap towards qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Piazza was subsequently asked to submit his proposed plans for the next two years in line with the federation's objectives and expectations.

During the negotiations, the federation outlined several conditions for a contract extension. Among its key demands were an earlier arrival of the head coach in Iran to begin training camps, a greater commitment of time to national team duties and more direct and consistent involvement in the players' preparation.

The federation considered these requirements particularly important given the upcoming competitions and the need for the head coach to join the national team's training camp in Tehran before the arrival of overseas-based players.

During his two-year spell in charge, Piazza experienced mixed results with Iran. The national team finished ninth in the 2025 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) with six victories and went on to secure eighth place at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship, recording one of its best-ever finishes in the competition.

In 2026, Iran finished 15th in the VNL but bounced back by winning silver at the Asian Championship and gold at the Nagoya Asian Games, adding two major continental honors to Piazza's record.

Ultimately, with the two sides unable to reach an agreement on the terms of an extension, Piazza's tenure as Iran head coach came to an end after two years.

Following the board's decision, Taghavi has been tasked with assessing potential candidates and negotiating with leading international coaches to appoint a new head coach for Iran's men's national volleyball team.

Iran secure 2027 AFC U17 Asian Cup spot

TEHRAN - Iran secured their ticket to the AFC U17 Asian Cup Uzbekistan 2027 after defeating Jordan 3-0 in their Qualifiers Group D match on Tuesday.

The win assured Iran a top place finish irrespective of what happens in the remaining matches.

Neither side could maintain possession long enough in the first half hour to create any openings, with play frequently delayed by stoppages and Jordan's Ahmad Zaki and Iran's duo of Aliasghar Naderi and Mohammadparsa Kheshtzar shown the yellow card. Iran, however, found the opening goal in the 33rd minute through Naderi, who rose high among a sea of bodies to head Radin Mirnezhaddarzi's free-kick past Karam Al-Najar, the-afc.com reported.

Al-Najar came off his line three minutes later and fumbled a cross by Keyvan Iranzad from the right, with a lurking Amirmohammad Zarei nabbing the ball and firing into an empty net to double their lead.

Jordan's Faisal Al Hourani failed to capitalize on a defensive error in the 42nd minute, booting over the bar from the edge of the six-yard box as the West Asian side headed into the break unable to put away the few chances that came their way.

The Central Asian side pulled further ahead in the 58th minute when Al-Najar ventured almost to the center line to stave away an Iran attack, and substitute Amirsam Jannatalipor took advantage of the keeper's slow retreat to chip the ball in from more than 35 yards into a gaping net.

Yashar Heidari made a superb one-handed save in the 75th minute to deny Al Hourani's strike from the right as Jordan pressed to reduce the deficit but Iran held firm to see out the win and book their ticket to the Finals.

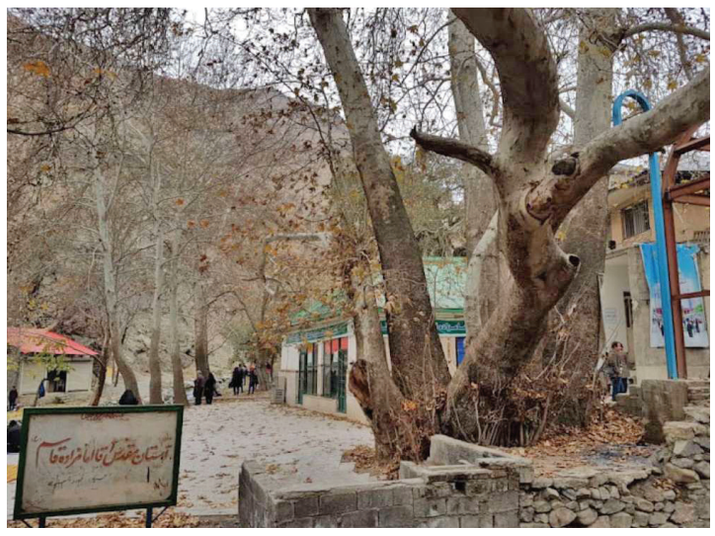
Sangan: A village of history, tradition and natural beauty near Tehran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – About 30 kilometers northwest of Tehran, along the road to Imamzadeh Davoud and on the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains, Sangan offers a different perspective on life beyond the capital. Its historic religious buildings, traditional basketry, fruit orchards and mountain landscapes make it an appealing destination for visitors seeking a short escape from the city.

