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Iraq's government and Kataib Hezbollah agree on a middle ground

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – The Iraqi government has backed down from threats to deploy the army and forcibly remove Kataib Hezbollah members from a town near Baghdad.

The agreement reached between the two sides is essentially a phased redeployment arrangement by Kataib Hezbollah in the town of Jurf al-Nasr, rather than a complete withdrawal or disarmament. ▸ Page **5**

UK shamelessly admits to offensive cyber strikes on Iran, three other nations

By staff writer

TEHRAN — A British four-star general has shamelessly claimed that his country's hackers are operating inside the computer networks of Iran, Russia, China and North Korea. He produced no proof that any of the four had done anything to invite it.

Rob Magowan, who runs the Cyber and Specialist Operations Command, was asked whether the National Cyber Force carries out offensive missions. "Absolutely," he told Sky News.

The force can supposedly map an "adversary's" systems and "achieve effect inside that network," and anyone who tries something will "meet that threat with threat," he claimed. ▸ Page **5**

Arab National Congress backs resistance in West Asia

TEHRAN – The Arab National Congress (ANC) on Saturday expressed support for resistance against Israeli and U.S. wars of aggression targeting the peoples of countries belonging to the resistance bloc, also called the Axis of Resistance.

The congress opened in Beirut, Lebanon's capital, brought together political, intellectual and national figures, including ANC Secretary General Maher al-Taher, Al Mayadeen said on its English website.

Al-Taher, delivering a keynote address, said the Palestinian people's steadfastness in the Gaza Strip and their refusal to surrender will remain etched in history. He said the events of that followed Operation al-Aqsa Flood on Oct. 7, 2023, placed the Palestinian cause at the top of the agenda of people around the world. ▸ Page **5**

Iran seeks to strengthen cross-border tourism cooperation with its neighbors: Shojaei

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Iran is seeking to make better use of its border provinces' tourism potential by strengthening direct cooperation with neighboring countries, Moslem Shojaei, director general of marketing and foreign tourism development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, says.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Shojaei outlined a fresh initiative, which aims to build tourism partnerships between Iranian border provinces and neighboring regions. The initiative seeks to give local tourism operators a greater role in international marketing, facilitate exchanges among tourism professionals and turn longstanding cultural, linguistic and commercial ties into new opportunities for attracting foreign visitors. ▸ Page **6**



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Two liquid-fueled missiles on one launcher at an IRGC missile facility, unveiled for the first time.

'Iran to Determine the Battlefield'

IRGC chief visits missile city with aerospace commander as new launcher unveiled

Iran reported that it had shot down an intruding drone off the coast of Bushehr and downed the 58th US MQ-9 drone over the Strait of Hormuz. It also unveiled a new twin missile launcher during a visit by the IRGC chief to a missile city and reported that tankers had been damaged in mine explosions and an F-16 fighter had sustained damage.

By staff writer

TEHRAN – Iran's Armed Forces reported a series of air defense and naval engagements in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, coupled with a high-profile visit by the chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to one of the country's underground missile cities.

The developments, announced by the IRGC and the Army on Saturday, underline Tehran's message that it retains full surveillance over southern waters and airspace and will respond to any violation.

New air defence downs intruding drone off Bushehr

In a statement issued at 17:00 Iran time on Saturday, the IRGC Public Relations said air defense units of the IRGC Aerospace Force had intercepted and destroyed a hostile reconnaissance drone after it violated Iranian airspace.

The statement said the drone was shot down in the northern Persian Gulf, in waters opposite the coasts of Bushehr, using what it described as a new and advanced IRGC air defense system, with precise and effective fire.

The IRGC stressed that any violation of Iran's airspace is unacceptable, adding that enemy attempts to use a wide range of reconnaissance and military equipment will be met with vigilance, readiness and a decisive response.

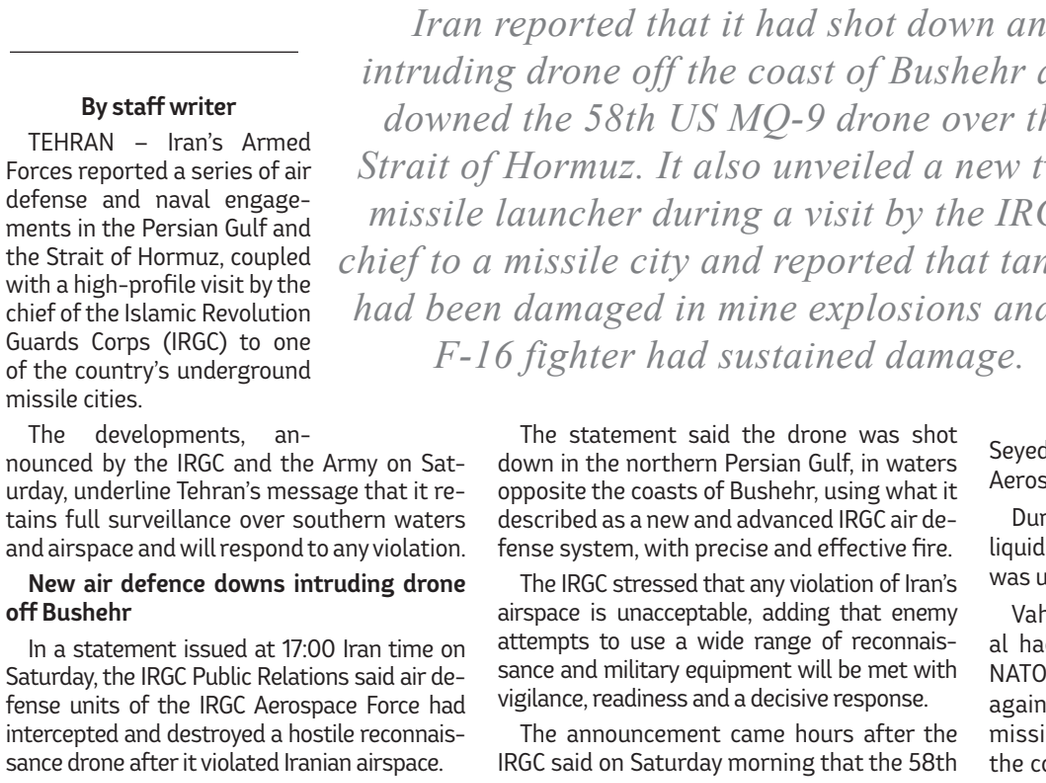
The announcement came hours after the IRGC said on Saturday morning that the 58th US MQ-9 drone had been intercepted and hit in the skies over the Strait of Hormuz.

Vahidi visits missile city as new launcher unveiled

On Saturday, IRGC Commander-in-Chief Major General Ahmad Vahidi visited one of the IRGC's missile cities to inspect its capacities, accompanied by Brigadier General Seyed Majid Mousavi, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force.

During the visit, a new twin launcher for liquid-fuel missiles of the Aerospace Force was unveiled.

Vahidi said the NATO secretary general had acknowledged 5,000 flights by all NATO countries in support of operations against Iran, a figure he described as an admission of the scale of mobilization against the country. ▸ Page **3**



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Pezeshkian praises Iranian economic players for foiling enemy's plans amid 'silent economic war'

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has praised Iranian investors, manufacturers, producers and businesspeople for sustaining economic activity and keeping domestic markets supplied during the recent wars of aggression, saying their efforts thwarted the enemy's plans to destabilize the country.

Addressing the annual capital market conference in Tehran on Saturday, November 21, Pezeshkian described the economic pressure facing Iran as a "silent economic war," which he said was in many respects more difficult than a military confrontation involving missiles and destruction. ▸ Page **2**

Araghchi: Iran's enriched uranium to be used solely in line with national needs

TEHRAN –Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reaffirmed that Iran's stockpiles of enriched uranium will remain under the country's control and be used in accordance with its national needs, stressing that no nuclear materials will be transferred abroad.

In an interview with the IRAN newspaper, Araghchi said Tehran has clearly defined red lines concerning its enriched uranium reserves, adding that any potential arrangement must safeguard Iran's national interests and address its requirements. ▸ Page **2**

Iran ranks among world's top 10 in polymer science

TEHRAN- Iran has joined the world's top 10 countries in polymer science, with senior Iranian polymer officials citing international scientometric rankings and a major international conference at Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT) as evidence of the field's growth.

According to Mehdi Nekoomanesh, president of the Iran Polymer Society, Iran ranked seventh in the world in polymer science based on Web of Science publication statistics for 2025, and tenth in the Scimago ranking in the subject category of polymers and plastics. He also said that, in terms of total scientific publications by universities, research institutes and other research centers in the polymer sciences category, Iran stands twelfth globally, while its 2025 Web of Science rank reached seventh. ▸ Page **4**

Tehran, Beijing seek closer cooperation on natural resources management

TEHRAN – Iranian and Chinese officials have discussed ways to strengthen environmental cooperation and update a memorandum of understanding on the sustainable management of natural resources.

Reza Aflatoni, head of Iran's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO), and Liu Guohong, head of China's National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), held talks on the sidelines of the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), held in Antalya, Türkiye, from November 9 to 20, ISNA reported.

The two sides also agreed to facilitate interaction and cooperation among institutions, organizations, and enterprises in the two countries. ▸ Page **7**

Iran advances in UN E-Government Development Index

TEHRAN – Iran has climbed 14 places in the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI), rising from 101st in 2024 to 87th in 2026, according to the UN website.

The report shows that Iran's EGDI score increased from 0.6564 in 2024 to 0.7427 in 2026, placing the country in the "high EGDI" group. It also points to measurable progress in expanding digital government services and developing the infrastructure needed to support digital governance, Mehr News Agency reported.

The E-Government Development Index presents the state of E-Government Development of the United Nations Member States. Along with an assessment of the website development patterns in a country, the E-Government Development Index incorporates the access characteristics, such as the infrastructure and educational levels, ▸ Page **7**

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Trump clings to every lifeline

Kayhan assessed Donald Trump's approach following what it described as the failure of confrontation and pressure against Iran. According to the paper, after encountering setbacks, Iran's enemies have shifted their focus toward negative media campaigns and efforts to generate unrest. It argued that recent economic, social, and media developments inside the country have coincided with the activities of opposition groups and statements from US officials. Viewed together, these events form a coordinated "hybrid war" strategy. Kayhan said Trump is pursuing a broader plan aimed at weakening Iran and that, after reaching a dead end through confrontation and pressure tactics, he now sees domestic instability as his most practical option. The commentary argued that attempts to fuel disorder are intended to occupy Iranian security institutions and create conditions favorable to future pressure. Recent developments should therefore be understood not as isolated incidents but as interconnected elements of a larger strategy directed against Iran.

Iran: ECO is a capacity that should be utilized

Amid shifting regional geopolitics, efforts by the United States to disrupt trade routes, and continuing economic pressures, the need for Iran to strengthen economic relations with neighboring countries has become increasingly important. In this context, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is viewed as a potentially significant platform for expanding trade and transit cooperation. In an interview with the Iran newspaper, Tehran University professor Akbar Valizadeh highlighted the growing geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of ECO. He argued that the organization has substantial potential to become an effective framework for regional cooperation. However, he stressed that this potential can only be realized if member states move beyond broad declarations and focus on practical projects that generate mutual benefits. ECO could help reduce part of the economic pressure facing Iran by facilitating transit, harmonizing trade procedures, expanding financial cooperation, and diversifying transportation routes. Tangible economic initiatives and greater coordination among member countries will determine whether the organization can play a larger role in regional development.

