Straight Truth

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Muslims will become the world's largest population by 2035: study

Muslims are expected to outnumber Christians by 2035, according to new projections from Pew Research Center.

Both religious groups are growing in size, but Muslims are growing faster. By 2070, if recent trends continue, there will be more than 3.6 billion Muslims and just under 3 billion Christians worldwide.

The world's total population is projected to increase by 29% between 2020 and 2070. Muslims and Christians are the only religious groups analyzed are expected to keep pace, with Christians growing by 30% and Muslims by 80%. ▸ Page **5**

War on Iran leaves Arab monarchies facing $1 trillion in losses

TEHRAN — The U.S.-Israeli war on Iran will cost the six Arab monarchies in the Persian Gulf nearly $1 trillion in destroyed infrastructure and lost economic output through 2030, Allianz Research estimates, leaving governments to borrow heavily and redirect wealth once invested abroad toward repairs and protection at home.

Its November report projects $790 billion in output losses over 2026–30, alongside just over $200 billion in physical damage.

The output figure measures the gap against the prewar growth trajectory. More than 80 energy facilities have been hit, about one-third severely, although most production infrastructure escaped major damage.

Geography determines who suffers most. Allianz forecasts a 4% contraction across the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council this year, ▸ Page **5**

Intl. writers recognized for six-word story award honoring Minab schoolchildren

TEHRAN- The winners of the international six-word story award "Minab School – 168 Unfinished Short Stories" were announced during a closing ceremony attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and a number of cultural officials and artists in Tehran on Thursday.

The ceremony took place at the Hejab Hall of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) and honored 10 Iranian and 10 international writers selected for the competition, Mehr reported.

The international winners are Syeda Hijab Zahra Naqvi from Pakistan, Saeideh Daryaeva from Serbia, Karina Dmitrievna Korzunova from Belarus, Hector Armando Perez from Nicaragua, Fabio Zucchi from Italy, Nabih Ali Ahmad from Lebanon, Lenka Dodarin from Serbia, ▸ Page **8**



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Visitors watching the movements of a robot at the CITEX exhibition, Milad Tower, Tehran.

CITEX: Tehran Unveils Its Smart Future

Tehran Times exclusive: from rescue robots to national metro train in Milad Tower

More than 100 companies gathered at the event, held under the slogan "Progressive Iran", with transportation, energy, environment, and IT among the main themes.

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN - A bench that displays weather information and offers mobile phone charging, a vehicle equipped with a system to inspect asphalt and its underlying layers, and a thermal-imaging drone designed to detect fire hotspots and locate people trapped in hard-to-reach areas were among the products unveiled at Tehran's CITEX exhibition.

Held under the slogan "Progressive Iran," the CITEX exhibition took place at Milad Tower in Tehran from November 17 to 20. More than 100 knowledge-based companies gathered at the event, hosted by Tehran Municipality, to help establish an integrated ecosystem for urban technology and innovation.

Transportation, municipal services, energy, water and the environment, and information technology were among the event's main themes. Energy management, waste management, the digital economy, and sustainable financing for urban projects were also addressed.

Companies and industry professionals active in fintech, municipal services and citizen welfare, smart transportation and traffic management, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, ICT infrastructure, water management, agriculture, and the urban environment showcased their latest achievements and ideas.

One of the notable technologies presented at CITEX was a vehicle-mounted system designed to inspect road surfaces and the layers beneath the asphalt. The system collects data that can be used to assess layer thickness, the condition of road foundations, and potential inconsistencies in construction work.

Another section of the exhibition was dedicated to robotics, featuring equipment designed for various applications, ranging from watering and firefighting assistance to rescue operations in aquatic environments and the inspection of difficult-to-access routes. A firefighting robot equipped with a water-spraying system, for example, is designed to operate in situations where approaching the flames would put human firefighters at risk. ▸ Page **7**

Iran's naval dominance extends 500km beyond Persian Gulf: IRGC chief

TEHRAN – Iran's naval dominance now extends at least 500 kilometers beyond the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, forcing enemy warships to keep their distance from the region, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said.

In comments at a gathering of university students on Friday, Major General Ahmad Vahidi said Iran's naval forces have established control not only over the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz but also over open waters hundreds of kilometers farther away. ▸ **Page 2**

Iran rejects US allegations of chemical and biological weapons development

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei has strongly rejected new US allegations that Iran is developing chemical or biological weapons, comparing the accusations to the false intelligence claims Washington used to justify its 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In a post on his X account, Baqaei said the allegations reflect a familiar US narrative that has shifted from claims of an Iranian nuclear threat to accusations of chemical and biological weapons development.

He questioned whether US officials expected the international community to forget the 2003 appearance of then-Secretary of State Colin Powell before the UN Security Council, when he displayed a small vial as purported evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. ▸ **Page 2**

13 Int'l organizations call for accountability over US-Israeli attack on Minab school

TEHRAN- Thirteen international organizations have called for an independent, impartial investigation into the US-Israeli attack on Shajarah Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, which killed 168 children and teachers, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

In a joint statement issued on World Children's Day (November 20), the organizations condemned 'double standards in the international community's response to crimes against children,' stressing that victims' rights must not depend on their nationality or the identity of the perpetrators.

The statement also cited more than 23,000 documented victims of terrorism in Iran, including 514 children under the age of 12, and called for accountability for both those directly responsible and their supporters.

Iran's Beiranvand named AFC Player of the Year

TEHRAN - History was made on Thursday at the AFC Awards Bangkok 2026 as Alireza Beiranvand became the first goalkeeper ever to be crowned the AFC Player of the Year.

The Iran custodian fended off competition from Saudi Arabian duo Feras Al Brikan and Salem Al Dawsari to land the top honor at the Aksra Theatre King Power, which hosted the 30th edition of the gala.

Beiranvand, who was nominated for a second time after 2019 and is only the second goalkeeping nominee after Saudi Arabian Mohamed Al Deayea (1996), is the fifth Iran player to claim the accolade after Khodadad Azizi (1996), Ali Daei (1999), Mehdi Mahdavikia (2003) and Ali Karimi (2004).

The 34-year-old shone on the biggest stage during the FIFA World Cup 2026, making a total of 15 saves as the Central Asians missed out on progress from the Group Stage in heartbreaking fashion via goal difference.



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Trump leaves Shenzhen empty-handed



©Xinhua

▸ Page **5**

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

None of Trump's options is favorable

Shargh examined growing tensions between Iran and the US and the possibility of renewed military action. Trump has repeatedly threatened in recent weeks to initiate another phase of a high-intensity confrontation with Iran. With diplomatic efforts stalled and neither side showing willingness to retreat from key demands, tensions continue to rise. Yet Shargh argued that none of Trump's available options is particularly favorable. Any military attack on Iran could provoke retaliatory measures against US allies in the region, particularly Arab states that cooperate closely with Washington. If Trump chooses to step back without a formal ceasefire or broader political settlement, Iran could emerge with greater influence over the Strait of Hormuz, strengthening its leverage in one of the world's most strategically important maritime corridors.

Etemad: Step-by-step understanding is the best option

As developments in the Middle East continue to shape the international diplomatic agenda, Iran has once again become a major subject of discussion in world capitals. In this context, Etemad interviewed political analyst Mashallah Shamsolvaezin about negotiations, US pressure tactics, and the geopolitical realities affecting Iran's relations with both Eastern and Western powers. He argued that the current international order lacks the conditions necessary for a comprehensive agreement. He also dismissed the idea that major Eastern powers such as Russia and China could effectively serve as guarantors of a broad settlement. Instead, he advocated a gradual and issue-based approach. Under such a framework, Tehran and Washington would reach agreements on specific matters and implement them in stages. For example, they could negotiate arrangements related to the Strait of Hormuz, sanctions relief, or the release of frozen assets. Once each commitment is fulfilled, both sides could proceed to the next stage. In his view, incremental progress offers a more realistic path than attempts to secure an all-encompassing agreement.

Javan: Dangerous gamble

Javan focused on the calculations guiding both Iran and the United States. Referring to a Reuters assessment, the newspaper noted that nearly nine months into the current US-Iran confrontation, both governments appear to believe that time is on their side. This belief has helped create a stalemate that neither side can easily escape. The paper described the situation as a dangerous gamble. Trump has chosen to increase pressure on Iran rather than launch another round of major airstrikes or offer significant concessions. According to the analysis, he believes further bombing would be unlikely to change the overall outcome and could instead trigger Iranian retaliation against energy facilities in the Persian Gulf. As a result, Washington is placing greater emphasis on maritime restrictions and economic pressure. The expectation is that sustained pressure may eventually force Tehran to make compromises, particularly regarding its nuclear activities. Javan suggested that this strategy reflects a judgment that economic and strategic pressure may be more effective than further military escalation.

Khorasan: New equation on the southern front

Khorasan discussed what it called a new strategic equation in Iran's southern theater. According to the newspaper, the policy involves targeting aircraft and drones that escort vessels accused of violating restrictions near the Strait of Hormuz. The paper presented this approach as part of a broader strategy designed to increase pressure on maritime activity in the area. The analysis also pointed to a wider doctrine focused on operations at sea. Future confrontations could involve more effective maritime strikes and warned that naval forces deployed in the region may face greater challenges if tensions continue. The newspaper further highlighted the reported interception of a US military drone by Iranian air defenses, describing the development as evidence of improved defensive capabilities. Such incidents indicate that southern waters may become a focal point of any future conflict and could play a decisive role in shaping the next phase of regional tensions.

Sazandegi: A meaningful summit

Sazandegi evaluated the Nov. 19 meeting of the leaders of the US, China, and Russia in Shenzhen. The newspaper argued that the gathering should be viewed as part of a broader trend rather than an isolated event. It noted that Chinese President Xi Jinping had previously hosted separate visits by Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, developments that may signal wider changes in international politics. The global system may be moving toward a framework in which China, Russia, and the US exercise disproportionate influence over major international issues, while Europe and other middle powers gradually play a smaller role. The article also cited former US deputy secretary of state Kurt Campbell, who pointed to expanding military and security cooperation between China and Russia, including support for Iran. In his view, even without a concrete agreement, the Shenzhen summit could enhance the international standing of Beijing and Moscow while raising concerns among Washington's traditional allies.

IRGC warns US military bases in Europe



TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned that US military bases in Europe could become targets of Iranian retaliatory strikes, stressing that the country's missile capabilities allow it to conduct operations beyond geographical boundaries if ordered by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, IRGC Spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi said Iran possesses the missile capabilities necessary to carry out such operations.

"Our missile capabilities are such that, if the Leader of the Islamic Revolution gives the order, we can conduct operations without geographical limitations," he said.

Mohebbi recalled that the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, had previously set a 2,000-kilometer limit on the range of Iranian missiles. However, he stressed that Iran is capable of striking US military installations in Europe if a new order is issued.

He also referred to Iran's previously demonstrated missile capabilities, citing a reported range of 4,500 kilometers, which he said places the US-British military base on Diego Garcia within reach.

Responding to CNN reports alleging the possible use of a dirty bomb, the IRGC spokesman dismissed the allegations as fabrications by Iran's adversaries and the Israeli regime.

"These are false allegations fabricated by the enemy and the Zionist regime. If we want to do something, we will announce it courageously," he said.

Mohebbi also warned that any US attack on Iranian dams would be met with a reciprocal response.

He further cautioned that any country whose territory or military bases were used by the United States to launch an attack against Iran would be considered a legitimate target for Iranian retaliation, regardless of its geographical location.

"If it becomes clear to us that the US has carried out military action against Iran from the bases of another country, anywhere in the world, that country will be our target, and we have no doubt about this," he warned.