Yet Sangan is more than a place for a day trip. The village preserves traces of centuries-old traditions, local craftsmanship and agricultural practices that have shaped its identity. It also offers opportunities to explore rural architecture, learn about nomadic culture and discover the natural attractions of the surrounding mountains.





For Tehran residents, its relatively short distance from the capital makes it an accessible destination for village tourism and nature-based excursions.

Rural tourism beyond an overnight stay

In recent years, Sangan has also been developing new forms of rural tourism, offering visitors experiences beyond conventional accommodation.

Reza Mollanorouzi, a cultural heritage activist involved in rural tourism, told the Tehran Times that villages close to Tehran provide city residents with an opportunity to experience rural lifestyles without travelling long distances.

He highlighted four types of traditional accommodation available at the Arg-e Sangi complex: wooden cabins, mud-brick cabins, stone cabins and nomadic black tents.

Each represents a different architectural tradition and way of life in Iran.

Wooden cabins are more commonly associated with the country's northern regions, while mud-brick structures are characteristic of central and some mountainous areas. Stone cabins reflect the building traditions of mountain communities, and black tents represent the traditional dwellings of nomadic groups.

According to Mollanorouzi, the complex allows visitors to experience all four types of accommodation in one location.

He said staying in a nomadic black tent is particularly interesting for Tehran residents, who would otherwise have to travel much farther to experience this form of traditional dwelling.

The experience also has a historical dimension. Contrary to the common perception that nomadic life was largely confined to distant rural areas, parts of the Tehran region were once connected to seasonal migration routes.

Mollanorouzi said nomadic groups and livestock herders traveled through areas around Varamin and the surrounding highlands as part of their seasonal movements. Sangan was among the places familiar with this way of life.

For this reason, he believes that experiencing a black tent in Sangan can offer more than a recreated accommodation setting. It can introduce visitors to an important part of the region's social history.

He also argues that rural tourism should go beyond overnight stays. Traditional bread-making, local food, medicinal plants, village architecture and evening gatherings can all become part of a more meaningful visitor experience.

Such activities, he said, can help preserve and transmit intangible cultural heritage while creating additional opportunities for local communities.



A historic religious complex with centuries of history

One of Sangan's most notable heritage sites is a centuries-old Takyeh in Sangan-e Pain, a traditional religious gathering place distinguished by its wooden ceiling and historic features.

Alireza Mashhadi, a local tourism activist, told the Tehran Times that available evidence suggests the building has a history of around 700 years.

Some of the gravestones incorporated into its walls and other sections carry inscriptions dating from the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods, he said. These historical remains offer valuable clues to the village's past and its social and religious life.

The structure has undergone changes and restoration over the centuries, particularly during the Qajar period. Therefore, not all of its present features necessarily belong to its earliest construction phase. Oral accounts among local residents also point to an older history for the site.

The Takyeh remains an important gathering place during religious occasions, in the lunar month of Muharram and Safar and the days commemorating the martyrdom of Fatima (AS), the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, to name a few.

One of its longstanding customs involves an elder or veteran religious servant offering a guest a piece of bread and some water before the main reception begins. Younger residents then prepare the communal spread, traditionally without disposable plastic tableware.



The practice reflects the close family and social ties that remain part of village life.

The Takyeh also has a connection with Iranian television history. According to Mashhadi, several scenes featuring Rais Ali Delvari, a national hero, were filmed there in 1974 during the production of the historical television series Deliran-e Tangestan.

From local apples to cherries for export

Agriculture and fruit growing have long been central to Sangan's economy.

Although wheat and barley were once widely cultivated, orchard farming gradually became more prominent.

Among the village's traditional products is the Sanguni apple, as well, a local variety once known for its popularity and distinctive oily skin. In the past, residents stored the apples in sand to keep them usable for longer periods.

Cherry orchards are another defining feature of the village, particularly in spring. When the trees blossom, white flowers cover the gardens and create an attractive landscape against the backdrop of the Alborz Mountains.

Today, cherries are among the village's most important agricultural products. Local sources say they are sold in domestic markets and exported to some Persian Gulf littoral states, Russia and some European destinations.

Walnuts and mulberries are also among Sangan's notable orchard products.

Sangan basketry: A craft at risk of disappearing

Beyond its historic buildings, Sangan has a distinctive tradition of handicraft production known as Sanguni basketry.