Jam-e-Jam: Admission of failure

Jam-e Jam examined a joint statement issued by the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom at the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors. The statement reaffirmed support for the agency's safeguards and verification functions and called on Tehran to resume full cooperation without delay. Quoting political analyst Abbas Salimi Namin, the report argued that the renewed focus on this issue amounts to an acknowledgment that previous pressure strategies failed to achieve their goals. He maintained that military and confrontational policies did not succeed in stopping Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and that Western governments are therefore returning to diplomatic and political mechanisms in an effort to exert influence. The analysis portrayed the emphasis on IAEA cooperation as evidence that alternative approaches are being revisited because earlier methods did not produce the desired results.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Overlapping interests among China, Russia and US favor diplomacy over war

Donya-e-Eqtesad analyzed the possibility of a trilateral meeting involving the leaders of the United States, Russia, and China in Shenzhen. According to the article, such a gathering would be less likely to signal the start of a new conflict involving Iran and more likely to represent a calculated diplomatic display amid a tense security environment. The significance of the proposed meeting lies in its ability to preserve both diplomatic engagement and strategic pressure simultaneously. It also discussed the deployment of three US aircraft carriers in the region. While acknowledging that these military movements have heightened tensions, the article suggested they also indicate that key actors are still assessing one another and searching for alternatives to confrontation. To understand the situation, the newspaper proposed examining three dimensions separately: the rationale behind a summit among the three leaders, the practical role of military deployments, and the factors that encourage or discourage war. In its assessment, overlapping interests among major powers are a more important driver of diplomacy than any immediate movement toward conflict.

Arman-e-Melli: Netanyahu seeks another war

Arman-e-Melli argued that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is experiencing political and strategic uncertainty and is attempting to persuade Trump and his team to adopt a tougher stance toward Tehran. According to the article, these efforts are unfolding while Iran and several regional actors, particularly mediators, are trying to reduce tensions and create conditions for a possible agreement. The paper claimed that Netanyahu seeks to obstruct this process and prevent closer engagement between Tehran and Washington. The analysis concluded that Israel continues to advocate stronger pressure on Iran, but it also stressed that significant regional and international forces oppose a return to open conflict. As a result, despite ongoing tensions and political maneuvering, many actors remain focused on avoiding another war and pursuing diplomatic alternatives instead.

Pezeshkian praises Iranian economic players for foiling enemy's plans amid 'silent economic war'

From page 1 ▸ "We are engaged in a silent war that is far more difficult than one in which missiles are launched, and destruction is caused. It is an economic war, one that you, as economic actors, are dealing with, and it is no easy battle," he said.

The president said Iran had faced an unequal and unjust confrontation in which its adversaries sought to undermine the country through military aggression and economic pressure. However, their objectives were frustrated by the resilience and collective efforts of the Iranian people, security and law enforcement forces, and economic players.

Pezeshkian noted that the enemy had anticipated severe shortages, commodity scarcity, and disruptions in domestic markets as a consequence of the war and mounting economic pressure. However, those expectations were not fulfilled, as production continued and economic actors managed to maintain the supply of essential goods.



He expressed appreciation to investors, manufacturers, producers and traders for their role in keeping the economy operational under difficult wartime conditions, emphasizing that their contribution had helped the country withstand pressure and prevent the anticipated disruption.

The president also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting the productive sector, particularly by ensuring a more reliable supply of electricity and natural gas. He stressed that industrial and production units should be the last sectors to face energy restrictions.

Pezeshkian said the government was prepared to work closely with investors and manufacturers to remove obstacles to business activity, revise problematic regulations and improve the operating environment for production.

He also called for reforms in the management of state-owned and affiliated companies, stronger productivity and more balanced pricing policies that safeguard the interests of both producers and consumers.

Emphasizing that investment alone would not be sufficient to strengthen the economy, Pezeshkian said it must be accompanied by competent management, higher productivity and more effective use of existing capacities.

He further stressed that acknowledging economic challenges and identifying their root causes were essential first steps toward addressing them, calling for coordinated efforts between the government and the private sector to reinforce domestic production and overcome the pressures facing the country.

Araghchi: Iran's enriched uranium to be used solely in line with national needs

From page 1 ▸ He said various proposals had been conveyed through mediators and could be considered, but stressed that the nuclear issue could not be dealt with in isolation and must form part of a comprehensive agreement addressing the broader issues.

Araghchi also outlined Iran's proposed roadmap for ending the conflict, explaining that the original Islamabad memorandum of understanding was no longer operational, although the commitments undertaken by the United States under the memorandum remained relevant.

He said Iran had subsequently put forward a seven-day plan, which was later reduced to two days. Under the proposal, Washington would first fulfill its commitments, followed by the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive final agreement.

The foreign minister said the proposal remained on the table, but emphasized that any resumption of negotiations would require the United States to explicitly demonstrate its willingness to reach an agreement and take confidence-building measures to prove its seriousness. Iran, he added, was also prepared to discuss the timing and implementation of its proposed conditions.

Araghchi attributed the complications surrounding diplomatic efforts partly to divisions within the US administration and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to draw Washington into another military confrontation. He said Netanyahu viewed renewed conflict as a means of securing his political survival.

Addressing Iran's nuclear doctrine and the debate over the possibility of reconsidering the country's membership in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Araghchi described the issue as a serious strategic discussion involving arguments on both sides. He nevertheless stressed that Iran's official nuclear doctrine remained unchanged, while expressing support for further expert-level deliberations.

The foreign minister said Iran sought to bring an end to the current state of neither war nor peace through an honorable agreement that would preserve the country's dignity and safeguard the achievements secured through its resistance during the war.

He emphasized that any eventual agreement would necessarily involve reciprocal concessions but must, above all, protect Iran's national interests.

Araghchi also highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in securing lasting peace, saying regional countries opposed a prolonged conflict and favored a sustainable political settlement. He rejected the notion that these countries would support the continuation of economic pressure and a blockade against Iran.

He identified inclusive regional security, economic development and cooperation among neighboring countries as essential foundations for lasting stability, stressing that regional states should not depend on foreign military forces to guarantee their security.

On diplomatic contacts, Araghchi confirmed that Qatar and Pakistan continued to serve as channels for exchanging messages and proposals between Tehran and Washington.

He said the mediation efforts were proceeding normally and that Iran had no intention of changing or expanding the existing channels. All contacts and proposals, he added, were being closely monitored by the country's relevant authorities.

The NYT builds the case for US strikes on Iran's dams

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – A recent article published by The New York Times, which attempts to link Iran's network of dams and hydraulic infrastructure to its missile program, has provoked considerable outrage in the country, where it is seen as something that could be used to justify future attacks on its water infrastructure if the conflict resumes.

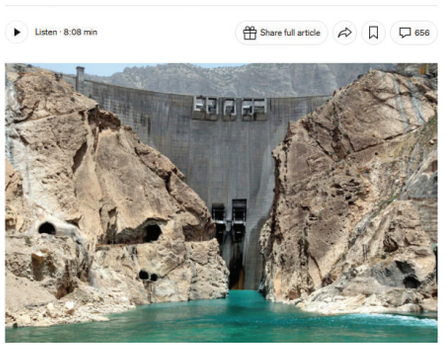
The article cited military analysts and water-resources specialists who speculated that the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps might be using the dams to supply electricity to underground missile facilities.

Sanam Mahoozi, one of the authors and herself Iranian, said on X: "There is no conclusive evidence, but these are questions worth raising."

The newspaper itself acknowledged that "given the secrecy surrounding Iran's missile program, any link between it and Iran's ambitious, decades-long initiative to build water infrastructure remains merely speculative. However, some experts believe the indications point clearly in that direction."

Kaveh Madani, director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health and a former senior Iranian environmental official, was one of the experts cited in the report and challenged the newspaper's reasoning. "Speculation is not evidence. Spatial proximity does not imply causation," he wrote on X, adding: "Not even those who have attacked Iran have made claims of this kind linking dams to missiles! This reductive and sensationalist account is an exercise in irresponsible journalism, with potentially dangerous consequences for civilian water supply infrastructure. The New York Times should know better."

It bears recalling that deliberately attacking the civilian population or civilian infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, water supply systems and power plants, is strictly prohibited under international law and constitutes a war crime. But to do so, it is necessary to construct a story in which dams and other civilian infrastructure are part of Iran's military complex.


War May Answer Longtime Riddle of Iranian Dams Built for No Clear Reason

Environmentalists have long puzzled over a wide network of water projects lacking any obvious justification. Then their areas were targeted in airstrikes.

Listen · 8:08 min Share full article 656

The aim of the article is clear: to portray Iran as a gigantic military machine in which everything is tied to the IRGC. In this narrative, Iran is not a normal country but an enormous military base in which the line between civilian and military blurs. That destroying the dams could unleash a chain of humanitarian and environmental catastrophes, including floods, displacement, agricultural losses and disruption of water and energy supplies, is a necessary risk, for which the Islamic Republic itself would, in any case, be responsible for having turned the country into a military base.

The article is a perfect example of the role played by the media, the NYT in particular, in what is known as the manufacturing of consent for war against Iran.

As the association of the Iranian Water Diplomacy noted in a statement, "International media have a responsibility that goes beyond publishing a hypothesis. When dealing with issues with humanitarian and legal consequences of this magnitude, they must clearly distinguish between verified data, circumstantial evidence, expert hypotheses and speculation. They should also consult specialists in hydrology, hydraulic engineering, environmental science, political geography, remote sensing and international law."

Beyond the technical response, Iranian authorities have also weighed in on the article and its political implications. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called the allegations "garbage" and described it as a pro-Israeli media of promoting narratives reminiscent of those that preceded the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

For his part, Iranian parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf accused the newspaper of preparing the ground for new attacks on civilian infrastructure and warned that this could trigger an Iranian response. "New rule: any dam, port or power plant located near a US or Israeli base is dual-use. We will apply your logic consistently and impartially," he posted on X.

This is not the first time the NYT has served to manufacture consent against countries labelled enemies by the US administration of the day.

In the period immediately before the invasion of Iraq, the NYT, like other outlets, among them CNN, repeated the lies about Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction". The parallels run deep: in December 2002, just months before the invasion, CNN went as far as reporting on an intelligence document suggesting that Iraq had a "dirty bomb".

In September 2002, then NYT journalist Judith Miller co-wrote a report which, citing US officials, claimed that Iraq had stepped up its search for nuclear weapons and that Baghdad was seeking aluminium tubes to enrich uranium.

Then Vice President Dick Cheney cited the newspaper's coverage of the aluminium tubes to bolster the case of President George W. Bush's administration against Iraq. Those claims were later discredited.

Publishing an article without conclusive evidence, as one of its own authors admits and as happened in the Iraqi case, yet one that fits the plans of the United States and Israel to attack and destroy Iran's civilian infrastructure, amounts to manufacturing consent for war crimes.

Regional states enabling US intervention must bear consequences: MP

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Parliament Speaker Hamidreza Haji Babaei has warned that regional countries paving the way for US intervention and military adventurism must bear responsibility for the insecurity and instability that follow.

Referring to the recent acts of aggression against Iran, Haji Babaei said the attacks were intended to strike at three fundamental pillars of the country: its ancient civilization, Islamic identity and people. Instead, he noted, they had demonstrated the resilience, strength and determination of the Iranian nation.

He said Iran's national identity was inseparable from its Islamic faith and deep-rooted civilization, which stretches back thousands of years. The country's longstanding monotheistic heritage, he added, became closely intertwined with Islamic culture and thought following the advent of Islam.

Haji Babaei said this combination of civilizational heritage, religious identity and the human potential of the Iranian people was among the sources of concern for Iran's adversaries.



Turning to the economic front, the deputy speaker stressed that breaking the US economic siege was essential to countering Washington's pressure campaign against Iran.

He said the continued movement of Iranian oil tankers should be viewed as part of the country's efforts to resist economic coercion and stand firm against 'global arrogance.'

Haji Babaei emphasized that Iran would not retreat in the face of US pressure or hostile actions, stressing that the country would continue on its chosen path by relying on its national will, capabilities, and resilience.

‘Iran to determine the battlefield’

IRGC chief visits missile city with aerospace commander as new launcher unveiled





From Page 1 ▶ What is happening to our enemies is only the beginning, he said, adding that their humiliation will be seen and that truth will prevail over falsehood.

Mousavi said the Aerospace Force is ready around the clock to carry out the orders of the Commander-in-Chief and the IRGC command. He said the force’s capabilities have increased in the interval between the two wars, with new surprises and effective systems added to its combat organization.

There will be no hesitation in exercising power and confronting threats, Mousavi said, adding: the field is in Iran’s hands and we determine the battlefield.

Strait of Hormuz: mines, tankers and the 58th MQ-9

The IRGC also detailed what it described as a US attempt on Friday night to facilitate the passage of tankers and the unauthorized transfer of cargoes through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to operational reports cited by the IRGC, the US Army employed extensive air cover, including refueling aircraft, F-16, F/A-18 and F-35 fighters, P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, several helicopters and MQ-series drones.

