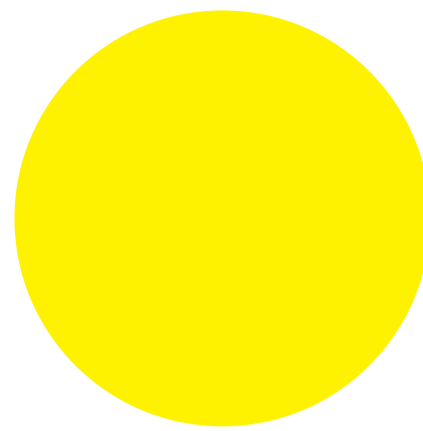


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# Iran Daily



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Unlocking latent potential of Chabahar port for India, Iran

By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writer

## OPINION

The development of Chabahar port in Iran has emerged as a vital strategic initiative that holds the potential to foster closer economic and geopolitical ties between India and Iran.

This key project has garnered widespread attention due to its far-reaching implications for trade, regional stability, and the broader global economy.

As New Delhi and Tehran collaborate to enhance the capabilities of the port, the impact will reverberate through various sectors, ultimately reshaping the dynamics of international commerce and bolstering the interests of both nations.

Situated along the coast of the Sea of Oman, Chabahar port occupies a strategically significant location. It offers direct access to the Indian Ocean and serves as a gateway to landlocked Afghanistan and the resource-rich Central Asian countries.

The port's position presents an enormous opportunity for India to boost its connectivity with the aforementioned regions, facilitating smoother trade routes and reducing reliance on traditional transit corridors. Furthermore, its expansion holds the promise of alleviating congestion at existing hubs, thereby streamlining the movement of goods and amplifying efficiency in global supply chains.

For Iran, the development of Chabahar port is a sign of economic revitalization and an avenue to strengthen its partnerships in the region.

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Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) meets with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (3rd R) in Tehran on January 15, 2024. president.ir

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Iran leads global fight against drug trafficking

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EXCLUSIVE

## Unlocking latent...

By leveraging the port's potential, Iran can harness its natural advantages to

emerge as a pivotal player in facilitating international trade and enhancing regional connectivity. Moreover, the project aligns with Iran's aspirations to diversify its economic links and reduce dependence on traditional trading partners, laying the groundwork for sustainable growth and increased resilience in the face of global economic uncertainties.

Collaboration between India and Iran in advancing the Chabahar port project needs the convergence of their shared interests and mutual benefits. As India seeks to bolster its foreign policy and expand its footprint in Southeast Asia and beyond, Chabahar port emerges as a key tool in realizing these objectives. The port's development aligns seamlessly with India's vision to bolster trade relations, spur economic development, and wield greater influence in the geopolitically significant Indo-Pacific region.

Simultaneously, Iran views Chabahar port as a gateway to expanding its global trade prospects and strengthening ties with key partners. By engaging in robust cooperation with India, Iran not only advances its economic interests but also enhances its position as a pivotal stakeholder in regional security and stability. Furthermore, the growing partnership between India and Iran stands as evidence of the existence of plans for fostering a climate of shared prosperity and progress.

As the port evolves into a bustling hub for maritime trade and commerce, it will exert a transformational impact on the outlines of international business and investment.

Meetings of Indian FM Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Tehran with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as well as Iran's Roads and Urban Development Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash are positive signs for the will to unlock huge potentials of the oceanic port. By harnessing the potential of Chabahar port, India and Iran are effectively charting a course toward a future defined by enhanced connectivity and mutual prosperity.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iran, India greater cooperation on agenda

# Chabahar project compensation proposed

### Economy Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a meeting with Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Monday, stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of agreements signed between the two countries, including on the Chabahar port development project, as well as the need to compensate for the delay in the fulfillment of commitments.

The president pointed to the deep-rooted relations between his country and India and emphasized the importance of efforts to improve the level of bilateral relations in various political, economic, science and technology, transportation, and energy sectors. For his part, Jaishankar thanked Raisi for his efforts in developing ties with regional countries as well as bringing about eye-catching changes in ties with India.

Announcing the country's interest in concluding a comprehensive and long-term cooperation agreement with Tehran, he emphasized New Delhi's full commitment to its obligations in the Chabahar port development project. During his visit, Iran and India also finalized an

agreement on the development of the Chabahar port, located in the southeastern part of Iran.

In an earlier meeting held between Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehرداد Bazrpash and Jaishankar in Tehran on Monday, the two sides emphasized equipping and developing the Chabahar port, which is India's first foreign port project.

Iran's roads minister also proposed setting up a joint transportation committee for the expansion of bilateral cooperation and said the formation of the committee will tap into the transit potential of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The visiting Indian minister, for his part, expressed the readiness of his country to launch new investments at the Chabahar port in the fields of transportation and transit.

Jaishankar also invited Bazrpash to visit India.

The new long-term agreement is intended to replace the original contract, which only covers India's operations at the Shahid Beheshti terminal in the Chabahar port and is renewed every year. The new agreement will be valid for 10 years and will be automatically extended.

India has been pushing for

the Chabahar port project to boost regional trade and increase its connectivity, especially to Afghanistan, since 2016, when the subcontinent signed a tripartite agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to develop the terminal.

Jaishankar projected the Chabahar port as a key regional transit hub at a connectivity conference in Tashkent in 2021.

In November 2023, India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra discussed with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian ways to boost connectivity through strategic Chabahar port.

The Chabahar port is also seen as a key hub for the INSTC project.

The INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multimode transport project for moving freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe.