The craft was inscribed on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2019 under registration No. 2658.

Local artisans traditionally make the baskets from willow branches collected in autumn. After preparation, the branches are woven into containers of different sizes and shapes.

In the past, these handmade products served a variety of household and agricultural purposes. They were used as strainers, rice covers, serving baskets and containers for collecting and carrying fruit.

Larger baskets, locally known as Dastareh, were particularly useful during fruit harvesting.

Basketry was once closely connected with the village economy. Farmers used large woven baskets to transport their produce, especially apples, to Tehran on pack animals.

The route reportedly passed through the historic caravanserai of Kan before reaching Gomrok district in downtown Tehran. The journey illustrates the long-standing economic connections between Sangan and the capital.

However, changing lifestyles and modern packaging methods gradually reduced demand for traditional baskets. Today, only a small number of people continue the craft.

Mashhadi believes national registration alone cannot guarantee its survival. Without active producers, a viable market and opportunities to pass the skills on to younger generations, the tradition could eventually disappear.

Sangan Waterfall: A mountain attraction in every season

Sangan Waterfall is perhaps the village's best-known natural attraction. It is a popular destination for hikers and nature enthusiasts around Tehran.

Estimated to be between 40 and 60 meters high, the waterfall changes considerably with the seasons.

In spring, increased water flow and green vegetation make the surrounding landscape particularly attractive. Summer and autumn offer their own mountain scenery, with changing colors and vegetation along the walking route.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian highlights role of scientific elites in national progress

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that no obstacle can prevent Iran from progressing or bring the country to its knees as long as it draws on the capabilities of its scientists, experts, and academic elites.

"We have invited universities, professors, and experts to help address the country's problems. Science can solve many of our challenges, particularly when combined with practical skills and directed toward serving the people. Once we recognize this, nothing will be able to stop us," dolat.ir quoted Pezeshkian as saying.

He made the remarks on Tuesday at a national ceremony honoring Iranian medalists at the 2026 international scientific Olympiads.

"They [The enemies] have already created numerous problems and placed obstacles in our way in an attempt to stop our progress and force us to submit to them. But they have failed, and they will never succeed, thanks to our scientists, academic elites, and entrepreneurs.

"We are facing challenges, but with the help of our scientists, we will find solutions to overcome them. We are determined to continue this effort for as long as we live," the president stressed.

Pezeshkian also praised the efforts of the students and their parents, expressing hope that "we will overcome the country's current challenges together."

The ceremony was attended by many officials, including the head of the Young Scholars Club, Reza Hosseini, who lauded the Iranian students' outstanding achievements in these competitions, noting that the number of gold medals won by the Iranian students at scientific international Olympiads has increased from 11 in 2025 to 24 gold medals this year.

Highlighting that the scientific capacity of Iranian medalists extends beyond achieving honors in international competitions, the official said these students are directly involved in the training and preparation of national teams in 15 countries around the world.

Moreover, Iranian-developed competitions have been held on a global scale with a total of over 100 countries participating in these



Olympiads.

In November 2025, in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Reza Hosseini, the head of the Young Scholars Club, elaborated on achievements over the past years. He said that young and talented Iranian students are a source of honor for the country, materializing the goals of scientific diplomacy and superiority.

The Young Scholars Club prepares students for international Olympiads in mathematics, physics, literature, biology, computer sciences, chemistry, astronomy, and astrophysics.

It is the home of Olympiad participants. The club was established in 1987 by order of the President at that time, Seyyed Ali Khamenei, with the aim of strengthening fundamental Sciences in the country and creating an elite ecosystem.

From the very first year, it began its mission by holding the Mathematics Olympiad in the country and dispatching a team to the International Mathematics Olympiad.

Iran soon became one of the top 10 countries in the world in the Science Olympiads. In the late 1990s and 2000s, the club became the home of elite Olympiad students.

According to Hosseini, the club has achieved parts of its objectives, and of course has a way to go to become what it wanted. The country's situation in international Olympiads has significantly improved, and its influence on the world is prominent.

Graduated students have come forward to identify and solve the problems of the next generations. In 2024, the martyred leader, in a speech, said the country had won 26 gold medals in 4 years, from 2018 to 2021, while from 2022 to 2023, the students grabbed 30 international gold medals. This means that the club was able to achieve more honors in these 2 years than in those 4 years. The trend marks scientific progress, which is not enough and must lead to a scientific uprising.