Iran's naval dominance extends 500km beyond Persian Gulf: IRGC chief

From page 1 ▸ "Why do enemy warships not dare to come closer than 500 to 600 kilometers?" he asked, attributing this to the combat capabilities of Iran's naval forces and the strength of commanders and personnel of the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Major General Vahidi noted that the Persian Gulf had previously hosted as many as 120 Western military vessels at certain times, while between 70 and 80 were normally present. However, he said, there has been no sign of those vessels for many months, either in the Strait of Hormuz or beyond it.

"The enemies must understand that they have no option but to admit defeat, and no choice but to leave the region," he stated.

The IRGC commander also stressed that retaliation for the US-Israeli crimes against



Iran is an undeniable right, warning that the world would no longer be a safe place for those responsible for the killings and atrocities.

"They will have no peaceful sleep and must tremble over the crimes they have committed," he said.

Major General Vahidi added that the Iranian nation would pursue those responsible until revenge is exacted for the blood of martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the victims of the Minab tragedy and all other martyrs.

He also highlighted the full combat readiness of Iran's Armed Forces, saying IRGC Aerospace Force personnel are continuously developing and unveiling new capabilities.

According to Major General Vahidi, the force's current capabilities are undoubtedly greater than those demonstrated during the first war of aggression, with its innovations, operational capabilities and technological achievements having also advanced.

Iran rejects US allegations of chemical and biological weapons development

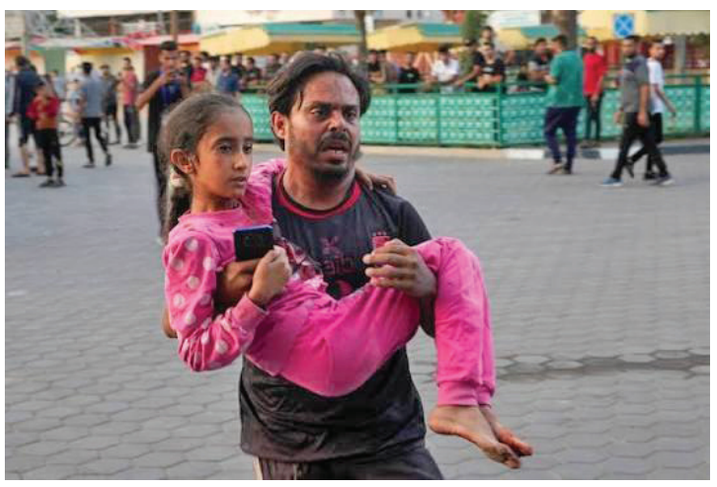
From page 1 ▸ Baqaei described the episode as one of the most consequential intelligence failures and political deceptions in modern history, noting that unsubstantiated claims about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction were deliberately used to generate public support for a military invasion.

He stressed that the consequences of the invasion were catastrophic, affecting not only the Iraqi people but also the wider region and American society.

Warning against a repetition of that experience, the Iranian spokesman questioned whether the international community had learned the lessons of 2003 or was once again prepared to allow misleading allegations to pave the way for another major crisis.

Baqaei's remarks came in response to renewed US accusations concerning Iran's alleged pursuit of chemical and biological weapons capabilities.

Iran calls for urgent Islamic action to halt Israeli genocide in Gaza



TEHRAN – Iran has called for an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and urged Muslim countries and the international community to take immediate and effective action to halt Israel's ongoing crimes against Palestinians, end the blockade of Gaza and ensure accountability for those responsible.

In a post on his X account, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called on the OIC secretary-general to convene an emergency meeting of the organization's foreign ministers, describing the continuation of genocide, forced displacement and the obstruction of humanitarian assistance to Gaza as a disgrace to humanity.

"Gaza urgently needs action to lift the blockade and compel the Zionist regime to allow humanitarian aid to enter," Araghchi wrote, underscoring the need for a coordinated response by Islamic countries to the worsening humanitarian crisis.

The foreign minister's appeal came as Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a strong condemnation of Israel's continued attacks on Palestinians in both Gaza and the occupied West Bank, calling for urgent international intervention and the prosecution of those responsible for war crimes and other international crimes.

In a statement released on Thursday evening, the ministry also condemned attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank, including the latest arson attack on Al-Dahiyah Mosque.

The statement described the situation in Gaza as catastrophic, noting that extensive Israeli bombardments had reduced large parts of the territory to rubble, while displaced Palestinians were being denied even basic shelter against winter cold and rain. It also condemned Israeli military operations in central Gaza, warning that the continued offensive threatened further civilian casualties and intensified the genocidal campaign.

Iran's Foreign Ministry attributed the continuation of these crimes to the failure of international institutions to take effective action, arguing that political support for Israel, particularly from the United States, had emboldened the regime to persist in violating Palestinians' fundamental rights.

The ministry specifically pointed to the role of the United States and other countries supporting Israel, including Germany, which it identified as the regime's second-largest arms supplier, as well as Britain, France and Canada. It said their military, political and diplomatic support, alongside efforts to shield Israel from accountability, made them complicit in the crimes committed in Gaza.

The statement also emphasized the responsibility of all parties involved in the October 9, 2025, ceasefire agreement in Sharm el-Sheikh to ensure an end to Israeli violations and protect Palestinian civilians.

Referring to the UN Charter and international law, the Foreign Ministry stressed that all governments have an obligation to support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and liberation from occupation, apartheid and colonialism.

It further called on countries to fulfill their obligations under the Genocide Convention and the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 by taking concrete measures to stop genocide and war crimes in Gaza and the West Bank.

The ministry also condemned the US administration's efforts to obstruct international accountability, particularly through sanctions and intimidation targeting International Criminal Court judges. It stressed that all countries have a responsibility to prosecute and punish Israeli leaders responsible for international crimes.

Reaffirming Iran's support for the Palestinian people until they achieve self-determination and establish an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital, the ministry called on the OIC and Muslim countries to mobilize their collective political and diplomatic capabilities, as well as those of other international institutions, to confront the genocide and bring an end to Israeli crimes.

Basij Cmdr. warns of enemy efforts to undermine public confidence and social cohesion



TEHRAN – Commander of Iran's Basij Force Hojjatoleslam Hossein Taeb has warned that the country's enemies are seeking to weaken public confidence and social cohesion by turning hope into despair, trust into distrust, satisfaction into discontent, and security into insecurity.

Speaking to university students, Taeb said national progress requires both neutralizing threats and improving institutional efficiency, stressing that threats facing Iran extend beyond military confrontation to include soft, semi-hard, intelligence-driven and hybrid forms of warfare.

He explained that the nature of power has evolved from coercion to attraction and networking, making hybrid power and hybrid threats increasingly important in security calculations.

Taeb described efficiency as the ability to set ambitious goals, formulate appropriate strategies, accurately identify national capabilities and bring them together effectively.

He also highlighted the importance of young people in the country's progress, recalling the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's repeated emphasis on their role. He warned that internal weaknesses could encourage adversaries to believe that developments in Iran are moving in their favor.

According to Taeb, hope, trust, public satisfaction, security and efficiency are among the fundamental pillars of social capital. He stressed that adversaries are seeking to undermine both the objective and psychological dimensions of security.

The Basij commander further called for supporting all institutions and groups working toward Iran's development, emphasizing the need for cooperation and synergy rather than unnecessary competition.

World closer than ever to nuclear disaster, Kuznick warns



TEHRAN– Peter Kuznick, Professor of History and Director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University, says the war on Iran carries an unacceptable risk of nuclear escalation.

The arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the West Asia region has brought the number of U.S. aircraft carriers operating in the region to three, as tensions continue to rise over the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. Tehran has warned that it would not necessarily wait for Washington to launch another attack before responding. The latest developments come amid mixed signals from the Trump administration. U.S. President Donald Trump has told advisers that he may hold off on further strikes if Iran and Yemen's Ansarullah do not engage in new provocations. The combination of a reinforced U.S. military presence and uncertainty over Washington's next move has left the prospects for de-escalation unclear.

Against this backdrop, concerns over the risk of a wider conflict—and its potential nuclear consequences—have taken on renewed urgency. In an interview with Mehr News Agency, American historian and American University professor Peter Kuznick warned that even the possibility of a U.S. or Israeli nuclear strike against Iran represents an unacceptable risk. He stressed that the war could have far-reaching implications beyond the regional military balance, undermining the credibility of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, exposing the limits of U.S. military power and underscoring the need for a collective security framework in West Asia.

The full text of the interview is as follows,

The risk of nuclear escalation

In your recent writings, you have warned that the war involving Iran, the United States, and Israel could create a serious risk of nuclear escalation. How close do you believe the current confrontation has brought the region and the international community to that threshold? What diplomatic steps could prevent it?

These are the crucial questions. Even a slight chance that the U.S. or Israel could use a nuclear weapon against Iran is an unacceptable risk and must be taken seriously and prevented. Unfortunately, there is more than a slight risk right now. The Republicans' shellacking in last week's election could play either way. It could make Trump more desperate and unhinged or it could make him aware of how unpopular this war is and that escalation would be met with universal outrage. That might not be enough to deter a pathological narcissist like Trump, especially when we know there have been discussions in Trump's circle of using nuclear weapons. Right now, Trump is trying to change the subject and make light of the war. His pulling Vance out of negotiations and having him focus on Democratic "corruption" is emblematic of this messaging. But we all know that Trump can change on a dime and reverse himself. The reports are that he has been in a rage since the humiliating midterm defeat and his pathetically low approval ratings keep shrinking. As I said in the latest Al Jazeera article that Ivana Nikolic Hughes and I wrote, I am certain that historians will rate Trump as the worst president in American history and deservedly so. But what worries me even more at the moment is what Netanyahu and the Israelis might do. To them, an Iranian nuclear program represents an existential threat. Israeli intelligence reports that alleged Iranian nuclear activity seems to be occurring at "Pick-Axe" Mountain under 300 feet of granite. Neither the U.S. nor Israel has conventional weapons that can penetrate that deep, which is why I fear that they might use one or more nuclear weapons. To make matters worse, more and more Iranians have been saying that in the aftermath of two recent waves of Israeli/U.S. attacks on Iran, Iran needs nuclear weapons to deter further attacks. I understand that logic, but given Trump's obsession with stopping Iran from acquiring a bomb and Israeli statements about "never again" and a nuclear Iran's existential threat, it creates a dangerously combustible mix in which any action by the U.S. and Israel is possible. The fact that Trump's closest advisors—Stephen Miller, Pete Hegseth, Sebastian Gorka, Elbridge Colby, Brad Cooper, Marco Rubio—are all perversely hawkish in their views and the Israel is keep egging Trump on, I worry that such mad behavior is possible.

So far as diplomatic steps, I drafted a letter to Pope Leo XIV urging him to use his unique moral authority as an outspoken opponent of war and proponent of nuclear abolition to call an emergency summit, minimally of Putin, Xi, and Trump, to get us off this path of war and potential nuclear war. That letter is up on the Nuclear Insanity Substack and has been endorsed by close to 250 very influential people around the world as well as hundreds of others. The Pope has joined many experts in warning that talk of nuclear weapons use has been increasing at an alarming rate. Former DNI Tulsi Gabbard warned 18 months ago that we are closer to nuclear annihilation than we have ever been. It's gotten much, much worse since then. The new piece that Ivana and I have on Al Jazeera calls for Putin, Xi, and Trump to do what Reagan and Gorbachev came so close to achieving at Reykjavik 40 years ago and rid the world of nuclear weapons in three stages over a 12-year period. All three leaders have at time recognized the madness of trying to defend their countries with weapons that will effectively end all large life on our planet if they were ever used. We now know that the threshold for causing nuclear winter is much lower than scientists thought in the 1980s. We also know that the Global South—the BRICS, SCO, African Union, and others—are pushing for a new global order based on peaceful growth and development. So we are trying to rally global forces to pressure the superpowers to find a new direction by ending the Southwest Asia and Ukraine wars and beginning the process of finding peaceful alternatives. It is time to reembrace diplomacy and reject war as a way of resolving differences. But the people of the planet, many of whom still live in poverty and backwardness, must make their voices heard to pressure the "leaders" to reverse course.