### Role of SCO, BRICS

Later on Monday, Iranian FM stressed that Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS group of developing countries has given a boost to strategic cooperation between Tehran and New Delhi.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a joint press conference after meeting



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Tehran on January 15, 2024.  
president.ir

with his Indian counterpart in Tehran.

He also hailed India's role in Iran's bid for membership in SCO and BRICS.

The Iranian foreign minister highlighted the signifi-

cance of his counterpart's visit to Tehran, which he said is a major step in the expansion of bilateral cooperation in different areas.

Amir-Abdollahian added that he and his Indian

counterpart discussed a wide range of issues, including economic issues and strategic connections, with special focus on the development of the Chabahar port and the INSTC.

## Iran's oil output hiked most in OPEC in 2023



Iran had the highest oil production increase among members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 2023 with over 300,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) rise, according to the US Department of Energy.

In its latest report, the US Department of Energy put Iran's average daily oil production volume in 2023 at 2.870 million bpd, Tasnim News Agency reported.

According to the report, Iran's oil production volume increased by 330,000 bpd compared to a year earlier. This is while OPEC's total oil production volume decreased by 630,000 barrels in 2023 compared to the year before. In total, OPEC's member states produced 26.890 million barrels of oil per day in 2023, while they produced 27.520 million bpd in 2022.

## Pakistan, Iran ready to raise bilateral trade to \$5b: Ambassador

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Mudassar Tipu expressed the readiness of Islamabad and Tehran to raise bilateral trade to \$5 billion as the two sides have recently signed a five-year agreement on strategic and economic cooperation.

During his visit to Bandar Abbas, southern Iran, where a Pakistani convoy of warships has docked, Tipu said his country prioritizes the promotion of trade relations with the Islamic Republic, IRNA reported.

Pakistan and Iran are committed to maintaining peace and stability in the region, the ambassador underlined. Relations between his country and Iran carry a message of solidarity, peace, and happiness to the region, the envoy noted.



## Qatar halts Red Sea LNG shipping amid attacks

QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest exporters of liquefied natural gas, has stopped sending tankers via the Red Sea although production continues, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

"It is a pause to get security advice, if passing (through the) Red Sea remains unsafe we will go via the Cape," said on Monday a source with direct knowledge of the matter, referring to the considerably longer route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip.

"It is not a halt of production," the source added. At least four tankers used to

carry Qatari LNG were held up over the weekend after US and British forces carried out air and sea strikes on Yemen following Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea, part of a route that accounts for about 15 percent of the world's shipping traffic.

The Al Ghariya, Al Huwaila and Al Nuaman had loaded LNG at Ras Laffan in Qatar and were supposed to head to the Suez Canal but stopped off the coast of Oman on January 14, according to LSEG ship tracking data.

The Al Rekayyat, which was heading back to Qatar, stopped along its route on January 13 in the Red Sea.

Qatar, the world's second-largest exporter of LNG, shipped more than 75 million metric tonnes of the fuel in 2023, according to LSEG data. Of that, 14 million tonnes went to buyers in Europe, and 56.4 million tonnes to Asia.

While several LNG vessels have changed course since

last month, others have continued to sail past Yemen through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

Asia spot LNG prices fell to a seven-month low of \$10.10 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) on Friday, supported by healthy storage levels in both Europe and northeast Asia.



# Iran's National Jewelry Museum, a treasured legacy of splendor



● donya-e-eqtesad.com



● donya-e-eqtesad.com



● tourinpersia.com

A magnificent assortment of royal jewels, amassed over centuries by various monarchs throughout Iran's history, is truly awe-inspiring. The opportunity to witness the world's largest jewel collection is not one to be missed. If you're intrigued, make sure to visit the National Jewelry Museum. Each piece housed in this extraordinary museum embodies a rich tapestry of history, encapsulating both poignant and triumphant moments, reflecting the pride and aspirations of rulers, whether powerful or vulnerable.

Located on Ferdowsi Avenue, in one of the buildings of the Central Bank of Iran, in Tehran, the museum showcases the Treasury of National Jewels. Some of the jewels in this collection date back to prehistoric times, serving as adornments for rulers in bygone eras. Moreover, they epitomize the grandeur and opulence of their courts, as well as their authority and affluence. These priceless relics of Iranian royalty are now

under the custodianship of the Central Bank of Iran.

The worth of these treasures transcends mere economic value, embodying the ingenuity and artistry of Iranian craftsmen and artists across different periods of Iranian history. It stands as a testament to Iran's rich artistic and cultural heritage.

This heritage has deeply influenced various aspects of Iranian culture, such as architecture, design, fashion, customs, and art, merging to provide insight into the authentic Persian culture. Prior to the Islamic Revolution, these jewels were often worn during formal occasions, including weddings and coronations.

The value of this collection is immeasurable. It contains gems that are unparalleled in the world, defying precise evaluation. From an artistic perspective, historical significance, and possession of incomparable jewels, the Treasury of National Jewels stands at a level that

even the most seasoned evaluators worldwide have been unable to appraise accurately.

The collection of Iran's Imperial Crown Jewels traces its origins back to the Safavid era, with subsequent monarchs expanding and enriching it. Before the Safavid dynasty, certain jewels existed in government treasuries, but it was during the Safavid era that foreign travelers, including Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Chevalier Chardin, the Shirley brothers, and others, began to make note of these treasuries. The Safavid monarchs meticulously gathered rare and exquisite gems over two centuries, with gem specialists from their court sourcing fine stones from the markets of India, the Ottoman Empire, as well as European countries like France and Italy.