Referring to this year's competitions, Hosseini said the students' achievements have placed Iran among the top 10 countries in the world in the Science Olympiads, which is a great honor. Despite the hardships and challenges brought about by the ongoing conflict, the students demonstrated their outstanding abilities by setting new benchmarks in various competitions and proudly raising Iran's flag on the international stage. Their remarkable achievements have become a source of great pride for the country.

IFRC lauds IRCS's considerable relief and operational capabilities

TERHAN – Cristhian Cortez Cardoza, the deputy regional director for the Middle East and North Africa of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has praised the relief and operational capabilities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), calling for expanded cooperation between the two sides in disaster preparedness and emergency response.

Commending the IRCS's efforts, Cardoza said the society's experience and expertise in disaster preparedness and relief operations, which it shares with other national societies, are highly valuable and help strengthen response capabilities in countries around the world, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks at a meeting with IRCS head Pirhossein Kolivand in Tehran on Monday.

Emphasizing the need to support the most vulnerable groups of society, Cardoza expressed hope that the two sides would also develop ties in training, preparedness, and enhancing relief services.

For his part, Kolivand underscored the specialized and operational capacities of the IRCS. By expanding international cooperation, and sharing the country's experiences and the lessons learned from relief operations, the IRCS training centers could become the regional hub for training relief workers and operational managers from countries in the region.

Commending the IFRC's support and collaboration with the IRCS, he stressed the necessity of benefiting from modern, smart technologies to boost operational efficiency and accelerate emergency responses.

A model of excellence in crisis management

In July, Jagan Chapagain, the secretary general of the IFRC, in a letter to the head of the IRCS, lauded the IRCS's efforts during the 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran, noting that relief and medical services, search and rescue operations, and dedication of the IRCS volunteers showcase the outstanding capabilities of a strong national society in crisis management.

Highlighting the immense operational, logistical, and humanitarian challenges, Chapagain stated, "The Iranian Red Crescent



Society has demonstrated decisive and effective leadership by acting as the country's primary humanitarian player," IRIB reported.

"On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I wish to extend our appreciation and recognition for the extraordinary humanitarian response led by the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the context of the current conflict situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the letter reads.

"Your swift mobilization of volunteers and staff, the scale and effectiveness of life-saving assistance, and the steadfast commitment to our fundamental principles have ensured that those in need of urgent assistance have received timely and dignified support.

The coordination of emergency health services, round-the-clock relief operations, psychosocial assistance, and community outreach, as well as the courageous and highly professional search and rescue operations, reflect not only technical excellence but also deep-rooted trust within communities. Such trust is the cornerstone of effective humanitarian action and underscores the unique auxiliary role of IRCS and its footprint across the wide Iranian territory.

Your response stands as a powerful example of what a strong National Society can deliver in times of crisis- saving lives, alleviating suffering, and preserving human dignity.

The IFRC remains fully committed to supporting IRCS in its ongoing efforts and in addressing the evolving humanitarian needs. We stand in solidarity with you, your dedicated staff, and your vast network of volunteers, whose courage and commitment continue to inspire the entire IFRC network."

InnoFarm seeks to advance agricultural innovation, technology-driven initiatives in Iran

TEHRAN – The the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO) and Iran Feed Industry Association organized the InnoFarm event in Tehran on Tuesday to expand its support for technology-driven initiatives in agricultural education, development and management, bringing together stakeholders from the government, research and innovation sectors to promote the application of new technologies in agriculture.

The event was participated by the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Office in Iran.

Addressing the event, Mr. Farrukh Toirov, FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, said innovation was a key driver of agrifood transformation worldwide, as food production systems face growing demands to provide nutritious food while addressing water scarcity, climate risks and rising production costs.

Meeting these challenges requires innovations that producers can access, trust and put into practice, he noted, adding that FAO places innovation at the center of its efforts to achieve better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

He explained that FAO's Strategic Framework identifies technology, innovation and data, alongside enabling conditions such as governance, human capital and institutions, as four accelerators of progress toward these goals.

Referring to the organization's activities in Iran, Toirov highlighted initiatives in digital agriculture and precision resource management, including support for apple producers in the Lake Urmia Basin. These initiatives have explored the use of smart irrigation systems and digital advisory applications that provide farmers with alerts and guidance on irrigation, soil conditions and fertilizer management.