Israel's nuclear arsenal and regional security

You have said that the Middle East should become a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. How does Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal affect the regional balance of power and the security calculations of other countries? Do you believe the international community applies consistent standards to nuclear non-proliferation in the Middle East?

We estimate that Israel has between 90 and 250 nuclear weapons, which it will not relinquish as long as it believes its security is threatened. Despite its long-standing reprehensible and cruel treatment of Palestinians, it was once a respected and admired nation. Now, in the aftermath of its genocide in Gaza and unbridled militarism, it is the most despised country in the world. The more isolated Israel has become, the more it has moved to the right. It has long been governed by far-right extremists who are adamantly opposed to both a one-state and a two-state solution. U.S. support for Israel was a big issue in the U.S. midterms. The Biden-Harris administration's support for the Gaza slaughter had been a major issue in Trump's 2024 election. Trump has proven to be even worse than Biden. But the American people have seen enough and AIPAC support for candidates was more of a detriment than a help in the midterms. Without undeviating U.S. support, financially, militarily, and diplomatically, Israel will likely find itself even more isolated. But not only will U.S. support for Israel slide, the overall U.S. role in the region will also change as its bases and alliances have come under attack. The largely corrupt [Persian] Gulf leaders, who have long assumed they benefitted from U.S. protection are being forced to reconsider whether housing U.S. military bases and tying themselves to the U.S. gives them greater security or it makes them bigger targets. Also much of the U.S. military infrastructure has been destroyed and will cost many billions of dollars to replace. So the Israelis will have to make a choice—either live in perpetual hostility to their neighbors or learn to live together peacefully. If the former, they will retain their nuclear arsenal and hide behind it. If the latter, after years of trust-building, they can rethink their dependence on nuclear weapons.

Israel is one of four nuclear powers and five countries in total that are outside the NPT, but it is the only country outside the NPT in what used to be called the "Middle East." Its official stance on possessing nuclear weapons is ambiguity, but everyone knows it has had them for decades. Western powers, led by the U.S., have shielded Israel from greater scrutiny and sanctions. So, yes, there is a clear double standard where Israel's interests and nuclear policy are concerned.

Iran, which is a party to the NPT and had allowed IAEA monitoring until the June bombing of its nuclear facilities, has been hit with severe sanctions as well as bombings and assassinations for enriching uranium, despite the fact that it is permitted to do so under the NPT. Such double standards and hypocrisy have not gone unnoticed in much of the world.

The historical pattern of U.S. military interventions

Drawing on your research into the history of American foreign policy, what historical patterns do you see in Washington's decision to enter the current confrontation with Iran? To what extent does this war reflect the recurring assumption that military superiority can produce political outcomes, despite the experiences of previous U.S. interventions?

The U.S. has long viewed Southwest Asia as crucial to U.S. national security and has happily climbed into bed with reactionary dictators who allowed the U.S. to exploit the region's oil resources. It has been willing to use force where necessary to keep these leaders in power and to block more progressive leaders from challenging them. Perhaps the most egregious case is what the CIA did to Iran in 1953 when it overthrew Mohammad Mossadeq, despite the fact that he was enormously popular both inside and outside Iran. He had been Time Magazine man of the year in 1951 and the U.S. ambassador said he had the support of between 95 and 98 percent of the Iranian people. But he committed the cardinal sin—thinking the Iranian people and not the British oil companies had a right to the proceeds from selling Iranian oil. When Iran nationalized the oil industry, the CIA overthrew Mossadeq and installed the Shah, who ruled with an iron fist and brutal SAVAK until 1979. This made a mockery of U.S. claims to support democracy. U.S. oil companies soon had 40 percent of the Iranian market. So the overthrow of the repressive and despised Shah, whom Jimmy Carter proclaimed his dear friend, declaring at the infamous New Year's Eve dinner, "There is no leader with whom I have a deeper sense of personal gratitude and personal friendship," should not have come as a big surprise. The U.S. has maintained its hostile stance toward Iran ever since, although there were times, such as in the 1980s during what became known here as the "Iran-Contra Scandal," when it was willing to sell Iran arms to procure cash for its Central American war criminal allies.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has constructed a regional strategy around alliances with Israel and Saudi Arabia, while maintaining ties to others in the region. In 1944, Franklin Roosevelt informed British Ambassador Lord Halifax that Saudi oil would belong to the U.S. Iranian oil would belong to the Brits, and Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil would belong to both. The U.S. policy has long revolved around controlling regional oil supplies. We saw that in the Carter Doctrine in 1980, the 1990-91 [Persian] Gulf War, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the 2009 overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya, and other actions. Since 2011, the U.S. has tried to pivot toward Asia, but it keeps getting sucked back in the [Persian] Gulf region.

The U.S. hasn't won a major war since World War II and, as important and necessary as stopping Hitler was, even that victory is suspect when we see militaristic and conservative Germany leading the rearmament of Europe and right-wing Japan leading the rearmament of Asia. What has become clear, however, is that war is obsolete in the modern era of drones, robotics, artificial intelligence, and asymmetric warfare. After almost five years of war, Russia has still not been able to seize control of the Donbas and after nine months, the U.S. has not been ale to defeat Iran, despite Trump's nonsensical claims to the contrary. The Russians could do to Kiev and the U.S. could do to Tehran what the Israelis did to Gaza—reduce them to rubble. But the world would be so outraged by such horrific behavior and it would open the door to a future so bleak that our planet would likely not survive. So the two most powerful nations on the planet have not been able to force weaker nations to give in to their demands. In the nuclear age especially, war is not only obsolete; it is insanely dangerous. It's time we give diplomacy a try.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Araghchi mocks Israeli ambassador over remarks on US military personnel



TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has sarcastically criticized the Israeli regime's ambassador to Washington over remarks suggesting that American soldiers would return home once Iran is defeated.

In a post on his X account on Friday, Araghchi responded to comments by Yechiel Leiter, who said in a November 19 interview with Newsmax: "You get American soldiers back to their families here when Iran is defeated."

Reacting to the statement, the Iranian foreign minister wrote sarcastically: "We did not know that the Israeli Ambassador to Washington was the Commander-in-Chief of the US Military."

The limits of military power and the fiction of 'finishing the job'

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - In recent weeks, the narrative calling for "finishing the job" in Iran has resurfaced, more a propaganda slogan than a concrete strategy.

First, there is no consensus on what the objective actually is. Some talk of regime change. For others, it means destroying the ballistic missiles Iran still holds, ending its nuclear program and its support for the Axis of Resistance, seizing its enriched uranium or ending its exclusive control of the Strait of Hormuz. And for a third group, it means achieving all of these goals at once.

This narrative claims, without explaining how, that a new military operation can achieve what was not achieved in 40 days of war.

If anything has become clear since that war, it is that Iran is not going to collapse, despite the many attempts to bring it about. It has also shown that it has no intention of surrendering. And there is little reason to believe that air power alone can topple the Islamic Republic, even if the United States and Israel strike Iran's energy infrastructure. Such attacks would almost certainly provoke a harsh Iranian retaliation against energy facilities across the region, with potentially devastating consequences for global energy markets.

Moreover, both Israel and the United States have reached the limits of their military power. Despite 40 days of intensive war, they have not achieved regime change, resolved the nuclear question or prevented Iran from rebuilding its conventional military strength, particularly its missile system.

No one denies that the attacks have had an impact on the economy and the population, but they have not eliminated or weakened Iran's capacity for military response. The idea that a new campaign will achieve what the previous ones did not demands, at the very least, a convincing strategic explanation, and it does not seem that one is possible.

If regime change is practically ruled out, using ground troops to seize the enriched uranium also seems unviable. As several experts, including Richard Haass, have pointed out, this option would require sustaining military operations inside Iran for several weeks, with a high number of casualties that the US administration is not prepared to tolerate.

Finally, some of those who defend "finishing the job" talk of taking Kharg Island, Iran's main oil and gas export terminal. Trump has championed it on numerous occasions, but has never dared to carry it out, because the risks are similar to those of the previous option. Joseph Votel, a former commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), said in March that, although 800 to 1,000 troops would be needed to hold the island, logistical support would also be required, which in turn would need military protection.

The troops would be highly vulnerable, and the operation would provide no significant tactical advantage.

The main problem for those who talk of "finishing the job" is that they have not stopped to answer the fundamental questions: what strategic objectives could be achieved in a new military campaign? What would Iran's response be? And how would the conflict end?

If those questions were answered in light of the strategic analysis set out here, the narrative would collapse under its own irrationality.

The "finishing the job" discourse is also part of that delusional and by now unmoored vision which assumes that Iran can be subdued through bombing. The short answer is: no, it cannot. Clinging to that idea is yet another sign of how far the United States is trapped in its own assumptions.

US must withdraw 12,000 kilometers from West Asia: MP



TEHRAN– A member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee has called for the complete withdrawal of US forces from West Asia, saying Washington should return to its own geographical region, 12,000 kilometers away.

Brigadier General Mohammad Esmaeil Kowsari made the remarks in an interview with Mehr News Agency, describing the United States as increasingly confused and at a loss over how to deal with Iran.

He said Washington had repeatedly shifted its position, alternating between threats of military action, calls to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, threats against Iran's nuclear facilities, and proposals for economic and land, air and sea blockades.

Kowsari stressed that Iran had managed the country through more than four decades of sanctions and economic pressure, demonstrating its ability to withstand external restrictions and maintain its national capabilities.

The lawmaker also referred to the US military experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, saying Washington had previously suffered significant setbacks in the region and that the US military was familiar with Iran's capabilities.

He argued that the United States had faced setbacks on political, military and social fronts, adding that Washington's current approach reflected its inability to determine an effective course of action toward Iran.

Kowsari emphasized the importance of preserving national unity and cohesion, calling for greater cooperation among regional countries to establish an independent and integrated West Asia free from external military intervention.

He concluded that the countries of the region should work together to safeguard their independence and build a framework for regional unity.

Iran-Pakistan trade reaches $6b, with potential to exceed $10b as FTA nears final stage

TEHRAN- The Deputy Director of the East Asia and Subcontinent Office at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization said: The volume of formal and informal trade between Iran and Pakistan is currently about $6 billion, and given the capacities and needs of both sides, it can be increased to more than $10 billion.

According to IRNA, Seyyed Mehrdad Siyadat-Nasab said on Thursday at a conference introducing the trade capacities of Iran and Pakistan in Bushehr: Despite the extensive economic and trade capacities of the two countries, the current level of exchanges is not proportionate to Iran's production capacity and Pakistan's market needs, and more effort must be made to actualize these capacities.

Referring to the volume of informal exchanges between the two countries, he added: Before the war, part of Iran's imports from Pakistan took place through the UAE and Jebel Ali port, which was not recorded in official bilateral trade statistics.

The Deputy Director of the East Asia and Subcontinent Office at the Iran Trade Development Organization continued: Taking these exchanges into account, the volume of formal and informal trade between the two countries reaches about $6 billion, which is even beyond the initial target, but there is still a gap to the $16 billion capacity.

Siyadat-Nasab, referring to Iran's export opportunities to Pakistan, stated: Agriculture, industry, mining, tourism, and technical and engineering services are among the areas where Iranian companies and economic actors can gain a larger share of the Pakistani market by using their capabilities.