Following the rule of Shah Soltan Hosein of the Safavid dynasty and Mahmud Hotak's invasion of Iran, the treasury was dispersed, with some jewels taken

by Mahmud Hotak, and transferred to his cousin and vicegerent, Ashraf Hotak. It was Shah Tahmasb and Nader who reclaimed the national jewels for Isfahan. Nader safeguarded the jewels within the country and sought to retrieve those that had been taken to India, although his efforts were in vain.

Some of these treasures never made it back to Iran from India, likely lost or stolen. After returning to Iran, Nader distributed part of the spoils as gifts to neighboring rulers and soldiers in his army, in keeping with tradition. Following Nader's assassination, one of his commanders looted the treasury, leading to the departure of one famous jewel that never returned to Iran — the renowned Koh-e-Noor (Mountain of Light) diamond. This diamond passed into the hands of Ahmad Shah Durrani, and later to Ranjit Singh of Punjab. After his defeat by the British government, the Koh-e-Noor diamond came under the possession of the East India Compa-

ny, eventually being presented to Queen Victoria as a gift in 1850.

Subsequently, there were no significant changes in the treasury until the era of the Qajar dynasty. During their reign, the Treasury was meticulously catalogued and expanded. Some of the stones were set in the Kiani Crown, the Nader Throne, the Globe of Jewels, and the Peacock Throne (or the Sun Throne). Two additional items gradually incorporated into this Treasury are the turquoise, sourced from local mines, and the pearls harvested from the Persian Gulf.

In 1937, a significant portion of the Treasury was transferred to the Bank Melli of Iran in accordance with the approved law. This portion formed part of the reserves for note issues and later became collateral for government liabilities to the bank. Now, you have the opportunity to visit this exceptional collection of precious stones that have been amassed over centuries.

## Artistic transition in second half of 16th century

Scholars of the Persian miniature are inclined to believe that the last quarter of the 16th century was not only a time when old traditions were followed but when a new style was formed which found its expression in the works of the Isfahan school.

Unfortunately, other branches of Persian art of the 16th century, above all applied arts such as ceramics, carpets and textiles, although they are represented by hundreds of examples in the world's museums, have not yet been sufficiently researched to enable one to confirm or deny the idea that a new phase in the history of art was formed in the second half of the 16th century. Perhaps the lack of thorough research on these materials, and especially on the evolution of their ornamentation, is a factor here.

But it is possible to assume that the changes in art during the second

half of the 16th century were not as great as during the second half of the 14th century and therefore they are not reflected in all art forms (for example, it is entirely unclear whether there were any sort of changes in architecture). In other words, we can now consider the second half of the 16th century to be a time of transition to a new phase, although this latter is not as clearly distinguishable as its predecessors. It is therefore difficult to speak of a canon style during this phase.

We now see a renewal of interest in representations of the human form, which is probably most clearly visible in textiles, although one may suppose that such fabrics do not represent a large proportion of the entire range of textile production. In 17th-century ceramics the strong influence of Chinese art can again be observed, but now aroused by the interest of Europeans in Chinese porcelain. Other

art forms do not seem to experience any new Chinese influences. During this phase active contacts with European art begin — first of all in painting. Traces of European influence can already be observed in the mid-17th century. First and foremost, this influence involves the court miniature, but it then spreads to other branches of art where it is reflected to varying degrees.

Here it is important to stress the fact that interest in European art initially arose in court circles, although there were various channels through which the influence was transmitted.

Apparently, the appearance of this new factor in 17th-century Persian art did not yet signify the emergence of a separate phase, nor even the onset of a transitional period — which became noticeable only from the end of the 17th century. An analysis of metalwork serves to support this argument.

Although there are few precisely dated pieces from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, a chronological series can be reconstructed. Changes are noticeable which could be explained by a decline in the quality of pieces, linked to their increased mass-production. For example, on copper and bronze (brass) items, the surface of the background to the design is not entirely hatched. Although hatching was obligatory during the 17th century; we now see in places only the engraved design against a plain background.

The omission of the hatching increases during the first half of the 18th century and around the middle of the century a complete break with tradition takes place, for in the second half of the century the background of Iranian copper and bronze (brass) objects is tooled with punches and the hatching disappears completely.



17th Century Iranian luster-painted bottle

## Concerns of the Obamas about elections, democracy

**US has not been  
a good world police**By Ebrahim Behnam  
Guest contributor**INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE**

Recently, Michelle Obama, the spouse of the former president of the United States, expressed concerns in a conversation regarding certain potential events in 2024. One of her concerns pertains to the presidential election and democracy in the US. Earlier, The Washington Post reported that Barack Obama advised Biden to strengthen his election campaign. Iran Daily discussed these concerns with Mehdi Zakerian, a university lecturer and expert on international relations.



AP

**IRAN DAILY:** Why are the former president of the United States and his spouse concerned regarding the US presidential election?

**ZAKERIAN:** In contrast to Trump and his supporters who express concerns or make claims about the integrity of elections in the US, it doesn't seem that the concerns of Barack Obama and his spouse revolve around the health of the American elections. It appears that these expressions of concern may be related to the competition between Democrats and Republicans and the surge of Republican candidates in polls. The Obamas are not alone in this regard, as many American elites and politicians have voiced concerns about the potential re-election of Donald Trump. Trump's influence in the US is growing, and his opponents argue that his re-election could pave the way for the decline of the American democracy. As such, the Obamas emphasize the need to be vigilant and serious about the looming threat to democracy in the US. The fact that Barack Obama has advised strengthening Biden's election campaign could also serve as a warning about the performance of the Biden administration in the next four-year term, which most likely will be just as shaky. Democrats have not left a successful track record domestically and internationally, which could potentially harm them in the elections and their competition with Republicans.



Do these concerns and warnings relate to Biden's performance and his administration, or do they also pertain to his physical condition and advanced age?