During those movements, two severe incidents involving explosions and fire were recorded for tankers in the southern part of the Strait, the IRGC said. The first occurred near Khasab port and the second early Saturday about three kilometers off the coast of Ghanam Island. The IRGC Navy’s public relations attributed the explosions to violating vessels striking naval mines.

The IRGC added that its new advanced air defense system destroyed a US MQ-9 reconnaissance-combat drone that was tasked with surveillance and air cover for the operation in the western Strait of Hormuz.

The IRGC Navy warned that any transit through the Strait of Hormuz with navigation systems switched off, via unauthorized routes and without coordination with the IRGC Navy’s traffic control center, will be treated as a violating transit and cooperation with the US Army and will be dealt with decisively.

Army: from east to west of strait under control

Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia visited Army units in the south during the same period, meeting commanders and personnel in Bandar Abbas, Kuhestak, the coastal line, Sirik and Jask.

He said the Armed Forces maintain full awareness of naval developments, stressing that from the east to the west of the Strait of Hormuz is under monitoring and control, and that operational readiness in controlling regional waters is evident.

Personnel of the Army’s Navy are monitoring the area around the clock with high morale, he said, adding that from the east of the strait to the northern Indian Ocean is under the Navy’s strategic control.

Akraminia said the United States pursued a set of objectives ranging from weakening nuclear and missile capabilities and dismantling the resistance front to changing the political structure, territorial disintegration and weakening Iranian identity. Judging by the attacker’s declared goals, he argued, the enemy failed to achieve its strategic objectives despite damage inflicted on the country.

He added that the readiness and motivation of personnel deployed on the eastern coasts of the strait have forced the enemy hundreds of kilometers back, saying Iran is stronger than before in both hard and soft domains and that the United States has no option but to accept Iran’s logical and legitimate conditions.

Separately, the Army Public Relations said on Friday evening, indigenous Army Air Defense systems deployed in the south, operating under the country’s integrated air defense network, detected and tracked a US F-16 fighter over the Persian Gulf. After tracking, the systems fired a missile toward the aircraft, and the explosion in its vicinity damaged the jet, forcing the pilot to abort the mission and make an emergency landing at one of the nearest regional airports.

Zolnour: No talks before US fulfills Iran’s seven conditions



TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has warned that Iran should not rush into negotiations with the United States until Washington fulfills the seven conditions set by Tehran, arguing that any sign of weakness would only encourage the US to press for further concessions.

Mojtaba Zolnour, the head of the Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, made the remarks in an interview with Mehr News Agency, referring to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution’s recent warning against the notion that making concessions to the United States could change its hostile attitude toward Iran.

He said repeated expressions of weakness by some officials, particularly their emphasis on the country’s economic difficulties and the need to reach an accommodation with the adversary, would only embolden the other side and harden its position.

“ We must engage with the other side from a position of strength, with our hands full, rather than give it any reason to believe that we are weak,” Zolnour said.

The lawmaker representing Qom stressed that the principle of negotiations, as authorized by the martyred Leader and the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, was not up for debate. The key questions, he said, were when talks should take place, what issues they should cover, and under what conditions and framework they should proceed.

Referring to the Leader’s guidance, Zolnour said Iran should not enter negotiations until the other side had met its conditions. Talks, he argued, should not be held simply for the sake of dialogue or to satisfy the other side’s desire for negotiations. They must lead to tangible results and be preceded by concrete steps.

Looking back at previous negotiations, he said the other side had accepted seven conditions but subsequently reneged on its commitments and walked away from the process.

Washington must now fulfill those same conditions to prove that it is prepared to honor its commitments, Zolnour said. Only then, he added, could Iran consider opening discussions on other issues.

He warned that Tehran should not be taken in by promises that are repeatedly made but never fulfilled. Iran must remain firm and pursue its interests rather than place undue trust in the other side’s assurances.

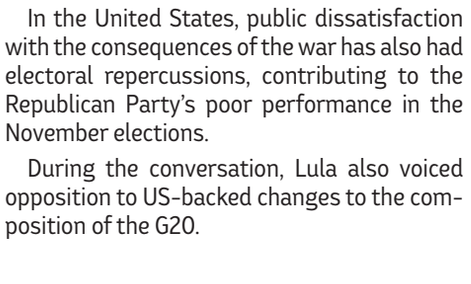
Zolnour also cautioned that projecting weakness on the economic front would play into the hands of Iran’s adversaries and could contribute to lower oil prices.

Reiterating that negotiations within clearly defined limits and conditions had been authorized, he said this did not mean talks could take place at any time or on any terms. Their timing, agenda, format and scope must all be determined in accordance with the country’s established position.

For now, he stressed, the priority is to ensure that the seven conditions are met. Welcoming negotiations would only make the other side less inclined to fulfill its commitments and respect the rights of the Iranian people.

“Iran must stand firm,” he said.

Lula says Iran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons, calls US claims ‘fabricated’



TEHRAN – Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has challenged Washington’s justification for its war against Iran, saying Tehran has no intention of developing nuclear weapons and accusing the United States of fabricating claims to legitimize military interventions abroad.

Speaking in a conversation with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, Lula criticized US President Donald Trump’s handling of the conflict and questioned the economic consequences of the war, particularly for poorer populations.

The remarks, reported by Brazil 247, were made public on Tuesday, November 17, in a video shared by Sánchez on social media, according to Brazil’s Folha de S.Paulo newspaper.

“They do not have a nuclear bomb, nor are they interested in building one. That is false. The United States invents stories to justify occupying other countries. Where are Saddam Hussein’s chemical weapons?” Lula said.

By referring to Saddam Hussein’s alleged chemical weapons, Lula drew a comparison with the claims used by Washington to justify its 2003 invasion of Iraq. He presented the example as evidence of what he described as a pattern of fabricated justifications for US military operations abroad.

The Brazilian president also questioned Trump’s strategy in the war against Iran, particularly Washington’s assessment of the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital maritime passage for international oil shipments.

“Trump starts a war and then claims he has won it when the war has only just begun. He did not know about the Strait of Hormuz... And what happened? The Strait of Hormuz became the powerful weapon Iran used against the United States. And who is paying the price? Trump paid a political price in the elections, but the people paying for it are the poor,” Lula said.

Lula’s comments come after nearly nine months of hostilities that have reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East and put pressure on international energy prices.

In the United States, public dissatisfaction with the consequences of the war has also had electoral repercussions, contributing to the Republican Party’s poor performance in the November elections.

During the conversation, Lula also voiced opposition to US-backed changes to the composition of the G20.

Iran condemns politically motivated UN resolution as instrument of pressure

TEHRAN – Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations has strongly condemned a Canadian-sponsored draft resolution on Iran’s human rights situation, describing it as a politically motivated attempt to exert pressure on the country under the pretext of human rights advocacy.

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council ahead of the November 18 vote, Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran’s ambassador and chargé d’affaires to the UN, called on member states to reject the resolution, accusing Canada and its Western allies of applying double standards and exploiting human rights issues to advance their geopolitical interests.

Darzi said country-specific resolutions of this nature violated the principles of sovereign equality, non-selectivity and non-interference enshrined in the UN Charter, adding that repeated attempts to single out Iran had done little to improve the lives of its people or address the consequences of military aggression and unilateral sanctions.

He also criticized the resolution’s sponsors for ignoring civilian casualties resulting from US-Israeli military aggression against Iran, particularly the killing of 168 schoolchildren and teachers in the attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab.

The Iranian envoy said the silence of Western governments over the deaths of Iranian civilians, including women and children, exposed the double standards underlying their human rights policies.

He further condemned attacks on civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, bridges, airports, industrial facilities, energy installations and cultural heritage sites, as well as economic sanctions and military restrictions that have affected Iranians’ access to basic rights and services.

Darzi argued that the annual resolutions had deepened political divisions and undermined the credibility of the UN human rights system rather than promoting genuine dialogue and international cooperation.

He stressed that Iran remained committed to constructive engagement with UN human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review and treaty bodies, but would not legitimize mechanisms that Tehran considers politically motivated and designed to advance fabricated narratives against the country.

The Iranian envoy urged all delegations committed to impartiality and the principles of the UN Charter to vote against the draft resolution, emphasizing that human rights should not be used as a tool of political pressure or applied selectively.

Iran ranks among world's top 10 in polymer science

TEHRAN- Iran has joined the world's top 10 countries in polymer science, with senior Iranian polymer officials citing international scientometric rankings and a major international conference at Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT) as evidence of the field's growth.

According to Mehdi Nekoomanesh, president of the Iran Polymer Society, Iran ranked seventh in the world in polymer science based on Web of Science publication statistics for 2025, and tenth in the Scimago ranking in the subject category of polymers and plastics. He also said that, in terms of total scientific publications by universities, research institutes and other research centers in the polymer sciences category, Iran stands twelfth globally, while its 2025 Web of Science rank reached seventh. These figures were presented at the opening ceremony of the 17th International Seminar/Conference on Polymer Science and Technology at Amirkabir University of Technology.

Nekoomanesh stressed that scientific progress should not be measured only by the number of published papers. Quality of research, innovation, technological advancement, the impact of scientific achievements on industry, and the development of international cooperation are also essential criteria. He noted that Iranian universities, research institutes and researchers have played an effective role in advancing polymer science in recent decades, including in synthesis, characterization and property determination, polymer processing, and the development of advanced materials. He added that polymer science and technology are central to addressing global challenges in advanced materials, health, energy, environmental protection and sustainable production. In particular, the shift toward a circular economy and the development of sustainable, recyclable and environmentally compatible polymers require innovative research and closer university-industry cooperation.

The Iran Polymer Society president said Iran is present in the global polymer science community and its contribution to advancing the field is increasing. Maintaining and strengthening this position depends on continued investment in research and development, expanded international engagement, and stronger links among universities, research centers and related industries. He described strengthening cooperation between academic researchers and polymer industry actors, and supporting young researchers and engineers, as core missions of the Iran Polymer Society. He expressed hope that the conference would lead to exchanges of ideas, new scientific collaborations, sharing of technological achievements, and sustainable connections between Iran's research community and international colleagues.

Conference highlights and scientific participation

Morteza Ebrahimi, dean of the Faculty of Polymer and Color Engineering at Amirkabir University of Technology, reported broad participation by universities and research centers in the 17th International Conference on Polymer Science and Technology. He said 300 faculty members served on the scientific committee, four specialized sessions were organized with industry managers and experts, and efforts were made to develop scientific cooperation with regional countries. He explained that one main goal of the event was to bring together Iran's polymer community and provide opportunities to present and exchange the latest research findings, propose new ideas, transfer experience, and develop scientific and professional connections.

Ebrahimi said strengthening cohesion within Iran's polymer community was the first focus of this conference. Organizers sought participation from specialists and researchers across different conference sections, from paper submission and review to planning and execution. The participation of 300 faculty members on the scientific committee reflected the expansion of scientific and research activity in polymer fields and the growing number of active centers across the country. Universities active in polymer science from different parts of Iran also participated as scientific supporters, which he described as a sign of significant growth in Iranian polymer science over the past four decades.

The second focus was developing international interactions. Ebrahimi said AUT corresponded with regional universities, especially in neighboring countries, and researchers from Iraq and Oman supported the event. Several Iraqi researchers participated as keynote speakers. He said such cooperation can exchange knowledge and experience, strengthen Iran's scientific position in polymer science, and help attract graduate students from neighboring countries, including Iraq. Iranian researchers living abroad were also invited; many expressed interest, but some could not attend because of wartime conditions and sanctions. Nevertheless, some Iranian diaspora researchers participated as keynote speakers.

Ebrahimi also discussed industry participation. Through consultations with Persian Gulf Holding, the National Petrochemical Company, and industrial associations including the National Association of Polymer Recycling Industries and the Compound and Masterbatch Producers Association, organizers agreed to include practical technical topics. Four specialized sessions featuring industry managers and experts were held for the first time within the conference framework, with the hope of creating new cooperation between academic researchers and industrialists.

He said planning began about a year earlier, and an April meeting at the National Polymer Association reviewed whether the conference could be held under existing conditions. Members agreed to continue preparations for ISPST 2026. Despite difficult conditions between war and peace, colleagues worked with commitment to hold the event as planned.