Referring to the tourism capacity between the two countries, he said: Every year, several million Pakistani nationals travel to cities such as Mashhad and Qom to visit holy sites, and with proper planning, arrangements can also be made for them to visit Iran's natural and historical attractions, including the northern cities, Isfahan, and Shiraz.

The official of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization considered the complementarity of the two countries' economies to be one of the important advantages of expanding economic relations and added: A significant part of Iran's exports to Pakistan includes energy-based products such as liquefied gas, petrochemical materials, tiles and ceramics, and steel, which, due to Iran's energy advantage, are competitive in that country's market.

He added: In return, Pakistan also has suitable capacity in the production and export of certain goods that Iran needs to import, and this economic complementarity can pave the way for the development of trade exchanges and meeting the needs of both countries.

Negotiations concluded for Iran-Pakistan FTA and list of covered goods has been exchanged between two sides

Siyadat-Nasab, referring to negotiations on the Iran-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) stated: Negotiations for this agreement have been conducted and the list of covered goods has been exchanged between the two sides. This agreement is in its final stages, and we hope its first phase will be implemented before the end of the year.

He continued: With the implementation of this agreement, customs tariffs on a major part of Iran's export goods to Pakistan will reach zero, and in return, Iran will also consider tariff concessions for some of Pakistan's export goods, which will help develop bilateral trade.

The Deputy Director of the East Asia and Subcontinent Office at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, referring to the capacity of Pakistan's ports for developing the country's trade exchanges, said: Pakistan's ports can take over part of the logistical and commercial role of the UAE's Jebel Ali port and become a platform for re-exporting Iranian goods to global markets and supplying Iran's import needs from third countries.

Noting that creating Pakistan's trade and logistics infrastructure requires time, he added: The infrastructure that was formed in the UAE over about 20 years will not be created in Pakistan overnight, but given the current conditions, this country can be one of the alternative routes for expanding Iran's trade relations with the world.

Siyadat-Nasab, emphasizing Iran's strategic view of developing relations with Pakistan, stated: Pakistan can become a strategic partner in the field of food security, reduce Iran's dependence on high-risk trade routes, and provide the ground for the formation of a new economic corridor between Iran and East Asia.

Possibility of developing Iran's land connection with China through Pakistan

Referring to the capacities of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, he said: The Belt and Road project extends from eastern China to Pakistan's Gwadar port, and this port is located about 70 kilometers from the Iranian border; therefore, it is possible to develop Iran's land connection with China through Pakistan.

The official of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization noted: The development of such routes can, while increasing the resilience of the country's economy in critical conditions, create new opportunities for access to regional and international markets.

He also, referring to the supporting infrastructure for Iran-Pakistan trade, said: The Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, located in Zahedan and with an office in Tehran, the two countries' Trade and Investment Council, and also two licensed trade centers in Pakistan are among the capacities that can help traders and economic actors in developing exchanges.

Siyadat-Nasab, referring to the economic capabilities of Bushehr province and the capacities of the Pakistani market, expressed hope that with the cooperation of the Trade Promotion Organization, provincial officials, and economic actors, the volume of Bushehr province's trade relations with Pakistan, as well as the economic exchanges between the two countries, will increase.

Pakistan is a 260-million market for developing Iran's exports

The Deputy Director of the East Asia and Subcontinent Office at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization said: Pakistan, with a population of about 260 million and extensive need for imports of goods and raw materials, is a suitable capacity for developing Iran's exports, and economic actors must have a precise understanding of the needs and competitive advantages of their products to succeed in this market.

Siyadat-Nasab stated: Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world, and due to its large consumer market and the need of various industries for imported raw materials, it has significant opportunities for developing trade exchanges with Iran.

He added: With about $35 billion in exports and nearly $65 billion in annual imports, this country is considered an important market in the region, and industry, mining, agriculture, and livestock are among the main axes of its economy.

The Deputy Director of the East Asia and Subcontinent Office at the Iran Trade Promotion Organization considered the textile and agricultural industries to be among the important economic sectors of Pakistan and said: This country has capabilities in producing certain agricultural products and basic goods needed by Iran and can supply part of the country's import needs.

Siyadat-Nasab, referring to the location of Gwadar port, stated: This port is located about 75 kilometers from Chabahar port, but its port infrastructure has not yet been completed.

Emphasizing the necessity of understanding the Pakistani market, he stated: Before entering this market, exporters must examine the competitiveness of their products in terms of quality and price, and then take action for marketing and finding customers.

This official of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization considered the use of international trade information systems as a solution for reducing marketing costs and added: Economic actors can register for free in the Trade Map system and use information related to countries' imported and exported goods and important trading companies.

West Asia crisis biggest energy security threat; Persian Gulf oil falters: IEA

TEHRAN- This report, based on an article by France 24, examines the International Energy Agency's latest warning that the crisis in West Asia has become the most serious threat to global energy security on record, with consumers increasingly bearing the cost as oil shipments are disrupted.

The International Energy Agency said on Thursday that the West Asia crisis triggered by US and Israeli strikes on Iran in February posed the "largest threat" to energy security in history. It warned that consumers were bearing more of the costs as Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz disrupted oil shipments.

The crisis in West Asia sparked in February by the US and Israeli bombing of Iran has created the "largest threat" to energy security in history, the International Energy Agency (IEA) warned Thursday.

The agency said in its flagship annual World Energy Outlook that consumers were increasingly footing the bill as the world runs out of ways to absorb the impact of the conflict on energy supplies.

The crisis, just like previous energy shocks, would certainly



leave "lasting marks", the agency warned.

Persian Gulf countries have been struggling to export oil since Iran began blockading the Strait of Hormuz and targeting tankers in the area, following US and Israeli strikes that sparked the crisis in February.

Despite attempts by the United States to escort vessels through the channel -- which pre-crisis carried about one-fifth of global oil shipments -- supply lines remain severely disrupted.

"The Strait of Hormuz crisis has created the largest threat to energy security in history, one that dwarfs the scale of the oil shocks of the 1970s," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol wrote in his foreword to the report.

The IEA's report comes as nations meet for the COP31 climate talks in Turkey, with governments under pressure to tackle climate change after a year of searing heatwaves and wildfires in Europe, and deadly floods in Nepal.

The agency uses three scenarios for its energy outlook: a cautious one takes into account policies that are currently in place, a middle scenario looks at "stated" government policies including measures that have yet to be adopted, and a third considers a world that reaches net zero emissions by 2050.

In its middle scenario, the IEA forecasts that global oil demand will reach a peak around 2030 before a slow decline, while gas demand would increase until around 2035.

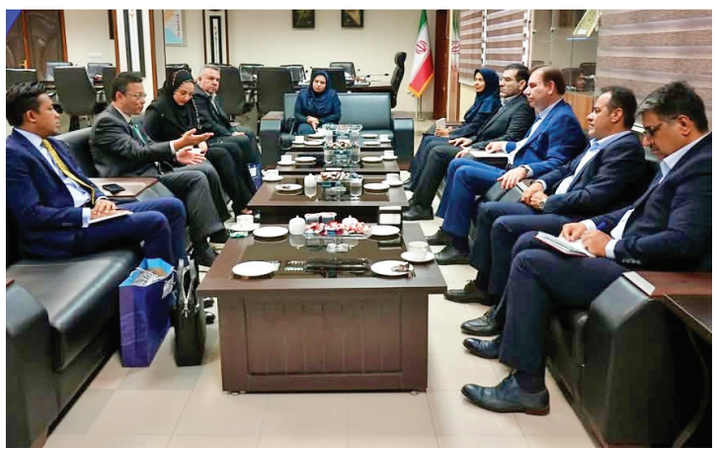
For this report, it also adds two other scenarios based on what might happen if the West Asia crisis persists.

"While the energy sector and the global economy have shown considerable resilience, the longer the crisis lasts, the deeper the effects will be," Birol said in a press release.

"And I don't see any credible pathway for the energy world to return to the way it was before."

The warning underscores how deeply the West Asia crisis is reshaping global energy markets, with Persian Gulf exporters facing persistent disruption and consumers in many countries confronting higher prices and uncertain supplies. According to the IEA's assessment, even if the immediate conflict were to ease, the energy system is unlikely to return to its pre-crisis conditions, making the security of supply routes and the diversification of energy sources more urgent than ever.

Malaysian ambassador's Bushehr visit signals new push for trade, investment ties



By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – Malaysia's ambassador to Iran, Dato' Wan Aznainizam Yusri bin Wan Abdul Rashid, visited Bushehr on Wednesday (November 18) where provincial officials showcased the Persian Gulf province's economic and commercial capacities and called for deeper bilateral cooperation in ports, petrochemicals, fisheries, agriculture, and tourism.

The Governor of Bushehr, emphasizing the province's extensive economic and commercial capacities, called for expanding bilateral relations with Malaysia, facilitating the presence of Malaysian investors, and expanding cooperation in the fields of ports, petrochemicals, fisheries, agriculture, and tourism.

According to IRNA, Arsalan Zare said during a meeting with Dato' Wan Aznainizam Yusri bin Wan Abdul Rashid, the Ambassador of Malaysia to Iran: "I hope this meeting will pave the way for strengthening friendly relations and developing joint cooperation between Bushehr Province, Iran, and the friendly and brotherly country of Malaysia."

Introducing the economic capacities and advantages of Bushehr Province, he added: "Due to its strategic location on the Persian Gulf, its extensive port and maritime capacities, oil, gas, and petrochemical industries, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as its historical and tourism attractions, this province has valuable capabilities for developing cooperation with Malaysia."

The Governor of Bushehr announced readiness for the presence of Malaysian investors and traders in the province and stated: "We hope that, with proper planning, bilateral cooperation will expand in areas such as maritime trade, petrochemical industries, processing of fishery products, agriculture, and tourism."

Zare, referring to the importance of cultural and social relations between the two countries, said: "We believe that developing cultural, scientific, academic, and tourism relations can help strengthen the bonds between the peoples of the two countries."

He also emphasized the necessity of strengthening relations between traders abd businessmen of both sides and added: "We expect that, with the assistance of the Malaysian Ambassador, the ground will be prepared for exchanging trade delegations with the cooperation and coordination of the chambers of commerce, industries, mines, and agriculture of the two countries."

The Governor of Bushehr continued: "Introducing the investment opportunities of Bushehr Province and establishing effective communication between economic actors of both sides can pave the way for greater understanding of mutual capacities and an increase in trade and economic cooperation."

Zare expressed hope that, by pursuing these issues and developing interactions between the public and private sectors of the two countries, the level of economic and trade relations between Bushehr and Malaysia will be further elevated.

Malaysia can be a gateway for entry of Iranian products into ASEAN market: ambassador

Also, the Malaysian Ambassador, in an interview on the sidelines of visiting the BuDEX exhibition, referring to his country's strategic position in regional trade, said: "Malaysia can be a gateway for the entry of Iranian products into the markets of ASEAN member countries, and Iranian date producers and exporters can benefit from the trade opportunities of this market."

The 8th International Specialized Exhibition of Dates and Related Industries of Bushehr (BuDEX) was held at the Permanent Exhibition Fairgrounds of Bushehr Province during November 17-20.

The push for closer Bushehr–Malaysia ties comes against the backdrop of a modest but growing bilateral trade relationship. Malaysia's total trade with Iran was valued at RM2.6 billion in 2024, up 24.6 percent from the previous year, with Malaysian exports consisting largely of palm oil and imports mainly Iranian oil and gas products. In 2025, bilateral trade stood at RM2.45 billion, with Malaysian exports accounting for RM2.17 billion. While Iran remains a small trading partner for Malaysia, both sides have identified energy, agriculture, food security, palm oil, the halal economy, and technology as areas for expansion.