Biden and his administration have certainly made efforts to fulfill their promises. However, whether these efforts have satisfied the public is questionable. Perhaps the only aspect of Biden's administration performance that can be defended is its environmental policies, particularly the return to the Paris Climate Agreement. In the realm of foreign policy, notable successes have not been achieved, and there have been failures in crucial areas. For example, Biden was unable to find a solution to the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA). The long-standing Israel-Palestine crisis, which had seen the signing of the Abraham Accords and normalization of relations between Israel and several Arab countries before Biden came to office, escalated into a destructive war in Gaza during his tenure, marking another setback for US foreign policy. Afghanistan fell to the Taliban during Biden's term, although the groundwork for that development had been laid during the Trump era. The situations in Iraq and Syria have not progressed according to American plans. The Middle East region remains highly tense, and Taiwan has become a contentious issue. Additionally, in the context of Russia and the Ukraine conflict, Biden and his admin-

istration have not achieved success. Even though the US claims to be the world's policeman, it has become evident that it is a force that violates the law itself. In the Gaza conflict, not only did the US fail to take action to reduce tensions and end the war, but it also opposed cease-fire resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. In-

stead of being a solution, the United States has become part of the problem in the Gaza conflict. Therefore, the US has not been a positive force for the world.

**In the domestic arena, especially after the 2020 presidential elections, many warned about the deepening social divides created during Trump's era. Biden also declared enhancing domestic unity as to be on his government's agenda. However, it now appears that Biden has not been very successful in strengthening domestic cohesion.**

Yes, that is correct. Biden has not been successful in restoring domestic co-

hesion.



AP



Former US president Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at the Whittemore Center Arena on December 16, 2023 in Durham, New Hampshire. **GETTY IMAGES**

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The US remains the world's foremost power, but the country's global credibility has been lost or is diminishing.

hesion. This is in contrast to China and Europe, which are reducing income inequality and mending social divides. In the US, however, the division has deepened. This is a weakness for the US. Nevertheless, one should not assume that the US is in a state of collapse. The US remains the world's foremost power, but the new issue is that the country's global credibility has been lost or is diminishing. China is economically weaker than the US, but it has gained global credibility in industrial and IT sectors. Russia, while being militarily weaker than the US, was able to annex Crimea and then attack Ukraine, and the US and NATO have not taken effective action against it. These incidents indicate a decline in Washington's international credibility. Therefore, while the US is still the top global power, it is facing challenges to its international credibility.

**Recently, the results of a Harvard University poll were released, showing that 51% of American youth support the establishment of a Palestinian state and the ending of Israel, which is contrary to official US policies. How do you evaluate this gap between the American people and their government?**

This poll reflects the sentiments of the American people regarding Israel's actions in Gaza. However, decisions in the US are not made based on these polls but rather on US national interests, where powerful lobbies and interest groups, including the Jewish lobby, have a significant influence on decision-making. Despite these anti-Zionist sentiments among American youth, the relationship between Israel and the US remains a strategic one that is aligned with US national interests. For example, despite this poll and the anti-Zionist tendencies among American youth, the US sells a considerable number of weapons to Israel, providing regional conflicts involving Israel as pretext.

## US biggest security threat to region: Arab nations

### 89% of Arab citizens oppose normalization with Israel



By **Ebrahim Beheshti**  
Staff writer

Benjamin Netanyahu, the hawkish prime minister of Israel, claimed in the early days of his devastating assault on Gaza in response to Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on occupied territories that this war would bring fundamental changes to the West Asia region. However, the realities of the West Asian region and Arab nations suggest otherwise. At least in the realm of public opinion in Arab countries, these developments have not played out in favor of Israel and its main supporter, the United States. On January 14, 2024, an extensive report on the results of a public survey involving 8,000 respondents from 16 Arab countries was released. Conducted by the Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies based in Doha, Qatar, the survey explored the opinions of Arab citizens on issues regarding the Gaza war and the involved actors. Among the key findings, it is noteworthy that the majority of the Arab community supports Hamas's October 7 attack, considers the US positions in the Gaza war as incorrect, perceives the Palestinian issue as relevant to the entire Arab world, and opposes the formal recognition of Israel. Comparing the results of this poll with similar

surveys in 2022 reveals that Israel's hawkish policies and US support in the Gaza war have nullified whatever progress the two countries had made in changing negative attitudes in the Arab world towards themselves, evidenced by the fact that such attitudes have become more prevalent. According to this year's survey, contrary to the narrative of pro-Israel media, 67% of Arab citizens consider Hamas's October 7 operation as a legitimate resistance operation, with only 5% labeling it as an illegitimate operation. Meanwhile, 94% of respondents assess the US position in the Gaza war negatively. Interestingly, 76% of the community stated that their positions towards the US have become more negative after the Gaza war. Additionally, 81% believe that the US is not serious about establishing an independent Palestinian state. Most notably, 77% of respondents consider the US and Israel as the biggest threats to the region's security and stability. 51% of the total respondents view the US as the biggest threat, compared to 26% who consider Israel to be the biggest threat. Israel and the US have pursued an Iranophobic policy in recent years, attempting to portray Tehran as the main threat in the region. However, this public opinion poll indicates a stark difference between the views of Arab nations and their governments, as only 7% see Iran as the biggest threat to regional security. The ineffectiveness of Iranophobic pol-