Mehdi Rafieizadeh, secretary of the scientific committee, reported that 737 papers were submitted to the conference secretariat across 15 thematic axes, and 278 scientific reviewers participated. After review, 163 papers were accepted for oral presentation and 495 for poster presentation. He noted that about 300 faculty members currently work in polymer science and engineering at Iranian universities, roughly 2,800 students are enrolled annually at various degree levels, and more than 24,000 polymer graduates have been trained so far. He said one recent report ranked Iran fifth globally in polymer science, while Iran's position in various scientific ranking systems generally falls between fifth and twelfth, indicating quantitative and qualitative development of the country's polymer scientific community.

Rafieizadeh reviewed the conference's history: the first edition was held in 1986 (1364) at Amirkabir University of Technology. Later hosts included Shiraz University, the Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute, Sharif University of Technology, Islamic Azad University, Tarbiat Modares University and Isfahan University of Technology. The last edition was held in 2024 at Sahand University of Technology, and the 17th edition returned to AUT, marking the seventh time AUT hosted the event.

On paper statistics, Rafieizadeh said 46 papers had one author, 183 had two authors and 243 had three authors; 10 papers involved more than six authors. By contributor group, 523 papers were submitted by students, 116 by faculty members, 19 by industry actors and 46 by other groups. By degree level, 32 papers were by bachelor's students, 9 by bachelor's holders, 225 by master's students, 114 by master's graduates, 198 by doctoral students and 128 by doctoral holders. He named some prolific contributors, including Dr. Roghani of Sahand University of Technology with 17 papers, Dr. Rezaei of the same university with 15, Dr. Kabiri of the Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute with 14, and Dr. Garmabi of AUT and Dr. Naderi of the Iran Polymer and Petrochemical Institute with 12 each.

The conference included three special thematic axes: artificial intelligence in polymers, circular economy in the polymer industry, and high value-added advanced polymers. Conventional topics were also covered, including polymers and composites, nanocomposites, elastomers, and polymer synthesis and characterization. A total of 121 papers were received in polymers and composites, 88 in polymer synthesis, and 33 on AI applications in polymers. Presentations were scheduled over three days in six halls, with posters available in both in-person and virtual formats for the first time. Three specialized workshops were finalized and held by AUT polymer faculty members the day before the conference. Four awards were planned: best oral presentation, best poster, best paper with an industrial perspective, and a student future-research award on special conference topics. A student competition resumed after several editions, and students using AI tools were required to report where and how they used them. Rafieizadeh thanked Iran's armed forces and people for enabling the conference to be held under current conditions.

Iran outlines capital market reforms to drive growth



TEHRAN- The Second Annual Iran Capital Market Conference opened in Tehran on Saturday under the theme "An Inclusive Capital Market: An Opportunity for Reinvention and Growth," with President Masoud Pezeshkian, Economy Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh, Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati and Securities and Exchange Organization Head Hojjatollah Saeedi attending.

Addressing the conference, Economy Minister Seyed Ali Madanizadeh presented the government's plans to restore stability, raise capital formation and productivity, and expand the capital market's role in financing production.

adanizadeh said macroeconomic stability and predictability are prerequisites for growth. Despite shocks from two wars, siege, sanctions and accumulated imbalances, the government has sought to regain control and restore stability. Inflation remains high, but joint action by the Central Bank, Economy Ministry and Planning and Budget Organization has sharply reduced monthly inflation; single-digit inflation remains the goal. He said the government avoided imposing a budget deficit on the Central Bank, reformed debt and bond markets, and is addressing banking imbalances to prevent monetary-base growth. Forex policies aim to restore predictability, though their effects lag.

Growth, he said, depends on capital formation and productivity. The "Ruyesh" plan promotes investment funds; foreign-currency funds and bonds can bring back funds that left the economy and channel them into profitable, export-earning projects. Private equity funds will launch soon to invest in large firms and projects, restructure companies and exit after development. A "Plan 20" identifies major national and leading projects, to be introduced with the Iran Investment Organization, to direct financing toward large projects.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

13th Damghan Pistachio Festival highlights bid for global recognition



By Adeleh Davari

DAMGHAN – The 13th National Pistachio Festival of Iran was held in Damghan from November 18 to 20, with the aim of showcasing the region's pistachio production and processing capabilities, improving farmers' knowledge, facilitating the exchange of experience among industry stakeholders, and advancing efforts to secure international recognition for Damghan pistachios through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The festival opened with the launch of a specialized pistachio industry exhibition at the International Conference Center of Damghan University. Over the three-day event, it brought together orchard owners, producers, business operators, experts, researchers, and others involved in the pistachio industry.

Damghan, one of Iran's major pistachio-producing hubs, holds a prominent place in the agricultural economy of Semnan Province. The district is home to more than 130 pistachio processing centers and around 5,000 orchard owners and farmers, underscoring the crop's importance to local employment and household livelihoods. According to available statistics, agriculture accounts for approximately 35 percent of employment in Damghan.

Mansour Abbasian, secretary of the 13th National Pistachio Festival, said pistachio yields per hectare in Damghan orchards had reached approximately 1,200 to 1,500 kilograms this year, compared with a national average estimated at around 800 kilograms per hectare.

He attributed the improvement in orchard productivity partly to regular training courses and workshops organized in cooperation with the Agricultural Jihad Organization, as well as the use of experts' and specialists' experience. Abbasian urged orchard owners to take advantage of the festival's educational programs and benefit from its scientific and technical resources.

Eight specialized workshops for farmers and industry professionals

One of the key components of the 13th National Pistachio Festival was a series of eight specialized training workshops held on November 19 and 20 in cooperation with the Pistachio Research Institute and featuring leading Iranian academics and experts.

The workshops covered a range of topics, including winter leaching, stigmatomycosis (bone-like skin spot), pests and pesticides, heat stress, pistachio tree nutrition, production resilience, diseases, autumn pruning, and the market for green pistachio kernels.

Participation was free for orchard owners, pistachio growers, and other interested individuals. The courses provided an opportunity to learn about modern production methods, orchard management techniques, and ways to improve product quality.

The specialized pistachio industry exhibition also ran for three days at the International Conference Center of Damghan University.

Featuring 15 exhibition booths, the event showcased pistachio-related products, agricultural machinery, tools and equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, and the achievements of industry stakeholders. It provided a platform for presenting the sector's capabilities and familiarizing farmers with the latest technologies and equipment.

Bid to secure FAO recognition for Damghan pistachios

One of the main priorities of the 13th National Pistachio Festival was advancing efforts to secure international recognition for Damghan pistachios through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Abbasian said the festival's secretariat, the Semnan Province Pistachio Association, and Damghan University were working together to achieve this goal. He described securing international recognition for Damghan pistachios as one of the major objectives of this year's festival.

Another issue on the agenda was the establishment of a pistachio parliamentary caucus in the Iranian parliament to pursue the concerns and challenges facing those involved in the industry.

The festival secretary also cited the transfer of management of Iran's Pistachio Office to the private sector as another achievement resulting from efforts made during previous editions of the event.

According to Abbasian, the office, which previously operated under the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, is now managed with the participation of the Iran Pistachio Association, industry stakeholders, and experts. The move is intended to ensure that producers' and orchard owners' concerns are addressed more seriously and effectively.



Alongside the industry's potential and achievements, the challenges facing producers were also a major topic of discussion at the festival.

Reduced permitted water extraction from agricultural wells and adjustments to water-use permits were among the main concerns raised by orchard owners. Industry representatives warned that these measures could undermine irrigation capacity and, if continued, lead to lower production, declining product quality, and the drying up of some orchards.

Power outages, rising prices of agricultural inputs, and high production costs were also identified as major challenges requiring attention from the relevant authorities.

In this regard, officials and representatives from national agricultural institutions, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, the parliament's Agriculture Committee, and its Article 90 Committee were invited to attend the festival and examine the industry's concerns.

Damghan pistachios: A national asset with global ambitions

Beyond its technical and economic focus, the 13th National Pistachio Festival also featured cultural and artistic programs.

Local artists from Damghan, alongside prominent artistic groups from across Iran, took part in the opening and closing ceremonies. The programs were designed to create a lively atmosphere, encourage public participation, and strengthen the event's social appeal.

The digital book documenting the 12th National Pistachio Festival was also unveiled as part of efforts to preserve the event's records and achievements. The publication includes reports, training workshops, speeches, and programs from the previous edition. Readers can access its written, audio, and video content by scanning a designated QR code.

The 13th National Pistachio Festival once again highlighted the economic, scientific, and social significance of this strategic agricultural product. In addition to showcasing production and processing capabilities, the event provided a platform for farmers to voice their concerns, exchange technical knowledge, and raise infrastructure-related challenges facing the sector.

With approximately 30,000 hectares of orchards in Semnan Province dedicated to pistachio cultivation, expanding domestic and international markets, improving product quality, and pursuing international recognition for Damghan pistachios could help strengthen the crop's position in Iran's agricultural economy.

Tehran to host intl. transport, logistics exhibit; Chabahar port, eastern corridor in focus

TEHRAN- The 7th International Exhibition of Transport, Logistics and Related Industries, with the support and participation of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, will be held during December 17–20, 2026 at the permanent venue of the Tehran International Exhibitions.

The event can provide a platform for showcasing the capabilities of the country's transport industry, examining investment opportunities, and strengthening cooperation among various sectors of the industry.

The 7th International Transport, Logistics and Related Industries Exhibition is an opportunity to examine the capacities of Chabahar Port and the country's eastern corridor, identify investment opportunities, and strengthen cooperation among actors in the port, rail, road, and logistics sectors.

According to a Saturday report by IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the development of Chabahar Port and the completion of transport networks in eastern Iran provide a strategic opportunity to strengthen Iran's position in regional transit, expand trade exchanges with Central Asian countries, and connect open waters to regional markets—a capacity that, by developing port, rail, and road infrastructure and improving logistics services, can become one of the country's key axes of international trade and transport.

Arab National Congress backs resistance in West Asia

Hezbollah figure says 'wars devour those who start them'

From page 1 ▶ The ANC chief went on to say that nobody can ignore that fact that the Gaza war has put the premiership of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel in disarray or overlook the resilience of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, Iran's strong resistance against the joint U.S.-Israel aggression and the Axis of Resistance as a whole.

He stressed that developments around the world cannot be understood in isolation from Israel's war of extermination in the Gaza Strip and the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran.

The ANC secretary general added that the Israeli war has not been confined to the Gaza Strip but has extended to all of Palestine.

Al-Taher warned of mounting risks of the forcible displacement of Palestinians from their land, whether in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, or the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948.

'Support for intra-Yemeni dialogue'

Turning to Iran, al-Taher said the United States thought that the assassination of Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, would "decide the battle within days, but it was surprised by the cohesion of the Iranian people and their rallying around their leadership."

He added that "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and the steadfastness of the Axis of Resistance opened a new path in global consciousness, bringing about a shift in the handling of the Palestinian cause and developments in the region."

At the close of Al-Taher's speech, the conference's secretariat announced support for the Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue, reaffirming its backing for talks among the warring Yemeni parties.

'Resistance role in the region must be activated'

Hamas political bureau chief Khalil al-Hayya said in his speech that, despite the Palestinian Resistance movement's acceptance last year of the outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement, the Israeli occupation regime is pressing on with its aggression against the Gaza Strip.



"Our people understand that resistance in all its forms is the only option for recovering the land, the holy sites and our rights... We affirm that we will continue to pursue the project of liberation and return," he continued.

Al-Hayya stressed that the Israeli attacks were not limited to occupied Palestine alone, saying it was attacking and striking Lebanon and Syria.

He affirmed that the occupation regime has moved to the implementation phase of its "Greater Israel" scheme.

Reaffirming adherence to steadfastness and "resilience in the face of the Israeli enemy" and to resisting the occupation in all its forms, al-Hayya called for activating the role of the Resistance across the region and widening the "scope of the confrontation with the enemy."

'Resistance is born of occupation'

For his part, Ammar al-Moussawi, the head of Hezbollah's International and Arab Relations Office, said the Resistance in Lebanon arose in response to Israeli aggression and occupation.

"The Resistance in Lebanon would not have come into being were it not for aggression and occupation," al-Moussawi stressed.

