



► Page 8

## Why is Germany so late in criticizing Israel over the Gaza war?

By our staff writer

TEHRAN - On Tuesday, May 27, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz delivered his most severe rebuke of Israel to date, saying massive air strikes on Gaza are no longer justified by the need to fight Hamas and "no longer comprehensible".

"The massive military strikes by the Israelis in the Gaza Strip no longer reveal any logic to me. How they serve the goal of confronting terror. ... In this respect, I view this very, very critically," Reuters quoted Merz as saying in a press conference in Turku, Finland.

Also, in a radio interview on Monday, May 26, Merz said: "Frankly, I no longer understand what the Israeli army is doing now in Gaza, or what its goal is."

However, the question is why the criticism by Germany came so late.

## Hezbollah is more aligned with Aoun than Salam

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Ahead of the uncertain visit of Morgan Ortagus, Donald Trump's deputy special envoy to West Asia, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's anti-resistance positions have escalated, starting with renaming Resistance and Liberation Day to "Liberation Day". In his statement during an interview with Sky News Arabia, he said, "The era of exporting the Iranian revolution is over."

Nawaf Salam, a Sunni Muslim, seems to be unaware that Islam is not confined to any one country, and that its teachings are not limited to Muslims only. He probably doesn't know that Lebanon's Shiites have identified with the principles of the Islamic Revolution because it is the true embodiment of authentic Quranic and Muhammadan Islam, and not for anything else.

The founder of the Iranian Revolution, Imam Khomeini, said: "When we say 'we must export our revolution,' the misconception that we want to occupy countries should not come to mind."

## Anti-Israeli operations rise in Gaza

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - A series of lethal operations by the Palestinian resistance fighters in Gaza has disrupted the Israeli occupation regime's ground invasion.

The armed wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam Brigades, reported that after returning from the battlefield, its fighters confirmed "targeting a Zionist force of four soldiers" using anti-personnel shells.

Resistance fighters detonated a "minefield against another Zionist engineering force that infiltrated at night east of al-Muntar Street, in Shujaiya near Gaza City."

Al-Qassam fighters "struck a Zionist Merkava tank with a Yassin 105 shell inside the Qandil Orchard, east of Shujaiya."

Al-Qassam deployed additional fighters to the area and, in another statement, said that "after returning from the front lines, our fighters confirmed they had hit a Zionist force barricaded inside a house with an anti-personnel round."

► Page 5

## Iran adds 600 mw of solar power, launches major renewable projects in 5 provinces

TEHRAN - Iran installed approximately 600 megawatts (MW) of solar power capacity in the past Iranian year (ending March 2025), marking a fourfold increase over the previous annual average of 150 MW, according to Alireza Parandeh Motlaq, deputy head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA).

In an appearance on the state TV, Parandeh Motlaq said the Energy Ministry has undertaken the development of several government-led solar power plants to help meet growing electricity demand from households and industry. Although initially state-funded, these plants are ultimately intended for transfer to the private sector. ► Page 4



© president.ir

## Iran and Oman strengthen ties with high-level visit and 18 new agreements

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN - Two historically close Persian Gulf nations marked what could be the beginning of an even closer state of ties on Tuesday, as President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran embarked on a high-ranking trip to Muscat, Oman.

Upon arrival, Pezeshkian and his accompanying delegation were received by Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defense Affairs, at the Royal Airport. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was among several ministers accompanying the president. Later, Pezeshkian was welcomed by Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at an official reception ceremony. ► Page 3

## Iran's security chief joins 13th intl. meeting of senior security officials in Moscow

Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, arrived at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow on Tuesday afternoon to attend the 13th International Meeting of Senior Security Officials. Upon arrival, he was welcomed by Iran's Ambassador to Russia and the Deputy Secretary of the Russian National Security Council.

The annual forum, hosted by Moscow, aims to foster a new global security architecture by bringing together senior security officials and defense ministers from across the world. This year's meeting is particularly significant given the current geopolitical dynamics and ongoing regional tensions. Over 125 delegations from 100 countries, along with representatives from 14 international organizations, are participating in the event held at the Russian National Center.

Speaking to reporters upon his arrival, Ahmadian highlighted the importance of the summit, saying, "On the sidelines of this meeting, I will hold bilateral talks with officials from several countries, including friendly nations." ► Page 3

## Enrichment not up for debate, Iran Foreign Ministry tells CNN

TEHRAN - Iran has reiterated that uranium enrichment remains a red line in its nuclear negotiations with the United States, with Tehran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson emphasizing that Washington appears to acknowledge this position.

"If the intention is to make sure that Iran's nuclear program would not be weaponized, I think that's something that we could simply do," said Esmail Baghaei, speaking to CNN in Tehran on Monday.

He stressed that Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy is non-negotiable—a position the Islamic Republic has consistently maintained throughout years of diplomatic engagement.

"If the (US) intention is to deprive Iranians of their right to peaceful nuclear energy, I think that would be very problematic to the extent that I think it would really challenge the whole process," he warned.

The remarks followed the conclusion of the fifth round of indirect U.S.-Iran nuclear talks, held in Rome last Friday. The discussions prompted cautious optimism from U.S. President Donald Trump, who noted signs of progress. ► Page 2

## Tehran, Tokyo voice readiness to expand trade relations

TEHRAN - In a meeting between the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and a special representative of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), both sides reaffirmed their interest in enhancing bilateral trade relations.

According to a statement from the TPO, Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi congratulated Nobutaka Maekawa on the 96th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Iran and Japan, and described cooperation between the two trade organizations as effective.

"We are eager to benefit from your expertise in the field of trade," he said.

Dehnavi, who also serves as deputy minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, added that Iran seeks to draw on Japan's experience in product promotion and supportive trade mechanisms.

Highlighting the Iranian market's appreciation for Japanese quality, Dehnavi said Iran would welcome JETRO technical experts to help facilitate knowledge exchange. ► Page 4

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Iran's unparalleled resistance

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed Iran's unparalleled resistance, both during the Sacred Defense period and at other times. It wrote: The experience of Iran's history from the beginning of the imposed war onwards has shown that national solidarity and social cohesion are still the most effective mechanisms for overcoming crises and facing international, economic, and security pressures. Scientific advances and achievements in new technologies have been made with the spirit of resistance and collective effort.

These achievements have played a significant role in creating national deterrence and strengthening Iran's bargaining power in regional and trans-regional strategic interactions. The fact that many nations and independent movements have taken the example of the Iranian resistance experience has strengthened the Islamic resistance front and strategic stability against unilateral and hegemonic policies. The spirit of unity and determination has not only been a solid barrier against the waves of division in overcoming seditions, but also in facing domestic challenges and international competitions. It has emerged strong in the battlefield and diplomacy, and from striving for progress to defeating the enemy's hybrid war.

## Sobh-e-No: Bitter experience of JCPOA promises

Sobh-e-No said while Western outlets report on Iran's proposal to create a nuclear consortium with the participation of regional countries and the United States, a closer look at the technical and political dimensions, and past experiences shows that this plan could undermine the country's strategic infrastructure in the nuclear industry. Such proposals are not unlike the failed experience of the JCPOA.

The recent proposal under the guise of regional cooperation is the same "zero percent enrichment" that is now being put forward in a new language. If the enrichment program is halted domestically, the industry will suffer damage.

If the domestic facilities were to be closed and nuclear work transferred to a joint factory on one of the Iranian islands, not only would the country's technical equipment be destroyed, but in practice, the ownership and management of the factory would also be in the hands of the partner countries. Experience has shown that such plans are technically, economically, and sovereignly harmful and threaten Iran's independence in the strategic nuclear field.

## Qalibaf re-elected as Parliament speaker



TEHRAN – Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has been re-elected as Speaker of Iran's Parliament for the sixth year in a row, following a leadership vote held during an open session on Tuesday, May 27.

Qalibaf and fellow lawmaker Ahmad Rastineh both declared their candidacy for the speakership of the 12th Parliament in its second term.

Qalibaf ultimately secured 219 out of 272 votes cast, maintaining his position at the helm of the legislature. Having previously served a full four-year term as Speaker during the 11th Parliament, Qalibaf's latest victory extends his leadership into a sixth consecutive year.

## IRGC dismantles terrorist network plotting unrest across Iran

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) of Kerman Province announced Monday the successful dismantling of a coordinated "anti-security" network allegedly plotting to incite unrest and public disorder across Iran.

According to a statement released by the Public Relations Office of IRGC in Kerman, the group had been actively engaged in planning and establishing operational cells aimed at triggering chaos in the country.

"Through precise surveillance and intelligence efforts by the IRGC Intelligence Organization of Kerman Province, an organized network focused on planning and mobilization for widespread disruption was identified and taken down," the statement said.

The network's key operatives were arrested during simultaneous operations conducted in multiple provinces, following warrants issued by

## Etemad: Meeting with the mediator

In an analysis, Etemad discussed Mr. Pezeshkian's visit to Oman and wrote: This visit carries a clear message about the depth and continuity of relations between Tehran and Muscat; relations that have deep roots in the history of regional diplomacy and have always been on the path of trust and cooperation during the most sensitive periods, including the peak of international pressure on Iran. Oman was one of the few states that not only did not cut off its relations with Iran, but also played a balanced and realistic role, becoming one of the main economic and political conduits of the Islamic Republic. It seems that history is repeating itself, and Muscat has once again become a key player in Iran's regional interactions, in a situation where the prospects for the revival of the nuclear deal are unclear. Therefore, part of the agenda of the President's visit to Oman should be seen as pursuing bilateral economic agreements, joint investments, developing port cooperation, and increasing trade exchanges. Therefore, it seems that Muscat remains one of the few capitals where Tehran can engage in complex issues such as the nuclear file and relations with the United States, and simultaneously reinforce the foundations for long-term economic cooperation in the region.

## Arman-e-Melli: Competition for a share in the JCPOA

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli discussed the approach of Europe and the United States towards Iran and the negotiations. The paper said: One of the important points in this equation is the differences that exist between the United States and Europe. Many analysts believe that Europe, as one of the main players in the JCPOA, wants to maintain and even increase its share in the negotiation process more than the United States. European countries, under internal and external pressure, especially from the U.S. and Israel, are trying to adopt tougher positions against Iran and maintain their influence in the decision-making processes.

Moreover, the U.S., which is no longer an official member of the JCPOA, looks at the negotiations differently, and its approach is more focused on pressure and the imposition of sanctions. These differences have pushed the talks into a state of uncertainty and increased pressure on Iran. However, it seems that Trump ultimately prefers an agreement with Iran because he knows the costs of conflict with Tehran and the regional Arab countries' opposition to tension in the region.

## Enrichment not up for debate, Iran Foreign Ministry tells CNN

TEHRAN – Iran has reiterated that uranium enrichment remains a red line in its nuclear negotiations with the United States, with Tehran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson emphasizing that Washington appears to acknowledge this position.

"If the intention is to make sure that Iran's nuclear program would not be weaponized, I think that's something that we could simply do," said Esmail Baghaei, speaking to CNN in Tehran on Monday.

He stressed that Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy is non-negotiable—a position the Islamic Republic has consistently maintained throughout years of diplomatic engagement.

"If the (US) intention is to deprive Iranians of their right to peaceful nuclear energy, I think that would be very problematic to the extent that I think it would really challenge the whole process," he warned.

The remarks followed the conclusion of the fifth round of indirect U.S.-Iran nuclear talks, held in Rome last Friday.

The discussions prompted cautious optimism from U.S. President Donald Trump, who noted signs of progress.

"We had some very good talks with Iran yesterday and today, and let's see what happens. But I think



we could have some good news on the Iran front," Trump told reporters in New Jersey on Sunday before departing for Washington.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described the latest round of talks as "one of the most professional rounds of negotiations" to date, though he acknowledged that several key issues remain unresolved. "Too complicated to be resolved in two or three meetings," he said.

While the Trump administration has maintained a firm public stance demanding a halt to all uranium enrichment—an activity central to both energy production and potential weapons development—Baghaei suggested that U.S. negotiators may be taking a more pragmatic approach behind closed doors.

"The fact that so far we have

continued our talks means that we understand there is a certain level of understanding that Iran cannot under any circumstances give up its right to peaceful nuclear energy," he said.

Baghaei also voiced optimism that a mutually beneficial agreement could be reached. "If really there is a will, there's ways," he said. "There is not only one way, there are so many ways."

He rejected ongoing threats by the Israeli regime to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, insisting that Tehran would not bow to intimidation.

"Iranians would not be conducive to any sort of pressure," he said. "When it comes to using that language, Iranians will come with one voice, and we will certainly defend our national security."

In a recent address, Leader of

## Iran, Pakistan vow to intensify cooperation to combat terrorism along shared border



Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri (R) shakes hand with visiting Pakistani Army Chief Marshal Asim Munir in Tehran on May 27, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iran and Pakistan have reaffirmed their strong commitment to eliminating terrorism on both sides of their common border through enhanced military cooperation.

This resolution was emphasized during a meeting between Major General Mohammad Bagh-

eri, Chief of the Joint Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, and Pakistani Army Chief Marshal Asim Munir on Tuesday.

In his remarks, Major General Bagheri described Pakistan as a strategic partner and highlighted the importance of the ongoing coordination between the two

countries' armed forces in securing their shared border.

He praised the existing collaboration as effective and invaluable, stressing that such cooperation should be further strengthened to address security challenges more efficiently.

Echoing these sentiments, Marshal Munir emphasized the need to deepen military ties and boost joint efforts in combating terrorism along the Iran-Pakistan border.

He acknowledged the extensive experience of the Iranian armed forces in various security domains and expressed Pakistan's determination to expand defense cooperation with Iran.

Marshal Munir's visit to Iran is part of a broader regional tour led by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which started in Turkey and will continue to Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei condemned U.S. efforts to pressure Iran into halting enrichment.

He called such demands "completely wrong," and asserted that the Islamic Republic does not need permission from any foreign power to pursue its peaceful nuclear program.

Since April, Tehran and Washington have held five rounds of indirect negotiations in Rome and the Omani capital, Muscat.

Iranian officials have frequently criticized the U.S. side for shifting its positions during the talks, arguing that such "contradictory" behavior undermines the diplomatic process.

During his first term in office (2017–2021), President Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear agreement—officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—which had placed significant restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

Calling the accord "one-sided," Trump reimposed broad U.S. sanctions on Iran.

In response, Tehran began scaling back its voluntary compliance with the deal, expanding its nuclear energy program within the framework of international safeguards.

The tour aims to enhance bilateral relations and tackle shared security and economic issues across West and South Asia.

This high-level meeting followed Prime Minister Sharif's own discussions with Iran's top leadership, including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and President Masoud Pezeshkian.

During these talks, both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthening ties and promoting regional stability.

The renewed focus on cooperative security measures comes amid ongoing concerns about cross-border terrorist activities affecting both nations.

By working closely together, Iran and Pakistan aim to create a safer environment for their citizens and contribute to broader regional peace.

## The Persian Gulf is on edge—regional powers must fix it themselves

By Seyed Mehrdad Bani Hashemi Kahangi

TEHRAN – In recent months, tensions in the Persian Gulf have reentered the global spotlight—not through official declarations, but via a silent escalation playing out beneath the waves and between the straits.

A string of maritime incidents, including ship seizures, sabotage operations, and contested maneuvers near the Strait of Hormuz, signal a renewed phase in the long-standing shadow war between Iran and its regional and international rivals.

## Geopolitical chessboard beneath the waves

The Persian Gulf is more than a strategic waterway; it is a living barometer of regional power shifts.

The reconfiguration of alliances post-Abraham Accords, coupled with the fluctuating presence of U.S. naval forces and growing Chinese and Russian maritime interests, has intensified the complexity of the Persian Gulf's security architecture.

Iran, amid this shifting terrain, has reasserted its deterrence policy by emphasizing control over its maritime borders and responding assertively to any provocations.

What distinguishes the recent maritime confrontations is Iran's evolving use of asymmetric tactics.

Swarm boat strategies, drone surveillance, and strategic use of legal justifications—such as violations of maritime law or territorial infringements—have created a layered deterrent.

This blend of legal framing and tactical innovation complicates traditional Western responses, especially in light of the U.S. Navy's overstretched commitments and decreasing regional political will.

The revival of maritime tensions arrives as global energy routes remain vulnerable.

While the Ukraine war has redirected European focus to the Black Sea, any disruption in the Persian Gulf—through escalation or miscalculation—would immediately reverberate across global oil markets.

Recent warnings by the International Maritime Organization and insurance spikes on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz reflect this latent anxiety.

## What the West Misses

Western narratives often frame Iran's maritime moves as purely aggressive or destabilizing.

What they fail to capture is Tehran's perception of maritime sovereignty and the deep-seated belief that the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a conduit for oil, but a frontline in a decades-long confrontation.



The lack of a regional maritime security framework, driven by Persian Gulf rivalries and external interference, leaves the space dangerously under-regulated.

If maritime escalation is to be averted, regional actors and global powers must pivot from symbolic gestures to structured engagement.

Multilateral frameworks, including regional naval de-escalation pacts and recognition of mutual security concerns, must take precedence over sanctions and unilateral maneuvers.

Only then can the Persian Gulf evolve from a perpetual flashpoint into a stable corridor of energy, commerce, and cooperation.

# Iran and Oman strengthen ties with high-level visit and 18 new agreements

From Page 1 ▶ In a meeting with the Sultan, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude to Oman for its role in facilitating the ongoing indirect talks between Iran and the United States. Oman has been hosting the negotiations and serving as the go-between.

“We appreciate the good efforts of our friendly and brotherly country, Oman, in mediating in the negotiations and hope this process leads to good results.” He underscored Oman’s strategic importance in Iran’s foreign policy, adding, “The Islamic Republic of Iran has complete trust in Oman; this trust increases both parties’ responsibility to strengthen relations and pursue more substantial agreements.” The U.S. had sought the UAE to act as the mediator. Iran, however, said it wants Oman to take on the role.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian expressed Iran’s readiness to expand collaboration with Oman in multiple fields, including financial, scientific, educational, technological, and particularly medical areas.

Emphasizing the shared responsibilities of Muslim nations, he said, “We are prepared to do whatever we can for the dignity and greatness of Muslims. Each of us has capacities that we can utilize for the welfare and progress of each other and other na-



Photo shows Iran’s FM Araghchi (L) and his Omani counterpart Al Busaidi signing cooperation documents as President Pezeshkian and Sultan Haitham bin Tariq sit behind them

tions in the region; under such circumstances, no foreign power will be able to bring Muslim nations under its dominance.”

He also thanked Oman for its clear and supportive stance on the plight of the Palestinian people, especially regarding the situation in Gaza. “We sincerely thank you for your good positions regarding the Gaza issue and support for the oppressed.”

Highlighting the importance of sustainable development beyond natural resources, the president noted, “Although oil and gas are divine blessings, they are not unlimited. It is necessary for the traders and industrialists of both countries to plan for future generations and strengthen long-

term economic foundations.” He called for facilitating economic exchanges, promoting trade, and expanding cooperation in defense and security.

For his part, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq expressed optimism about the future of bilateral relations.

“By God’s grace, today Oman is in a good position without dependency on oil and gas and with a focus on strengthening trade exchanges,” he said.

The Sultan agreed on the need to boost trade by improving access for traders and developing links between Iranian and Omani ports. He also highlighted the significance of Iran’s north-south railway for enhancing re-

gional trade.

Addressing security ties, Sultan Haitham emphasized Oman’s commitment to supporting Iran’s success, viewing it as beneficial for the entire region.

“More support should be provided for energy cooperation between the two countries, and we welcome any collaboration with Iran, especially in military fields and mutual interests,” he added.

He expressed gratitude for the trust placed in Oman by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in the mediation process, assuring that Oman acts with purely benevolent intentions.

“Rest assured that the positions conveyed by you to us will be given full attention and respect.”

On the Palestinian issue, Sultan Haitham praised Iran’s principled defense of Palestinian rights, stating, “Standing firm on the rights of the Palestinian people and defending oppressed citizens is valuable and commendable for us.”

The discussions led to the signing of 18 cooperation agreements, which aim to strengthen the ties between the two countries across various sectors, including legal, economic, political, cultural, educational, health, defense, media, technology, energy, and mining.

## Iran’s security chief joins 13th intl. meeting of senior security officials in Moscow

Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, arrived at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow on Tuesday afternoon to attend the 13th International Meeting of Senior Security Officials. Upon arrival, he was welcomed by Iran’s Ambassador to Russia and the Deputy Secretary of the Russian National Security Council.

The annual forum, hosted by Moscow, aims to foster a new global security architecture by bringing together senior security officials and defense ministers from across the world.

This year’s meeting is particularly significant given the current geopolitical dynamics and ongoing regional tensions.

Over 125 delegations from 100 countries, along with representatives from 14 international organizations, are participating

in the event held at the Russian National Center.

Speaking to reporters upon his arrival, Ahmadian highlighted the importance of the summit, saying, “On the sidelines of this meeting, I will hold bilateral talks with officials from several countries, including friendly nations.”

He stressed that such gatherings, along with the establishment of multilateral groups like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, signal a global shift toward creating a new international system that challenges the existing unilateral order.

“The space that has been created should be used to form a new system in the international arena,” Ahmadian added, emphasizing Iran’s intent to actively engage in shaping this evolving global framework.



Security Chief Ali Akbar Ahmadian (L) talking to reporters upon arrival at Moscow on May 27, 2025.

Since its inception in 2010, the International Meeting of Senior Security Officials has served as a crucial platform for security leaders and experts worldwide to collaborate on addressing the complex security threats of the 21st century.

The forum encourages dialogue and cooperation on a wide range of issues, from terrorism

and cyber threats to regional conflicts and arms control.

This year’s meeting will be chaired by Sergei Shoigu, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation.

Under his leadership, the forum seeks to strengthen international partnerships and explore collective solutions to emerging security challenges.

## Constitutional Council approves Iran’s membership in APAC

indicating a likely clerical error in the statement.

The approval paves the way for Iran to formally join APAC, a regional entity dedicated to strengthening accreditation systems and promoting the mutual recognition of conformity assessments among member countries.

Established in 2019 through the merger of the Asia-Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) and the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC), APAC plays a key role in enhancing trade reliability and technical cooperation across the region.

Iran’s accession to APAC is expected to improve the credibility of its conformity assessments

The bill received overwhelming support in the Iranian Parliament during a public session held on April 16.

Legislators debated its contents after hearing a detailed report from the Parliamentary Committee on Industries and Mines. Following the discussions, the bill passed with 184 votes in favor, 14 against, and 2 ab-

stentions out of 212 lawmakers present.

Under the legislation, the Iranian government is authorized to proceed with APAC membership according to the organization’s statute and is obligated to pay the corresponding membership fees.

In line with constitutional mandates, the bill also stipulates that all actions must adhere to Articles 4, 77, 125, and 139 of the Iranian Constitution—ensuring both religious and legal compliance in the implementation phase.

Furthermore, the law includes a transparency clause requiring the government to present an annual report to parliament.

This report will outline financial costs, commitments undertaken, and the practical benefits derived from membership in APAC, thus enabling parliamentary oversight of the country’s engagement with the organization.

Iran’s accession to APAC is expected to improve the credibility of its conformity assessments and boost the global standing of its exports and services, particularly in technical and industrial sectors.

The move also signals a broader policy trend of expanding institutional ties with Asia-Pacific nations in light of shifting global dynamics and evolving regional alliances.

## Bam Khatoon move up in AFC Women’s Club Competition 2024/25 Rankings

TEHRAN – The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed the latest AFC Women’s Club Competition 2024/25 Rankings, with Bam Khatoon moving up to seventh place.

Having amassed 97.662 points, Australia climbed to pole position ahead of second-placed Korea Republic, with Japan securing the third spot.

Australia owe their pole position to Melbourne City FC’s spectacular run, which saw them finish runners-up behind China PR’s Wuhan Jiangda Women’s FC on Saturday.

Hyundai Steel Red Angels Women’s FC’s Semi-final finish at the AFC Women’s Champions League was enough to secure Korea Republic the second place with 75.852 points. The Red Angels, who faced Melbourne City in the last four, put up a valiant fight before succumbing to Shelby McMahon’s winning goal in the final seconds of the game.

In the third position are Japan, who finished on 74.800 points after Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies displayed impeccable form in the Group Stage of Asia’s premier women’s club competition.

Bam Khatoon moved up to seventh place, collection 50.389 points. The Iranian team lost to Hyundai Steel Red Angels in AFC Women’s Champions League 2024/25 quarter-final in late March.

Points for all clubs have been calculated following the conclusion of the AFC Women’s Champions League 2024/25, while the national team points are based on the FIFA Women’s World Ranking issued on March 6, 2025.

## Bonyadifar to officiate Esteghlal vs. Malavan in Hazfi Cup final

TEHRAN – Moud Bonyadifar has been selected to officiate the match between Esteghlal and Malavan in the 2024–25 Iran Hazfi Cup final.

The final will be held at the Imam Khomeini Stadium in Arak on Thursday.

Bonyadifar will be assisted by Alireza Ildorom and Mohammad Ataei, with Hassan Akrami serving as the fourth official.

Esteghlal is the most successful team in Hazfi Cup history, having won the title seven times.

## Jahanbakhsh leaves Heerenveen

TEHRAN – Alireza Jahanbakhsh has announced his departure from Eredivisie side Heerenveen.

The 32-year-old winger joined Heerenveen last November. However, the club chose not to extend his contract, and the Iranian player has now left the team.

In a message on Instagram, Jahanbakhsh said, “As my journey with SC Heerenveen comes to an end, I want to sincerely thank the club, my teammates, the staff, and the amazing fans for all the support and great memories. Although it was a short stay, it’s been an honor to wear this shirt with the beautiful Pompebløden on it. I wish the club nothing but success in the future.”

Jahanbakhsh has been linked with several Iranian football teams.

## Roberto Piazza names Iran squad for 2025 VNL

TEHRAN – Roberto Piazza has named his 16-man team for the 2025 FIVB Men’s Volleyball Nations League.

Team Melli will start the prestigious campaign with a match against Brazil on June 11 in Rio de Janeiro.

Iran will also meet the U.S., Slovenia, and Ukraine, respectively in the following days in Week 1.

Iran men’s national team roster

**setters:** Javad Karimi, Arshia Behnezhad

**Opposites:** Amin Esmaeilnezhad, Bardia Saadat, Pouya Ariakhah

**Outside hitters:** Morteza Sharifi, Amirhossein Esfandiari, Ehsan Daneshdoust, Poriya Hossein Khanzadeh, Ali Haghparsat

**Middle blockers:** Mohammad Valizadeh, Yousef Kazemi, Eisa Naseri, Matin Ahmadi

**Liberos:** Mohammadreza Hazratpour, Arman Salehi

## Iran lose to Kyrgyzstan in CAFA U17 Championship 2025

TEHRAN – Iran was defeated against Kyrgyzstan 4–3 in the CAFA U17 Championship 2025 on Monday.

Iran will play Uzbekistan on Wednesday in Group A.

Group B consists of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

The competition is being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from May 26 to 31.

## Moharrami says goodbye to Dinamo Zagreb

TEHRAN – Iran international winger Sadeq Moharrami said goodbye to his Croatian club Dinamo Zagreb.

The Iranian right-back made eight appearances this season, with two of those as a starter.

Moharrami’s contract is set to expire at the end of June and is unlikely to be renewed.

“After 7 years it’s time to say goodbye. To my teammates, coaches, staff, and especially the fans. Thank you for every moment, every cheer, and every lesson. Zagreb will always be a part of me. Now it’s time for a new chapter, but the memories will last forever,” Moharrami posted on his Instagram account.

The 29-year-old, with 32 caps for Team Melli and participation in the 2022 World Cup, is not contemplating a return to his home country.

## Taftian advances to 2025 Asian Athletic Championships SF

TEHRAN – Hassan Taftian of Iran secured his place in the semifinal round of the 2025 Asian Athletic Championships on Tuesday.

He finished in third place with a time of 10.47 seconds in the men’s 100m heat 4 behind Oman’s Malham Al Balushi (10.41) and China’s Wang Shengjie (10.41).

Taftian will lock horn with his rivals in the semifinal on Wednesday.

The 26th Asian Athletics Championships take place from May 27 to 31 in Gumi, South Korea.

## Omid Alishah to remain at Persepolis

TEHRAN – Persepolis captain Omid Alishah will stay with the team, with his contract set to be extended. Although media reports have suggested that he was considered surplus to requirements, a source close to the club confirmed that the player will remain with Persepolis.

?smaail Kartal has reportedly agreed to retain Alishah for the upcoming season.

The 33-year-old midfielder is Persepolis’s all-time record appearance holder and one of the most prominent figures in the club’s history.

Alishah joined Persepolis in 2013 and has spent more than a decade representing the Iranian giants.



TEHRAN – Iran’s Constitutional Council has officially endorsed a parliamentary bill authorizing the country’s accession to the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), marking a strategic step in Tehran’s ongoing efforts to integrate more deeply into regional and international standardization networks.

The announcement was made on Monday by Hadi Tahan Nazif, spokesman for the Constitutional Council, who confirmed via a post on the social media platform X that the legislation had passed legal and religious scrutiny.

“The bill for the membership of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was found not to be in contradiction to the principles of Sharia and the Constitution,” he wrote—although the organization in question is the Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), not the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC),

## Tehran, Tokyo voice readiness to expand trade relations



TEHRAN - In a meeting between the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and a special representative of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), both sides reaffirmed their interest in enhancing bilateral trade relations.

According to a statement from the TPO, Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi congratulated Nobutaka Maekawa on the 96th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Iran and Japan, and described cooperation between the two trade organizations as effective.

"We are eager to benefit from your expertise in the field of trade," he said.

Dehnavi, who also serves as deputy minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, added that Iran seeks to draw on Japan's experience in product promotion and supportive trade mechanisms.

Highlighting the Iranian market's appreciation for Japanese quality, Dehnavi said Iran

would welcome JETRO technical experts to help facilitate knowledge exchange.

Nobutaka, the JETRO special envoy, acknowledged the longstanding friendship between the two nations but expressed concern over the impact of sanctions on trade relations.

"We are truly disheartened by the current state of our economic ties and are seeking to revise our approach in Iran to achieve more promising outcomes," he said.

He reaffirmed Japan's continued interest in investing in Iran, saying the country's motivation to pursue investment opportunities remains unchanged.

Nobutaka also stressed the commitment of both the Japanese government and private sector to engage with Iran, noting that JETRO's presence in the country would be maintained to support Japanese companies interested in doing business there.

Also present at the meeting, Amir Roshanbakhsh, the deputy for international business development at the TPO, said Iranians have already benefited from Japan's industrial expertise.

"We've built significant capacity in technical and engineering services. Training and technology transfer fall outside the scope of sanctions, which has allowed us to preserve and consolidate this potential within the country," he added.

## Iranian 85-member trade delegation travels to Oman

TEHRAN- An 85-member trade delegation from Iran's private sector departed for Oman on the eve of the visit of President Masoud Pezeshkian and Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Head Samad Hassanzadeh to the Arab country.

The delegates are active in the fields of technical and engineering services, food industries, mining, and knowledge-based, and artificial intelligence, petrochemicals, medical and pharmaceutical equipment, and tourism.

According to Jamal Razaghi Jahromi, head of the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce, in addition to the Iran-Oman Business Opportunities Conference, which will be held on Wednesday with the presence of Masoud Pezeshkian, and Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, King of Oman, and the heads of the Iran and Oman Chambers of Commerce, an investment conference and a face-to-face meeting of Iranian and Omani traders and businessmen will be held, as well as a meeting between the Omani Minister of Commerce and the head of the Iranian Chamber.

As announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's exports to Oman increased in the previous Iranian year 1403 (March 2024-March 2025), while imports from the Arab country declined, boosting Tehran's trade surplus with Muscat.

Iran recorded a trade surplus of \$764 million with Oman in 1403, up from \$570 million the previous year.

Exports to Oman reached around 6.0 million

tons worth \$1.548 billion, marking a 7.94 percent rise compared to the year before.

In contrast, imports from Oman dropped by 9.17 percent to 776,000 tons valued at \$785 million.

Top imported goods from Oman included unrefined gold, animal feed corn, and sunflower seed oil. On the export side, Iran mainly shipped petroleum bitumen, iron and steel billets, and urea.

Oman accounted for 2.68 percent of Iran's total exports and 1.08 percent of its total imports in the same period.

Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$140 million to Oman in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 21), according to data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA data showed that Oman was Iran's sixth top non-oil export destination in the mentioned month.

Iran's Ambassador to Oman Mousa Farhang says the Arab country's economic ecosystem is favorable for Iranian private sector companies, encouraging firms to begin with smaller-scale projects to establish a foothold in the Omani market.

During a visit to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce pavilion at the Oman Oil and Energy Exhibition on May 14, Farhang met with Iranian business representatives and company delegates, expressing optimism about Oman's potential as a destination for Iranian private investment.

## TEDPIX up nearly 25,000 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 24,915 points to 3.134 million on Tuesday, which is the fourth day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the capital market's share in the national financing system is going to increase to 50 percent over the next five years, positioning it as a key engine of economic activity, employment, and industrial growth.

Hojatollah Seyedi said the organization's 14th development plan includes targeted measures to stimulate production, starting with fiscal incentives embedded in the nation-

al budget.

He outlined two additional pillars of the government's production strategy: implementation of the Law on Supporting Production and a five-part economic development plan currently being drafted by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO).

Seyedi said new investment funds have been created within the capital market to support production, including Murabaha bonds aimed at financing small- and medium-sized enterprises.

He said the Securities and Exchange Organization is targeting a "50-50" financing model, balancing bank loans and capital market resources, over a four- to five-year horizon. "Initial public offerings in project-based companies have already begun, and infrastructure for Murabaha bond issuance is in place," he said, noting a surge in applications from producers seeking bond issuance licenses.

# South Korea-Iran ties can be developed in various fields: South Korean ambassador

TEHRAN - South Korean Ambassador to Iran Kim Junpyo said that relations between South Korea and Iran can be developed in various fields relying on many communities between the two countries.

The envoy made the remarks in a meeting with the mayor of Sanandaj city, the center of Iran's Kordestan province, on Monday night.

He said: "The city of Sanandaj, due to its high potential, can be a bridge to strengthen cultural and economic relations between Iran and South Korea."

He announced his country's readiness to invest in various fields, including tourism, culture, and especially the field of medicinal plants, and said: "The Republic of Korea also has high capacity in the field of medicinal plants, and this can be a suitable platform for joint cooperation."

Expressing his pleasure at being in this city, the ambassador appreciated the municipality's preparation of a clip introducing the capacities of Sanandaj in Korean and



South Korean Ambassador to Iran Kim Junpyo (L) and Kordestan Governor-General Arash Zereh-Tan

said: "This is the first time that I have been presented with content about an Iranian city dubbed in Korean, and I will take it to Korea to introduce it to the people of my country."

Anvar Rashid, the mayor of Sanandaj, for his part, emphasized the formation of the Sanandaj-South Korea Joint Investment Committee, and stated: "This committee will be an effective step in

sustainable development and cultural interaction between the two countries of Iran and South Korea."

The formation of this joint committee can open economic knots and bring tangible benefits to the people of both countries," he added.

He emphasized that this committee, with the aim of exchanging experiences, and defining joint projects, will be a platform for

## Iran, China ink deal to export engineering services for Kazakh steel plant

TEHRAN - Iran has signed a deal with a Chinese company to export engineering services for the construction of a sponge iron production unit in Kazakhstan, marking a significant step in regional industrial cooperation.

According to IRIB, the agreement was signed at a ceremony attended by Iranian and Chinese representatives.

The project involves the design and engineering of a sponge iron plant in Kazakhstan with an annual production capacity of 800,000 tons.

Taherzadeh, Head of ASCOTEC Holding which represents Iran in the contract, said the deal

represents the first instance of engineering cooperation based on Iran's proprietary PERED technology.

He described the agreement as a major step toward the development of indigenous technology and a boost to Iran's presence in regional steel markets.

Sun, a representative of China's TCS company, hailed nearly two decades of successful cooperation with Iranian firms.

He expressed interest in expanding such collaboration to new projects in Kazakhstan and beyond.

"We have strong investment capabilities in Iran's steel sector and are confident this success can be replicated in Kazakhstan," he said. "We are also active in Africa and welcome further cooperation with Iranian companies there."

Vajihollah Jafari, Iran's deputy Industry, Mining and Trade minister for mining affairs, called the deal a milestone in Iran-China cooperation in third countries.

He expressed hope that similar partnerships would expand into other sectors.

He added that Iran and China also enjoy solid cooperation on domestic projects within Iran.

## Iran adds 600 MW of solar power, launches major renewable projects in 5 provinces

TEHRAN - Iran installed approximately 600 megawatts (MW) of solar power capacity in the past Iranian year (ending March 2025), marking a fourfold increase over the previous annual average of 150 MW, according to Alireza Parandeh Motlaq, deputy head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA).

In an appearance on the state TV, Parandeh Motlaq said the Energy Ministry has undertaken the development of several government-led solar power plants to help meet growing electricity demand from households and industry. Although initially state-funded, these plants are ultimately intended for transfer to the private sector.

SATBA's current roadmap includes a 5,000 MW expansion target. Given the urgency of the timeline set by authorities, some of the required equipment is being sourced internationally. Imported solar components are being shipped via rail and sea, with maritime

routes taking about 35 days and rail deliveries requiring 15 days. As of now, three shipments of equipment have arrived, with two already dispatched to sites that were designated and designed last year.

Parandeh Motlaq noted that in the previous Iranian year (ended on March 20), the country achieved its highest-ever annual capacity addition in renewable energy. Meanwhile, the Energy Ministry has received private-sector proposals for a total of 38,000 MW of renewable capacity. The government plans to build 5,000 MW of solar plants and procure 2,000 MW worth of equipment in the near term.

He added that per recent regulations, any industrial facility that generates part of its own electricity using renewable sources is exempt from mandatory load reduction measures—a policy that has been in effect since 2023.

He also stated that households can benefit from installing rooftop solar panels. If a family installs

a 5-kilowatt system, the Energy Ministry will purchase the generated electricity at a rate of 3,700 toman (approximately \$0.074) per kilowatt-hour. However, those who exceed standard household consumption limits will still be subject to restrictions.

**297 MW of solar power projects begin installation across 5 provinces**

The head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced the launch of construction for 297 MW of renewable power capacity across five provinces.

Mohsen Tarzatabal, who also serves as Deputy Energy Minister, made the announcement on Monday during a ceremony marking the beginning of equipment installation for the new solar projects.

Tarzatabal said the projects are part of a larger government plan to build 3,000 MW of solar capacity through the development of modular 3-MW solar plants. Construction

has already started at 856 sites across the country, including in seven provincial capitals.

The initial phase covers five regions: Golestan, Bushehr, Fars (specifically Shiraz County), East Azarbaijan, and Kish Island.

Tarzatabal stated that the total investment for the current phase of development in these five provinces amounts to \$96 billion, fully financed by the government.

**500 MW expansion in renewables under fourteenth government**

Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi also announced a 500 MW boost in renewable power development under President Pezeshkian's administration, known as the fourteenth government.

Speaking at the launch of a solar equipment installation program, Aliabadi gave assurances that the new plants will be operational on schedule and support the national grid.

## ICCIMA hosts OPEC training workshop on engineering services exports

TEHRAN - The first OPEC international training workshop on engineering and technical service exports opened at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Tuesday, with a strong call for expanding Iranian companies' participation in projects funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development.

Iranian officials and business leaders presented this opportunity as a catalyst for enhancing the country's technical service exports and diversifying its sources of foreign currency revenue.

Ali Naqavi, head of the Construction and Technical Services Committee at Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) emphasized that Iran boasts over 50,000 qualified engineering companies, a capacity unmatched in the region. "If just 20 Iranian companies each carry out three foreign projects annually, the resulting foreign exchange earnings could exceed our current oil exports," he said.

Naqavi called for closer collaboration between the Iranian Investment Organization and the private sector to unlock this potential.

He noted that the Chamber is working with OPEC to hold two to three training workshops per year to ensure Iranian companies have access to the latest information and international opportunities.

Hossein Keshiri, Iran's representative to the OPEC Fund, announced that the Fund will finance \$3.0 billion worth of infrastructure projects in 2024, covering around 70 initiatives across 60 countries.

He stressed the importance of improving Iranian companies' access to these projects and overcoming existing barriers to participation.

"We are working to clear the way for Iranian firms to benefit from the Fund's infrastructure investments next year," he said.

Mohammad Khazaei, Secretary-General of the

Iranian Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), provided a broader context, explaining that the OPEC Fund was launched in 1976 to provide development loans to non-OPEC nations using capital from OPEC member states. "OPEC countries, including Iran, cannot access these funds themselves, but they can participate in the execution of projects the Fund supports," he noted.

Deputy Economy Minister and head of Iran's Organization for Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance, Abolfazl Koudeh, stressed that engineering service exports are fundamentally different from goods exports. "They rely primarily on human capital and technical expertise," he said. "That's why empowering our workforce, especially in the private sector, is crucial—and the government is committed to this."

He added that workshops like the one held with OPEC are part of this broader empowerment strategy.

# Hezbollah is more aligned with Aoun than Salam

From page 1 ► By exporting our revolution, we mean for people to awaken, free themselves from the suffering they endure, and emerge from the domination of others who plunder their resources and wealth, while they themselves live in poverty and deprivation. The goal is to revive and implement the universal provisions of Islam, and strive for everyone to enjoy prosperity, freedom, and independence.”

Salam probably ignores that the core of the values that the Islamic Revolution stands for is supporting the Palestinian Sunnis, and that all the hostile pressure and sanctions being exerted on Iran are because of supporting the Palestinians who are Sunni Muslims!

But Salam is also oblivious to the historical fact that it was the Shiites of Lebanon who “exported their revolution” to Iran in the sixteenth century. It was done by the prominent Lebanese jurist Ali al-Karaki (the great-grandfather of Sayyed Khamenei), who converted Iran from Sufism to Shiism.

Even if we were to accept, for the sake of argument, that Iran exported its revolution, when and how? At the height of its weakness, Imam Khomeini “exported” Revolutionary Guard commanders to establish a resistance front that defeated Israel and, before that, the American Marines.

During the interview, Salam said he hopes to “change the rules of the political game in Lebanon, which has been plagued by wars,” arguing that “the current government has accomplished what previous governments failed to accomplish in ten years.” He said, “What matters to us is the trust of the people, not the satisfaction of the entourage.”



More than two months have passed since the birth of Nawaf Salam’s government, and his promises remain just on paper.

Salam’s prime ministerial statement, which pledged to “expedite the reconstruction of what was destroyed by the [U.S.-led] Israeli aggression and to remove the damage,” has so far remained unimplemented, with even no sign of taking the first steps toward reconstruction.

Salam expressed that he is a “peace seeker,” but peace with whom? With an imperialist colonial regime that has not ceased to annihilate the Palestinian people for more than seven decades, and launches daily attacks on Lebanon, violating its sovereignty?

On May 25, 2025, nearly six months after the ceasefire agreement, the Israeli army radio reported that the Northern Command of the army “had begun the process of reorganizing the deployment of its forces on the border with Lebanon.” Accordingly, it was decided to redeploy “the Galilee Division (91st Division) along the entire Lebanese border with occupied Palestine,” meaning a return to the situation before the last war.

And when Salam, the former pres-

ident of the International Court of Justice, pointed out that Palestine’s strength today lies not in weapons but in international recognition and diplomacy, did he not notice that “Israel” pays no attention to international laws and regulations?!

Meanwhile, Ortogus had leaked through the media and political puppets linked the U.S. surveillance den (embassy) in Beirut that Washington “will be more stringent and decisive,” especially regarding the disarmament of Hezbollah in light of reports speaking of a new American trilogy: “weapons, reform, and peace.”

Ortogus had previously threatened that “the alternative to disarming Hezbollah is war on Lebanon.”

Contrary to Salam’s positions, President Joseph Aoun continues to insist that dealing with the weapons in possession of the Resistance should not lead to any conflict; this was highly appreciated by MP Mohammad Raad, head of Hezbollah’s Loyalty to the Resistance bloc in the parliament.

At a press conference, Raad commended Aoun’s objective stance and calm approach, refusing to respond to Salam’s positions “so as not to lose what remains of our courtesy.”

Nawaf Salam is no stranger to Lebanon’s reality. While he has spent the last 15 years outside Lebanon, he appears to be influenced by his political family, which has played a negative role in Lebanese history.

Salam’s grandfather was implicated in the 1934 sale of Lake Hula (5 x 4 km<sup>2</sup>, extending parallel to the Jordan River on the border with the occupied Syrian Golan Heights) to the Jewish Agency.

On the evening of May 23, 2025, amidst the brutal Israeli bombardment of Lebanon, Salam invited nearly 400 dignitaries to attend a performance of William Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Seemingly, Salam himself has not learned from the play’s messages.

In his greed for power, Hamlet’s father was assassinated by his brother Claudius. As a result, the Danish state was shaken, and a Norwegian prince, Fortenbras, assumed power, implicitly suggesting that a state built on treason and corruption will inevitably fall and be taken over by foreigners.

In light of American barbarism and brutality, if Hamlet were to ask the question, “To be or not to be?” the answer would inevitably be: I am a resistance fighter, or I am killed, annihilated, lose my dignity and sovereignty, and depart from the annals of history without a single noteworthy honorable national achievement.

In light of the results of the municipal and mayoral elections, we anticipate the results of the upcoming parliamentary elections, in which Salam’s chances of underestimating the wide majority of pro-Resistance popular base will likely be slim. Next year, Salam will depart without a single noteworthy honorable national achievement!

## ‘Chaotic scenes proof of Israel’s failure to manage crisis it created’

The Government Media Office in Gaza has issued a statement about the scenes at the aid distribution point in southern Gaza, saying Israel’s project to distribute supplies “in the so-called ‘buffer zones’ has failed disastrously”.

“Thousands of starving civilians – besieged and cut off from food and medicine by the occupation for nearly 90 days – rushed to these areas in a heartbreaking scene that ended with the storming of distribution centres and the seizing of food under the crushing weight of hunger,” it said.

It added that Israeli forces had responded “by opening fire and injuring several citizens, which clearly reflects the total collapse of the so-called humanitarian track that the occupation claims to uphold”.

The office said the scenes were evidence of Israel’s failure to manage the humanitarian crisis “it deliberately created through a policy of starvation, siege, and bombing”.

It added the establishment of “buffer ghettos” for distributing limited aid “under the threat of death, bullets, and starvation does not indicate a genuine intention to address the crisis.”

“Rather, it represents a calculated political strategy to perpetuate starvation, dismantle Palestinian society, and impose politicized humanitarian tracks that serve the occupation’s security and military agenda.”

## North Korea says US ‘Golden Dome’ risks ‘space nuclear war’

North Korea has criticized the U.S. plan for a futuristic “Golden Dome” missile shield, saying it could “turn outer space into a potential nuclear war field”, BBC reported.

The defense system, which President Donald Trump plans to unveil by the end of his term, is aimed at countering “next-generation” aerial threats to the U.S., including ballistic and cruise missiles.

Pyongyang’s Foreign Ministry slammed the plan as “the height of self-righteousness [and] arrogance”, state media reported.

It accused Washington of being “hell-bent... to militarize outer space” and warned that the plan might spark “a global nuclear and space arms race”.

## Trump admin moves to cut \$100 million in federal contracts for Harvard

The Trump administration is asking federal agencies to cancel contracts with Harvard University worth about \$100 million, a senior administration official said Tuesday, intensifying the president’s clash with the nation’s oldest and wealthiest university, AP reported.

The government has already canceled more than \$2.6 billion in federal research grants for the Ivy League school, which has pushed back on the administration’s demands for changes to several of its policies.

A draft letter from the General Services Administration directs agencies to review contracts with the university and seek alternate vendors. The administration planned to send a version of the letter on Tuesday, the official said. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations.

The New York Times first reported on the letter.

President Donald Trump has railed against Harvard, calling it a hotbed of liberalism and antisemitism. The school filed a lawsuit on April 21 over the administration’s calls for changes to the university’s leadership, governance and admissions policies. Since then, the administration has slashed the school’s federal funding, moved to cut off enrollment of international students and threatened its tax-exempt status.

## Car rams into crowd during Liverpool victory parade



A day of jubilation turned into chaos in Liverpool on Monday as a car deliberately drove into crowds celebrating the city’s Premier League title win, injuring at least 27 people.

Merseyside Police have arrested a 53-year-old local man in connection with the incident and confirmed it is not being treated as an act of terrorism.

“We believe this to be an isolated incident, and we are not currently looking for anyone else in relation to it,” said Merseyside Police Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Sims at a press briefing.

“The incident is not being treated as terrorism,” she added.

The crash took place at around 6:00 pm local time near Water Street, shortly after Liverpool’s open-top victory bus passed the area.

An AFP journalist on site reported several victims being carried away on stretchers, though the full extent of the injuries is still unknown.

“It was extremely fast,” said Harry Rashid, 48, who was attending the parade with his wife and daughters.

“Initially we just heard the pop, pop, pop of people just being knocked off the bonnet of the car. It was horrible and you could hear the bumps as he was going over the people.”

Another eyewitness, Mike Maddra, said, “The car turned left, mounted the pavement, came towards us and ran towards the buildings. We got out the way and it was speeding up.”



Children mourn the killing of their family members at Nasser Hospital on Monday [Abed Rahim Khatib/Anadolu]

## Why is Germany so late in criticizing Israel over the Gaza war?



From page 1 ► Unfortunately, Germany stood on the wrong side of history in the Gaza war. Merz’s predecessor Olaf Scholz visited Israel on October 17, 2023, ten days after the outbreak of the war that was triggered by Hamas’s attack on southern Israel.

Scholz’s visit to Israel emboldened the Netanyahu regime in its apocalyptic war on Gaza, which is continuing relentlessly until this hour.

Even German philosopher Jurgen Habermas expressed his support for Israel’s horrible acts in Gaza in the early weeks of the war.

Germany has been the second biggest arms supplier to Israel. It comes after the United States.

Even now that voices are rising in Europe for an arms embargo against Israel, Germany’s new Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl under Merz’s government snubbed Spain’s calls for an embargo, saying Germany will keep supplying weapons to Israel despite Israel’s intensified offensive in Gaza that has sparked international outcry.

“As a country that understands Israel’s security and existence as a core principle, Germany is always obliged to assist Israel in guaranteeing its security,” Wadepuhl told a joint press conference in Madrid alongside Spanish counterpart Jose Manuel Albares on Monday, May 26, according to the Defense Post.

“That naturally includes being willing to supply weapons in the future,” said Wadepuhl, citing Germany’s unique responsibility towards Israel after the Holocaust.

However, Germany that has been following a rather pacifist policy since the end of the Nazi rule must have used its influence to prevent another Holocaust by Israel and pressured Israel to accept a two-state solution for the decades-long conflict.

Interestingly, during his visit to Israel on May 17, Wadepuhl cast doubt on the success of Israel’s 19-month war on Gaza, saying the conflict cannot be solved through military actions and stressed

that Germany supports a political solution.

It seems that Germany has come to its senses, but too late. Its criticisms are coming after war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Though very late, the new stance by Germany is welcomed. It may help to repair Germany’s reputation in the world to some extent.

It is heartening that the Social Democrats, Merz’s junior coalition partner, has demanded a halt to arms exports to Israel, or Germany risks complicity in war crimes.

Whether Western countries, including Germany, acknowledge it or not, they are somehow complicit in the war crimes that have been taking place in Gaza since October 2023.

If it had not been for the West’s unquestionable and unwavering support, the extremists ruling Israel would not have committed this astonishing degree of crimes against the Gaza population.

There was and there is no justification to drop thousands of tons of bombs on 2.3 million people, dislocate them repeatedly from once place to another, cause famine and starvation, maim and orphan thousands of children, kill tens of thousands, and commit many other indescribable crimes to randomly kill some fighters who are seeking break suffocating chains around their neck.

Additionally, al-Quds Brigades stated that its fighters “successfully shelled a Zionist foot patrol with 60mm mortar rounds near a gathering of Israeli military vehicles that had advanced into Al-Atatra, north of Gaza.”

At the same time, the armed wing of the Palestinian Mujahideen Movement, the Mujahideen Brigades, successfully downed an IOF “EVO MAX 4T reconnaissance drone while it was on a surveillance mission in the Shujaiya area.”

As the IOF intensifies attempts to re-invade the Gaza Strip with infantry forces, the Palestinian resistance fighters remain resolute, working to thwart the incursions and inflict casualties on occupation soldiers and military assets.

al-Khamisa area” of Beit Lahia in northern Gaza.

Shujaiya and Beit Lahia remain two of several fronts from which Israeli occupation forces (IOF) are attempting to invade the northern part of the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the al-Quds Brigades, announced that its fighters “bombarded a gathering of Zionist enemy soldiers and vehicles infiltrating the vicinity of al-Ma’ari School, northeast of Khan Younis (in the southern Gaza Strip), with a barrage of heavy mortar shells.”

“Our fighters observed a helicopter landing and smoke bombs being deployed to evacuate the wounded,” the resistance faction said.

## More than 800 lawyers, judges call for UK sanctions on Israel over Gaza war

The United Kingdom must impose sanctions on the Israeli government and its ministers and take steps to “prevent and punish genocide” in Gaza, according to a letter signed by more than 800 lawyers, academics and former judges.

The open letter to Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday called on the British government to take concrete

action to halt the “serious violations of international law” being committed by Israel.

“Genocide is being perpetrated in Gaza or, at a minimum, there is a serious risk of genocide occurring,” the letter stated, adding that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian law were also taking place.

It urged Starmer to respond swiftly as “urgent and decisive action is required to avert the destruction of the Palestinian people of Gaza.” The letter quoted recent comments by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who expressed Israel’s intention to “take control of all the territory of the [Gaza] Strip” and “conquer, cleanse and stay – until Hamas is destroyed”.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))

## Tehran conference highlights importance of accessible tourism in Iranian museums

TEHRAN - A national conference on accessible tourism and museum training was held Tuesday at the Carpet Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran, focusing on improving tourism opportunities for people with disabilities and the role of education in creating more inclusive cultural experiences.

According to organizers, the event marked the 10th anniversary of Museum and Disability Day, and brought together officials from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Iranian National Committee of ICOM (International Council of Museums), and various disability and tourism advocacy groups.

In his address, Mostafa Fatemi, Director General of Domestic Tourism Development at the Ministry, highlighted the establishment of a dedicated accessible tourism working group within the ministry's tourism department.

He outlined several key initiatives, including regional competitions in nine provinces to revive and promote traditional Iranian cuisine through the participation of influential individuals with disabilities.

Fatemi also put the spotlight on workshops and training programs for tourism facility staff to raise awareness and improve services for travelers with disabilities.

Efforts to designate "accessible tourism



cities" and to develop branding strategies to promote them nationally, and issuing new guidelines for the accessibility of restrooms and other essential tourist infrastructure, were among other topics addressed by the official.

The conference featured a "ParaTour" of the museum, during which participants experienced a guided accessibility-focused tour of the facility.

Attendees also discussed identifying top-performing museums based on accessibility standards, raising awareness among museum professionals, and sharing success stories, such as those from the Niavaran Palace Museum, in adapting their facilities for disabled visitors.

## Vatican releases message for World Tourism Day 2025

The Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelization has released its message for World Tourism Day 2025, themed "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation," calling for protecting the environment, tourists and workers, and offering Christian hope.

Tourism should be marked by justice and respect for Creation, and, for this Jubilee Year, those working in tourism should express Christian hope.

These elements were outlined in the Vatican's message for the 46th World Tourism Day 2025, which is observed annually on September 27, on the theme "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation."

In the message, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, urged admiration for and protection of the Earth's resources, promotion of tourism through just practices, and adoption of sustainable lifestyles.

In light of global mobility, Archbishop Fisichella noted, "a use of resources is required that significantly impacts both people's health and the environment."

Therefore, he appealed to those working in tourism to seek solutions that respect environmental sustainability.

### Justice, care and caution

Tourism, Archbishop Fisichella suggested, brings up the issue of justice, which, he stressed, means offering fair wages to those working in tourism.

"The inevitable increase in travelers must be matched by appropriate offerings," he said, while warning again speculation, think-

ing only about profits, and the attitude of some who, in the face of growing tourist activity, respond by closing their doors to visitors.

"Overcrowding, in some places," he recognized, "presents serious challenges," but, he reasoned, "these can be prevented through timely interventions and by making use of the tools that technology provides."

### Christian community's participation in tourism

The Archbishop recalled that the Christian community also participates in tourism, especially through the hospitality they extend to pilgrims and tourists.

For this reason, he underscored, shrines are encouraged to remain "sacred spaces of authentic spirituality, where the heart finds comfort and reflection on life's fundamental questions is encouraged through silence, prayer, and dialogue with men and women of God."

Archbishop Fisichella, whose Dicastery is in charge of overseeing the 2025 Holy Year, reaffirmed his desire that "the Jubilee may inspire signs of hope by promoting sustainable use of resources."

Moreover, he announced that the Ninth World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Tourism will be held in Rome from 16-19 October, calling it "an important opportunity to reflect together on these themes and on the commitment the Church wishes to undertake so that tourism too may develop as a tool for evangelization and human advancement."

(Source: Vatican News)

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley

The cultural landscape of Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley offers a microcosmic perspective of the way people have harvested the resources of the high Pyrenees over millennia.

According to UNESCO, the property is an exceptional geographical unit located in the southeastern part of the Principality of Andorra, in the heart of the Pyrenees.

It covers an area of 4,247 ha or a little more than 9% of the national territory. A protective buffer zone of 4,092 ha surrounds this area.

The upper part of the valley is an exposed glacial landscape, with spectacular steep cliffs, rock, and lake glaciers. Lower down, the valley narrows and becomes more wooded, while in its lowest section, the river flows into a short gorge.

A secondary valley, the Perafita-Claror Valley, merges with the Madriu Valley from the South-West.

The Madriu-Perfita-Claror Valley is a microcosm that illustrates the way in which man has harvested mountain resources over the past millennia.

It also reflects the persistence of an ancient communal system of land management – four communities own land within the property.

Its spectacular glacial landscapes with vast pastures and wooded valleys reflect climate change, the economy and social systems, as well as the persistence of pastoralism and a strong mountain culture.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Uzbek ambassador highlights country's expanding tourism sector in Tehran ceremony

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Iran, Fariddin Nasriev, underscored his country's growing tourism appeal during a cultural and diplomatic gathering held Monday evening at the ambassador's residence in Tehran.

Addressing Iranian officials, diplomats, and invited guests, Ambassador Nasriev presented an overview of Uzbekistan's recent achievements in tourism, culture, and science and technology. He described 2025 as a significant year for Uzbekistan-Iran relations, marking the 33rd anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

"Uzbekistan and Iran are connected by a long history and shared culture," he said, pointing to increasing cooperation between the two countries in recent years. He highlighted official visits, including those by the presidents and prime ministers of both countries, which have helped push political and economic relations to new levels.

Ambassador Nasriev noted that bilateral trade has reached \$500 million, with over 210 joint companies currently operating. He expressed confidence that trade volume could rise to \$2 billion in the near future, and announced the recent opening of the Uzbekistan Trade House in Tehran as a key step toward that goal.

Tourism, he said, has become one of Uzbekistan's key government priorities. A series of national reforms under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev have focused on developing the tourism sector and improving infrastructure, earning international recognition.



Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Iran, Fariddin Nasriev, addresses a gathering of Iranian officials, diplomats, and other guests during a ceremony held at the ambassador's residence in Tehran, May 26, 2025.

One milestone was hosting the 25th session of the UN World Tourism Organization's General Assembly in Samarkand in 2023. Ambassador Nasriev also pointed out that two Uzbek cities have gained regional honors in 2024: Khiva, named the tourism capital of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Shahrisabz, named the tourism capital of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Looking ahead, the envoy announced that Samarkand will host the 43rd session of UNESCO's General Conference in autumn 2025. This will be the first time the high-level event is held outside UNESCO's Paris headquarters in its 80-year history — a point of pride for Uzbekistan.

Ending his speech, Ambassador Nasriev extended an open invitation to the audience: "We welcome

you all to visit the beautiful land of Uzbekistan — home to scholars and thinkers like Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Biruni, and Avicenna."

Speaking to the Tehran Times, Ambassador Nasriev said the event was intended to highlight Uzbekistan's commitment to strengthening cultural and economic ties with Iran. "As part of our efforts to boost bilateral tourism, we are increasing the number of weekly direct flights between Tehran and Tashkent from two to three," he announced.

In addition to Ambassador Nasriev's keynote address, several distinguished academics from both Iran and Uzbekistan also delivered remarks during the ceremony. Their speeches focused on the deep historical and cultural ties between the two nations, as well as the potential for expanded collaboration in educational and scientific fields.

## Wezmeh Cave in west Zagros reveals window into prehistoric ecosystems

TEHRAN - In a landmark archaeological discovery, researchers have uncovered a remarkably diverse assemblage of Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene animal remains from Wezmeh Cave in western Iran's Zagros Mountains.

The 2019 excavation, directed by archaeologist Fereidoun Biglari of the National Museum of Iran, brought together a multidisciplinary team including zooarchaeologists Hossein Davoudi and Marjan Mashkour, whose analyses are shedding new light on the region's prehistoric biodiversity, extinct megafauna, and human-animal dynamics.

"The sheer range of taxa from Wezmeh Cave is unlike anything previously documented on the Iranian Plateau", said Hossein Davoudi of the University of Tehran. "From large carnivores like hyenas and bears to domestic sheep and goats, the site offers a continuous record of faunal transitions spanning tens of thousands of years."

Marjan Mashkour, affiliated with

both CNRS in France and the University of Tehran, highlighted the site's exceptional preservation and ecological richness. "What sets Wezmeh apart is not just the number of specimens—over 11,000—but the ecological narrative they tell. The cave functioned as both shelter and natural trap, preserving remains accumulated through carnivore activity, natural mortality, and human occupation," she explained. The presence of burned bones and domesticated animals suggests intermittent use by Neolithic and Chalcolithic herders.

Among the notable discoveries are remains of now-extinct species such as spotted hyena, cave lion, alongside brown bears, wolves, foxes, wolves, red deer, ibex, weasels, and porcupines—offering a vivid glimpse into a complex paleoenvironment. These extinct species underscore the cave's broader significance, providing critical insights into Pleistocene megafauna diversity and their coexistence with humans. Many species appear to have been



natural prey or possibly targets of prehistoric hunters, while the domesticated caprines point to early pastoralist activity in the region.

The new findings build upon earlier discoveries at Wezmeh, which include the premolar of a Neanderthal child and Early Neolithic human remains, further cementing the cave's status as a site of major paleoanthropological importance.

Reflecting on its broader significance, excavation director Fereidoun Biglari emphasized the site's unique chronological range. "Wezmeh Cave preserves an extraordinary sequence of evidence, spanning from Middle Paleolithic hunter-gather-

ers to Early Holocene herders," he noted. "It ranks among the richest faunal repositories in Western Asia and serves as a vital reference for understanding long-term environmental change and human adaptation."

The Wezmeh discoveries not only enrich the archaeological narrative of the Central Zagros but also offer critical insights into the emergence of Neolithic societies, the ecological contexts that shaped them, and the vanished ecosystems of the Pleistocene era.

The results of this research have been published in the Journal of Iran National Museum.

## Kermanshah identifies 50 new villages with high tourism potential

TEHRAN - The Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Kermanshah province has announced the identification of 50 lesser-known villages with strong tourism potential, aiming to promote rural and nature-based tourism across the western Iranian province.

These villages, in addition to the 14 officially designated tourism-target villages, are set to welcome travelers interested in village tourism and eco-tourism experiences.

According to Fahimeh Roshan, Deputy Director of Tourism for the provincial department, the 14 designated villages, including Varmaghan, Charmaleh, Hajji, Piran, Harsin, Sorkheh, Golin, and Harir, were selected nearly two decades ago as part of a national tourism development plan. Since then, key infrastructure and tourism facilities have been developed in these communities.

"In recent years, there has been growing interest in rural and nature tourism," Roshan told ISNA. "Kermanshah's unique geography and climate make it home to many villages with untapped



tourism potential, and we are now taking steps to introduce them to both domestic and international visitors." Roshan further noted that each tourist who visits and shares their experience becomes an informal ambassador for the destination. "We want to create lasting impressions that encourage word-of-mouth promotion," she said.

She also noted the success of several villages in the scenic Uramanat region, which in recent years have evolved into popular tourist destinations.

"Local communities have seen the economic benefits of tourism firsthand," she added, "and this has encouraged them to engage more actively in welcoming tourists."

Kermanshah, situated in western Iran, is a region celebrated for its profound historical and cultural significance. Set against the backdrop of the Zagros Mountains, Kermanshah has been an important center of civilization since ancient times.

The province boasts remarkable archaeological treasures, including the monumental rock reliefs of Taq-e Bostan and the ancient inscriptions at Bisotun, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Beyond its historical allure, Kermanshah features breathtaking natural landscapes, such as the serene Sarab-e Niloofar spring, the dramatic Quri Qaleh water cave, and the picturesque Parishan waterfall.

With its blend of historical marvels and natural wonders, Kermanshah offers a rich tapestry of experiences that continue to captivate visitors and highlight Iran's diverse heritage.

# Health ministry to carry out comprehensive cancer screening program

TEHRAN –The health ministry is planning to implement a comprehensive screening program for the early detection of the three most common, but preventable cancers (namely breast, cervical, and colon) in the country.

The program will be initially piloted in the three pilot provinces of Qom, Isfahan, and Mazandaran within the framework of the family physician program.

The target groups are the individuals aged 30 to 70 and in some cases, those who are 40 to 75 years old, ISNA quoted Jafar Jandaqi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Both early and advanced tests for breast, cervical, and colon cancers are available. Six or seven months into the implementation of the program, it will be expanded all over the country, he noted.

Forty percent of the cancers can be avoided; early detection through screening will increase the chance for successful treatment, and improve the life expectancy of the patients, he added.

While in other countries, screening program will only target high risk groups, like those with a family history in cancer, the health ministry intends to implement a comprehensive screening program for the aforementioned cancers throughout individuals' lives, from birth to the final years of life, within the Primary Health Care (PHC) system to be able to define treatment, and home-based palliative and care



services to those in need of these services, Jandaqi noted.

The screening program will involve different service packages including prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation packages. The health ministry will utilize modern technologies such as artificial intelligence to further promote diagnosis and offered services, the official said.

According to the health ministry, cancers are the leading cause of premature mortality in the country.

Cancers account for more than 55 thousand deaths annually. Some 34 thousand deaths out of 122 thousand premature deaths (under 70 years of age) and 11 thousand deaths out of 85 thousand very premature deaths (under 50 years of age) are caused by various cancers.

The latest national cancer census shows that the number of new cancer cases in Iran is expected

to increase to 160,000 by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), indicating an increase of 43 percent.

The first 10 most common cancers in Iran are breast, prostate, colon, stomach, lung, bladder, thyroid, uterus, brain, and spine cancers. The most common cancers of Iranian women include breast, colon, thyroid, stomach, uterine, leukemia, ovary, brain and spine, lungs and esophagus.

Around 250,000 Iranians are now living with cancer.

## Recent achievements

Launching the first national production line for electroporation systems, Iran has become the first country in Asia to acquire advanced cancer treatment technology.

The inauguration ceremony of the Iranian-made device was held on Monday at University of Tehran, IRNA reported.

The home-grown electrochemotherapy ablation system (a new method of targeted treatment of cancerous tumors) is a significant achievement that relies mainly on domestic technical knowledge and global standards.

The electroporation system uses electrical pulses to enhance the permeability of cancer cells and significantly enhance the effectiveness of anti-cancer drugs.

In February, an Iranian knowledge-based company managed to develop a new method for the synthesis of Technetium (99mTc) tilmanocept, a radiopharmaceutical diagnostic imaging agent used to determine lymph nodes that may be draining from tumors.

Since 2013, the U.S. has been the only manufacturer of this radiopharmaceutical agent, IRNA reported.

The lymphatic system is known as one of the main conduits of cancer metastasis. In patients with breast, lung, and genital tract cancers, accurate detection of lymph node involvement is critical for surgeries.

Thanks to this remarkable achievement, about 90 percent of patients with various cancers in the country will gain access to a more affordable and more accurate method for cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Having passed the preclinical phases successfully, the drug has entered the clinical phase.

## Tehran hosts 5th Intl. Congress on ‘Health in Arbaeen’

TEHRAN – The 5th International Congress on “Health in Arbaeen” was held in Tehran from May 26 to 27 with the participation of six countries.

The Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of Shia Muslims, and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Each year, a huge crowd of people floods to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform mourning rituals.

This year’s event brought together participants as well as 24 international lecturers from Italy, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, IRNA reported.

“The main goal of the congress is to make physicians familiar with the issues of health care and treatment during the Arbaeen pilgrimage. It mainly focuses on endemic diseases that may spread by Afghan and Pakistani pilgrims who pass Iran on their way to Iraq,” IRNA quoted Abdolreza Pazoki, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

They also discussed guidelines for treating skin, musculoskeletal, and other diseases, as well as needed medicines and medical equipment.

The same as previous years, medical universities on the borders will monitor infectious diseases by taking preventive measures.

### 4th congress

The 4th International Congress on “Health in Arbaeen” was held in Tehran from July 3 to 5 last year.

A total of 3,500 national and international participants attended the 4th congress. Hosting the event, the Iraqis comprised the majority of foreign attendees to enhance services to pilgrims.



The congress focused on the following scientific areas including accidents and hazards; artificial intelligence; traditional medicine; processions; environmental health; nursing; relief and rescue.

It also covered rehabilitation; forensic medicine; mental health; nutrition; cultural issues; pharmaceuticals; medical tools; as well as mawkibs (voluntary stations to serve the pilgrims). Moreover, some new topics such as dentistry and oral hygiene were discussed.

Xavier Castellanos Mosquera, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) undersecretary-general for national society development and operations coordination, attended the inauguration ceremony of ‘the International Congress of Relief and Rescue, Health and Mass Gatherings Management in Arbaeen’ held in Tehran on August 1 via video conference.

Castellanos Mosquera said that Arbaeen International Congress offers a unique model of mass gathering management for other red crescent societies worldwide.

“The management of mass gatherings demonstrates exceptional expertise and the Iranian Red Crescent Society is a pioneer in sharing its knowledge and experience in this international congress,” Castellanos Mosquera highlighted.

## Lake Urmia’s level 23cm above lowest recorded ever



TEHRAN – The current level of Lake Urmia amounts to 1270.27 meters, which is 23 centimeters more than the lowest figure recorded so far.

Lake Urmia in the north-western West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s. The lake is the largest in West Asia and the sixth-largest salt lake in the world, with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

The area of Lake Urmia has declined due to reduced precipitation, reaching 1,130 square kilometers. Also, the volume of the lake has lowered to 1.60 billion cubic meters, IRNA quoted Majid Rastgari, an official with West Azarbaijan Water Company, as saying.

Presently, the total amount of water in 14 dams is almost 800 million cubic meters, amounting to 44 percent of the capacities of dams’ reservoirs, he added.

According to Behzad Shir-Panjeh, head of National Park of Lake Urmia, the recent precipitations in spring have restored Lake Urmia’s reservoirs, with 550,000 litres of water being stored for the wildlife.

The rainfalls in the lake’s basin have contributed to the growth of vegetation and shrubs, providing a favourable source of food for wildlife in the islands as the amount of water reserves resurged compared to the past Iranian year (March 2024 – March 2025), he noted.

The official went on to say that there are five water reservoirs in the Ashk Island of Lake

Urmia, which is considered one of the most important habitats of Persian yellow deer, and two or one water reservoirs in Espir and Kabudan Islands; the collected water will be released during summer.

Thanks to increased precipitations, gulls and flamingos have made nests and laid eggs in the islands of Lake Urmia National Park.

### Restoration efforts

Through a joint project led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the Government of Japan, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is going to join to promote sustainable agricultural practices and solutions for the conservation of Lake Urmia.

On December 1, 2024, the Government of Japan and UNDP signed an exchange of notes to launch “The Project for Developing Conservation Systems of Wetlands in Lake Urmia and Other Wetlands, Including

Their Surrounding Communities.” The project, which runs from 2024 to 2028, will be implemented in partnership with the Department of Environment and FAO.

Focusing on sustainable agriculture and climate-adapted livelihoods, the initiative seeks to deliver long-term benefits for local communities while preserving the biodiversity of wetlands as critical ecosystems.

Lake Urmia faces significant challenges due to the overconsumption of water resources magnified by climate change impacts, which has severely impacted its ecosystem.

Agricultural activities in the region are increasingly vulnerable to water shortages, a situation exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Studies indicate that these climatic changes could further disrupt agrifood systems and the lake’s fragile environment in the future.

FAO with the support of the government of Japan, identified technical agricultural solutions to increase water efficiency in the agriculture sector at the Lake Urmia basin, which may be efficient in saving the internationally known biosphere reserves.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## COVID-19 takes lowest toll on foreign nationals in Iran

Iran had the lowest coronavirus cases and mortality among refugees and foreign nationals compared to the population it is hosting, Mehdi Mahmoudi, Director of Citizens and Immigrants Affairs of the Ministry of Interior has said.

He said that since the very beginning, when the country became infected with the disease, the community of foreign nationals in our country was no exception to this issue, and prevention programs and necessary measures have been taken for this group.

“We identified foreign nationals in need and tried to provide them with livelihood assistance, as well as health packages and self-protective items needed to prevent the infection,” he explained.

## ایران کمترین تلفات کرونا اتباع خارجی را داشته است

مهدی محمودی مدیرکل امور اتباع و مهاجرین وزارت کشور گفت در خصوص ابتلا به بیماری کرونا در بین اتباع خارجی، ایران کمترین ابتلا و کمترین تلفات را نسبت به جمعیت داشته‌است.

او در گفت‌وگو با ایلنا گفت: از همان ابتدا که کشور درگیر این بیماری شد، جامعه اتباع خارجی هم در کشور ما مستثنی از این موضوع نبود و برنامه‌های پیشگیری و تمهیدات لازم نیز برای این گروه نیز در نظر گرفته شده است.

اتباع غیرایرانی که نیازمند بودند را شناسایی کرده و تلاش کردیم از نظر معیشتی به این گروه نیز کمک‌هایی صورت بگیرد و همچنین بسته‌های بهداشتی و اقلام مورد نیاز پیشگیری از بیماری کرونا در چندین نوبت به آنها ارائه شده است.



MAY 28, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.*  
**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times » Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:33 Dawn: 3:08 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:51 (tomorrow)

## Salam Cultural Artistic Festival to promote peace, humanity

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN – The Islamic World Peace Forum is set to launch the Salam Cultural Artistic Festival, an international initiative aimed at fostering universal peace, understanding, and cultural solidarity, the organizers have announced.

The festival, organized in collaboration with various cultural and artistic institutions, underscores the importance of cultural diplomacy in a rapidly changing global landscape, Davood Ameri, the director of the festival said during a press conference held in Tehran on Tuesday.

Ameri emphasized that this event marks the beginning of a significant cultural and artistic movement. “This occasion is an opportunity to establish meaningful connections with artists worldwide, elevating Iran’s artistic voice on the global stage,” he stated.

“The festival aims to honor human culture and address humanity’s future needs by bringing together global artists and thinkers. Today’s world faces disconnection, oppression, and the erosion of human values—challenges that threaten global harmony.”

Addressing the threat of increasing isolation and the dominance of machinery over human values, he highlighted the vital role of artists and intellectuals in overcoming these obstacles. “If we fail to understand and promote the culture of co-existence, future generations will face severe difficulties. Culture forms the foundation of human relations, and recognizing shared cultural values is essential to prevent future crises,” he explained.

A core concept discussed at the festival is the cultural significance of greetings, particularly the Islamic greeting ‘Salam,’ which embodies health, safety, and divine peace. “Salam is more than a word; it signifies a divine blessing and a universal principle for human diplomacy. Promoting the culture of Salam can strengthen bonds among nations and serve as a saving grace for humanity,”

Ameri added.

The festival will showcase visual arts dedicated to disseminating and promoting this cultural value, he noted.

For his part, Behnam Zangi, the secretary of the event, emphasized that art possesses a unique power to influence other sectors, and that the festival aims to leverage visual arts to deepen understanding of Salam and peace.

In the coming 20 days, discussions will delve into the festival’s international dimensions, with hopes to foster collaborations across Muslim-majority countries and beyond, he mentioned.

He also noted that the organizers aim to engage artists from diverse regions—including Asia and European nations—to build bridges through cultural exchanges. “Our goal is to create a global community of Muslim artists within their cultural spheres and gradually expand to include other civilizations.”

The Salam festival also seeks to promote peaceful engagement between different cultures, emphasizing the role of visual arts in representing the universal values of peace and justice. “The festival’s visual component will primarily include posters, paintings, illustrations, photographs, calligraphy, and cartoons, with a call for submissions to be announced soon. Artisans from various countries are encouraged to participate,” he added.

The event aspires to contribute to the universalization of the culture of peace and Salam, positioning itself as a platform for meaningful intercultural understanding.

The festival’s initial phase will focus on visual arts, with plans to expand into other creative fields. The organizers hope that through this initiative, the message of peace, friendship, and mutual understanding will resonate globally, creating a more harmonious future rooted in shared human values.

## Political Cannes awards target propaganda, not art

TEHRAN – Following the pattern of politicizing art and cinema, this year’s Cannes film festival again proved the way in which artistic merit has been sacrificed for political agendas.

Jafar Panahi’s new film took the Palme d’Or award despite the fact that, according to independent critics, it has little artistic merit and cinematic appeal and the award was presented to it for its political orientation.

Following Panahi’s “It Was Just an Accident” winning the Palme d’Or on May 24, Jean-Noël Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, wrote in a post on the social media platform X: “In a gesture of resistance against the Iranian regime’s oppression, Jafar Panahi wins a Palme d’Or that rekindles hope for all freedom fighters everywhere”.

In the wake of these unfounded and interfering accusations of the French Foreign Minister towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, the French charge d’affaires in Tehran was summoned by the Director of Western Europe Division II at Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Tanhaei. Iran’s firm protest was conveyed to him formally.

The French minister’s words were described at the meeting as a flagrant interference in the affairs of Iran and condemned as irresponsible and provocative. An official clarification was further demanded from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Tanhaei further condemned the French government for using a cinematic event it organized for political reasons against the Islamic Republic



of Iran, adding that a country like France, a firm Zionist regime supporter and an accomplice to serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, especially the right to self-determination of the Palestinian nation, has no moral right to raise human rights allegations against others.

The French chargé d’affaires affirmed that he would deliver Iran’s message to his government.

Such interventionist comments made by the French foreign minister on Iran’s domestic affairs evoked a response from Iran’s Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi.

“There have been many transgressions making a mockery of France’s “human rights activism”. But perhaps nothing has made the hypocri-

sy as stark as the French approach to the Israeli regime and its war crimes. Spare us Iranians the lectures. You have no moral authority whatsoever,” Araghchi wrote on X on May 25.

This is not the first instance of Western festivals praising politically-motivated films against the Islamic Republic. A glimpse at such films indicates that they do not have cinematic and artistic values but are rather blunt, repetitive political commentaries. Such films tend to project a distorted, grim, and incomplete picture of Iranian life, while being used as propaganda material for Iranian-hating media.

Iranian cultural experts are of the opinion that which secured Panahi the Palme d’Or was not cinematic brilliance or artistic novelty, but po-

litical alignment of the subject matter of the film with the pro-Western Iranophobia agenda.

The strategic deployment of the arts to secure cultural sabotage occurs in the guise of advocating the cause of freedom of expression and artistic independence - yet actually, the Western festivals have become an arena to shape desired narratives and to exercise soft power over international public opinion.

Ultimately, what occurred at Cannes this year provides another instance where we see Western cinema to be not an arena for artistic contention, but an arena of political score-settling — where juries measure a movie not with the yardstick of artistry, but with the scale of politics.

## Iran, Russia to expand artistic cooperation

TEHRAN – The Iranian ambassador to the Russian Federation Kazem Jalali met with Vasily Tsereteli, the President of the Russian Academy of Arts and grandson of the renowned Russian artist Zurab Tsereteli, in Moscow on Monday to discuss and exchange views on developing bilateral artistic cooperation between the two countries.

In this meeting, organized by the cultural attaché office of the Iranian Embassy in Russia, Jalali described cultural diplomacy as one of the essential aspects of the strategic relationship between Iran and Russia, IRNA reported.

“As neighboring countries with many commonalities, Iran and Russia must have an accurate and deep understanding of each other’s art. The development of artistic relations can further strengthen bilateral ties in other areas as well,” he said.

The ambassador added that the cultural attaché office of the Iranian Embassy is responsible for advancing cultural and artistic relations between the two countries and emphasized that the embassy fully supports all forms of artistic collaboration.

In another part of his remarks, Jalali referred to the embassy’s positive cooperation with the Russian Academy of Sciences and welcomed the proposal made by the President of the Russian Academy of Arts to

collaborate with similar Iranian institutions and artists.

Highlighting the great potential of Iranian artists in the fields of visual arts, particularly painting and sculpture, he invited Vasily Tsereteli to visit Iran and witness its artistic capacities.

He also referred to the upcoming Russian Cultural Days in Iran in June, and extended an invitation to Tsereteli to travel to Tehran on this occasion.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Cultural Attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Moscow Masoud Ahmadvand also expressed his appreciation for Tsereteli’s assistance in promoting Iranian art in Russia.

He noted that Russian art enthusiasts previously had little knowledge about Iranian visual arts, and Tsereteli had guided them step-by-step like a caring advisor.

“Thanks to his guidance, the embassy was able to facilitate the participation of Iranian artists in Russian art exhibitions,” Ahmadvand noted.

The cultural attaché pointed out that with the participation of Iranian artists in two recent art exhibitions in Moscow, Russian collectors’ understanding and appreciation of Iranian visual art has significantly increased compared to the previous year.

He also announced the upcoming



Kazem Jalali (L) and Vasily Tsereteli meet at the Russian Academy of Arts in Moscow on May 26, 2025.

exhibition of Russian artworks at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran in the near future, which will feature works by Zurab Tsereteli alongside other Russian artists.

He mentioned that collaboration between the Iranian and Russian academies of arts is among the future plans of the two countries.

For his part, the President of the Russian Academy of Arts stated that Iran possesses a rich culture and civilization.

“I have become familiar with Iranian artworks, especially paintings by Iranian artists, during my travels to various countries,” he said.

Vasily Tsereteli further expressed the Russian Academy of Arts’ readiness to expand artistic cooperation

with the Islamic Republic of Iran and conveyed his interest in opening a branch dedicated to teaching realism painting based on Iranian cultural values.

Following this, the Iranian Ambassador visited the exhibitions of the Academy, particularly those showcasing visual works by the late Zurab Tsereteli.

Zurab Tsereteli, a celebrated Russian painter, sculptor, and architect of Georgian origin, recently passed away at the age of 91 due to cardiac arrest. Zurab (the Georgian form of the Persian name Sohrab) served as the President of the Russian Academy of Arts from 1997 until his death. His grandson, Vasily, was elected by the majority of Academy members to succeed him as the new president.

## Cartoon of Day



Ways of Dying in Gaza

Cartoonist: Morad Kotkot from Palestine

## Tehran cultural center to review “The Last Samurai”

TEHRAN – American filmmaker Edward Zwick’s movie “The Last Samurai” will be screened during a session at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Wednesday evening.

Iranian film critic Kurosh Jahed will attend a screening of the film followed by a review session.

Released in 2003, “The Last Samurai” explores themes of honor, cultural conflict, and personal redemption set against the backdrop of Japan’s tumultuous Meiji Restoration. The story of the film was inspired by the real-life 1877 Satsuma Rebellion led by Saigo Takamori and the broader Westernization of Japan during this period.

Tom Cruise stars as Nathan Algren, a haunted American military officer whose turbulent past and emotional scars lead him into a journey of self-discovery among the samurai. The charac-

ter of Algren is loosely based on historical figures Eugene Collache and Jules Brunet, French Imperial Guard officers who fought alongside Japanese forces during the Boshin War, reflecting the international influence and intervention during Japan’s modernization.

The film begins with Algren, an alcoholic and disillusioned veteran of the American Indian Wars, who is recruited by the Japanese government to train their new Imperial Army. His employer, a businessman named Matsue Omura, aims to suppress a samurai-led rebellion threatening the new imperial order. Algren’s initial cynicism begins to shift after he is captured during a skirmish and taken to the village of the samurai leader, Moritsugu Katsumoto, played by Ken Watanabe. Through his captivity, Algren develops a deep respect for the samurai’s code, their traditions, and their way of life, especially

as he forms a close bond with Taka, Katsumoto’s sister.

Throughout his immersion in samurai culture, Algren overcomes his alcoholism and guilt, learning the art of kenjutsu and gaining insight into the spiritual and moral values of the samurai.

The narrative intensifies when Katsumoto, opposed to the destructive modernization policies, plans to confront the imperial government. The story culminates in a fierce and tragic final battle where the samurai, fighting to defend their honor and culture, face overwhelming odds. Algren joins their fight, fighting alongside the samurai in a display of loyalty and respect. The battle is brutal, with sacrifices made by many, including Katsumoto, who chooses to die with dignity in a traditional seppuku.