The Malaysian ambassador's visit to Bushehr, including his tour of the BuDEX exhibition, thus served as a platform for presenting the province's investment opportunities and for signaling a shared interest in moving beyond traditional trade flows toward a more diversified economic partnership—one that leverages Bushehr's port and industrial infrastructure and Malaysia's role as a gateway to Southeast Asian markets.

For Bushehr, the hoped-for outcome is concrete: Malaysian investment, more frequent trade delegations, and a higher profile for provincial products—including dates—in ASEAN markets. Whether those ambitions translate into measurable trade growth will depend on the pace of follow-up between the two countries' public and private sectors.

Fuel quota for industries, mines increased by 10%

TEHRAN- The Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade announced that fuel allocated to mineral and industrial producers in the SADAF system for the current year is 10 percent higher than last year, with provincial quotas increased by the same amount.

Speaking during a visit to the Metafo exhibition on Thursday, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak said all producers holding operating licenses and with a record of activity are registered in the SADAF system. The system is managed by the relevant deputy at the ministry, and fuel allocation is based on consumption records, production volume, and the quota set for each unit.

Atabak stated that units operating within the approved quota will receive their required fuel, and requests for higher quotas can be considered if production grows, subject to review and approval by provincial authorities.

Emphasizing the need to organize the fuel supply and distribution chain in the production and mining sector, he said surplus fuel allocation must be proportionate to actual production levels. Requests inconsistent with a unit's capacity and output cannot be approved.

According to the ministry, fuel allocated in the SADAF system is registered for a specific location, and its transfer between production units or mines is not permitted. The mechanism aims to increase transparency, monitor consumption, and prevent deviations in fuel allocation.

Atabak also referred to efforts to rebuild damaged steel units, describing the sector's performance as noteworthy. He said effective measures were taken to restore production capacities after damage occurred in some units.

Citing the efforts of Mobarakeh Steel, Khuzestan Steel, and other affected complexes, he said the reconstruction work was technically and operationally significant and can be assessed on an international scale.

Muslims will become the world's largest population by 2035: study

From page 1 ▸ As a result, the size of many religious groups will change relative to the world's overall population. Muslims will make up a larger percentage of the global population in 2070 (36%) than they did in 2020 (26%). Christians, meanwhile, will hold fairly steady at 29%.

Although Hindus are growing in absolute number, they are projected to decline as a percentage of the global population. Jews are expected to follow a similar pattern.

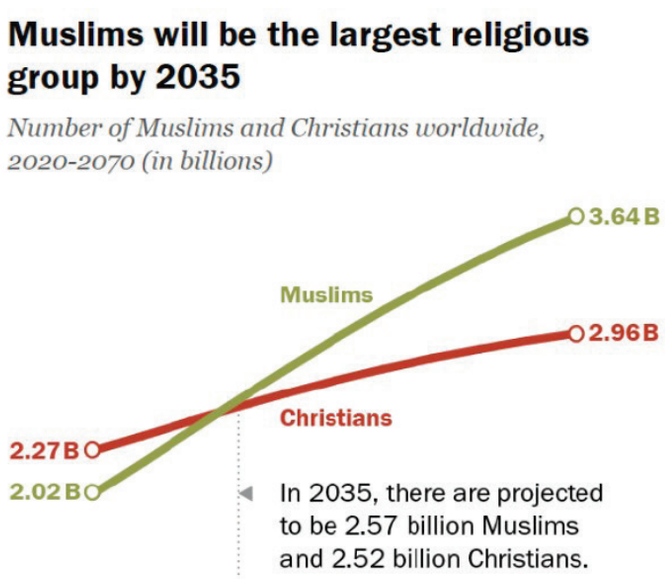
Meanwhile, Buddhists are expected to shrink both in number and as a portion of the world's population in the coming decades.

All other religions combined (including Baha'is, Daoists, Jains, Sikhs, adherents of folk religions and many other groups) are expected to experience a modest increase in number. However, they will slip below 2% of the global population by 2070.

And people who have no religious affiliation – sometimes called religious "nones" – are projected to drop substantially as a share of the world population, from 24% in 2020 to 17% in 2070.

In the 21st century, most of the world's population growth is expected to occur in Africa, particularly in countries south of the Sahara Desert.

By 2070, more than a quarter of all people worldwide will live in sub-Saharan Africa. Since the vast majority of people who currently live there are either Christians or Muslims, the region's high fertility and rising life expectancy will boost the global numbers of both faiths.



By comparison, the populations of other major geographic regions are expected to grow more modestly, or even to shrink. For example, between 2020 and 2070, the number of people living in Europe will decline, and their share of the world's population is projected to drop from 10% to 6%.

Fertility differences have big effects on populations. Globally, Muslims tend to have more children than other major religious groups. During the 2020-2025 period, the total fertility rate for Muslims was 3.1 children per woman. By comparison, the rate for non-Muslims was 2.0 children per woman.

The current age profile of the people in each religious group also plays a role in the projections. In younger populations, a larger share of people have yet to complete their childbearing years. On average, Muslims around the world are younger than any other religious group in this study. As of 2020, the median age of Muslims (24) was nearly a decade lower than the median age of non-Muslims (33).

If recent trends continue, by 2070:

- More than half of the world's Christians will live in sub-Saharan Africa.

- An African country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will surpass the United States as the country with the greatest number of Christians.

- The United States will no longer have a Christian majority, though Christians will remain the biggest religious group in the country.

- Pakistan will have the largest Muslim population, followed by India, Nigeria and Indonesia (which currently has the most Muslims).

- Hindus will increase the most in absolute number in India, but they will grow faster in countries outside India, including the U.S.

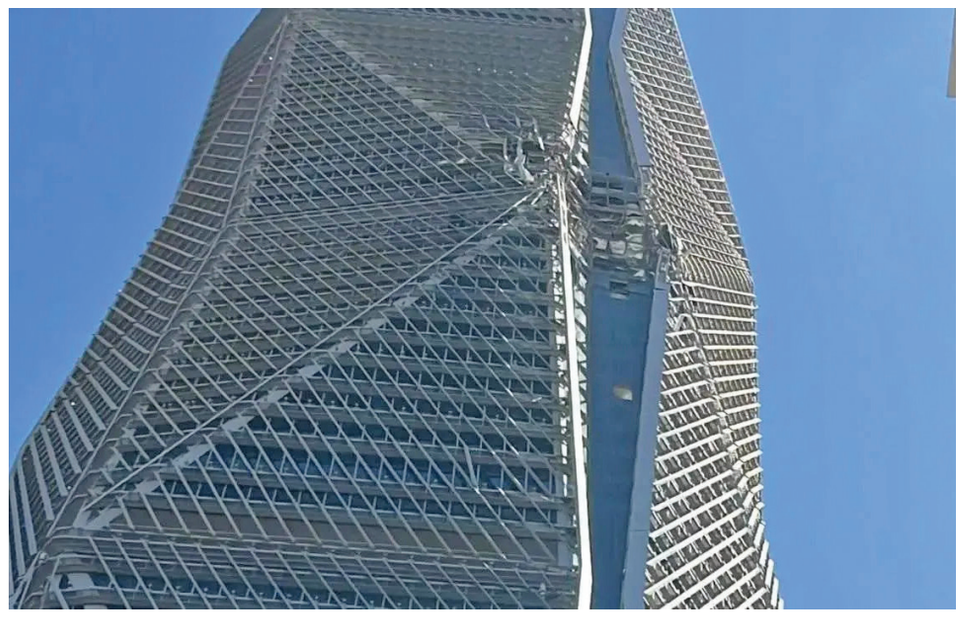
- The overall populations of China, Japan and South Korea will shrink, and their Buddhist populations will drop by more than half.

- Most countries will have more religiously unaffiliated people than they do now. But the increase will be entirely offset by population decline in China, where most religious "nones" currently live.

- 62% of all Jews will live in Israel, up from 46% in 2020.

These findings are part of a broader Pew Research Center project examining how the size of seven religious groups will change globally between 2020 and 2070 if recent demographic trends continue. Pew Research Center's projections take into account the differences between religious groups' age profiles, fertility rates, and patterns of religious switching and migration. (Religious switching and migration are assumed to continue at the same levels that have been recently observed.) We also incorporate mortality rates, applying the same rate to each religious group within a country. Read the methodology for more details about these projections and their limitations.

Yemen targets Saudi Arabia's financial hub



The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) targeted the financial district in the Saudi capital on Thursday. The attack on the Saudi hallmark came as YAF makes battlefield advances against the Saudi-backed forces inside Yemen.

The YAF struck Riyadh's tallest skyscraper, which houses the headquarters of the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), the sovereign wealth fund that finances the kingdom's mega-projects in line with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 initiative.

The attack shattered windows across seven to eight floors of the Public Investment Fund tower and bent sections of its metal façade, Alhurra reported.

It was the second time in less than two weeks that a YAF attack had damaged a prominent building in Riyadh's financial district. The earlier strike on Nov. 8 targeted an administrative building belonging to Saudi Aramco, the kingdom's state-owned oil giant.

Saudi Civil Defense said in a statement that the tower was partly damaged but that there had been no injuries.

Entrances to the King Abdullah Financial District were closed on Thursday, and people were evacuated as ambulances and fire engines gathered at the scene.

The Saudi-led forces said in a statement that they had dealt with a "missile threat" launched by YAF toward Riyadh.

YAF has been firing missiles at Saudi airports and oil infrastructure since the war in Yemen resumed in July. The attacks have intensified following Saudi airstrikes in Yemen supporting military operations launched by its proxy forces.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that two Western officials have said Saudi officials now expect the confrontation with YAF to last as long as six months. A third source familiar with Saudi plans confirmed those accounts.

Riyadh's campaign against YAF has two objectives: First to prevent it from threatening Saudi territory and infrastructure. Second to push back against YAF inside Yemen by increasing support for the kingdom's allies. Securing the temporary capital, Aden, has now become a top priority for anti-YAF forces.

Yemen's Saba news agency reported early Thursday that Saudi aircraft had carried out airstrikes on the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

But developments on the battlefield are not going in Riyadh's favor. The withdrawal of Saudi-backed forces on Sunday from areas near the Bab al-Mandab Strait dealt a blow to Saudi Arabia. The next day, Saudi Arabia removed the commander of the anti-YAF forces from his post.

YAF's strategy of reciprocal attacks

Meanwhile, YAF issued a statement on Friday announcing that Jeddah Port and all Saudi ports along the Red Sea coast will be targets of if the kingdom carries out its threats to bomb Hudaydah port.

"We warn all employees and workers at these ports, as well as anyone in their vicinity, to evacuate immediately and stay away. We also call on all shipping companies to immediately remove their vessels from these ports," YAF said in the statement.

It added, "The Yemeni Armed Forces warn all international airlines that Saudi airspace is unsafe, as it will become a theater of our operations in the coming hours, with the exception of the sacred airspace over Mecca and Medina."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump leaves Shenzhen empty-handed

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Donald Trump flew to Shenzhen promising a historic meeting with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. He flew home Thursday with a group photograph and a declaration that commits nobody to anything.

The three men sat at a round wooden table in a lakeside villa for about 80 minutes, then issued a four-point statement. Nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, it said.

The three powers announced they will talk about reducing nuclear risks. They also endorsed United Nations reform, higher petroleum output and a warning to the International Criminal Court "against abusing its jurisdiction."

What it lacked was any date, verification step, or cut. The arms control negotiations Trump has long wanted were not announced.

China, which the Pentagon expects to field more than 1,000 warheads by 2030 yet still sits far below Washington and Moscow, has never accepted caps.

Trump admitted to Reuters that a three-way deal is "a very hard thing." Daryl Kimball of the Arms Control Association welcomed the language and added that "we need much more than rhetoric."