Furthermore, al-Moussawi noted, those seeking "to put the Resistance on trial either do not know or choose to ignore that they are offending the memory of a people, not to mention venturing into a project written in blood."

He went on to say that "sovereignty is neither restored nor safeguarded by undermining the nation's strength or by endangering civil peace."

Elsewhere in his remarks, al-Moussawi explained that the United States and Israel made every effort to wage destructive wars across the region.

"The United States and Israel did their utmost to wage devastating wars in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran," he pointed out.

'Wars devour those who start them'

Al-Moussawi also said the demonstrations gripped European countries shows that wars ultimately harm those who start them, noting, "The current demonstrations in Europe are proof that wars devour those who start them."

The remarks by the Hezbollah official came just as tens of thousands of students and workers walked out across more than 25 European countries in a coordinated strike against military rearmament, soaring living costs, and Western complicity in West Asian wars.

Al-Moussawi added that Washington could start wars but could not end them.

The concrete example, is the United States' unprovoked and illegal war against Iran which has brought misery for Trump and his Republican Party.

"The era of lightning wars is gone for good, and wars are won by the people of the land and those in the right," al-Moussawi explained.

'Gazans are prophets of human dignity'

For his turn, Hamdeen Sabahi, founder of Egypt's Karama Party, described the people of Gaza as the flag bearers of human dignity.

"The people of Gaza are now the prophets of human dignity," Sabahi remarked.

Sabahi also called for unity with the Resistance and for the Palestinians to put aside its divisions.

"We must unite with the fighters and the Resistance, and this nation must unite and set aside what divides it," he insisted.

He also suggested that the ANC to adopt a vision for dialogue with Iran and Turkey.

"I call on this conference to adopt a vision for an Arab-Iranian dialogue and an Arab-Turkish dialogue," Sabahi said.

Citing the late Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sabahi distinguished between fighting the enemy and fighting among Arabs. "'Fighting is an honor, and infighting is a crime' against our nation, as the late leader Gamal Abdel Nasser said," he acknowledged.

'Independence key to survival'

Concurrently, Khaled al-Sufyani, General Coordinator of the National Islamic Conference, invoked the words of the martyr Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on the purpose of fight, saying, "As the martyred leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said 'We fight in order to win.'"

He attributed the Arab National Congress' continuity to its independence, saying, "The reason this conference continues is its political and financial independence."

The Arab National Congress (is a pan-Arab political forum established in the late 20th century with the aim of fostering unity, cooperation, and strategic dialogue among Arab intellectuals, political leaders, and civil society figures.

Youth across 25 European countries fill city squares over war spending, Gaza



TEHRAN — Placards and Palestinian flags returned to city centers on Saturday, a day after tens of thousands of students and workers walked out across more than 25 European countries in a coordinated strike against military rearmament, soaring living costs, and Western complicity in West Asian wars.

Across many capitals, Palestinian flags flew beside signs condemning weapons transfers to Israel.

In Italy, a rail stoppage triggered on Friday night continued disrupting train lines into Saturday evening, while fresh marches mobilized in France and Spain following security alerts from the U.S. Embassy in Paris.

The mobilization links domestic economic strain directly to the foreign policy priorities of Washington, Tel Aviv, and European capitals.

While nearly one in four Europeans aged 15 to 29 faces the risk of poverty or social exclusion according to Eurostat figures, the European Union is advancing its 800-billion-euro ReArm Europe plan through 2030.

Simultaneously, the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran has rattled energy markets and pushed Brent crude past $96 a barrel after earlier spikes above $113, worsening inflation on groceries and rent across the continent.

'Money for schools, not war'

Italy delivered the largest turnout as the country's biggest labor confederation, CGIL, joined the youth strike with a nationwide walkout across more than 100 cities.

Union leader Maurizio Landini estimated participation exceeded one million people, though the Interior Ministry has not verified the figure.

In Rome, where organizers counted 50,000 marchers near the Colosseum, banners demanded "Money for schools, not war" in defiance of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's defense-heavy budget.

Another 100,000 rallied in Milan, where dockworkers have recently drawn praise from students for refusing to load weapons shipments bound for Israel.

Across Germany, the youth group Gen Z regelt organized rallies in 73 cities and towns, claiming 87,000 participants nationwide.

Police counted roughly 4,500 demonstrators at Berlin's Alexanderplatz, while water cannons were deployed in Leipzig after fireworks were thrown. Anger centered on legislation enacted earlier this year allowing the government to reinstate mandatory military conscription if volunteer targets fall short.

Young Germans carried signs accusing Berlin of gutting classroom budgets to fund future war alongside the United States.

'Fight for our future'

In Britain, students from more than 350 schools, colleges, and universities walked out and marched toward London's Parliament Square alongside the Stop the War Coalition.

Police made ten arrests after right-wing counter-protesters confronted the rally, where UKIP leader Nick Tenconi was photographed attempting to tear up a Palestinian flag.

"Young people will not sit quietly while our schools, colleges and universities are cut and billions are found for war," Socialist Students national chair Adam Powell-Davies said. "Fight for our future, not their wars."

Smaller walkouts unfolded across a dozen Croatian cities, outside the University of Vienna in Austria, and in Sweden.

In France, where recent demonstrations over teacher shortages and crumbling school buildings helped spark Friday's continent-wide action, protesters tied local austerity to Western military escalation.

Iraq's government and Kataib Hezbollah agree on a middle ground

From page 1 ▶ According to the arrangement, the deployed government forces include an Iraqi army unit, federal police, energy police, and two Popular Mobilization Brigades: the 72nd and 79th Brigades. The entrance of the forces was described as very smooth.

A new joint command headquarters has been established and is under the control of the federal police.

Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah personally visited the area to oversee the redeployment of military units and the transfer of security responsibilities.

Saad Maan, head of the Security Media Cell, stated that a new command headquarters has been opened under the leadership of the Federal Police.

The agreement came after approximately two months of "in-depth negotiations". The government had previously issued a Friday deadline for Kataib Hezbollah to leave, but under the agreement reached, the group is expected to complete its withdrawal within one month.

A Kataib Hezbollah source has been cited as saying that the group "allowed the government a way out of the predicament it created," but insisted the resistance movement would not leave Jurf al-Nasr.

The movement's military spokesman, Jaafar al-Husseini, stated that the issues with the government "will be resolved through private channels," adopting a less aggressive tone.

The mediation was a multi-party effort rather than the work of a single envoy. Iraqi media cited security officials as saying the agreement was "brokered by senior Shia political leaders."

Hadi al-Amiri, leader of the Badr Organization, and Falih al-Fayyadh, chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), both attended meetings with Kataib Hezbollah leader Hamidawi and were thanked by him for their mediation efforts.

Abdul Aziz al-Muhammadawi, PMF chief of staff, was also thanked by Hamidawi for his work to prevent bloodshed. Tribal elders and prominent figures from Baghdad and the Central Euphrates region held a tribal conference in Jurf al-Nasr, north of Babil Province, announcing their support for the security forces, the PMF, and the resistance factions.

From Kataib Hezbollah's perspective, the core interest preserved by this agreement is avoiding military confrontation and retaining its weapons.

The government, in turn, can claim to have restored state authority and gained a foothold for investigating alleged oil smuggling. Prime Minister al-Zaidi stated to the deployed forces: "We are not waging war. Everyone there is your brother... the sons of this nation, their blood is our blood." But he insisted that the decision to restrict weapons to state control is "final".

An Iraqi analyst stated that the agreement provides for the "phased redeployment" of Kataib Hezbollah fighters from Jurf al-Nasr (also known as Jurf al-Sakhr), with some members moving to Anbar province near the Syrian border.

This process could take several weeks, and some fighters will remain. The analyst explicitly stated: "At present, there is no discussion or action regarding the disarmament of Kataib Hezbollah. This is a redeployment." The analyst also noted that the area contains barracks, factories, and fuel storage facilities, constituting "a whole military-industrial complex," so the handover is unlikely to be completed quickly.

The dispute between the Iraqi government and Kataib Hezbollah over Jurf al-Nasr erupted in November, with the core accusation being that the group was operating an oil smuggling network in the area.

A government investigation committee stated it found "clear tampering" with oil pipelines passing through the area, along with attempts to bury and conceal traces, and identified two refineries, tankers and storage tanks.

Al-Zaidi spokesman had previously declared that "there is a deadline for the armed faction to leave Jurf al-Nasr," claiming that this was an exercise of the state's constitutional responsibility to protect public funds.

Kataib Hezbollah categorically rejected these accusations, calling the investigation a "lie" and accusing the Prime Minister's office of "blackmail".

The resistance movement stated that the investigative committee's visit to the area on November 15 "found no violations whatsoever of the oil pipelines."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UK shamelessly admits to offensive cyber strikes on Iran, three other nations

From page 1 ▶ Magowan cited no incident, no victim, and no technical finding. Four governments became threats to Britain's "way of life" on his word alone, then shared a sentence with criminals who harm children.

In 2023, the force told the public it runs operations daily and described itself as "accountable, precise and calibrated."

The British military has never mentioned the civilian harm it has caused during its cyber operations.

The law suits the work. London holds that violating another state's sovereignty in cyberspace is not unlawful in itself, and that only coercion crosses the line.

Tehran has heard this genre of charge before. Earlier this month its Foreign Ministry dismissed France's claim that Iran hacked supermarket refrigeration as "baseless and malicious."

The price paid by civilians

Iranians know the answer. In October 2021, the cards that deliver subsidized fuel stopped working at all 4,300 stations. Drivers queued, and those who finally pumped paid unsubsidized prices.

The late President Ebrahim Raisi said the aim was to anger people "by creating disorder and disruption."

In December 2023, roughly 70 percent of the country's 33,000 stations went dark, and the oil minister confirmed a cyberattack.

During the 12-day U.S.-Israeli campaign of aggression in June 2025, Iran's Information and Communications Technology Ministry counted more than 20,000 attacks on payment systems, fuel distribution, healthcare networks and retail platforms.

When U.S. and Israeli strikes opened the 2026 war on February 28, Iran was the recipient of more cyberattacks. Even a popular calendar and prayer app was hijacked.

U.S. cyber and space operations "effectively disrupted communications and sensor networks," claimed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dan Caine.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Morteza Mehrzad joins OKI Fantomi Sarajevo

TEHRAN – Iranian sitting volleyball superstar Morteza Mehrzad has officially joined Bosnian club OKI Fantomi Sarajevo, adding one of the sport's most recognizable figures to the European champions' roster.

The three-time Paralympic gold medalist was formally introduced as the club's newest player in Sarajevo, where he expressed his excitement about beginning a new chapter in his career. Standing at an extraordinary 247 centimeters, Mehrzad is widely recognized as one of the most remarkable athletes in Paralympic sport.

Speaking through an interpreter, the Iranian international said he already had a special connection with Sarajevo, having visited the Bosnian capital several times with his national team.

"I love this city, Sarajevo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina very much because it reminds me so much of the city I come from," Mehrzad said.

He also praised the welcoming atmosphere at his new club, describing the transfer as a straightforward process following initial contact with the team.

According to Mehrzad, the players and staff have made him feel comfortable, and he is optimistic about achieving positive results together. He also made it clear that he intends to give his best for Fantomi whenever he represents the club.

Club president Ismet Godinjak described the Iranian as an outstanding athlete and a humble person, highlighting his exceptional achievements on the international stage.

Mehrzad has already attended several training sessions and made his debut in a match against Sinovi Bosne from Lukavac. His new teammates are still adapting their setting techniques to find the best balls for his playing style.

Fantomi are currently enjoying an impressive domestic campaign, sitting top of the table with six victories from six matches without dropping a single set.

The Sarajevo side have also set ambitious goals for the future, including defending their European title and winning a historic tenth continental crown.

Mehrzad's arrival represents a significant addition to a club determined to maintain their dominance in sitting volleyball.

Iran rout Vietnam at 2026 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Iran powered past Vietnam 10-2 on Saturday to book their place in the quarter-finals of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2026.

The four-time champions, steered by Davoud Baghdadabadi's hat-trick, face off against fellow qualifiers Lebanon on Monday to decide the group winners while Vietnam and Afghanistan will take to the pitch in search of their first win.