icies becomes more evident when comparing the results to previous years. In 2018, 13% of Arab citizens considered Tehran the main threat, which decreased to 10% in 2020 and further to 7% in 2022. Meanwhile, in the latest survey of January 5, 2024, negative attitudes towards the US have risen sharply to 51%. In 2020, 44% of Arab respondents considered the US the biggest regional threat, which decreased to 39% in 2022 but surged to 51% thereafter in 2024. This survey underscores two main points: first, Arab nations have a significantly different evaluation of the Palestinian and Israeli issues compared to their governments, and second, the efforts and policies of the Biden administration have failed to reduce anti-American sentiments in the West Asian region, particularly among Arab countries. Israel's destructive attacks on Gaza, which were done with US support, have had a pronounced impact on exacerbating negative evaluations towards both the US and Israel. Ultimately, the exorbitant costs paid by Israel and the US to portray Iran as the primary regional threat have borne no fruit. The realities are much more tangible than what American media's promotional policies can conceal. Israel's hawkish policies and US support in the Gaza war have nullified whatever progress the two countries had made in changing negative attitudes in the Arab world towards themselves.



US President Joe Biden attends a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as he visits Israel amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Tel Aviv, Israel, October 18, 2023. **REUTERS**

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoeei said his team still has room for improvement despite a comfortable 4-1 victory over Palestine in its opening match at the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar.

A minute of silence was observed before the kickoff as the Iranian players offered sympathy for the loss of over 24,000 people in the Gaza Strip over the past three months, but when the game got underway Qalenoeei's men showed no mercy to their opponents, taking the lead through veteran striker Karim Ansarifard with two minutes into the contest before Shoja Khalilzadeh's sliding effort doubled the advantage inside 12 minutes.

Mahdi Qayedi bagged a third goal for the Asian powerhouse in the 38th minute, finding the net with a composed finish from inside the box.

Tamer Seyam, to the joy of the neutrals at the Education City Stadium, and, of course, consolation of a whole war-ravaged nation, pulled one back for Palestine when he headed home from the edge of the six-yard box after Iranian Saeid Ezzatollahi's header fell into his path.

AS Roma striker Sardar Azmoun, introduced at half-time, restored the three-goal cushion with a close-range effort 10 minutes after the break but the Iranian players took their feet off the gas thereafter, while looked vulnerable at the back at times. "The first game of every tournament is a tricky one and I'm happy with the result, though I'm not pleased with our overall performance today," Qalenoeei said in the post-match press conference.

"Palestine was a decent side and we were lucky to score an early goal, otherwise it could have been much tougher for us as the game wore

## AFC Asian Cup: Iran coach Qalenoeei 'not pleased with the performance' despite opening victory



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 4-1 victory over Palestine in the AFC Asian Cup at the Education City Stadium, Al Rayyan, Qatar, on January 14, 2024.   
● ROBERTUS PUDYANTO/AFC

on... We gave away the ball in the opposition half too often, not to mention we were sloppy with the goal conceded. We will have to make sure those mistakes will not happen in the future games. "I'm grateful for the result but I'm expecting an improved display in the next game," added the Iranian, who is in charge of the national team in a second Asian Cup after his previous

spell came to an end with a last-eight shootout defeat against South Korea in the 2007 edition. Chasing a first trophy in the continent's flagship international event since 1976, Iran will next face Hong Kong on Friday. Hong Kong got off to losing start in Group C earlier on Sunday, falling to a 3-1 defeat against the United Arab Emirates.

"The players can celebrate the victory tonight but we'll start focusing on the Hong Kong game right from tomorrow. There is no weak team in this tournament and we have outmost respect for all of our opponents here. We'll have to think of every match like it is the final showdown for us," Qalenoeei said. The Iranian coach believes the depth of his squad could contribute to the team's suc-

cess in Qatar. "We have a very good squad where the quality is about the same. I choose my starting lineup based on the players' performance in training, as well as the opponents and tactics. "You can see how Karim (Ansarifard) and Qayedi [who were given surprise places in the starting XI] performed. Even those who came on did well, so

it's just proof that we don't have a first or second team," added the five-time Iranian top-flight champion as a manager with Sepahan and Esteghlal. Brentford's Saman Qoddous, who is enjoying his best international spell under Qalenoeei, delivered yet another impressive performance in the midfield duo alongside Ezzatollahi, assisting the first two goals for his side

which earned him the man-of-the-match award. "To be honest, I don't know what I think about it (the award)," said Qoddous. "It's a good team performance, and I like that over any individual performance. "I have to thank the coach. I love the position I'm playing right now where I get to be involved more but I will play wherever the coach wants me to play."

## Asian Handball Championship: Iran edges China to progress into main round



● IRIHF

Mojtaba Heidarpour and Afshin Sadeqi bagging five and four goals respectively. Iranian goalkeeper Mohammad Siavoshi, meanwhile, made his contribution with a heroic performance, which saw him take the player-of-the-match prize. Zhou Ao netted a game-high seven goals for China, while Ji Yu had six. This was a second successive victory for Iran in Bahrain following the first-day 40-13 demolishing of New Zealand. The top spot of the group will be at stake when Majid Rahimzadeh's side takes on record nine-time champion South Korea today.

The top two of the four groups will progress to the main round – comprising two groups. The four semifinalists will qualify for next year's World Championship in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway.

a 15-10 lead at halftime before holding off China's improved performance in the second period to stand second to South Korea in Group B of the preliminary phase on goal difference. Mohammadreza Oraei topped the scoring chart for Iran with six goals, with

## Sports Desk

Iran secured a place in the main-round group stage of the Asian Men's Handball Championship after a 24-22 victory over China in Isa Town, Bahrain. Iran got off to a flying start in Sunday's game and took

## Barca lacking in every way in Madrid thrashing: Xavi



Barcelona coach Xavi reacts on the touchline during the Spanish Super Cup final against Real Madrid in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on January 14, 2024.   
● YASSER BAKHSH/GETTY IMAGES

AFP – Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez criticised his team for their inadequate performance in a humbling 4-1 defeat by Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final on Sunday. The Spanish champions were thrashed in Saudi Arabia by their bitter Clasico rivals and Xavi said his team gave a bad account of

themselves. "We were lacking in every way and have to apologise to the fans, we did not show the level to compete in a final," Xavi told reporters. "It's a heavy defeat, as a Barca fan I'm disappointed, we put on one of our worst displays of the season. "This is not the image that Barca have to show, especially in a final

against Real Madrid." Vinicius Junior hit a first-half treble for Real Madrid, including a brace inside the first 10 minutes, with Robert Lewandowski netting for the Catalans. Rodrygo rounded off Real Madrid's rout in the second half, while Barca defender Ronald Araujo was sent off for two bookings, both for fouls on Vinicius. "We did not stop counter-attacks and runs, we started in the worst way in a final, we were trailing for the whole game," added Xavi. "We reacted well with Robert's goal and then with the penalty, the game basically ended there." Xavi said his team had to work on their mistakes after the defeat, but that three trophies were still at stake this season. Barcelona visit third-tier Unionistas de Salamanca in the Copa del Rey last 16 on Thursday. "It's a trophy lost, we have to be self-critical (but) I still believe in the project and we can still have a great season," said the coach. "I think we can turn the situation around ... everything continues, I've been in these situations many times, there's nothing for it but sucking up the criticism."

The American destroyer USS Laboon approaches the oiler USNS Kanawha (background) for replenishment-at-sea operation in the Red Sea on December 25, 2023.

● AFP

# Raisi condemns US strikes on Yemen

## Ansarallah targets US warship in Red Sea

### International Desk

Yemen's Ansarallah movement on Sunday fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea after the movement vowed to retaliate attacks by the US-led coalition on the Arab country.

The attack on Sunday marked the first US-acknowledged fire by the resistance movement since America and allied nations, including the UK, began strikes Friday on Yemen following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Ansarallah's missile on Sunday went in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, the US military's Central Command said in a statement.

Since November, the Yemeni forces have repeatedly targeted Israel-bound ships in the Red Sea, saying they are avenging Israel's brutal onslaught on the Gaza Strip since October 7.

On December 18, the US announced the launch of a multinational force to purportedly protect trade in the

Red Sea after attacks by Yemen forced at least a dozen shipping lines to suspend operations in the region.

The US-led coalition launched two deadly strikes on the Arab country last week, which met with condemnations from many countries, especially the regional states.

### Iran slams US strikes

On Sunday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi censured the US missile strikes carried on Yemen, saying the move portrays Washington's aggressive and anti-human rights nature.

In a phone call with the Head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council Mahdi al-Mashat, Raisi said all freedom-seeking nations in the world condemn the US aggression against the Yemeni people.

The first day of US-led strikes Friday hit 28 locations and struck more than 60 targets with cruise missiles and bombs launched by fighter jets, warships, and a submarine. Sites hit included weapon depots, radars, and command centers, including in remote mountain areas, the US said. The Ansarallah

movement asserted the strikes killed five of their troops and wounded six others.

US forces followed up with a strike Saturday on a radar site in Yemen. The attacks are raising fear of the expansion of the Gaza conflict in the region.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Monday that the US cannot say it is seeking to prevent the spread of war in the region while it launches attacks on Yemen and expands the ongoing war in Gaza to the Red Sea.

During a joint press conference with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Monday, the Iranian top diplomat said that the US cannot, on one hand, support Israel's genocide in Gaza and, on the other hand, ask the regional countries to exercise restraint.

### UK involvement under scrutiny

The UK, which is also part of the coalition, has also launched attacks on Yemen. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was due to face Parliament Monday to explain why the UK joined the US in striking Yemen

and why British lawmakers did not get a say on the military action.

Four Royal Air Force Typhoon jets took part in last week's US-led strikes on Yemen.

British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said Monday that Friday's strikes had been intended "as a single action" rather than part of a campaign, but did not rule out UK participation in further military strikes. Keir Starmer, leader of Britain's main opposition Labour Party, said he supported last week's strikes but expects more openness from the government in future.

"If the government is proposing further action, then it should say so and set out the case, and we're going to have to consider that on a case-by-case basis on the merits," he said.

The smaller opposition Liberal Democrats accused the government of "riding roughshod over a democratic convention," and that the Parliament should get a vote on military action.

"For Rishi Sunak to attempt to ignore elected representatives is disgraceful," Liberal Democrat defense spokesman Richard Foord said.

# UN tells Israel access to northern port critical for Gaza aid

### International Desk

Three United Nations agencies called Monday on Israel to allow access to the port of Ashdod, north of Gaza, for the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

Bringing food and supplies to the besieged population of Gaza, which is increasingly at risk of famine, also depends on the opening of new entry routes into the territory, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a joint statement.

The use of Ashdod, located some 40 km (25 miles) north of the Gaza border, is "critically needed by aid agencies", they said, while calling for a "fundamental step change in the flow of humanitari-

an aid into Gaza".

The war on Gaza, now in its 100th day, has sparked a humanitarian catastrophe for the besieged strip's 2.4 million people, who are struggling to get food, water, fuel and medical care.

Opening the Ashdod port would reduce the time it takes to transport food to Gazans from the north, WFP's regional director for the Middle East, Corinne Fleischer, told AFP earlier this month.

Meanwhile, four US officials told Axios that President Joe Biden and other senior US officials are becoming increasingly frustrated with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rejection of most of the administration's recent requests related to the war

in Gaza.

Biden's administration keeps pressing Israel to reengage with Palestinians as partners once fighting in Gaza is over and support their eventual independence. Netanyahu keeps saying no.

Even on actions to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian civilians, the two allies are far apart.

That cycle, frustrating to much of the world, seems unlikely to end, despite US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's fourth urgent diplomatic trip this week to the Middle East since the war started. Though the United States, as Israel's closest ally and largest weapons supplier, has stronger means to apply pressure on Israel, it shows no willingness to use them. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Monday the United States made a "big mistake" by providing Israel with extensive support, adding that it was a complete miscalculation by Israel and its allies who thought they could destroy Hamas in a short period of time.

He emphasized that Israel achieved none of its goals through its attacks against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

### Lawsuit against US, UK

After South Africa filed a case against Israel at the International

Court of Justice (ICJ) for genocide in Gaza, the country's nearly 50 lawyers are preparing a separate lawsuit against the US and UK governments on the grounds that they are complicit in Israeli forces' war crimes in Palestine.

The initiative, led by South African lawyer Wikus Van Rensburg, aims to prosecute those who are complicit in the crime in civilian courts in collaboration with lawyers from the US and UK, with whom he is already in contact.

Rensburg, who has been writing letters to various countries and the ICJ for the last few weeks demanding that Israel and its supporters be prosecuted, has begun preparations to file a lawsuit against the two Western countries, with the support of his colleagues.

On Monday, health officials in Hamas-run Gaza reported more than 24,000 deaths in the war with Israel which has sent shockwaves across the region.

According to the ministry, more than 60 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military strikes across the territory overnight.

It said dozens of people were also wounded in what the resistance group's media office described as "intense" Israeli strikes and artillery bombardments across the Gaza Strip.

# Seizure of oil tanker conforms to int'l law: Navy chief



### International Desk

The Iranian Navy's seizure of an oil tanker in the Sea of Oman on January 11, 2024, was made in compliance with international law, as the country took back what had been stolen by the US, Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Rear Admiral Irani said the thuggish American forces committed a theft, and so it was necessary for Iran to reclaim its rightful possession, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to Iranian state media, Iran on Thursday seized the oil tanker St. Nikolas, which was sailing under the Marshall Islands flag and owned by the Greek shipowner Empire Navigation with Iraqi crude destined for Turkey, in retaliation for last year's confiscation of the same vessel and its oil by the US.

Echoing remarks from the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Navy chief warned the enemies of the country that the era of hit and run is over.

In Washington, the Pentagon claimed Iranian forces unlawfully boarded the St. Nikolas in the Gulf of Oman and forced it to change course toward Iranian territorial waters.

The White House condemned the seizure. "No justification whatsoever to seize it, none whatsoever. They need to let it go," White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said on Thursday.

The US seized the St. Nikolas last year in a sanctions enforcement operation when it sailed under a different name, Suez Rajan. Iran warned the US the move would "not go unanswered".

Armed intruders boarded the St. Nikolas as it sailed close to the Omani city of Sohar, according to British maritime security firm Ambrey, and its AIS tracking system was turned off as it headed in the direction of the Iranian port of Bandar-e-Jask.

"Communication with the oil tanker has been cut off around 06:30 on January 11 in the waters of Oman," Turkish oil refiner Tupras told Reuters in an emailed statement, confirming it had bought the cargo from Iraqi state marketer SOMO.

The ship loaded around 145,000 metric tons of oil in the Iraqi port of Basra and was heading to Aliaga in western Turkey via the Suez Canal, Empire Navigation told Reuters. It said it had lost contact with the vessel, manned by a crew of 19 including 18 Filipino nationals and one Greek national.



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## Iranian philosopher Mojtahedi dies at 93



IRNA – Karim Mojtahedi, a distinguished Iranian philosophy professor, died at the age of 93.

Born in 1930 in Tabriz, northwest Iran, Mojtahedi devoted his entire life to academic pursuits.

Having earned his doctorate in philosophy from France's Sorbonne University, Mojtahedi returned to Iran at the age of 34.

In recognition of his contributions, he was inducted into the Iranian Science and Culture Hall of Fame in 2001. In 2010, he was honored with UNESCO's Avicenna Gold Medal and later recognized as a Distinguished Professor by Iran's National Elites Foundation.

Over his six-decade-long academic journey, Mojtahedi authored more than 20 books on philosophy, including titles such as 'Hegel's Thoughts,' 'Descartes and His Philosophy,' 'Philosophy of History,' and 'Kant's Critical Philosophy.'

He will be laid to rest at the Artists' Section of Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery in the southern part of metropolitan Tehran on Tuesday.

Several cultural officials and literary figures expressed their condolences over the death of the philosopher. Among them are Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, CEO of Iran's Book and Literature House Ali Ramezani, and Head of Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies Musa Najafi.

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# Newly discovered inscribed brick may reveal Elamite water supply system in Western Iran



Archaeologists discovered a brick inscribed with Akkadian script, marking the Elamite water supply system, alongside some intricately patterned bricks in Iran's Dehloran Valley. This discovery sheds light on the political and economic significance of the ancient site of Garan, located on the western border of Elamite civilization. According to ISNA, the findings were reported during a specialized session titled "Representation of Dehloran Valley's Perspective; Based on the Discoveries of Garan Mound," organized by the Institute of Archaeology, arkeonews.net reported. Tappeh Garan (locally pronounced Gharran) is a large mound in the Dehloran

plain, about three kilometers east of the Dawairij River and 2.8 km north/northwestern of Tappeh Musiyani. Researchers believe that the written objects found at Garan consist of Akkadian scripts and geometric patterns thought to illustrate the outlines of an agricultural scheme. Frank Hole, Kent Flannery, James Neely, and Henry Wright conducted historic archaeological work in the Dehloran plain in southwest Iran nearly 50 years ago. In 2016 and 2019, the area was resurveyed to determine whether agricultural and increased irrigation activities had destroyed any archaeological sites. During the surface sur-

vey on Garan Mound two inscribed objects were found. The inscriptions yield some information on the economic and political importance of Tappeh Garan in the Old Elamite Period.

"Garan, situated in the Dehloran Valley within the modern province of Ilam and on the southwestern plateau of Iran, covers an area of 17 hectares. It features a prominent cone-shaped elevation in the south of the site, surrounded by several irregular mounds to the east, north, and west of the main prominence," said Mohsen Zeinivand, an archaeologist involved in the excavation.

Zeinivand highlighted the exceptional importance of Garan in archaeological studies of the region due to its organized human habitation sequence from the late ancient periods to the end of the historical era. It transformed into the largest settlement in the second millennium BC until the late Achaemenid period, holding extraordinary significance in the archaeology of the area, the archaeologist said.

Regarding recent examinations of the site, Zeinivand explained: "Surface surveys identified numerous broken bricks with possible inscriptions. Although the inscriptions on these brick fragments were not easily decipherable due to weathering and erosion, one sample revealed partially readable words such as 'ruler,' 'son,' and 'his lord,' suggesting Akkadian language."

According to Zeinivand, the lines on the patterned bricks represent four distinct features: a river, a mountain, a dam or embankment, and irrigation channels.

In conclusion, the archaeologist emphasized that the Akkadian-inscribed brick, coupled with the patterned ones, likely offers insights into the political and economic

significance of Garan on the western borders of ancient Elam.

The name Elam was given to the region by others – the Akkadians and Sumerians of Mesopotamia – and is thought to be their version of what the Elamites called themselves – Haltami (or Haltamti) – meaning "those of the high country." 'Elam,' therefore, is usually translated to mean "highlands" or "high country" as it comprised settlements on the Iranian Plateau that stretched from the southern plains to the elevations of the Zagros Mountains.

Susa was formerly the capital of the Elamite Empire and later an administrative capital of the king of Achaemenid, Darius I and his successors of 522 BC. Throughout the late prehistoric periods, Elam was closely tied culturally to Mesopotamia. Later, perhaps because of domination by the Akkadian dynasty (c. 2334-c. 2154 BC), the Elamites adopted the Sumerian-Akkadian cuneiform script.



## Iran leads global fight against drug trafficking



By Sadeq Dehqan

Staff writer

The Islamic Republic of Iran has emerged as a dedicated force in the forefront of the global fight against drug trafficking, bearing the highest financial and human costs in this relentless battle.

According to Major General Younes Abdi, head of the Center for Foreign Nationals Affairs, the country's commitment to combatting the drug trade has incurred substantial expenses and losses on it.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Abdi said that since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, over 3,800 individuals from all walks of life, including the military, law enforcement, intelligence, and the general public, have lost their lives

combating drug smugglers, predominantly to those trafficking narcotics from Afghanistan into Iran and onward to other countries. Among these martyrs, 3,017 are affiliated with the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while the rest come from diverse backgrounds, including Basij volunteer force members, the Ministry of Intelligence, and other armed forces, Abdi added. Iran finds itself in a challenging position due to its proximity to Afghanistan, the largest producer of narcotics globally, he noted. Afghanistan has been recognized as the leading producer of opium poppy since 1992, with a significant surge in production following the 2001 military intervention by the US and NATO. Reports by the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime (UNODC) indicate that opium cultivation reached its peak between 2004 and 2007, surpassing even the coca cultivation for cocaine in South America. In 2007, 92% of non-medical opiate users globally were supplied by Afghanistan, with a total value exceeding \$4 billion.

According to UNODC, despite the reduction in opium poppy cultivation in

Afghanistan in 2023, the country remains a major producer of heroin and crystal meth, much of which is smuggled out, he said. Abdi explained that conflicts, the ongoing state of insecurity, the destruction of Afghanistan's economic infrastructure, and the lack of reconstruction and economic development in the country contribute to its constant status as a pri-

mary global producer of narcotics.

The cheapest and shortest transit route for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe goes through the neighboring country, Iran. Consequently, traffickers consistently attempt to exploit Iran as the first stop along this route to access Western and Euro-

pean markets, despite facing strong resistance from Iran's anti-drug trafficking agents at the borders, he reiterated.

Annually, approximately 35% to 40% of drugs produced in Afghanistan, intended for transit to other countries, enter Iran, he said. With nearly 900 kilometers of shared border, Iran consistently faces challenges in combating drug traffickers, leading to the loss of hundreds of Iranian forces in the battle against narcotics.

Abdi emphasized that the core issue for Iran in its fight against drug trafficking is the steady production of narcotics in Afghanistan. Despite efforts, the primary transit route for these drugs continues to pass through Iran. Abdi noted that the eastern

provinces of Iran, particularly Sistan and Baluchestan, witness the highest confrontations between Iranian forces and drug traffickers. As a result, the majority of Iranian martyrs are from this province, with 1,816 individuals sacrificing their lives in the struggle against narcotics. Other eastern provinces, such as Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, and Kerman also bear a significant share of martyrs, he added. Plus, the western province of West Azarbaijan, which serves as a common gateway for drug exit to Europe, reports a substantial number of martyrs.

Abdi stressed the need for international cooperation and support in controlling opium production in Afghanistan, urging the global community to recognize and appreciate Iran's sacrifices in combating drug trafficking.