Ukraine got less. Trump called Putin a "friend" and called Ukraine "the other side." The war, now in its fifth year, appears nowhere in the text.

Europeans gathering in Berlin had no seat, and Chancellor Friedrich Merz called the whole affair "first and foremost a photo op."

This was no Yalta, which ran more than a week. Shenzhen settled nothing, including the farm purchases, rare earth exports, and $30 billion trade framework still stuck between Washington and Beijing.

Iran in the room, missing from the page

Iran hung heavily over the proceedings, illustrating the limits of U.S. coercive power.



Trump described nonproliferation as "what we're doing in Iran." Iran would describe it differently: a war of aggression the United States and Israel launched on February 28, now nearly nine months old, with a naval blockade targeting its civilians that the hot war did not kill.

Despite months of U.S. bombing and sweeping economic pressure, Iran has withstood the assault without capitulating, leaving Washington with no clear exit strategy and growing anxiety among partners over prolonged regional instability.

Neither Beijing nor Moscow showed any willingness in Shenzhen to join Washington's pressure campaign or endorse U.S.-Israeli military aggression.

The Pentagon's bill had passed $47 billion by October and has climbed since. Xi, reportedly keen to avoid wading deep into either Iran or Ukraine, offered Trump no help on Tehran.

American voters had already delivered their verdict. Republicans lost Congress on November 3 with the war high on their list of complaints.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll found 71 percent of Americans want Congress to end the war, including 51 percent of Republicans, while Trump's handling of Iran draws 26 percent approval.

Stagecraft favors China and Russia while Trump nods off

Xi opened by recalling the three countries' wartime alliance. "History is the best textbook," he said.

Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim later congratulated him for handling both men at once. Putin, running an economy far smaller than either rival's, sat as an equal and argued that sanctions had backfired.

Beijing barred a Bloomberg reporter from the session after a shouted question, and Trump held no press conference in Asia.

Cameras at the APEC plenary caught Trump, 80, with his eyes closed and head down for about 10 seconds while Xi spoke on trade.

Canada's Mark Carney took notes beside him. Gavin Newsom's press office posted the clip with the line "The world is laughing at him."

The footage joins earlier moments this year, at an Oval Office ceremony, a Board of Peace meeting and a Knicks game, for a man who built a nickname around "Sleepy Joe."

Xi and Trump are scheduled to meet again at the G20 in Florida next month.

War on Iran leaves Arab monarchies facing 1$ trillion in losses

From page 1 ▸ with Hormuz-dependent Qatar shrinking 14%, Kuwait 11% and Bahrain 8%.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have tried to bypass the strait for some exports, contract 2.8% and 0.9%. Oman grows 3.3%, benefiting from its alternative ports.

Recovery will take longer than reopening shipping lanes.

Damage affecting roughly 18% of Qatar's gas output will take years to repair. Tourist arrivals fell 22% in the first half, while Dubai home prices dropped 10.2% from January's peak by September. Allianz expects tourism to approach prewar levels only in 2029.

The consequences reach government balance sheets. Cumulative budget deficits are forecast at $475 billion; maturing debt raises financing requirements to $722 billion.

Allianz anticipates $534 billion in debt issuance, $125 billion in foreign-exchange reserve withdrawals and $90 billion in sovereign wealth fund transfers.

These financing needs overlap with the economic disruption and should not be added to the headline loss estimate.

The Persian Gulf's annual external surplus is expected to halve to $100 billion. Sovereign funds could redirect $120 billion to domestic investment, leaving less capital for global markets. Bahrain, already with central government debt equivalent to 134% of GDP, faces an uncovered financing gap of about $6 billion.

Washington's bill is still incomplete. Pentagon official Arthur Miller told senators on November 19 that U.S. military costs had reached $48.3 billion through November 13, excluding repairs to American bases damaged by Iranian attacks. Installations presented as instruments of regional security have themselves become costly targets.

Americans have been paying through higher fuel prices as well. A November 13–16 Reuters/Ipsos poll found only 31% supported the war.

For Saudi Arabia, renewed fighting with Yemen's Ansarallah movement compounds the consequences of its own U.S.-supported bloody intervention, launched in 2015.

Human Rights Watch documented apparently unlawful airstrikes by Saudi-backed forces; UNDP estimated Yemen's war had erased $126 billion in potential growth by 2021.

Allianz says October's Ansarallah attack on Riyadh airport disrupted the tourism rebound. Saudi investment is increasingly being directed toward export routes, transport links and resilient infrastructure, while less commercially convincing megaprojects face cuts.

Allianz Research brings together the economic research teams of German insurer Allianz and its trade credit insurance subsidiary, Allianz Trade.

ICJ ruling against Myanmar brings Gaza genocide case into sharper focus

The International Court of Justice's finding that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya has sharpened attention on a separate case brought by South Africa against Israel over its war in Gaza. The judgment could prove relevant to how the court approaches some of the central legal questions in that case.

On Thursday, the ICJ held Myanmar responsible for genocide over its 2017 military campaign against the Rohingya Muslim minority, which involved thousands of killings and widespread sexual violence, Arab Weekly reported.

Gambia brought the case seven years ago, with backing from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It was the first time the ICJ had held a state responsible for genocide and the fourth time since the Nazi Holocaust that an international court had found that genocide had taken place.

Myanmar and Israel have both rejected accusations that their military campaigns were intended to destroy a civilian population. Myanmar said its forces were pursuing Rohingya militants in a counterterrorism operation. Israel claims its offensive in Gaza targets Hamas rather than Palestinians as a group.

The New York Times said the Myanmar verdict had shed light on issues that could become significant in the proceedings against Israel. Janina Dill, an international humanitarian law expert at Oxford University, told the newspaper that the judgment had helped clarify some of the legal questions facing the court in South Africa's case.

Yuval Shany, an international law expert at Hebrew University, told the New York Times that the majority's reasoning might give judges in the Israel case more room to examine the wider circumstances surrounding military operations. That could strengthen South Africa's arguments, he said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

New initiative seeks to bring Iranian handicrafts to global markets: Soleimani



TEHRAN – The Kimia handicrafts, launched by the Dafineh Museum Group of the Mostazafan Foundation, aims to add value to traditional Iranian crafts through storytelling and introduce products inspired by the country's museum collections to international markets, the group's chief executive has said.

Hamidreza Soleimani made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the Kimia handicrafts exhibition at the Malek House of Innovation and Creative Center in Mashhad, describing the initiative as a new approach to promoting Iranian handicrafts.

He said planning for the brand began about a year ago, with the initiative seeking to distinguish itself by developing a specific narrative for each handicraft item.

Under this approach, each product is accompanied by a story that highlights its cultural, historical or artistic significance, creating additional value and making it more appealing to potential buyers, Soleimani explained.

Kimia produces both functional and decorative handicrafts, including contemporary adaptations and smaller-scale reproductions inspired by notable objects and artworks preserved in the Dafineh Museum Group's collections.

Soleimani said the initiative was launched in Mashhad, with the first program taking place near the Imam Reza (AS) shrine. He added that the project seeks to identify and support talented artisans across Iran and provide them with opportunities to reach wider markets.

Around 200 handicraft pieces were presented at the exhibition. According to Soleimani, the organizers plan to introduce the works to international markets, helping promote Iranian culture while generating foreign currency earnings through handicraft exports.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Safavid-era bathhouse in Isfahan reopens after restoration



TEHRAN – The historic Shah Bathhouse in Isfahan, a notable example of Safavid-era architecture, has reopened following restoration and rehabilitation work carried out with private-sector investment.

The reopening ceremony was held on Thursday, in the presence of Isfahan Governor-General Mehdi Jamalinejad, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, head of the Investment Center at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Mojtaba Shokri, acting head of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund, and provincial cultural heritage officials.

Located next to Isfahan's historic bazaar, the approximately 2,000-square-meter complex features traditional vaulted spaces and domed structures. Its restoration was undertaken with the participation of a private investor.

The bathhouse has now resumed operations as a sample of traditional Iranian hammam offering hygiene and therapeutic services, alongside a cultural complex centered on a museum. The project has created 30 direct jobs, according to officials.

The rehabilitation is part of a broader approach adopted by the Revitalization and Utilization Fund, affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, to encourage private investment in historic properties. Under this scheme, selected monuments are leased to qualified investors, often through long-term agreements, in return for their restoration, maintenance and adaptive reuse for cultural or tourism-related purposes.

The initiative is intended to address funding constraints facing the preservation of Iran's extensive historical heritage while giving restored monuments a sustainable role in contemporary urban life.

Speaking at the ceremony, Jamalinejad praised the investor's contribution, saying the protection and revival of the country's valuable heritage depended on the commitment of individuals willing to safeguard its historical assets.

He also reaffirmed the provincial administration's support for restoration projects and efforts to facilitate private-sector participation in the preservation of historic buildings.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Iran's Beiranvand named AFC Player of the Year

TEHRAN - History was made on Thursday at the AFC Awards Bangkok 2026 as Alireza Beiranvand became the first goalkeeper ever to be crowned the AFC Player of the Year.

The Iran custodian fended off competition from Saudi Arabian duo Feras Al Brikan and Salem Al Dawsari to land the top honor at the Aksra Theatre King Power, which hosted the 30th edition of the gala.

Beiranvand, who was nominated for a second time after 2019 and is only the second goalkeeping nominee after Saudi Arabian Mohamed Al Deayea (1996), is the fifth Iran player to claim the accolade after Khodadad Azizi (1996), Ali Daei (1999), Mehdi Mahdavikia (2003) and Ali Karimi (2004).

The 34-year-old shone on the biggest stage during the FIFA World Cup 2026, making a total of 15 saves as the Central Asians missed out on progress from the Group Stage in heartbreaking fashion via goal difference. In particular, the custodian reminded everyone of his world-class abilities with an outrageous point-blank stop to foil Maxim De Cuyper during the 0-0 draw against Belgium – one of seven saves in a Player of the Match performance.

On the club front, the 1.95m-tall shot-stopper was ever-present for Tractor FC in the AFC Champions League Elite 2025/26. Back in the competition for the first time since 2021, Beiranvand kept five clean sheets in nine matches to help the Tabriz-based side reach the Round of 16 and equal their best-ever finish. Domestically, he only missed three games as Tractor finished second in the league to seal a second consecutive direct qualification for the AFC Champions League Elite.

Beiranvand has kept 39 clean sheets in 90 appearances for Team Melli and is their most-capped goalkeeper.

Jafari retains her crown as AFC Women's Coach of the Year

TEHRAN - After making history as the first-ever recipient from Iran last year, Marziyeh Jafari has now become only the second person to claim back-to-back AFC Coach of the Year (Women) accolades.

In taking home the honor at the AFC Awards Bangkok 2026 on Thursday evening, the 44-year-old follows in the footsteps of record seven-time winner Asako Takakura of Japan, who clinched the award between 2012-2015 and 2017-2019.

Jafari was recognized for achievements at both club and international level in 2025/26, where she served at the helm of Bam Khatoon FC and the Iran women's national team.

She guided Bam Khatoon during the Group Stage of the AFC Women's Champions League (AWCL) and also to a fifth straight league title and 12th overall – both records. That sealed a place in the Preliminary Stage of the AWCL 2026/27 edition, in which they have since successfully advanced to the Group Stage to chalk up a fifth Continental Finals appearance – the most of any women's club in Asia.

A native of Bam who began her coaching journey at 17 and has been with Bam Khatoon since 2008, Jafari has brought success over to the global stage and led them at the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026. Having spearheaded their qualification for a second consecutive edition of the showpiece, she oversaw respectable performances from the Iranian Lionesses as they bowed out at the Group Stage.

First Announcement

KSC

INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER IN TWO STEPTS
No. :515947
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE
5,000 MT UHP Grade Graphite Electrode 600 mm with respective nipples

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

Description: UHP Grade Graphite Electrode with respective nipples as per following specification

Bulk Density:	1.65 – 1.75 g/cm³
Real Density:	2.22 – 2.25 g/cm³
Porosity:	21 – 27 %
Ash Content:	0.2 % Max.
Specific Resistance:	4.5– 6.5 μΩm
Bending Strength:	110 -140 Kgf/Cm²
Young's Modules:	7.8 – 11.8 GPa
Co-efficient Of Thermal expansion:	0.3 – 1 10⁻⁶ /°C

Graphite Electrode Dimensions:

Electrode Diameter:	600 mm
Electrode Length:	2400 mm

Nipple Specification:

Nipple Diameter:	317.50 mm
Nipple Length:	457.20 mm
Socket Depth:	234.60 mm
Number of Thread:	4 Thread per Inch
Thread Type:	Tapered Thread

Note1: BIDDER SHALL SUBMIT WITH TENDER A BID BOND ISSUED BY AN IRANIAN BANK OR BY A EUROPEAN FIRST CLASS BANK , IN THE AMOUNT OF 789.967.200.000 Rials OR 374,427 EUR FOR 5,000 MT GRAPHITE ELECTRODE Dia.600mm AND MAY REDUSED IN PROPORTION WITH THE QUANTITY OF BIDDERS OFFER.
ACCOUNT NUMBER FOR THE FINANCIAL BLOCK TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TENDER:

1) ACCOUNT No.0102513186002 AT "MELLI BANK OF IRAN AHVAZ KSC BRANCH"
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First Announcement

KSC

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1,000 MT UHP Grade Graphite Electrode 450 mm with respective nipples

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:
Description: UHP Grade Graphite Electrode with respective nipples as per following specification

Bulk Density:	1.65 – 1.75 g/cm³
Real Density:	2.22 – 2.25 g/cm³
Porosity:	21 – 27 %
Ash Content:	0.2 % Max.
Specific Resistance:	4.5– 6.5 μΩm
Bending Strength:	110 -140 Kgf/Cm²
Young's Modules:	7.8 – 11.8 GPa
Co-efficient Of Thermal expansion:	0.3 – 1 10⁻⁶ /°C

Graphite Electrode Dimensions:

Electrode Diameter:	450 mm
Electrode Length:	1800 mm

Nipple Specification:

Bulk Density :	1.75 – 1.85 g/cm³
Porosity:	18-25%
Ash Content:	0.2% Max.
Specific Resistance:	3-4.5 Micro Ohm Meter
Bending Strength:	25-28 N/mm² (MPa)
Young's Modules:	16.5-19.5 KN/mm² (GPa)
Co- efficient Of The Thermal expansion	0.3-1.0
Nipple Diameter:	241.30 mm
Nipple Length:	355.60 mm
Socket Depth:	183.8 mm
Number of Thread:	4 Thread per Inch
Thread Type:	241 T4L

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CITEX: Tehran unveils its smart future

Tehran Times exclusive: from rescue robots to national metro train in Milad Tower





From page 1 ▸ In the crisis management section, technology was showcased both as a tool for educating citizens and as a means of gathering information for urban authorities. A virtual reality earthquake simulator was one example of its educational applications. Users are placed in a simulated environment to familiarize themselves with potential hazards and the decisions they may need to make during an earthquake.

Another technology on display involved image processing to monitor water flows in urban canals and waterways. The system analyzes camera footage to detect rising water levels and potentially hazardous conditions, sending alerts to the relevant authorities for timely action.

In the transportation section, the National Metro Train was displayed to highlight domestic manufacturing capabilities and support the expansion of public transportation fleets. The train has an 85-percent localization rate and is expected to join Tehran's existing metro fleet.

Visitors also had the opportunity to experience virtual cycling along a simulated route through one of Tehran's parks. Using a camera and a virtual reality headset, participants could pedal along the route and enjoy a virtual tour of the park. The experience is based on digital twin technology, which enables the recreation of a real-world location in a digital environment, preserving its details and dimensions.

According to the organizers, showcasing a product at an exhibition is only the first step. Bringing an innovation into the urban services system requires a clearly defined process for evaluation, testing, financial support, and eventual procurement or deployment.

National biodiversity action plan finalized to halt nature loss

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has released the final revision of the 'National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP3)', which provides a framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve harmony with nature by 2050 through effective, comprehensive national participation.

The NBSAP3 has been developed through a participatory and forward-looking process, drawing upon the long-standing Iranian tradition of respect for nature, consistent with the national and global goals and the country's commitments to biodiversity, IRNA reported.

The strategy is designed to establish a national framework for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity, aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

The NBSAP aims to safeguard Iran's valuable natural assets by making biodiversity conservation an integral part of national development, public well-being, and Iranian identity. It seeks to achieve this through broad-based engagement involving all levels of government and society.

Speaking on October 16, at the summit of heads of state and government held as part of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17) in Yerevan, President Masoud Pezeshkian called for "peace diplomacy" to protect biodiversity, condemning the devastating environmental impact of wars of aggression as ecocide and urging the international community to establish effective, transparent, and enforceable mechanisms to safeguard natural heritage during wartime.

Pezeshkian described environmental cooperation as a bridge between nations, stressing that biodiversity conservation could serve as an important pillar of "peace diplomacy."

"In a region facing security crises stemming from the illegal and expansionist presence of powers, as well as climate change, water scarcity and ecosystem degradation, environmental cooperation can build bridges between nations," he said.

"Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in history when biodiversity is no longer merely a scientific or environmental concern. It is also an issue of peace and security, human health, food and water security, and intergenerational justice for all the inhabitants of our planet," Pezeshkian stressed.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran was among the first countries to recognize the legal and international significance of this issue and become a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). However, Iran's relationship with biodiversity goes far beyond its membership in an international convention.

With an ancient tradition of living in harmony with nature and an extraordinary diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic resources, Iran is the custodian of an invaluable and irreplaceable natural wealth. This heritage is the result of millions of years of evolution, natural dynamism and adaptation, and is reflected in the culture, customs, livelihoods, indigenous knowledge and historical identity of the people of this land.

Owing to its exceptional geographical location, Iran lies at the intersection of several biogeographical regions. From the Hyrcanian and Arasbaran forests to the Zagros Mountains, and from arid and desert landscapes to the coasts of the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Caspian Sea, Iran is home to thousands of plant and animal species, as well as valuable genetic resources. These natural assets underpin the country's ecological stability and sustainability, provide a vital foundation for water and food security and human health, strengthen resilience to natural hazards, and serve as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

In Iran, biodiversity, together with climatic and geographical diversity, is deeply intertwined with human history and civilization. Friendship with, respect for and protection of nature are integral to the cultural, religious and ritual identity of Iranians. Nature has long been regarded as an inseparable part of human life and a trust to be preserved for future generations. Many traditional ways of life, agricultural and livestock-raising practices, the use of medicinal plants, and the indigenous knowledge of Iranian communities have evolved over time through an understanding of and adaptation to nature, reflecting thousands of years of interaction between humans and the natural world.



For Iran, therefore, biodiversity conservation means far more than protecting species and their habitats. It means safeguarding a natural, cultural and civilizational heritage."

Data-driven strategies to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts

Iran ranks among the top 20 countries in the world for biodiversity and is home to a variety of plant and animal species. However, in recent years, certain actions have destroyed habitats and pushed many species to the brink of extinction.

So far, more than two million plant and animal species have been identified in the world, of which 43,000 exist in Iran. In fact, there are 11 types of ecosystems in the world, including aquatic, terrestrial, natural, and artificial ecosystems. Iran has 9 of these 11 ecosystems. Also, out of the 42 types of wetlands in the world, 41 types have been identified in Iran.

According to the DOE, some 2,000 animal species, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and inland fish, and about 1,200 fish species have been identified in the country's ecosystems. Of these species, 210 mammal species, 640 bird species, 300 reptile species, 23 amphibian species, and 350 inland fish species can be mentioned. However, Iran's biodiversity, like the rest of the world, faces many challenges such as habitat destruction, overhunting, drought, and climate change.

To strengthen the protection of wildlife species and habitats across the country based on a targeted and strategic approach, the DOE is implementing a comprehensive range of conservation, scientific, legal and operational initiatives, with priorities guided by data and scientific research.

The DOE focuses on a more scientific approach to develop and implement conservation efforts tailored to specific needs of each species and habitat, IRNA quoted Peyman Valizadeh, an official with the DOE, as saying.

It has so far prepared plans for the preservation of 25 endangered species, with thirteen more plans being developed. The plans provide a clear framework for species conservation by delineating the species' status, major threats, conservation priorities, necessary actions, and assessment indicators, he noted.

However, the DOE faces some challenges to implement these measures at national and provincial levels. One of the biggest challenges is securing funding to implement the plans. Developing specialized capacity to preserve species is the other problem. Lack of trained, specialized forces has made it difficult to implement the conservation action plans effectively. Therefore, training specialized personnel, developing experts' capacities in provinces, and strengthening scientific and technical capabilities of the headquarters are put on the agenda, the official highlighted.

More Iranian universities in UI GreenMetric University Rankings

TEHRAN – A total of 47 Iranian universities are featured on the 17th edition of the GreenMetric World University Rankings 2026, up from 44 universities in 2025.

The 17th edition of the rankings showcases 2016 institutions across 110 countries, making it the largest global university ranking system dedicated to assessing institutional sustainability performance. In 2026, the ranking was renamed the UI GreenMetric Sustainable University Rankings.

Razi University of Kermanshah, with a total score of 8,4485, ranked first in Iran and 79th in the region, and 143rd worldwide; in 2025, it ranked 147th. Tarbiat Modares University, with a global ranking of 160, is placed 93 in the region, and second in the country. University of Kashan is placed third in the country, 100th in the region. It ranked 172 globally.

Alzahra University (202), University of Zanjan (452), Kashan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services (454), University of Mohaqeq Ardabili (524), Zanjan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services (573), University of Birjand (854), and Yazd University (884) are ranked fourth to tenth.

This year, a new theme has been introduced, "Advancing Sustainable Campuses through Governance, Digitalization, and Integrated Performance." It will continue to encourage greater participation from universities worldwide, fostering a collective commitment to building sustainable campuses for the future.

Universitas Indonesia (UI) initiated a world university ranking in 2010, known through 2025 as the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, to measure universities' sustainability efforts. It was designed as an online survey to capture sustainability policies and programs implemented by universities across the globe.

The ranking is broadly based on the conceptual framework of Environment, Economy, and Equity. Its categories, indicators, and weightings are intended to be relevant to a wide range of stakeholders while minimizing bias as much as possible. Data collection and submission are designed to be relatively straightforward and typically require a reasonable amount of staff time.

In the 2010 edition, 95 universities from 35 countries participated: 18 from America, 35 from Europe, 40 from Asia, and two from Australia. In the 2025 edition, 1,745 universities from 105 countries participated.

This growth reflects the global recognition of the UI GreenMetric as a pioneering sustainability-focused university ranking.

Starting in 2026, the ranking was renamed the UI GreenMetric Sustainable University Rankings. The theme for 2026 is "Advancing Sustainable Campuses through Governance, Digitalization, and Integrated Performance." This highlights how universities strengthen sustainability through effective governance structures, transparent leadership, and accountable policies.

UI GreenMetric Sustainable University Rankings evaluates university policies and performance using the following seven categories:

Setting and Infrastructure (11 percent), Energy and Climate change (20 percent), Waste (17 percent), Water (11 percent), Transportation (17 percent), Education and Research (13 percent), and Governance and Digitalization (11 percent).

Recent rankings

The 2026 Leiden Ranking Traditional Edition has included 45 Iranian universities among the top 1,618 universities worldwide.

In 2025, 48 Iranian universities were included, placing the country first among Islamic nations in terms of the number of universities for the second consecutive year.

The University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 182), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (230), and Iran University of Science and Technology (388) are ranked first to third in the country.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (390), Tarbiat Modares University, Amirkabir University of Technology, University of Tabriz, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences are placed fourth to tenth, respectively.

Leiden Ranking Open Edition has included 80 Iranian universities. Tehran University of Medical Sciences is placed first in the country (ranking 154 globally), followed by University of Tehran (172), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (316), Iran University of Science and Technology (431), Tarbiat Modares University (440) are the top five universities in the country.

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Ranking has included 50 Iranian universities in the list of top universities in 2027, up from 48 universities in 2026.

University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 114, ranks first among Iranian universities, Mehr news agency reported.

Sharif University of Technology (ranking 130 globally) and Amirkabir University of Technology (ranking 191 globally), Iran University of Science and Technology (192), Shahid Beheshti University (232), Isfahan University of Technology (244), University of Tabriz (254), Shiraz University (303), K.N. Toosi University of Technology (343), Babol Noshirvani University of Technology (355), and Shiraz University of Technology (359) are ranked second to tenth.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027 placed 75 Iranian universities among the top institutions.

The 2027 rankings include 2,297 institutions from 118 countries and territories. There are 106 new entries compared with last year.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, and Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences are the top universities in the country with a global ranking of 401-450.

Sharif University of Technology and University of Tehran are placed second, ranking 401-500 globally.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (501-550), Shiraz University of Technology (551-600), and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (651-700) are placed third to fifth.

Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS) has evaluated Iranian institutions across 33 out of 57 academic subjects in the fields of Natural Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Iranian universities had better performance in Engineering and Medical Sciences with 70 and 24 subjects, respectively.

The Round University Ranking (RUR) 2026 has placed 41 Iranian universities among the world's top universities, up from 36 in 2025.

This year's ranking includes 1,313 universities from 99 countries, providing one of the most comprehensive views of institutional performance across the global higher education landscape.

The Islamic Azad University, ranked 90 globally (up from 93 in 2025), ranks first in the country.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks (119), University of Tehran (180), Iran University of Science and Technology (235), Sharif University of Technology (271), Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (323), University of Tabriz (375), Isfahan University of Technology (441), Shahid Beheshti University (457), and K.N. Toosi University of Technology (505), rank second to tenth.

Based on the Teaching Ranking dimension, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, and University of Tehran are placed first to third, with global rankings of 22, 48, and 109, respectively.

In the Research Ranking dimension, Iran University of Science and Technology (146), Sharif University of Technology (151), and Islamic Azad University (189) are the top three universities in the country.

In the International Diversity Ranking dimension, Islamic Azad University, with a global ranking of 313, is placed first, followed by University of Religions and Denomination (579), and Imam Hossein University (608).

In the Financial Sustainability Ranking dimension, Imam Hossein University (161), Iran University of Science and Technology (237), and Baqir al-Olum University rank first to third.

Shanghai University ranking 2026 has placed six Iranian universities among the top 1,000 institutions worldwide, unchanged compared to the past year. In total, more than 2500 universities are ranked, and the best 1000 are published.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 501-600, are jointly placed first in the country, IRNA reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, and Tarbiat Modares University rank third to sixth, respectively.

TEHRAN TIMES

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NOVEMBER 21, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The people whom I hate the most and who are the farthest from me on the Day of Judgment are those who talk uselessly, and those who put down others, and those who show off when they talk.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:14 Dawn: 5:19 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:47 (tomorrow)

Italian composer Antonio Pappalardo composes requiem for Martyr Leader



TEHRAN – Italian composer Antonio Pappalardo, who traveled to Iran to perform his work "Petros Eni," has announced that he has composed a requiem for the Martyr Leader.

Prior to the performance of "Petros Eni," Pappalardo met with the CEO of the Roudaki Foundation to discuss the potential for artistic cooperation and the international performance of musical works accompanied by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, ISNA reported.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nasir Heidarian and accompanied by the choir, performed this work on Wednesday, November 18, at Vahdat Hall in Tehran.

Referring to a book he recently read regarding the Martyr Leader, Pappalardo spoke about how he was inspired by its content, and said that he has written an elegy on this subject which he intends to perform after February 2027.

Mohammad Allahyari, CEO of the Roudaki Foundation, noted the Martyr Leader's interest in and familiarity with art, poetry, and music, emphasizing the importance of recognizing his cultural and artistic perspectives.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was martyred following the launch of the latest bout of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against Iran on February 28.

Allahyari added that due to the public enthusiasm, all tickets for the performance had been sold. He further described the artistic capacities of the foundation, its performance halls, and the activities of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra and the National Orchestra of Iran.

He also noted that, based on the experience of international performances by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, this ensemble serves as a vital vehicle for introducing Iranian culture and art to the global stage.

Pappalardo provided details regarding the creation of "Petros Eni" and highlighted the significance of November 18 in the Christian calendar. He discussed the potential for performing this work alongside the Tehran Symphony Orchestra in other countries and emphasized the necessity of introducing Iranian culture and civilization to a global audience.

"Petros Eni" was composed in 2006 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the start of construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. The work is an oratorio that recounts the life and mission of Saint Peter through musical narration, utilizing the capabilities of a symphony orchestra and a choir.

The performance of this work in Tehran coincided with the 400th anniversary of the consecration of the current St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, which was consecrated in 1626. This coincidence lends a historical and cultural dimension to the upcoming performance, turning it into an opportunity to represent the cultural and spiritual links between nations.

The event was organized through a joint initiative involving the Roudaki Foundation, the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, and Iran's cultural center in Italy. It aimed to expand cultural and artistic exchanges between the two countries and promote dialogue among different cultures and religious traditions.

Macklemore shares new song and video, benefitting Gazan mothers and children



Just weeks after controversy erupted around his "Free Palestine" comments onstage while opening for Ed Sheeran, Macklemore has released a new song and video called "Where's Our Love" that amounts to a plea for peace in the Middle East and other troubled areas across the globe — including the US.

The video is filled with imagery from Gaza and other Palestinian areas, some of it heartwarming, some of it disturbing, but there's no question that the upshot of the message is a plea to stop the killing and oppression — From "Sudan to the Congo, Palestine to Haiti / America being terrorized by ICE agents, quote the Bible and then regurgitate hatred / And what the hell happened to loving thy neighbor / The kids in the Congo mining for cobalt to put into our phones / So we can argue about what genocide is on the internet / As our Teslas drive us home."

The song itself is in a familiar musical format, with a piano chord and a choir-like chorus intoning the songs title acting as a backdrop for Macklemore's lyrics — which, it should be noted, contain nothing resembling hate speech. However, any attempt to address such a divisive issue in 2026 is doomed to be misunderstood, Variety reported.

The upshot of the song arrives in its closing lyrics: "And if the words 'Free Palestine' are more hurtful than the babies killed / Then I don't know / But any revolution in the history of the world wasn't built on hope alone."

The announcement states that all proceeds from the song will go to the Mother of Hind Fund to support mothers and children in Gaza.

"Where's Our Love" follows prior protest singles "Hind's Hall" and "Hind's Hall 2," both named for Hind Rajab, a five-year-old Palestinian girl who was killed alongside her family in Gaza by Israeli forces during the invasion, and the Columbia University student protestors who commandeered Hamilton Hall and renamed it in Hind's honor.

Macklemore has been vociferously supporting the Palestinian people for years now, and he escalated his efforts in recent months. After what happened at the Ed Sheeran concert on Labor Day weekend, he was dropped from the tour, sparking an even bigger controversy. Sheeran's other opening acts and backing band backed out in protest, while Macklemore donated $1 million in tour proceeds to Palestinian aid organizations and announced his "Free Palestine Tour". The tour is underway overseas, but Macklemore says US arenas aren't willing to host it.

Intl. writers recognized for six-word story award honoring Minab schoolchildren

TEHRAN- The winners of the international six-word story award "Minab School – 168 Unfinished Short Stories" were announced during a closing ceremony attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi and a number of cultural officials and artists in Tehran on Thursday.

The ceremony took place at the Hejab Hall of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) and honored 10 Iranian and 10 international writers selected for the competition, Mehr reported.

The international winners are Syeda Hijab Zahra Naqvi from Pakistan, Saeideh Daryaeva from Serbia, Karina Dmitrievna Korzunova from Belarus, Hector Armando Perez from Nicaragua, Fabio Zucchi from Italy, Nabih Ali Ahmad from Lebanon, Lenka Dodarin from Serbia, Marie-Ange Somda and Wama Maina from Burkina Faso, and Mariko Papa from Mali.

The 10 Iranian winners are Mohammad Eskandari, Narjes Rastakhiz, Nahid Baqeri, Parsa Norouzi, Abolfazl Roshan-Afshar, Fatemeh Khoshnood, Hadis Arfavi, Ali Hasheminia, Soghra Abbasi, and Najmeh Tahani.

The award, titled "Minab School – 168 Unfinished Short Stories," was launched in memory of the 168 people, including schoolchildren and teachers, who were killed in the February 28 attack on the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, during the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

The competition invited writers to convey stories in exactly six words, using an exceptionally concise literary form to address themes including children's rights, peace, patriotism, and hope.

According to figures previously released by the award's secretariat, the inaugural edition attracted 16,158 submissions from 3,354 writers in 38 countries, reflecting considerable international interest in the initiative.

The literary initiative seeks to keep the memory of the victims alive through creative expression and provide a platform for writers from different countries to respond to the tragedy.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict's opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

An analysis by Al Jazeera's digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Furthermore, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three separate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

Cartoon of Day



Children of War

Cartoonist: Bouali Mbarek from Canada

Tehran session to explore relationship between Iranian cinema, philosophy

TEHRAN- A number of Iranian academics and cinema figures will discuss the relationship between Iranian cinema and philosophy during a special session marking the National Day of Wisdom and Philosophy.

Organized by the Iran Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs, the program is scheduled to take place at the Iran Cinema Museum in Tehran on Monday.

The session, titled "Iranian Cinema and Philosophy," will bring together scholars and cultural figures to examine how philosophical thought is reflected in Iranian filmmaking and how cinema can serve as a medium for exploring fundamental questions about human existence.

Speakers will include Esmaeil Bani-Ardalan, a faculty member at the Art University; Ahmadreza Motamedi, a filmmaker and faculty member at Soore University; and Shamsolmoluk Mostafavi, a faculty member at Islamic Azad University.

Raed Faridzadeh, head of the Iran Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs, and Seyyed Rouhollah Hosseini, the organization's deputy for technological development and cinematic studies, are also scheduled to participate.

The event's introductory statement describes cinema as thought brought to the screen, providing a space in which questions about humanity, time and truth can be explored through images. It also highlights the longstanding engagement of Iranian cinema with questions of life, love and meaning, describing it as a field of reflection and intellectual inquiry.

The program will also feature the unveiling of "The Other Is Hell", a book by Saeideh Ajorbandian that examines the dramatic works of American playwright Sam Shepard through the lens of French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist thought.

The book, published by Yekshanbeh Publishing House in Tehran, offers a philosophical analysis of Shepard's plays, exploring the existentialist ideas reflected in his dramatic universe. It considers the relationship between Shepard's characters and the human condition, drawing on Sartre's philosophical perspective to examine questions of identity, existence and human relationships.

The gathering aims to provide an opportunity to examine the philosophical dimensions of Iranian cinema and discuss the ways in which cinematic expression engages with ideas and questions central to human experience.