Mohammad Masoumizadeh turned in an overhead kick from the right to get things going before Mohvahed Mohammadpour powered home a close-range header after connecting to Seyed Nazim's lob.

Mohammadali Hassanabad's acrobatic effort then hit the sand and rolled past the right post to give Iran a three-goal lead in eight minutes, the-afc.com reported.

Beleaguered keeper Nguyen Anh Quang failed to handle Mahdi Shirmohammadi's shot in the ninth minute and saw the ball bounce beyond him as Datsan denied Tran Noc Bao's free-kick at the other end to close the opening period.

Saeid Piramoun connected to Dastan's goal kick in the 16th-minute before his overhead kick went past Anh Quang, with Baghdadabadi adding to the scoreline in the same minute when he lifted the ball over the keeper following a weak back pass by Noc Bao.

Vietnam pulled one back through Ngo Tan Tai, who slipped the ball between Dastan and the right post in the 17th minute. The keeper then turned away Pham Truong Du's stinging drive but was beaten in the 23rd minute as Pham nodded in from close range off a cross by Dao Gia Bao.

Ali Mirshekari added goal number seven on the half-hour mark with an overhead attempt past a rooted Anh Quang before the Central Asian side wrapped up with goals by Masoumizadeh and Baghdadabadi, who netted twice in the closing minutes.

Snooker cueist Gharagozlou crowned world champion

TEHRAN – Iranian cueist Ali Gharagozlou has been crowned world champion after defeating Hong Kong's Tam Yun Fung to claim the gold medal in the 15-red snooker competition at the 2026 IBSF World Snooker Championship.

Gharagozlou produced an impressive performance to secure the prestigious title, marking a major achievement for Iranian snooker on the international stage.

The victory was particularly significant given that Tam Yun Fung had previously eliminated another Iranian representative, Amir Sarkhosh, in the quarter-finals, denying him a place in the last four.

However, Gharagozlou avenged his compatriot's defeat by overcoming the Hong Kong player in the final to capture the world title and bring the gold medal home for Iran.

IBSF World Snooker Championship 2026 takes place from Nov. 12-21, 2026, at the Yashwant Club in Indoor, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Iran claim two more golds at 2026 World Para Taekwondo Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian athletes Maryam Abdollahpour and Amirmohammad Haghighatshenas won two more gold medals at the 2026 World Para Taekwondo Championships on Saturday, adding to Iran's successful campaign in South Korea.

Abdollahpour triumphed in the women's K44 -57kg category, defeating Brazil's Silvana Mayara Cardoso Fernandes in the final to secure the world title. Gamze Ozcan of Türkiye and Sophie Caverzan of France claimed the bronze medals.

In the men's K44 -70kg division, Haghighatshenas also reached the top of the podium after overcoming Mexico's Juan Diego Garcia Lopez in the final. Garcia Lopez took silver, while Ivory Coast's Bi Assamoa Michel Chris Boli and Azerbaijan's Imamaddin Khalilov shared bronze.

On Friday, Aylar Jami and Zahra Rahimi both reached the finals in their respective weight categories, ensuring two medals for Iran and providing a strong start to the country's campaign at the prestigious global competition.

Jami emerged as one of the standout performers of the tournament, overcoming a challenging field of international opponents before securing the world title. Rahimi, meanwhile, continued her impressive international career by reaching the final of the women's K44 -52kg division and taking home the silver medal.

Jami produced an outstanding performance in the women's K44 -47kg division, ultimately claiming the gold medal after defeating Morocco's Naoual Naarif in the final.

The Iranian athlete won the championship bout 2-0, completing an impressive campaign and securing the most prestigious prize available in her category: the world title.

The latest victories further strengthened Iran's medal tally at the championships.

Iran seeks to strengthen cross-border tourism cooperation with its neighbors: Shojaei

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Iran is seeking to make better use of its border provinces' tourism potential by strengthening direct cooperation with neighboring countries, Moslem Shojaei, director general of marketing and foreign tourism development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, says.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Shojaei outlined a fresh initiative, which aims to build tourism partnerships between Iranian border provinces and neighboring regions. The initiative seeks to give local tourism operators a greater role in international marketing, facilitate exchanges among tourism professionals and turn longstanding cultural, linguistic and commercial ties into new opportunities for attracting foreign visitors.



Moslem Shojaei, director general of marketing and foreign tourism development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

Iran is currently facing considerable regional uncertainty, with tensions and the possibility of renewed conflict affecting the broader tourism environment. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has recently highlighted the importance of provincial diplomacy and closer cooperation between border provinces and neighboring countries. How does this approach translate into tourism policy, and what is the rationale behind the initiative known as Gozar-As-Marz, which literary means ("Beyond Borders")?

When the broader environment of the tourism industry changes because of regional developments, tensions rise and uncertainty increases. In a situation that can be described as neither war nor peace, it becomes difficult to predict what may happen next. Naturally, existing policies and approaches must adapt to these changing circumstances.

One of the main reasons we launched the Beyond Borders initiative was to make our tourism sector more flexible and better equipped to respond to such conditions. We need an approach that allows us to adjust our plans and maintain tourism connections even when the wider regional environment becomes unpredictable.

The initiative also has a theoretical foundation in economics and geography, particularly in concepts related to decentralization and the importance of peripheral regions. Policies developed at the center cannot always be transferred effectively to border areas without considering their particular circumstances. Without sufficient coordination and cohesion, this top-down approach can lead to mistakes.

Border regions are often better positioned to identify and address their own challenges because they deeper understand local conditions and have direct relationships with communities across the borders. This is essentially a bottom-up approach to planning, rather than the top-down models that were more prominent in the 1980s and 1990s.

What does the Beyond Borders initiative involve in practical terms? How will Iranian provinces cooperate with their counterparts across national borders?

The basic idea is straightforward: each Iranian border province should establish closer working relations with the corresponding province or region in the neighboring country.

For example, provinces such as Ilam, Khuzestan, Kermanshah and South Khorasan can cross the border, engage with their counterparts and develop joint tourism activities.

We have often approached international tourism promotion through a centralized model, expecting provinces to attract foreign visitors by organizing promotional campaigns, inviting tourism professionals, hosting familiarization tours and bringing in influencers to introduce their destinations and products.

But border provinces have a particular advantage. Their tourism operators, tour organizers and hotel owners already know the neighboring regions and often maintain direct relationships with their counterparts there.

Take West Azarbaijan, for instance. Local tourism professionals in the province know the neighboring areas much better than officials working at the national level. They already have established contacts with tourism operators across the border.

An initiative that might take the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other central institutions two or three months of coordination could sometimes be arranged by local operators in just a day or two even through a few WhatsApp messages, social media exchanges and meetings. This gives border provinces greater speed and flexibility in organizing joint activities.

What makes these local connections particularly effective in promoting tourism?

There are several factors. For examples, border communities often have long-standing commercial relations, cultural similarities and family connections across national boundaries. In many cases, people on both sides speak the same language or share closely related cultural traditions.

For instance, Kurdish communities in Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces have close cultural and linguistic connections with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Similarly, Arab communities in Khuzestan have cultural and linguistic ties with Arab populations across the border in Iraq.

These connections make communication easier and help tourism professionals understand the preferences, expectations and interests of potential visitors.

As a result, tourism operators in border provinces are often better placed to identify suitable markets, promote local attractions and attract visitors from neighboring regions. They understand the language, culture and travel preferences of their potential customers.

Iran has several neighboring countries and a considerable number of border provinces. How broadly can this initiative be implemented?

Iran has 15 neighboring countries and 16 border provinces, creating considerable opportunities for cross-border tourism cooperation.

There are many potential connections. The province of Sistan-Baluchestan, for example, can develop tourism relations with Pakistan's neighboring provinces. South Khorasan can strengthen cooperation with Afghanistan, while Khorasan Razavi can build on its existing geographical and cultural connections with Afghan regions, including Herat.

Sarakhs and other border areas can also develop closer tourism links with Turkmenistan. Similarly, Golestan has opportunities to cooperate with its Turkmen counterparts.

These are examples of how the initiative can be developed across different parts of the country. Each province can identify the most suitable neighboring regions and build cooperation based on its geographical position, cultural affinities and existing economic relations.

What practical tools will be used to turn these cross-border connections into actual tourist flows?

One of the main instruments will be familiarization tours. We will invite tourism professionals from neighboring countries, particularly those involved in sending travelers, to visit Iranian border provinces and become acquainted with their attractions and tourism infrastructure.

For example, tour operators and other tourism representatives from Iraq's Kurdistan Region can visit Kermanshah, Sanandaj and Marivan to explore their tourism capacities. They can also visit West Azarbaijan through border crossings such as Tamarchin and become familiar with the province's attractions and facilities.

These programs can involve tour operators, hotel owners, tourism service providers and social media influencers. The objective is to introduce Iranian destinations and tourism products directly to people who can promote them and organize trips.

Rather than relying solely on centralized promotional activities, we want local tourism stakeholders to establish direct and lasting working relationships with their counterparts across the border.

When provincial authorities are directly involved in these arrangements, problems can often be identified and resolved more quickly.

Ultimately, the initiative is intended not only to promote destinations but also to strengthen the resilience of tourism connections. By empowering border provinces and encouraging direct cooperation with neighboring regions, we can maintain channels for travel and economic exchange even under difficult circumstances.

Yazd's literary heritage seen as untapped potential for tourism development

TEHRAN – Yazd's literary heritage, prominent cultural figures and lesser-known historical attractions could play a greater role in boosting tourism in the central Iranian city, a member of the Yazd City Council's Tourism Commission has said.

Fakhr al-Sadat Khamesi stressed the need to incorporate literary heritage into tourism programs, saying literary tourism could help introduce visitors to the city's history, culture, arts and traditions while creating new economic opportunities.

Speaking to Mehr news agency, she said literary tourism has become an important area of economic development in many countries, but Yazd's considerable literary assets have yet to receive sufficient attention in the city's tourism itineraries.

She said identifying and promoting lesser-known literary figures, sites and cultural assets through targeted planning could help raise the profile of Yazd's cultural heritage and generate revenue for the local economy.

Khamesi pointed to the national and international recognition of poets Farrokhi Yazdi and Vahshi Bafqi, saying that despite their prominence, attractions associated with their lives and literary legacy have not been adequately introduced in their home region.

She singled out the historic house of Farrokhi Yazdi as a potential destination for literary tourists. The Qajar-era property, which is listed as a national heritage site, could become a regular stop on visitors' itineraries if tourism authorities give it the necessary attention and planning.

Khamesi also highlighted Yazd Municipality's specialized Cultural Centre for Tourism and Handicrafts as a platform for promoting the city's overlooked attractions.



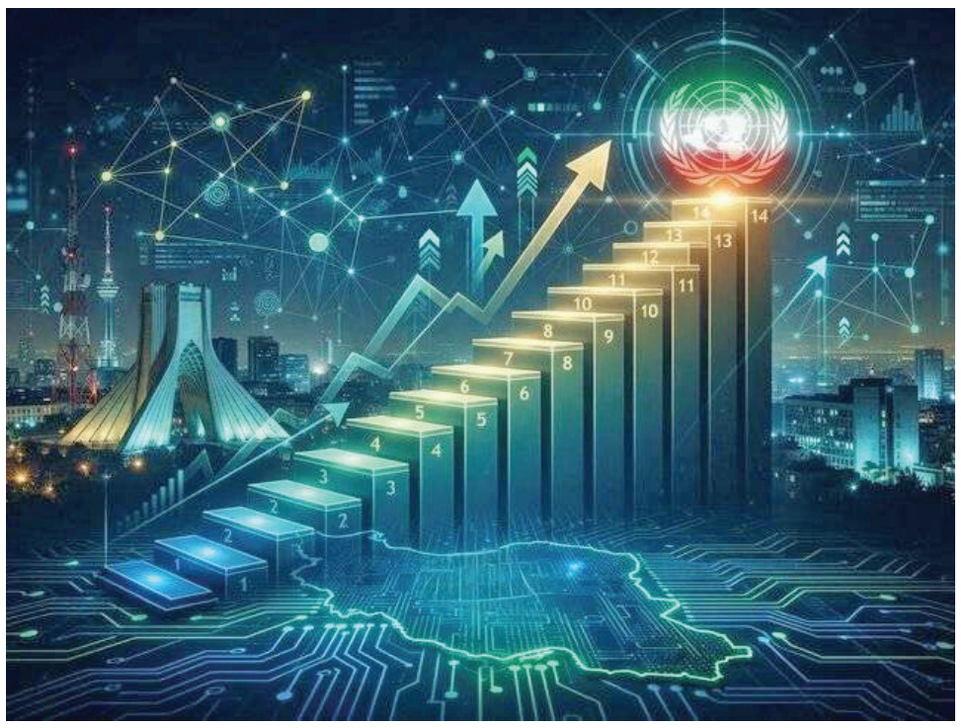
She said the center could contribute to the development of literary tourism by establishing specialist working groups and organizing a range of cultural events.