He also pointed to the promotion of Farmer Field Schools and practical knowledge-sharing approaches under the same initiative, saying these platforms help bring scientific knowledge directly to farming communities and support the transition toward more sustainable agricultural practices.

Turning to InnoFarm's role, the FAO representative said one of the most challenging aspects of agricultural innovation was translating promising ideas into practical applications. Researchers need opportunities to test their solutions against real production challenges, entrepreneurs require technical and business support, and investors need credible evidence before committing resources, he explained.

In this regard, he said InnoFarm's efforts to connect these groups could help bridge the gap between research and practical application and introduce useful innovations into livestock, poultry and aquaculture production. Its combination of scientific assessment, mentoring, business preparation and investor engagement reflects an approach that can help promising technologies move closer to market adoption.

Toirov also referred to FAO's SDG Agrifood Accelerator Programme, implemented with technical support from the Social Enterprise Ecosystem and Development (SEED), as an example of the organization's efforts to support agrifood enterprises. The programme provides small and medium-sized businesses with tailored mentoring in investment strategies, marketing and financial planning, while helping them evaluate their social and environmental contributions.

Among the businesses supported by the programme were enterprises involved in indigenous grain processing in Ghana and precision rice farming in Thailand. Their experiences demonstrate how tailored support can address the needs of different technologies and markets while maintaining a focus on sustainable development, he said.

He stressed that support for selected innovators should continue beyond award ceremonies, enabling them to test business assumptions, demonstrate the results of their solutions and build lasting relationships with customers and investors.

The FAO representative also highlighted the World Food Forum's Startup Innovation Awards as another model for supporting young agrifood entrepreneurs by connecting them with mentoring opportunities, platforms to present their solutions and greater international visibility.

Young entrepreneurs have valuable ideas, he said, but access to expertise, testing facilities and professional networks often plays a decisive role in determining whether these ideas can be translated into practical solutions.

Toirov further introduced FAO's Agrifood Systems Technologies and Innovations Outlook (ATIO) and its associated Knowledge Base as resources for tracking emerging technologies, understanding their applications and assessing the conditions that influence their adoption.

He said these resources could help initiatives such as InnoFarm compare available solutions, identify gaps in evidence and evaluate the suitability of innovations for specific agricultural production systems.

He also pointed to opportunities for sharing well-documented Iranian experiences through international knowledge networks, emphasizing that evidence on the performance, affordability and adoption of technologies would make such exchanges particularly valuable.

Global solidarity essential to tackling antimicrobial resistance: health official



TEHRAN – Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most serious threats facing health systems worldwide, posing an immediate challenge rather than a distant future risk and requiring global cooperation and solidarity to contain, a health official has said.

Estimates indicate that AMR directly causes around 1.2 million deaths annually, while nearly five million deaths are associated with the phenomenon. Without effective interventions, the annual death toll directly attributable to AMR could reach around 10 million by 2050.

Qobad Moradi, head of the Communicable Diseases Management Center at the Ministry of Health, identified the excessive use of antimicrobial medicines and weaknesses in hospital infection prevention and control as major factors exacerbating the crisis.

He made the remarks on Monday during a webinar marking World AMR Awareness Week, observed annually from November 18 to 24.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and develop resistance to medicines, making infections increasingly difficult to treat and raising the risk of disease transmission, severe illness and death. As a result, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become less effective or ineffective, making some infections difficult or even impossible to treat.

Moradi stressed that the consequences of AMR extend beyond human health, affecting food security, the economy and environmental sustainability as well.

"No country can tackle this threat alone," he said, noting that resistant microorganisms can easily spread across geographical borders. He emphasized that addressing AMR therefore requires international solidarity and coordinated global action.

Pointing to the inclusion of AMR on the United Nations agenda, Moradi said the issue had moved beyond the technical discussions of the World Health Organization (WHO) to become a major concern at the highest levels of global policymaking.

He added that specific goals and strategies had been outlined to address the challenge, including raising public awareness, strengthening surveillance systems, advancing research, and improving infection prevention and control measures.

A global action plan to combat antimicrobial resistance was endorsed at the 68th World Health Assembly in May 2015. One of its key objectives is to improve awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education and training.

World AMR Awareness Week is an annual global initiative aimed at increasing understanding of antimicrobial resistance and promoting best practices among the public, health professionals and policymakers.

TEHRAN TIMES

www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

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

Tehrantimes79

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

NOVEMBER 18, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Success is the result of foresight and resolution, foresight depends upon deep thinking and planning and the most important factor of planning is to keep your secrets to yourself.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:49 Evening: 17:15 Dawn: 5:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:44 (tomorrow)

Rhetoric Orchestra to present works by Bach, Vivaldi and Rutter in Tehran

TEHRAN- Rhetoric Orchestra will take the stage at Tehran's Roudaki Hall with a concert titled "A Narrative of Baroque Grandeur," featuring works by renowned composers Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi and John Rutter.

The performances, conducted by Alireza Motevaseli, are scheduled for Saturday, November 21, and Monday, November 23, at 8 p.m.

Reza Marivand will serve as the orchestra's artistic director and head, while Farbod Latifi will take the position of concertmaster. Pianists Negar Shoeibi and Kia Khosravifard will appear as soloists, alongside flutist Mahsima Fallahi.

The concert program brings together compositions by three prominent figures in classical music, offering audiences an opportunity to experience different approaches to musical expression, from the intricate counterpoint and structural richness of the Baroque period to the more contemporary musical language of Rutter.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers in Western classical music and a central figure of the Baroque era. Born in Eisenach, Germany, Bach came from a family of musicians and developed a distinctive musical language characterized by complex counterpoint, harmonic depth and remarkable structural precision. His extensive body of work encompasses orchestral compositions, concertos, keyboard music, cantatas and major sacred works. Among his best-known compositions are the Brandenburg Concertos, the Well-Tempered Clavier, the Mass in B minor and the St. Matthew Passion. Although his music did not receive widespread recognition immediately after his death, Bach's influence grew considerably in the 19th century, and his compositions remain fundamental to the study and performance of classical music.

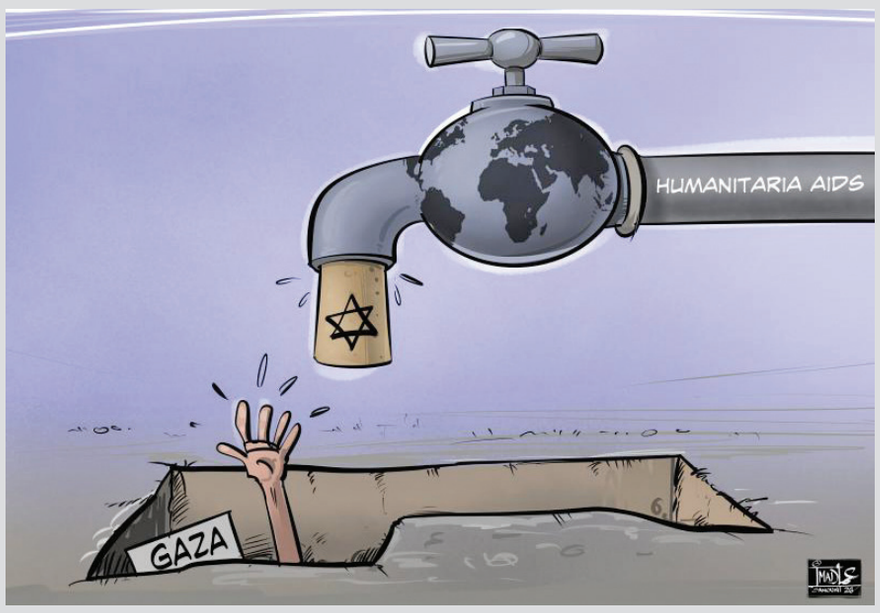
Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741), an Italian composer, violinist and Catholic priest, was another major figure of the Baroque period. Born in Venice, he became particularly influential through his contributions to the development of the instrumental concerto, especially the violin concerto. Vivaldi composed hundreds of concertos, as well as operas, sacred vocal works and chamber music. His compositions are distinguished by their energetic rhythms, vivid contrasts and expressive melodies. His most celebrated work, "The Four Seasons", a set of four violin concertos, is among the most frequently performed compositions in the classical repertoire. Vivaldi's innovative approach to instrumental writing helped shape the concerto form and influenced generations of composers, including Johann Sebastian Bach.



John Rutter, born in London in 1945, represents a much more recent chapter in the history of classical music. An English composer, conductor and arranger, he is particularly known for his contributions to contemporary choral music. Educated at Clare College, Cambridge, where he studied music, Rutter later became widely recognized for his accessible melodies, rich harmonies and skillful orchestration. His extensive repertoire includes sacred and secular choral compositions, orchestral works and arrangements of traditional songs. Among his best-known works are "Requiem", "Gloria" and "Magnificat". He has also conducted and recorded extensively with the Cambridge Singers, an ensemble he founded in 1981. His compositions are performed by choirs and orchestras around the world and have become an important part of the contemporary choral repertoire.

By bringing together works associated with these composers, Rhetoric Orchestra's upcoming performances seek to offer a musical narrative connecting different periods and traditions of classical music, with the Baroque masters at the heart of the program.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Sanouni Imad from Morocco

Iranian feature animation "Legacy of the Guardian" competing in 16th GMfilmf in Italy



TEHRAN – The Iranian animated feature film "Legacy of the Guardian" is competing in the 16th Guglielmo Marconi filmf - International Kids and Teens Film Festival (GMfilmf), which is underway in Treviso, Italy.

The 86-minute animation is present in the competition section of the festival along with 12 other films and animations, IRNA reported.

Directors Emad Rahmani and Mehrdad Mehrabi Gargari also joined a festival talk on November 16, which provided an opportunity for Italian audiences and animation enthusiasts to explore the creative process behind this work and the evolution of transforming mythological narratives and Iranian traditions into a modern visual storytelling format.

In the session, Rahmani, writer and director of "Legacy of the Guardian," discussed how the initial idea was formed and how Iran's mythological heritage was transformed into an engaging story for children and adolescents. Mehrabi, director and 3D artist, also shared his experiences in character creation and the execution of digital movement and animation with the attendees.

The program was designed under the slogan "From Myth to Animation," aiming to showcase the production process of animated films and the role of cinema in fostering connections between diverse cultures.

A fantasy adventure animated film set in contemporary Iran, the story of "Legacy of the Guardian" is about two boys who discover the presence of a group of thieves in an ancient area. This leads to the awakening of a legendary guardian, and the two children embark on an adventure with him to recover the stolen artifact.

Amid the ruins of an ancient Iranian city, Bahram, a shy nine-year-old armed with a wooden sword, dreams of becoming a hero. Along with his lively friend Jano and a courageous squirrel companion, he explores the historic site, turning every small discovery into a great adventure.

One evening, the boys discover a sealed passage and interrupt a group of smugglers searching for a legendary sword. Bahram manages to solve an ancient riddle, awakening Khashayar, a mythical guardian reincarnated as a stubborn, talking goat. As the smugglers get closer and closer to a weapon capable of amplifying the intentions of its wielder, Bahram realizes that courage comes not from power, but from the choices of those who choose to wield it.

"Legacy of the Guardian" had its premiere at the 44th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran on January 31 as it officially opened the festival. Since it was the only animation accepted in the festival, it was screened in the non-competition section.

In October, the feature animation took part in the 38th International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan, and received the festival's special award, along with the prize for best animated feature.

Emad Rahmani is a screenwriter and director whose work spans animation and narrative video games. In over 15 years of professional experience, Rahmani has directed and developed over 20 projects in animation and interactive entertainment.

His projects often draw inspiration from Iranian history, mythology, and regional culture, but are crafted as emotionally relatable genre stories, designed to reach audiences far beyond their original context.

In his directorial partnership with Mehrabi, Rahmani focuses primarily on story development, script development, storyboarding, and the initial construction of the visual narrative. Humor and adventure remain central elements of his work, especially when they allow younger audiences to engage with complex cultural or moral themes without losing the joy of the story.

Mehrdad Mehrabi Gargari is an Iranian animation director and 3D artist with a degree in architecture from Bonab University. His main areas of expertise include layout, camerawork, movement, character design, animation direction, and final visual continuity of sequences.

His collaboration with Rahmani is based on complementary responsibilities. While Rahmani focuses on story development, storyboarding, and the initial definition of the visual narrative, Mehrabi leads the transition from these foundations to layout, movement, and final animation. They have co-directed two other animated feature films together including "Sword and Sorrow" and "The Legend of Sepehr".

Guglilemo Marconi filmf - Kids and Teens International Film Festival was established to create a large film festival for children and teenagers that combines talent and culture, to indicate welcoming places for young people and to offer workshops dedicated to the study of new forms of artistic expression.

The festival aims to be an initiative aimed at the whole country and internationally to satisfy both the expectations of a young population and those of adult spectators, in an attempt to bring the general public closer to quality forms of cinema.

Its programming, despite having children, school-age children and university students as its preferential audience, also opens up with enthusiasm to adults and to the entire population interested in cinematographic art, fascinated by artistic and visual culture, passionate about teaching, pedagogy, fun and educational but also simple entertainment.

It represents a good opportunity to show new training paths, offering a constantly renewed program of cultural activities, and to propose, through the cinematographic medium, respectful skills and fruitful reflections open to all members of the school.

This year's edition of the festival will conclude on November 30.

'Adventures of Rostam and Rakhsh' to bring Shahnameh epic to Tehran stage



TEHRAN- "The Adventures of Rostam and Rakhsh," a theatrical production by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), based on the story of the Seven Labors of Rostam from Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece Shahnameh, will be staged at Ibn Sina Cultural Center in Tehran.

The play is written by Atesa Shamlou, designed by Samira Yazdanpajou and Fatemeh Sheikholhokamai, and directed by Meysam Yousefi. The production is being presented as part of the institute's rotating theater program.

The play was previously produced under the title "Haft Khan" (The Seven Labors) as part of the "Book, Theater, School" project. It has already been performed in schools, at IIDCYA centers and through the institute's mobile theater program, which takes theatrical productions to children in different communities.

Ali Beyk-Mohammadi, Mohsen Qasri and Komeil Pourqoli make up the cast, while Amirhossein Ensafi and Ramin Abdollahi are responsible for the music.

The story begins when Zal informs his son Rostam that King Kay Kavus and his army have been captured by the White Div, a powerful demon dwelling in Mazandaran. To rescue the king and his soldiers and break the demon's spell, Rostam sets out on a perilous journey from Sistan to Mazandaran, accompanied by his loyal horse, Rakhsh. Along the way, he must overcome a series of formidable challenges known in Persian literature as the Haft Khan, or Seven Labors of Rostam.

Rostam is one of the most celebrated heroes in Persian literature and the central warrior figure in many of the legendary episodes of the Shahnameh, or Book of Kings, composed by the Persian poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Born to Zal and Rudabeh, Rostam is associated with Sistan and serves as the principal defender of the Iranian kingdom against its enemies. Renowned for his extraordinary strength, courage and military skills, he embodies the ideals of heroism, loyalty and devotion to his homeland. His adventures form a substantial part of Ferdowsi's epic, which recounts the mythical and historical past of Iran through stories of kings, warriors, conflicts and moral trials.

Rakhsh, Rostam's legendary horse, is far more than a means of transportation. A remarkable and intelligent animal, he is the hero's inseparable companion and plays an active role in several of his adventures. Known for his strength, speed, courage and loyalty, Rakhsh shares Rostam's dangers and contributes to his victories. In the account of the Seven Labors, the horse is particularly important, demonstrating his own courage and alertness when confronting dangers. The relationship between Rostam and Rakhsh represents a bond of mutual trust and companionship, making the horse one of the most memorable animal characters in Persian epic literature.

The Seven Labors recount Rostam's journey through a series of dangerous encounters and supernatural challenges. These include battles with fierce animals, demons and other mysterious forces. Each trial tests a different aspect of the hero's abilities, requiring not only physical strength but also courage, intelligence, patience and determination. The final confrontation with the White Div is particularly significant, as Rostam must defeat the demon to save Kay Kavus and his companions. The story has remained one of the best-known sections of the Shahnameh and has inspired numerous artistic interpretations, including illustrations, paintings, theatrical performances and adaptations for younger audiences.

Drawing inspiration from ancient Iranian literary sources, the new theatrical production combines humor and music with a psychological approach to themes such as raising awareness and avoiding false self-confidence. Through Rostam's adventures, the play seeks to introduce young audiences to a major part of Iran's literary heritage while encouraging reflection on personal qualities and the importance of making informed decisions.

The Shahnameh, one of the most influential works of Persian literature, consists of approximately 50,000 couplets and preserves a vast collection of Iranian myths, legends and historical narratives. Ferdowsi's epic has played a major role in maintaining the Persian language and transmitting cultural traditions across generations. The story of Rostam and his Seven Labors remains among its most enduring narratives, offering younger readers and audiences an introduction to the values, imagination and heroic traditions of classical Persian storytelling.

"The Adventures of Rostam and Rakhsh" will run from November 17 to December 18, at Ibn Sina Cultural Center, located on North Iran Zamin Street, Shahrak Qods.