The council member also called for greater attention to contemporary poets and literary figures from Yazd, describing them as another valuable but underused resource for expanding the city's literary tourism offerings.

Yazd, whose historic city was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2017, is located in Iran's central desert region near the historic Spice and Silk Roads. UNESCO describes the city as a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited resources in a desert environment.

Its traditional architecture, historic neighborhoods and cultural traditions have made it one of Iran's significant heritage destinations. Developing literary tourism could provide another way to explore the city's cultural identity beyond its better-known architectural attractions.

Iran advances in UN E-Government Development Index



TEHRAN – Iran has climbed 14 places in the United Nations E-Government Development Index (EGDI), rising from 101st in 2024 to 87th in 2026, according to the UN website.

The report shows that Iran's EGDI score increased from 0.6564 in 2024 to 0.7427 in 2026, placing the country in the "high EGDI" group. It also points to measurable progress in expanding digital government services and developing the infrastructure needed to support digital governance, Mehr News Agency reported.

The E-Government Development Index presents the state of E-Government Development of the United Nations Member States. Along with an assessment of the website development patterns in a country, the E-Government Development Index incorporates the access characteristics, such as the infrastructure and educational levels, to reflect how a country is using information technologies to promote access and inclusion of its people. The EGDI is a composite index published biennially by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It evaluates all 193 member states across three equally weighted pillars: provision of online services, telecommunication connectivity, and human capacity.

Iran has recorded the most significant increase (59.4 percent) in the online services index (OSI), rising from 0.3773 in 2024 to 0.5845 in 2026. It moved the country's performance in OSI from the middle group to the high group.

The rise highlights the role of developing online public services, enhancing the quality and accessibility of services, and improving public service delivery in the advancement of the country's e-government.

Iran's score in the telecommunication infrastructure index (TII) increased by 6.42 percent—rising from 0.8987 in 2024 to 0.9564 in 2026; the country has maintained its place at the 'very high' level.

The results demonstrate the capacity of the country's communication and telecommunication infrastructure for the development of e-government, and underscore the necessity of continued investment and the strengthening of the infrastructure required to expand digital services.

The country's score in the Human Capital Index (HCI) has risen from 0.6932 in 2024 to 0.6782 this year, preserving its position in 'high' category.

Local Online Service Index (LOSI) has moved up by 34 spots, from 99 in 2024 to 65 this year. Iran's score in this index has increased by 118.9 percent, moving from 0.3438 to 0.7525, moving it from a 'medium' to a 'very high' level.

Moreover, the E-participation index has grown by 93.62 percent from 0.1781 on 2024 to 0.3448 in 2026, moving the country's E-participation performance from 'low' to 'middle' level.

The trend reflects an improvement in Iran's standing in e-participation—a domain focused on developing mechanisms to collect citizen feedback, ensure access to public information, and foster public involvement in decision-making and digital governance.

> The report shows that Iran's EGDI score increased from 0.6564 in 2024 to 0.7427 in 2026, placing the country in the "high EGDI" group.

Sustaining the country's progress requires integrated development of digital services, improved quality and accessibility of public services, citizens' e-participation, development of communication infrastructure, and investment in digital education and skills.

This fourteenth edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey marks twenty-five years of global assessment and covers 193 Member States and, for the first time, the State of Palestine. It records continued progress: 151 of the 194 countries assessed now have high or very high EGDI values, driven principally by expanding online services.

Progress, however, remains uneven. Approximately 1.95 billion people—24.3 per cent of the world's population—live in countries with EGDI values below the global average. Gaps in affordability, connectivity, human capital and institutional capacity particularly affect countries in special situations, requiring differentiated financing, capacity development and technical cooperation.

The LOSI shows broader and more mature local digital government. Yet disparities persist across and within regions, and improvements in municipal infrastructure and online information have not always translated into accessible, participatory and seamless end-to-end services.

This edition introduces targeted methodological refinements while preserving continuity and comparability. It strengthens the assessment of life-event services, participation and engagement, government digital infrastructure and e-government literacy, providing a fuller picture of the foundations for digital transformation.

The Survey also examines the transition towards AI-enabled and potentially agentic public administration. It highlights opportunities for more proactive and responsive services, while stressing that trusted data, resilient infrastructure, human oversight and clear accountability are essential to ensure AI serves the public interest and does not transform existing digital disparities into a deeper AI divide.

Workshop held with WHO support to strengthen public health functions



TEHRAN – The National Public Health Management Centre, a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborating center, has hosted a one-day workshop to build capacity for implementing essential public health functions (EPHFs) in hospitals.

The workshop was organized by the WHO Country Office in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences. It aimed to help participants enhance understanding of EPHFs and support their practical implementation in hospital settings, according to a press release published on the WHO website on November 17.

The workshop was inaugurated by Saeed Aslanabadi, Vice Chancellor of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, and Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In his remarks, Jabbour reaffirmed WHO's commitment to improving population health, advancing universal health coverage (UHC) and strengthening health system resilience.

"Implementing essential public health functions is a cost-effective and sustainable approach to improving population health, advancing universal health coverage and strengthening health system resilience. This work supports WHO's priorities in primary health care and health security and aligns with the WHO Regional Director's flagship initiative on the health workforce. A skilled, supported and resilient health workforce is essential for the effective implementation of EPHFs. Ultimately, safeguarding population health is a responsibility shared across the health system, and this collaboration aims to strengthen the public health orientation of hospitals and contribute to more resilient health systems and better health outcomes for all," said Jabbour.

The participation of Asqar Jafari Roohi, Vice-Chancellor for Medical Affairs at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, underscored the importance attached to collaborations between WHO and national academic and health care institutions and reflected the commitment of the University's clinical and curative services leadership to strengthening the public health orientation of hospitals and advancing the integration of primary health care and EPHFs into hospital service delivery.

Empowering local champions to drive EPHF implementation

The Tabriz workshop built on an earlier initiative, a joint collaboration involving WHO, the Iran University of Medical Sciences and the National Public Health Management Centre. As part of the initiative, hospital managers from across Tehran and selected provinces received training on applying EPHFs in hospital settings.

Four colleagues from Tabriz University of Medical Sciences – Mahmood Yousefi, Ali Ebadi, Reza Aqebati and Ms Farzaneh Alikhah – took part in the initial training and went on to drive EPHF implementation at Mardani Azar and Osku hospitals. Applying the knowledge and experience they had gained, they helped translate the EPHF framework into practice, laying the groundwork for further institutional engagement.

Their role highlights the value of investing in the capacities of health professionals and hospital managers who can then champion change within their institutions, and demonstrates how peer learning and inter-institutional collaboration can support the practical application and wider adoption of public health approaches across health care settings.

Jabbour's mission continued with a crucial visit to the Zahra Mardani Azari Children's Educational, Research, and Medical Center. After meaningful discussions with local specialists and health workers regarding pressing pediatric health issues and visiting several sections, including the Child Development Program, WHO memorial trophies were presented to the Center's Director, Mohammad Barzegar, and a dedicated female health worker. This gesture recognized their unwavering dedication and tireless daily efforts to protect Iran's youngest and most vulnerable patients.

Iranian, Uzbek experts sign MOUs to deepen sci-tech cooperation

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies and Uzbek scientific and industrial institutions have signed several memorandums of understanding to expand cooperation in various technological fields.

The agreements were signed on the sidelines of the International Week of Innovative Ideas (InnoWeek 2026), held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from October 27 to 29.

Supported by the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology, Iranian companies also showcased their latest innovations and products, presented their technological capabilities, and held specialized meetings with Uzbek representatives from manufacturing companies, industrial centers, universities, science and technology parks, and economic organizations.

The signed MOUs focus on educational cooperation and the transfer of technical knowledge, the implementation of joint industrial and mining projects, technology development, the exploration of possibilities for joint production, and the enhancement of research ties between the universities and companies of the two countries.

Moreover, a specialized team of Iranian knowledge-based companies paid a visit to Samarqand to become familiar with the capacities of the market to present Iranian-made products and services.

On the sidelines of InnoWeek, the Iranian delegation visited the international exhibition of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. Iranian experts conducted meetings with participants from India, China, Lebanon, Germany, Norway, and other European countries to explore the potential to enhance ties in the health sector, such as manufacturing and supplying medicines, pharmaceutical raw materials, medical equipment, and health-related products, as well as identifying new business partners.

Apart from featuring Iranian products, Iran House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT) in Tashkent played a key role in facilitating the Iranian delegation's presence, expanding international markets for knowledge-based products, organizing meetings with industries, universities, and potential partners, following up on the implementation of reached agreements, and turning negotiations into implementation.

The 2026 exhibition focused on Artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation, biotechnology and biomedicine, green energy and environmental technology, industrial engineering and advanced manufacturing, pharmaceutical and medical tools, agriculture, water and energy, mining, construction industry, chemicals and petrochemicals, and information technology.

The exhibition brought together scientists, startup founders, investors, and government representatives.

The exhibition also included startup competitions, masterclasses, training sessions, and direct meetings with potential investors.

The International Week of Innovative Ideas has been held since 2018 with the aim of accelerating innovative development in Uzbekistan, promoting innovations and technologies in all sectors of the economy, as well as developing human capital, science and innovation.

Joint scientific research

This year, the second joint call of the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the Agency for Innovative Development under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan supported the implementation of 10 research projects.

It aimed to promote international scientific collaboration, improve the quality of joint research, and utilize the technological capacity of the two countries.

It would be allocated on a competitive basis for scientific and technical programs and projects in the fields of Environment and Agriculture; Water saving and irrigation technologies; Gene editing for drought- and salt-tolerant plants; Desertification and dust reduction; Material Sciences; Exploration and processing of rare earth elements; Advanced materials; and Mining and metallurgy.

The grant amounted to 30 billion rials (some $13,000) for each research project for at most three years; in case the Iranian researcher has published scientific articles in Q1 or Q2 journals or has joint ownership of a patent with an Uzbek researcher, the grant would total 40 billion rials (around $17.3).

In November 2025, Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev discussed ways to promote scientific and technological collaborations.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 43rd Session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from October 30 to November 13.

During the meeting, Mirziyoyev voiced Tashkent's readiness to develop cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation with Iran, Mehr news agency reported.

Simaei-Sarraf, for his part, underscored the significance of fostering academic and scientific relations between the two countries. He also invited the Uzbek official to pay a visit to Iran. The two sides highlighted strengthening science diplomacy and bilateral ties.

Tehran, Beijing seek closer cooperation on natural resources management

TEHRAN – Iranian and Chinese officials have discussed ways to strengthen environmental cooperation and update a memorandum of understanding on the sustainable management of natural resources.

Reza Aflatoni, head of Iran's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO), and Liu Guohong, head of China's National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), held talks on the sidelines of the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), held in Antalya, Türkiye, from November 9 to 20, ISNA reported.

The two sides also agreed to facilitate interaction and cooperation among institutions, organizations, and enterprises in the two countries.

The meeting was centered around conducting joint research projects, training and empowering human resources, pursuing regional and global initiatives, joint monitoring and assessing, managing forests and rangelands fires, and combating desertification.

Sustainable water management and resource conservation, climate change and carbon sequestration, innovation and green technologies, biodiversity and genetic resources, participation of local communities and sustainable livelihoods, forestry and afforestation, seedling production and timber cultivation, land restoration, pest and disease management, as well as land management and allocation, and resource utilization were among other key focuses of the meeting.

Cooperation in the field of climate change and carbon sequestration includes implementing projects in deserts, forests, and rangelands; exchanging experiences on climate change adaptation and mitigation; monitoring and evaluating the impacts of climate change on natural resources; and measuring, reporting, and verifying (MRV) projects.

Exchanging experiences and expanding bilateral partnerships through South-South cooperation and leveraging the capacity of international organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) were among the other topics discussed during the meeting.

The MOU was initially signed on April 22, 2014. It was developed based on mutual interests, reciprocal exchange of knowledge, experience, and technology in compliance with the laws, regulations, and international obligations of the parties.

The agreement aims at fostering strategic, research, scientific, technical, operational, and economic collaborations in fields like forests, forestry, pastures, watershed management, protection, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources, combating desertification, and adaptation to climate change.

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Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505
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No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran **P.o. Box:** 14155-4843 **Zip Code:** 1599814713

NOVEMBER 22, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Wealth converts a strange land into homeland and poverty turns a native place into a strange land.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:13 Dawn: 5:20 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:48 (tomorrow)

Iran, Turkey keen on expanding cinematic cooperation

TEHRAN – In a meeting in Ankara, Turkey, the head of Iran Cinema Organization Raed Faridzadeh and the President of Ankara Music and Fine Arts University Gulchin Yahya Kachar emphasized the necessity of expanding cinematic, academic, and research cooperation between Iran and Turkey.

The two sides discussed the shared capacities of the two countries in cultural and artistic fields, as well as strategies for expanding bilateral interactions, IRNA reported.

In the meeting, Faridzadeh pointed to the potential for cooperation between Iran and Turkey in the film industry. He highlighted the screening of Iranian films and the organization of specialized workshops—particularly in documentary and short film—as key areas for joint efforts, emphasizing the potential of leveraging the works of Iranian documentary filmmakers.

Furthermore, referring to ongoing efforts to establish an international cinema journal aimed at obtaining Scopus indexing, Faridzadeh identified the expansion of scientific and research cooperation in cinema as another field for bilateral engagement. He



noted the development of joint scientific articles and the definition of shared research programs as significant opportunities for such cooperation.

Also speaking at the session, Asghar Farsi, the Cultural Attaché of Iran in Turkey, emphasized the importance of maintaining communications and strengthening cultural and human ties between the two nations. He described the cultural and emotional commonalities between the people of Iran and Turkey as being rooted in long-standing ties and shared cultural experiences, noting that these capacities serve as a foundation for expanding cooperation in various fields, including cinema and art.

Farsi also stressed the importance of continuous cultural and artistic interaction and the utilization of existing capacities to develop bilateral relations. He viewed organizing cinematic events, alongside other cultural and artistic programs, as an opportunity to strengthen connections and enhance mutual understanding between the two nations.

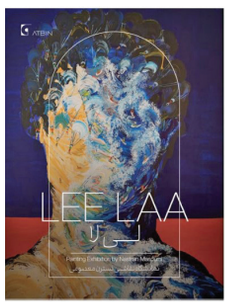
For her part, Gulchin Yahya Kachar described the university's educational capacities in cinema and media, stating: "This university offers two related undergraduate programs in radio & television and cinema, designed with different approaches; one focuses more on practical and applied aspects, while the other emphasizes theoretical and academic studies."

Expressing interest in developing joint cooperation with Iran, she added: "We are eager to engage with Iranian cultural institutions and academic centers in joint projects and to create opportunities for collaborative programs. I hope that by expanding academic and cultural interactions between the two countries, we can utilize existing capacities toward effective and practical cooperation."

The meeting also involved discussions and exchanges of views regarding the development of educational and cinematic cooperation, the exchange of experience between filmmakers and students of both countries, the organization of short-term training courses, providing opportunities for Turkish students to visit Iran for practical filmmaking experience, and the exchange of Iranian students to Turkey.

What's in Tehran art galleries

Painting



* An exhibition of paintings by Nastaran Masoumi is currently underway at Atbin Gallery.

The exhibit named "Lee Laa" will continue until December 1 at the gallery that can be found at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.



* Paintings by Mohadeseh Bagheri are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled "Liminaliy", the exhibit will be running until December 22 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Hannibal Alkhas is underway at Kavin Gallery.

The exhibit named "A World in Fragments" will be running until November 29 at the gallery located at No.24, Pesian St. Zaferanieh Neighborhood.



* Ensieh Zargar is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

The exhibit named "In-Person Purchase" will run until December 1 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Abtin Yari is underway at Yafteh Gallery.

The exhibition named "Threshold" will run until December 4 at the gallery located at 8 Taleqani Dead End, Yarmohammadi St. in the Darus Neighborhood.



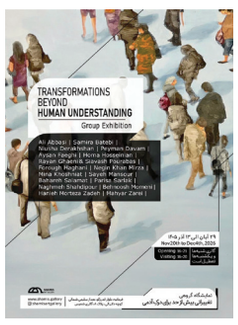
* A collection of paintings by Qassem Lotfi is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named "History Is a Rabbit's Sleep" will be running until November 30 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* Paintings by Arezou Gholami are on display in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Instability" will continue until November 27 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Hafte Tir Square.



* Shamis Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists.

The exhibit named "Transformations Beyond Human Understanding" will run until December 4 at the gallery located at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.



* Iranshahr Gallery is showcasing paintings by Farshid Davoudi in an exhibition.

The exhibit named "May My Soul Be Brimming" will run until December 13 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.



* Sharif Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Elena Kashanian.

The exhibit entitled "Blue Vine" will be running until November 27 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.

'The House of Bernarda Alba' on stage at Niavaran Cultural Center

TEHRAN- "The House of Bernarda Alba," a play by renowned Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca, is currently on stage at the Khazar Hall of Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran.

Ali Shahamati directed the production, based on a translation by Najaf Daryabandari, and it will run through December 11, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The cast includes Dina Matin, Sahel Deziani, Leila Nematollahi, Rafat Hassan-Nejad, Rezvan Karimi, Fatemeh Khalili, Mahdieh Khoshfetrat, Nesa Amini, Lillian Esmaeil, Venus Asadi, Hanieh Tahmasbi, Saba Mohammadi, and Soheila Qeidi.

"The House of Bernarda Alba" is one of the most celebrated works of Federico Garcia Lorca (1898–1936), a major figure in 20th-century Spanish literature and theater. A poet, playwright and theater director, Lorca is widely recognized for combining poetic language, symbolism and elements of Spanish popular culture in his works. His plays frequently explore themes of repression, social conventions, desire, freedom and the conflict between individual aspirations and restrictive traditions.

Completed in 1936, shortly before Lorca's execution during the early stages of the Spanish Civil War, "The House of Bernarda Alba" is generally regarded as the final work in his rural trilogy, alongside "Blood Wedding" and "Yerma." The play was first staged in Buenos Aires in 1945, nearly a decade after the playwright's death, and has since become a landmark of modern world theater.

The three-act tragedy centers around the oppressive household of Bernarda Alba, a domineering matriarch who enforces strict rules following the death of her second husband. In adherence to family tradition, she imposes an eight-year mourning period, isolating her five daughters—Angustias, Magdalena, Amelia, Martirio, and Adela—from the outside world and any romantic prospects, leading to mounting tension within the house.

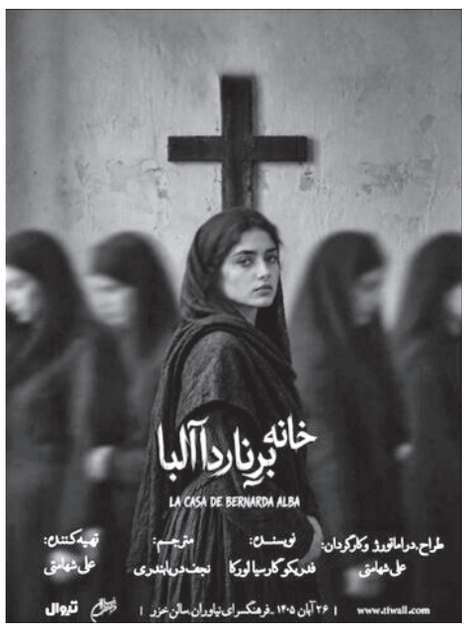
Bernarda's eldest daughter, Angustias, inherits a significant fortune from her late father, thus becoming the object of desire for Pepe el Romano, a young suitor. This inheritance causes jealousy to brew among her sisters, particularly given that they have been left with little by their father. Angustias's wealth gives her a sense of agency, which her sisters resent, especially Adela, the youngest, who yearns for freedom and happiness, symbolized by her decision to defy her mother's mourning dress code by wearing a vibrant green gown.

As the narrative unfolds, the household dynamics grow increasingly fraught. Adela's initial spirit and desire for liberation are dampened when she realizes Angustias's impending marriage to Pepe. Advising Adela, Poncia, the family's maid, suggests that Angustias might not survive childbirth, hinting at a grim possibility for Adela to act on her desires. When the sisters occasionally catch a glimpse of Pepe, the anticipation and tension escalate, with Adela being torn between her burgeoning love for him and her loyalty to her family.

The emotional volatility reaches a breaking point when Bernarda discovers Angustias wearing makeup, a breach of her strict mourning rules. In a fit of rage, she forces the makeup off, illustrating her tyrannical control and the repression of her daughters. The situation intensifies as Maria Josefa, Bernarda's elderly mother, who is usually confined to her room, expresses her own longing for freedom and warns Bernarda about the destructive nature of her oppression.

Adela and Pepe's secret affair, a counterpoint to the family's rigid moral code, amplifies tensions further. Adela's rebellion manifests in destructive ways, particularly in her conflict with her siblings, especially Martirio, who harbors her own feelings for Pepe. The family atmosphere becomes charged with jealousy, resentment, and desperation as gossip about local women treated harshly for societal transgressions deepens their collective dread.

As the play hurtles toward its tragic conclusion, Bernarda's refusal to acknowledge



her daughters' emotional turmoil culminates in violent confrontation. When a shot is heard outside, it is initially assumed that Pepe has been killed at Bernarda's behest. In a heartbreaking turn, Adela, believing Pepe to be dead, takes her own life by hanging herself in despair, not knowing that he has survived.

In the aftermath of Adela's tragic death, Bernarda orders her remaining daughters to grieve in private, refusing to acknowledge the true nature of their struggles or the deep-rooted consequences of her oppressive rule. The play closes with a haunting reminder of the devastating impact of tyranny and societal expectations on personal freedom and emotional connection.

Through the confined domestic setting and the growing tensions among the characters, Lorca examines the oppressive effects of patriarchal authority, social expectations and rigid codes of honor.

The play's enduring relevance lies in its exploration of the struggle for individual freedom against authoritarian control, making it a frequently staged work on international theater stages.

Arasbaran Cultural Center to show Xavier Dolan's "Mommy"

TEHRAN – Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran will screen the 2014 Canadian melodrama film "Mommy," written, directed and edited by Xavier Dolan, on Sunday.

According to the website of the cultural center, the film screening is set for 6 pm and will be followed by a review session in the presence of the movie critic Kourosh Jahed.

Starring Anne Dorval, Antoine Olivier Pilon, and Suzanne Clément, the film concerns a mother with a sometimes-violent teenage son, struggling to control his behavior in a desperate attempt to avoid seeing him being institutionalized.

The story focuses on mother–son relationships, a recurring theme in Dolan's work, and also marks his fourth collaboration with Dorval and his third with Clément. Inspiration for this particular story was drawn from Dolan's discovery of Pilon and the music of Ludovico Einaudi.

The film debuted at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Jury Prize. It subsequently became a critical and financial success, grossing over $13 million worldwide. Mommy went on to win numerous other awards, among them nine Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Motion Picture. Mommy was announced as Canada's submission for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film at the 87th Academy Awards, but it was not nominated.

Xavier Dolan, 37, is a Canadian filmmaker and actor. He first received international acclaim in 2009 for his feature film directorial debut "I Killed My Mother," which he also starred in, wrote, and produced, and which premiered at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival in the Directors' Fortnight section and won three awards from the program.

Since 2009, he has written and directed eight feature films, all of which have premiered at Cannes, with the exception of "Tom at the Farm," which premiered at the 70th Venice International Film Festival in 2013 and his first English-language film, "The Death & Life of John F. Donovan," which premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival.