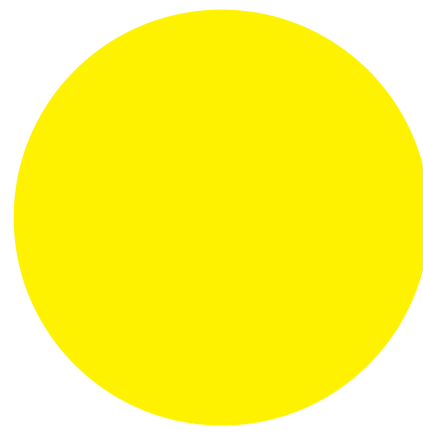


**Iran: No restrictions on scientific activities in aerospace field**

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# Iran Daily



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## Daily delivery of gas to national trunkline exceeds 850mcm: **Minister**

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**Glass half empty of energy landscape**



By Mostafa Shirmohammadi  
Editor-in-chief

### OPINION

Iranian energy authorities have been bragging about “major achievements” and measures taken to alleviate a chronic shortage that has plagued the country in recent years. To be fair, they have done a great job, especially over the past two years, despite US unilateral sanctions on the petroleum industry and other leading sectors. The latest such feats were announced by Oil Minister Javad Owji, who said an “unprecedented” 851 million cubic meters of gas is being pumped into the national distribution network per day, setting a record in the history of the natural gas industry. A day earlier, Owji’s deputy Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr boasted that the aggregate gas output had crossed the milestone of one billion cubic meters per day, and that they are investing more than \$70 billion to raise it to 1.5 bcm per day. The figures are jaw-dropping, especially when the biting sanctions are taken into account. Moreover, under Owji, Iran’s oil production rebounded from 2.2 million barrels per day to beyond 3.4 million bpd – a rise of more than 54%– while its crude exports, once hitting the rock-bottom of 400,000 bpd, skyrocketed to around 1.2 million bpd on average, posting a three-fold hike.

Last but not least, Iran is also pressing ahead with a renewables drive to rip energy from its abundant solar and wind sources to crank out 20,000 MW of green electricity per day by 2027 and 50,000 MW per day by 2031. However, this is just a glass-half-full view of the situation. The empty half of the glass, which appears to be overtaking the full half year by year, is that the country is destined for an uncharted territory where production and consumption could level off in the years to come, turning Iran from a world-class exporter into an energy importer.

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## Iran Hails ICJ Verdict

## Against Israel, Urging

## Trial of Regime Officials

*Court ruling makes waves*

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The photo shows pro-Palestinian demonstrators gathering in front of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, on January 26, 2024, as the court readies to deliver its initial ruling on the case against Israeli genocide in Gaza. ● GETTY IMAGES

Travelers can drive personal vehicles between two countries

### Iran, Armenia collaborate to facilitate tourism

EXCLUSIVE

The vice president of the Iran-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group announced the signing of a cooperation agreement to facilitate tourism between the two countries.

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### Magnificent Lishtar Dome in Gachsaran, a timeless architectural marvel

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### Netanyahu can't sustain war without US aid

Yemenis took weapons, missiles from previous ruler

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### Price of normalizing ties with Israel heavy now

Netanyahu to drag US to all fronts for his own gain

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## Iran-EU monthly trade up 24%: Eurostat



The Statistical Office of the European Union, Eurostat, in its latest report, said the monthly trade between Iran and the European Union registered a 24 percent growth.

Iran and the member states of the European Union exchanged more than €450 million worth of products in November 2023, showing a 24-percent growth compared to November 2022, reported Tasnim News Agency.

The 27 EU member states exported about €3.5 billion worth of non-oil products to Iran in the first 11 months of 2023 (January to November).

Eurostat put the total value of the trade exchanges between Iran and 27 member states of the European Union from January to November 2023 at €4.21 billion, showing a 12 percent decline compared to the same period a year earlier.

Iran and 27 EU member states had exchanged €4.79 billion worth of products from January to November 2022.

According to the report, EU exports of non-oil products to Iran fell from €3.81 billion between January and November 2022 to €3.48 billion from January to November 2023.

The value of the EU imports from Iran between January and November 2023 reached €730 million, registering a 25 percent decline compared to the previous year's corresponding period.

The EU member countries imported €980 million worth of products from Iran between January and November 2022.

Among the member states of the European Union, Germany had the maximum share of trade with Iran, accounting for 31% of Iran's total trade volume exchanged with Europe.

# Daily delivery of gas to national trunkline exceeds 850mcm: Minister

A total of 851 million cubic meters of gas were injected into Iran's national trunkline on Saturday, the oil minister said, adding that the recorded figure was unprecedented for the gas industry of the country. Javad Owji announced the above during his visit to the Dispatching Department of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) in Tehran as a cold spell and precipitation drive up the demand for natural gas, Shana reported.

About 1.5 to 2 meters of snow have fallen in some provinces of the country, the minister said, noting that under such conditions, the gas supply network has been stable, as no gas shortage has been reported

in the country thus far.

"Compared to last year, the NIGC had a daily increase of 30 million cubic meters in production from South Pars phases and independent gas fields operated by the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC)," he stated.

Gas storage was one of the concerns, and NIGC managed to store nearly 3.2 billion cubic meters in natural gas storage tanks for winter, Owji said.

Overhauling operations of gas refineries, trunkline, and pressure booster stations were carried out during the summer of the current [Iranian] year to have a sustainable supply of gas during the cold days, he concluded.



## WSA: Iran produces over 31m tons of crude steel in 2023



Iran produced more than 31 million tons of crude steel in 2023 as Iranian smelters cast 2.9 million tons of steel ingots in December 2023, according to the World Steel Association (WSA). In its latest report, the WSA said that the major steel production companies in 71 countries produced over 135.7 million tons of ingots in December 2023, which shows a 5.3 percent decrease compared to December 2022, IRNA reported.

According to the report, Iran's steel industry, with the production of 2.9 million tons of crude steel in December 2023, ranked eighth in the world, although in terms of total production in 2023, with the production of 31.1 million tons, Iran was the tenth-biggest steelmaker in the world.

China produced 67.4 million tons of crude steel in December 2023, down 14.9% from December 2022. India produced 12.1 million tons, up 9.5%, and Japan produced 7.0 million tons, up 1.1%. The United States churned out 6.8 million tons, up 7.6%. Russia is estimated to have produced 6.0 million tons, up 4.3%.

## BRICS nations buying gold to topple US dollar in transactions

The BRICS countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, are buying massive amounts of gold to topple the dominance of the US dollar in transactions on the global stage. Throughout 2023, the BRICS alliance has acquired gold at a remarkable rate, watcher.guru.com reported. The central banks throughout the alliance have sought to stock up on the metal, with many assuming that it was

for an impending BRICS currency announcement. However, Forbes has recently reported that the BRICS bloc is using gold to help shift global demand away from the US dollar. Indeed, the alliance is not relying on gold to be a currency used in place of the dollar.

Yet, they are acquiring the asset so that it could be used "as the basis for international exchange," similar to the dollar. Subsequently, denominating in this asset is an effective way to maintain its local currency strength but redirect global activity away from US dollar reliance.

The developing nations want to rely less on the US dollar by creating a new currency to settle international trade, the report added.



## Iran eyes greater cooperation with ESCAP Transport Committee

Iran's Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) will develop its cooperation with ESCAP Transport Committee in the future, said a PBO official.

Masoud Mirzaei, who leads the PR Department at the PBO, said on Saturday that his organization had held a webinar with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on January 24, in a bid to discuss ways to devel-

op transit cooperation between Iran and the UN body, IRNA reported.

Mirzaei referred to the importance of increasing Iran's interactions with various ESCAP committees, adding that the PBO will boost its collaboration with the ESCAP Transport Committee.

He also called for strengthening the frameworks of cooperation with ESCAP in Iran.

## Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for IRGAFOS 168 (ALKANOX240) // 161,000 kg



Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of IRGAFOS 168 (ALKANOX240) for polyethylene production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product.

Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until February 10, 2024.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: February 26, 2024.

Email: l.allafkari@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34282921

Tender	No	Quantity
IRGAFOS168 (ALKANOX240)	PVS-0241052	161,000 kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company ( Public Stock )

Published: Dated Sunday January 28, 2024

## Glass half empty ...

A recent study by the National Development Fund has sounded the alarm, saying that in less than a decade Iran's crude output could drop to around 2.3 million bpd due to maintenance issues.

The same survey has also warned about another unfolding energy shortfall, saying the country would only be able to fulfill a third of its gas demand by 2041. Such warnings should be taken seriously and no one should be under any illu-

sion that a country ranking among the top global holders of oil and gas reserves would ever end up in such a dire situation.

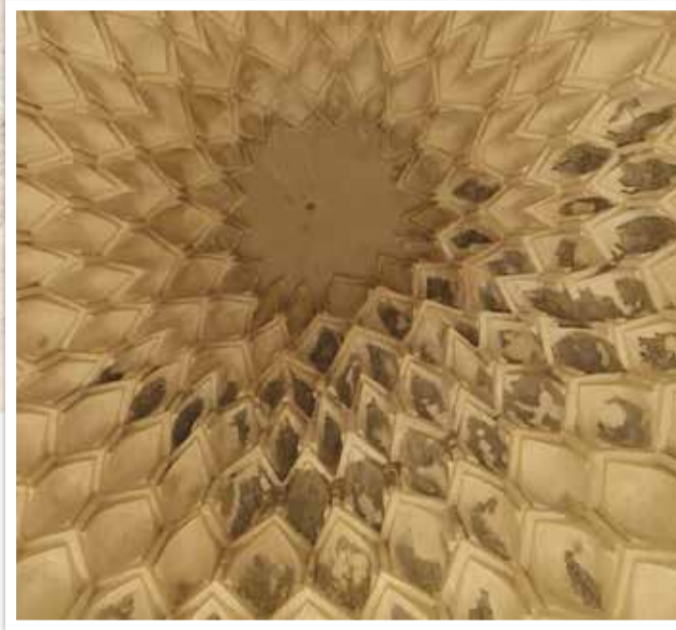
Iran has set high targets to boost its energy production. However, achieving

such goals requires massive investment as well as a nationwide campaign for energy efficiency measures. No doubt those objectives would be "unattainable" if the required investment is not made.





# Magnificent Lishtar Dome in Gachsaran, a timeless architectural marvel



IRNA

## Iranica Desk

A dome is a type of structure and architectural feature that closely resembles a hollow hemisphere. The history of constructing various domes in Iran dates back to ancient times, where they were utilized in the construction of Mesopotamian buildings and tombs. Many domes from the Sassanid period in southwest Iran have also endured. The construction of domes in Iran continued after the advent of Islam. One of the renowned domes from the middle Islamic centuries is the Lishtar Dome, considered one of the attractions of Gachsaran in

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province.

Cultural heritage experts believe the Lishtar Dome dates back to the seventh and eighth centuries CE. This beautiful dome, located 30 kilometers west of Gachsaran, on the ancient road connecting Gachsaran to Dogonbadan and Behbahan, was built during the Timurid era. The structure reflects the civilization and architecture of its time and showcases the artistic talents of the architects of that era.

This enduring architectural masterpiece has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. The name "Lishtar Dome" is derived from the district in which it

is located.

The architecture of the Lishtar Dome is constructed in a stepped manner on an artificial hill. To build the dome, a 35- by 30-meter area, with a higher elevation than the adjacent plain, was flattened, and the foundation of the building was formed on it.

The interior space of the dome is adorned with beautifully intricate geometric designs and embellished with decorations such as honeycomb-shaped muqarnas. The artistic arrangement of the stones and the unparalleled engineering of this dome have made it a lasting architectural marvel through the ages and eras

to the present day. This unique and beautiful architecture and decorations have transformed the Lishtar Dome into one of the most visited sites.

A precise document about the main function of the Lishtar Dome is not available, making it difficult to clearly determine its original purpose. Based on other surviving works from the Timurid period and the location of the dome, various possibilities can be considered. It is plausible that the structure was intended as a guide for travelers to easily recognize the main roads. Alternatively, it could have been built as a mausoleum for a notable figure from the Timurid era, as similar

structures were found on the tombs of sultans and dignitaries of that time. Some locals believe it was initially the mausoleum of an Imamzadeh.

Constructed from sturdy materials, this dome reflects the depth of art and architecture of its time. The strength of the building materials has ensured that the structure has not suffered any significant damage despite the passage of time. However, the Lishtar Dome in Gachsaran has experienced minor damage due to the passage of time and erosion, resulting in some parts developing cracks.

In recent years, the Cultural Heritage Department of Gachsaran has made efforts to repair and restore this structure, completing the restoration in 2015. Lishtar Dome attracts numerous tourists and enthusiasts of historical and ancient artifacts every year, especially during the Nowruz (early spring) holidays.



The interior space of the dome is adorned with beautifully intricate geometric designs and embellished with decorations such as honeycomb-shaped muqarnas.

## Roman and Sassanid expressions in third century

From a scattered and fragmentary body of evidence a picture emerges of how an international language of kingship began to arise from the two realms' (Roman and Sassanid) originally hostile and competitive appraisals of each other in the third century. Their third-century expressions of kingship and triumph arose from long and complex histories.

In the age of Severus Alexander, the Romans looked back on several hundred years of continuous triumphal ritual, art, and architecture. Although a new dynasty, the Sassanids appropriated their first expressions of triumph from a long-established repertoire developed by their erstwhile Arsacid overlords, which itself drew at least indirect inspiration from an equally venerable history of Hellenistic and Achaemenid precedents. Ultimately, despite the continuing influence — and physical presence — of these august lineages, contemporary concerns engendered a new dynamic in Roman and Sassanid triumphal art. The figure of the "Eastern barbarian," with his loose trousers, long-sleeved shirt, cape, and "Phrygian" cap, had a

well-established history in Roman visual culture by the early third century and was used to represent a variety of peoples, and historical and mythological figures.

Clothed in this garb, the figure of the "Parthian" provided the most ready visual template for the new Persian threat. Roman representations of Parthians derived from a multifaceted background. Roman art inherited a tradition with roots in Athenian and Hellenistic depictions of Achaemenid Persians, which was modified by the Romans' own ethnographic observation. As well as becoming an important attribute of Roman imperial power the image of the Parthian served as a way for Roman visual culture to imagine extreme otherness and portray a culture whose values (luxury, pleasure) and strengths (servility to authority) were diametrically opposed to Rome's. The image of a Parthian submitting to Roman dominance had a huge impact on Roman visual culture from Augustus's time. The image of a Parthian returning the legionary signa captured from Crassus in 53 BCE gained prominence — and even wide popularity

— after Augustus's negotiated settlement with Phraates.

The event became intertwined with Augustus's formulation of the kingship and the culmination of Rome's cosmic hegemony in an Augustan golden age. It appeared on large issues of denarii produced by the Senate, and Augustus's official iconography, most prominently exemplified by the Augustus of the Prima Porta, incorporated it as the central element in visual depictions of his "culmination of a perfect world order." The Roman Senate and Augustus intervened architecturally at several important sites in the city of Rome to commemorate the event, thus making the Parthian imagery part of Rome's privileged cultic and memorial environment. Augustus planned a temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitoline to house the signa and erected a triumphal arch next to the temple of the Divus Julius depicting Parthians retreating in battle and the now famous image of the kneeling barbarian handing over the signa. These structures and images were a constant visual presence in the city.

For Rome's later rulers, they, like the memory of Augustus himself, would be an object of emulation and appropriation.

Images of Parthians in Roman ritual performance and visual arts maintained a place that representa-

tions of other peoples did not. Whereas numismatic and monumental imagery displayed Northern barbarians as defeated warriors, slaves, or even captives receiving clementia before a Roman tribunal, the image of the Parthian offering adoratio had a separate significance. Although Parthians also appeared as defeated warriors or captives, a Parthian performing adoratio held a special place insofar as it represented a renewed acknowledgment of Rome's cosmic dominance over "the rest of the (semi-) civilized world."

Statue of Augustus of Prima Porta



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, "The Lure of the Other and the Limits of the Past," from a book entitled, "The Two Eyes of the Earth," written by Matthew P. Vanepa, published by University of California Press.



# Netanyahu can't sustain war without US aid

## Yemenis took weapons, missiles from previous ruler

### INTERVIEW

Israel's killing of more than 26,000 people in the Gaza Strip has plunged the Middle East into turmoil. While Western countries have taken no practical steps to stop Tel Aviv's war machine in its tracks or, in the case of the United States, have actively supported it, several members of the axis of resistance including the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon have stood up for the innocents of Gaza. Shocked that not everyone is going to stand by and watch a genocide unfold, the US, the UK, and their allies have launched attacks on Yemen while declaring that either the Yemenis should show restraint or Tehran should rein them in. However, Tehran has repeatedly stated that what the Yemenis, Lebanese, or other resistance groups decide to do, they decide for themselves. This is where we are at: a war of weapons as well as a war of narratives. The following is part of ABC's interview with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on January 23, 2024, translated into English.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) discusses the conflict in the Middle East in an interview with ABC's Martha Raddatz on January 23, 2024, as tensions rise in the Red Sea. [mfa.gov.ir](http://mfa.gov.ir)

**ABC: I would like to start with the issue of Yemen. There have been numerous attacks on commercial ships and American ships. Do you support these attacks?**

**AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN:** You should logically inquire with the Yemenis about the situation in Yemen. Less than three weeks ago, one of the Yemeni leaders journeyed to Tehran and met with me. When it comes to the security of the Red Sea, we were in agreement that the safety of shipping and navigation is very important. The Yemenis believe in upholding the security of maritime travel and shipping. However, in solidarity with the civilian population of Gaza, they intercept ships heading towards the ports of the Israeli regime in the waters of the Red Sea. This decision is the Yemenis' way of supporting Palestine, and I consider it to be a courageous choice. Nevertheless, our intelligence confirms that maritime security is a concern for everyone, including the Yemenis. However, we must address the root cause and determine the necessary actions. In my view, if the genocide against Gaza ceases immediately, security will be restored in the Red Sea. This is what the Yemenis have conveyed to us.

**You mentioned that the Houthis' actions are brave. So, does Iran endorse their actions in the Red Sea?**

We will never embrace a risk to the safety of navigation and shipping, as the trade and transportation of Iranian oil is conducted through sea routes. We benefit from regional security and consider ourselves an integral part of the region and its security. However, let's delve into the root cause: the Yemeni genocide in Gaza and the killing of 25,000 civilians, including thousands of women and children. It is crucial to pay attention to the underlying causes. We all benefit from security,

but security is an interconnected concept. Presently, we observe that the security of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea are intertwined.

**Do you support the action of Hamas on October 7?**

Perhaps the most fitting interpretation of Hamas' action was articulated by the secretary general of the United Nations during the early days of the Gaza conflict. He stated that "October 7 did not happen in a vacuum." The conflicts in Palestine have deep roots that stretch back nearly eight decades of occupation of Palestinian land. From our perspective, Hamas is a Palestinian liberation movement that has opposed an occupation. Nonetheless, we do not endorse the killing of children, women, or civilians anywhere in the world.

**I want to revisit the matter of Yemen. The United States has launched attacks against several targets in Yemen. The United States also claims that the Houthis have received weapons from Iran. Considering that you're concerned about security as well, don't you wish to put a halt to the ongoing events?**

Firstly, Yemenis possess a wide array of weapons since the ousting of Ali Abdullah Saleh. Yemen harbors numerous facilities and capabilities within its borders. They even have ballistic missiles dating back to Ali Abdullah Saleh's era. We haven't supplied any weapons to the Yemenis; they have utilized their own resources.

We regard shipping and maritime security as integral to regional security. This matter holds significance for the Yemenis, too. The Yemenis have informed us that ceasing the conflict in Gaza will lead to a resolution of the crisis and tensions

in the Red Sea. During my meeting with David Cameron, the British foreign minister, in Davos last week, I conveyed that the joint military action by the US and UK against Yemen will not enhance regional security or alleviate tensions in the area.

**You claim that Iran hasn't sent weapons to Yemen and that Yemenis possess their own weapons. However, two US Navy officers lost their lives while attempting to intercept a weapons shipment from Iran to Yemen. The Pentagon possesses photographs of these weapons, clearly demonstrating their Iranian origin.**

These were primarily staged performances. If the United States possesses any information regarding this matter, they should present us with the evidence. Since October 7, the US has transferred numerous ships and logistics planes carrying weapons from its bases within and outside the region to Tel Aviv. They have publicly announced this.

In my view, the US should now address the extent of its contribution to the genocide and the killing of children and women in Gaza with these weapons. Why did they choose to exacerbate and intensify the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank instead of working towards its cessation? America itself stands accused; it cannot accuse others. America is more than simply an accused party; it has committed a crime and is attacking Yemen alongside the UK without coordinating with the United Nations, thereby violating international law. What authorization exists to attack Yemen? Has the Security Council issued such a permit? Iran has not supplied any weapons to Yemen.

**Are you concerned about the war spreading throughout the region? Currently, you have the backing of**

**Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Hamas. There is a lot of worry that Iran will get involved or cross the line.**

Leading up to the October 7 operation, Israel was tearing down homes and hospitals and causing the deaths of innocent civilians in Gaza and the West Bank for weeks, months, and years. Hamas's actions were a reaction to the countless crimes committed by the Israeli regime against the Palestinians. We cautioned after October 7 that given our understanding of the region, there was a strong likelihood of an escalation and expansion in the scope of the war. And that's exactly what has happened now. However, the root of the crisis stems from the behavior of the extremists in the Israeli regime's cabinet. Yes, we are worried about the war expanding. Everyone stands to lose from its spread.

**What measures do you and Iran take to prevent the war from spreading?**

As Iran's foreign minister, I am currently in New York. I will propose solutions at the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council on how to save the West Asian region from this crisis. The Islamic Republic of Iran remains committed to restoring stability and peace to the region. Let us not forget that we battled ISIS for years in Iraq and Syria, and our finest military advisors were martyred by terrorists in those countries. No one gains from a war. We never consider the solution to be engaged in a war.

**Does Iran have a red line for going to war with the US?**

Firstly, the war's scope in the region has already expanded, which means a growing risk of an even wider conflict. All parties should strive to de-escalate tensions and focus on a political resolution. If the

US ceases its logistical, weapons, political, and media support today and stops aiding Israel's genocide in Gaza, Netanyahu wouldn't be able to sustain the war even for 10 minutes. Therefore, the key to resolving the issue lies in Washington, more than it lies in Tel Aviv.

**You mentioned that the United States is responsible for the war's expansion. Iran is also responsible. In your opinion, what is the likelihood of war between Iran and the US?**

Over the past 110 days or so, American officials have repeatedly conveyed to us that the United States does not desire an expansion of the war. We do not seek to broaden its scope either, but we candidly inform the Americans that they cannot escalate the intensity of the conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, engage in a military clash with Yemen in the Red Sea, and then talk about restricting the war's expansion! The situation in the region is extremely delicate. One must proceed with utmost caution. The United Nations, the United Nations secretary general, and the United Nations Security Council, entrusted with the responsibility of upholding international peace and security, should be allowed to fulfill their obligations.

America is not the village chief or the uncontested leader of the world! It is a member of the United Nations among others. America should comprehend that security in the region cannot be achieved through war and military actions. Our region is home to profound historical civilizations. We should engage in dialogue using civilized language and show respect to the inheritors of these great civilizations. We will persist in our efforts to establish stability and security and maintain a region characterized by sustainable development and security.



# Price of normalizing ties with Israel heavy now

## Netanyahu to drag US to all fronts for his own gain

**INTERVIEW** The world is following the news of the Israeli massacre in Gaza with great concern and various degrees of awe.

However, Israel, United States, and their allies are trying to distract the people from asking the important questions. They want to give Iran a greater role in the narrative than it truly has, hoping that the incorporation of this new boogeyman will justify their increasing involvement in the Gaza war and the brewing conflicts in Yemen, in particular, and the Middle East, in general. What is being ignored is that individuals and groups have minds of their own and do not follow a country blindly in the same way that the US follows Israel blindly.

The following is part of Al-Monitor's interview with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on January 23, 2024, translated into English.

**AL-MONITOR:** There is a lot of buzz about convening a conference or a potential international process that could pave the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state following the conclusion of the Gaza war. Will Iran participate in such a conference or international process?

**AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN:** Post-war Gaza is a burning issue. This topic has been on everyone's minds for weeks. But we believe that when it comes to post-war Gaza, the Palestinian leaders should take center stage, while others lend their support. It is crucial to foster Palestinian-Palestinian dialogues where they reach a consensus on how to govern Gaza and the West Bank.

Allowing others to call the shots for the Palestinians will not yield favorable outcomes. However, it is important for others to rally behind the Palestinian decision. By Palestinians, I refer to all Palestinian factions with their diverse perspectives.

Of course, we must consider one more step ahead: the Palestinian people should also have the right to choose how Gaza and the West Bank should be managed and how Palestine should be governed. Their chosen model should be developed with the assistance of the United Nations.

**Does Iran oppose or support the normalization of Saudi Arabia's relations with Israel if it helps pave the way for the establishment of the Palestinian state and the process we are discussing?**

We had a discussion about this with the Saudis. The Saudis assured us that Palestine is their utmost priority. Regarding the normalization of relations, Israel's recent actions have complicated the matter and made it challenging for any country seeking to normalize ties with the Israeli regime.

Now, there is a pressing question in our region: normalization with whom? With the regime that has killed 25 thousand women, children, and civilians? With the regime against which protests have erupted on the streets worldwide, including America and Europe, condemning its genocide? The ongoing genocidal actions of the Israeli regime are vastly different from those of pre-October 7. A country aiming to normalize relations with Israel under the current situation will have to pay a heavy price.

**Let me ask about Iraq. Once again, that country has become a battleground between Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and American forces. Do you still insist, in your discussions with the Iraqi government, on the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq? Can you shed light on what seems to be a concerning dispute in Iran-Iraq relations?**

Tehran and Baghdad share robust ties. We have a close bond between the two nations since the downfall of Saddam

Hussein. If I say that there are cordial and exceptional relations between the two countries, I would be stating the truth. However, over the years, we have had an issue regarding the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Despite our historical and positive relations with the Kurds and Iraqi Kurdish leaders, terrorist groups have been exploiting the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as a launching pad for attacks against Iran. We have repeatedly conveyed this concern to the central government and authorities of Iraqi Kurdistan, even warning them that if they fail to secure our shared borders, we will exercise our right to legitimate defense within the framework of international law. We respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and there is a security agreement in place between us on this matter. We have not launched attacks on Iraq, but we have targeted the Mossad headquarters in the Kurdistan region. The officials in the central government and Baghdad comprehend this very well. Therefore, while we maintain a strong and exceptional relationship with Iraq, we will not compromise our national security for anyone. However, the issue regarding the US and Iraq is something that the Iraqis themselves must decide.

**You've already mentioned the back channels used to relay messages to the US. Can you provide more details**

**on whether you've directly or indirectly received or sent messages to the Biden administration regarding de-escalation?**

Over the past 110 days or so, there have been exchanges of messages between Iran and the United States concerning regional developments and the situation in Gaza. Last week, during a meeting with British Foreign Minister David Cameron in Davos, I candidly expressed that the joint US and British attack on Yemen was a strategic blunder. It is evident that the recent actions of the Israeli regime in Gaza have all been carried out with full American support. The United States has facilitated these actions by providing weapons, giving political and international backing, and sending American military and security advisors. Consequently, America is deeply involved in the war alongside Netanyahu in Gaza and the West Bank. However, Israel has not achieved anything substantial. Despite extensive US support, Hamas has not been defeated or disarmed, and no captives have been released through military force.

For Netanyahu, personal survival is also a crucial factor. If America halts the war today, Netanyahu will be unable to resume it tomorrow. Therefore, Netanyahu attempts to make America engaged in other fronts as well. We observe his efforts to involve America on all fronts for his own

benefit.

Hence, we caution the Americans to be wary of Netanyahu and the Zionists' manipulative tactics. Their game is one of war.

Of course, diplomatic channels remain open for message exchanges between America and us. Additionally, Switzerland, which looks out for America's interests in Iran, serves as an official diplomatic channel for our communication. These message exchanges help foster a better understanding of the situation. We have no intention of expanding the scope of the war.

It is evident that the safety of shipping and navigation in the Red Sea and the surrounding region is in our best interest. A significant portion of our trade and oil transportation is conducted by sea. The region will not benefit from further conflict. However, the war in Gaza must cease. When I refer to war, I am specifically addressing the killing of women, children, and civilians. The continuation of this genocide does not bode well for America's so-called prestige. I genuinely doubt that the White House can justify the support it provides to the killing of 14 thousand children and infants. Supporting the Israeli regime to the extent of endorsing their genocide is incongruous with the values the United States espouses unless we assert that the White House is held hostage by Tel Aviv.

**You mentioned that Iran has no intention to escalate tensions in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf due to its shipping interests. What measures do you take to de-escalate the tensions? Have you communicated or will you communicate with the Houthis to cease the attacks?**

Around three weeks ago, one of the Yemeni leaders named Abdulsalam, who acts as their negotiator with Saudi Arabia, visited Tehran. Firstly, there is a misconception among the White House and American officials; Some American officials believe that we have a remote control for the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas. In reality, they make their own decisions. They each have their own motives and considerations. Being Arabs and Muslims, they take steps to support the Palestinian Arabs and Muslims. This is influenced by the cultural and religious dynamics of our region.

To be honest, we greatly admire their bravery. They choose to stand against the Israeli oppression in Palestine and support the Palestinian people. This decision comes at a great cost and requires immense courage from them. The Yemenis inform us that they value the safety of navigation and shipping. However, in their support of the Palestinian people, they have decided to halt all Israeli ships and any ships heading to Israeli ports.

The United States and Britain have made a grave mistake. While Saudi Arabia and Yemen are on the verge of reaching a final agreement after a decade of war, with various war fronts still active, the United States and Britain have opened a new war front in the Red Sea and Yemen. This means that these two countries are moving to increase and spread tensions. The Yemenis have nothing to lose. For 10 years, Saudi Arabia stood against them with all its resources. Britain played a significant role in the war against Yemen as well. Hence, we believe that war is not the solution. Netanyahu cannot destroy Hamas and free its captives through genocide and the killing of innocent children and women.

It is crucial for everyone to strive for an end to the war. You might wonder if the conflicts on other fronts would cease if the war in Gaza ended. Two days prior to the recent humanitarian ceasefire, I had a meeting with Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah in Lebanon. I informed them about the upcoming establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire lasting several days. I asked him whether Lebanon would continue its attacks in support of Gaza if the ceasefire is implemented. He replied, "No, we will stop if the attacks on Gaza stop." Throughout the entire six days of the humanitarian ceasefire, Lebanon did not fire a single shot. Therefore, we must address and put an end to the root cause of all these conflicts.



An Israeli tank takes position at the western entrance of Khan Yunis' refugee camp as Palestinians flee with a few belongings to safer areas further south in the southern Gaza Strip on January 26, 2024.  
AFP



## Moharrami ruled out for months with torn ligament



AFC

### Sports Desk

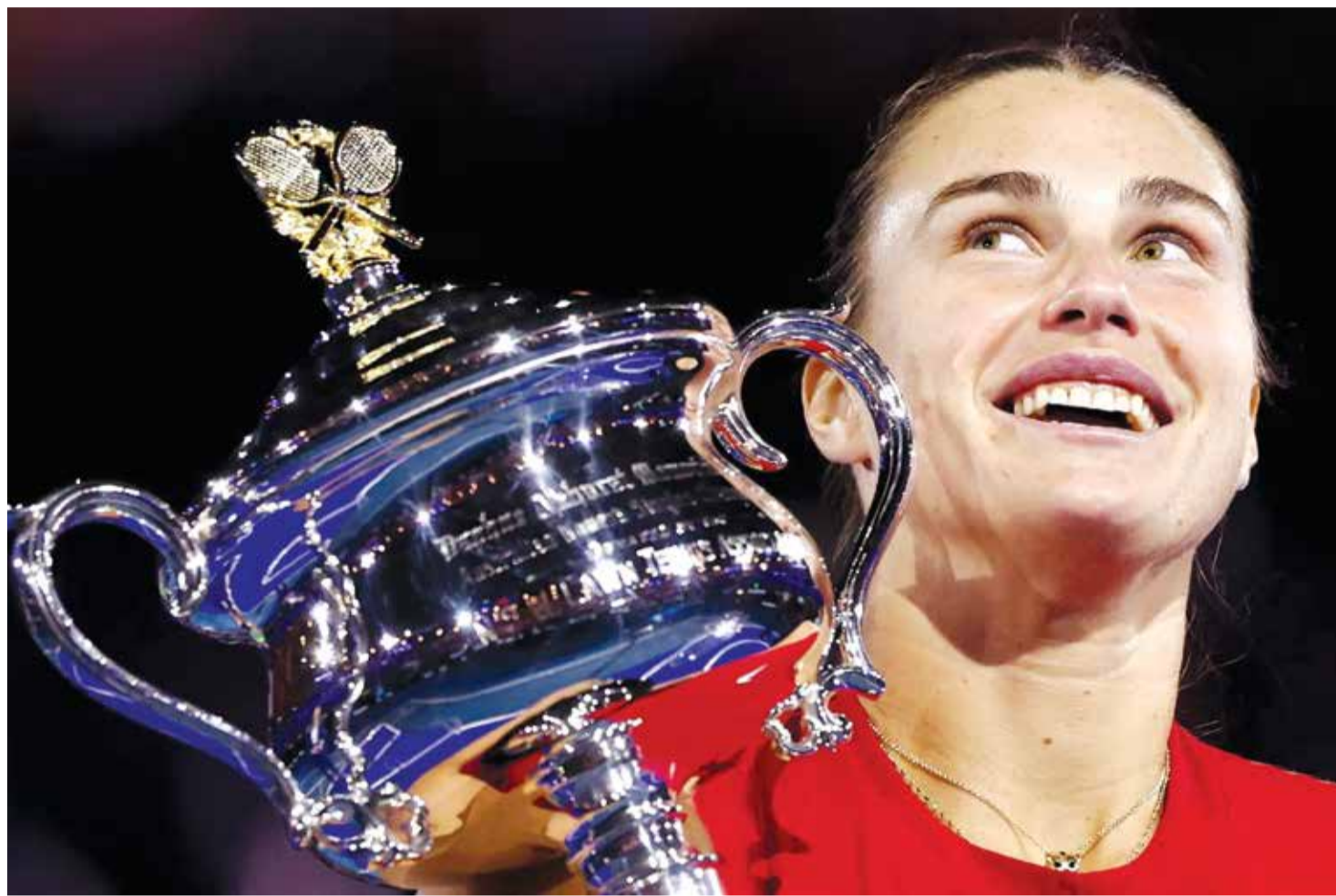
Iranian fullback Sadeq Moharrami is set to be sidelined for at least six months, likely to miss the rest of the season, after suffering a torn knee ligament while on international duty at the AFC Asian Cup.

The Dynamo Zagreb player sustained the injury in the closing stages of the first half against the United Arab Emirates in Al Rayyan, Qatar, last Tuesday, when he collided with Emirati defender Hareb Abdullah and was replaced by Ramian Rezaeian. Iran went on to win the game 2-1, courtesy of a Mahdi Taremi's double against Yahya Al Ghassani's late consolation for the UAE, and progress to the round of 16 as the Group C winner with maximum points.

Moharrami's injury comes as a massive blow for Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee, whose team is chasing a first Asian Cup trophy in 48 years and will face Syria in the first knockout round on Wednesday.

Syria manager Hector Cuper will have his own injury woes to deal with as skipper and prolific striker Omar Khribin is a doubt for the last-16 clash after an injury during a training session.

# Sabalenka overpowers Zheng to retain Australian Open crown



Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka celebrates with the women's singles trophy at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia, on January 27, 2024. GETTY IMAGES

**REUTERS** - Aryna Sabalenka continued to be an irrepressible force at the Australian Open as she powered to a 6-3 6-2 victory over Chinese 12th seed Zheng Qinwen on Saturday to successfully

defend her title and add a second Grand Slam trophy to her cabinet. The Belarusian second seed has barely put a foot wrong at what has turned into her happiest hunting ground as she became the

first woman to retain the Melbourne Park crown since compatriot Victoria Azarenka in 2013. "It's been an amazing couple of weeks and I couldn't imagine myself lifting this trophy one

more time," Sabalenka said. "I want to congratulate you Qinwen on an incredible couple of weeks here in Australia. I know it's really tough to lose in the final but you're such an

incredible player. "You're such a young girl and you're going to make many more finals and you're going to get it." Sabalenka came into the match without dropping a set at the year's first

major and stayed perfect to join Ash Barty, Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova and Lindsay Davenport in the elite club of players to have managed the feat since 2000.

Zheng, who had saved four set points, showed she was slowly growing in confidence in her second meeting with Sabalenka by firing up her own big forehand amid the rallying cry of "Jia You" from her compatriots in the crowd. A clean crosscourt winner earned Sabalenka a break point in the opening game of the second set and Zheng's double fault handed it to her on a platter.

The 21-year-old first-time finalist, bidding to match her idol Li Na - the Melbourne Park champion 10 years ago and first Asian and Chinese player to win a major - saw her hopes fade after two more errors on serve left her 4-1 down.

Sabalenka shrugged of shaky service game to close out the most one-sided final since Azarenka beat Maria Sharapova 6-3 6-0 in 2012 by smashing a forehand winner.

"It's my first final and I'm feeling a little bit pity, but that's how it is," said Zheng. "I feel very complicated because I could have done better than I did in this match."

## I'll miss him but I'll sleep better, Guardiola says of Klopp's quit decision

**REUTERS** - Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said he will miss his old sparring partner Juergen Klopp when the Liverpool manager calls time on his reign at the end of the season. Klopp stunned the football world on Friday when he announced this would be his last season at the Anfield club he took over in 2015 and led to multiple trophies.

Asked after his side's 1-0 FA Cup fourth-round win at Tottenham Hotspur if the news had been a shock, Guardiola said: "I am a little bit, he's an absolutely incredible manager and I know I don't know him closely but he's an incredible person. "I had a feeling that he's leaving part

of us too at Man City as Liverpool have been our biggest rival in his years.

"Personally he has been my biggest rival from when he was at Dortmund and I was at Bayern Munich. He will be missed, personally I will miss. I am pleased because without him I will sleep a little bit better the night before we play against Liverpool! But I wish him all the best."

City have jostled with Liverpool in several epic title races since Guardiola and Klopp both took charge and look set to go toe-to-toe again this season with the sides first and second in the standings. "He doesn't admit it but he will be back," Guardiola, whose City side are seeking a fourth successive league ti-

tle, said. "All the managers will (feel tired) when you've done many years, I feel it completely.

"I felt it at Barcelona so I understand it completely."

Klopp, who has won the Champions League, Premier League, Club World Cup, FA Cup, League Cup and Super Cup during his spell in charge, said he had made the decision because his energy for the job was waning.

"I think the Premier League is going to miss his charisma, personality and the way his teams play," added Guardiola. "They have always been a pleasure to watch how positive they are in their approach. They try to win every game. I wish him all the best."



JASON CAIRNDUFF/ACTION IMAGES

## Doncic equals fourth-highest NBA scoring total



**BBC** - Luka Doncic equalled the fourth-highest scoring performance in NBA history with 73 points as the Dallas Mavericks defeated the Atlanta Hawks. The 24-year-old Slovenian broke the Mavericks' record score of 60 he set against the New York Knicks in 2022. Only the legendary Wilt Chamberlain (100 and 78) and Kobe Bryant (78) have scored more in 77 years of the NBA. "It was just exciting. Sometimes I couldn't believe it," Doncic said after the Mavericks' 148-143 victory.



Mavericks guard Luka Doncic (77) attempts a shot during an NBA victory over the Hawks at State Farm Arena, Atlanta, GA, US, on January 26, 2024. JASON GETZ/AJC

Doncic notched 10 rebounds and seven assists. He connected on 25 of 33 shots from the floor - including eight three-pointers - and made 15 of his 16 free throws.

Chamberlain also had two scores of 73 in 1962 while David Thompson reached the figure in 1978.

Doncic became the 10th player in the NBA to score at least 70 points in a game after Joel Embiid beat the Philadelphia 76ers' franchise record on Monday. It is the highest score since Los Angeles Lakers legend Bryant scored 81 points against the Toronto Raptors in 2006. Chamberlain's century haul came for the Philadelphia Warriors against the New York Knicks in 1962.

Doncic ranked the performance "probably at the top" of his career as the

game coincided with the fourth anniversary of Bryant's death in a helicopter accident.

"We all loved Kobe. It feels special to be in that conversation with those names," Doncic added.

Doncic's display helped his side end a run of three straight defeats as Mavericks coach Jason Kidd hailed a "special" performance.

Kidd said: "His ability to make shots, create shots, find open guys, he did that at a high level tonight. I've said this before, we can't take him for granted.

"Sometimes we are a little bit tough on him because of the wins and losses, but what he does on the court is different than anybody else.

"Every night is special. He always does something."



# Iran hails ICJ verdict against Israel, urging trial of regime officials

Court ruling makes waves

## International Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran has welcomed the top UN court's ruling in the Israel-Gaza case with its Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian congratulating South Africa on its success in taking legal proceedings against Israel for its genocidal crimes in the besieged strip.

"I would like to congratulate the South African government and people, the people of Palestine and South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor on the country's success in its lawsuit against the Zionist regime with the International Court of Justice," Amir-Abdollahian said in a post on his X account on Friday.

The World Court ordered Israel on Friday to prevent acts of genocide against Palestinians and do more to help civilians, although it stopped short of ordering a cease-fire as requested by the plaintiff South Africa.

The foreign minister reiterated his country's support for the South African government's initiative, adding, "Today, the officials of the fake Israeli regime are the most notorious people for the world's public opinion who have to be brought to justice immediately for committing genocide and unprecedented war crimes against the Palestinians." "I should reiterate that the White House's all-out support for the crimes by the Zionists will never be forgotten and will be pursued by public opinion. I ask all my counterparts in the world to support the action of South Africa at the ICJ," he said.

In separate comments, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani denounced the Israeli regime's "hostile" reaction to the ICJ's order for the regime to prevent acts of genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Netanyahu rejected the claim of genocide as "outrageous" and claimed Israel would continue to defend itself. However, he welcomed the ICJ's decision not to order a cease-fire. Israel claims it makes the utmost efforts to avoid civilian casualties. Reflecting criticism of Israel voiced in the court's ruling, a headline in Israel's Jerusalem Post read: "ICJ badmouths Israel for 35 minutes, then Israel wins".

## Split reactions

Reactions to the top UN court's ruling Friday in the Israel-Gaza case were split along the lines of the war raging in the Palestinian territory.

The United States reiterated its position that allegations Israel has committed genocide in Gaza are "unfounded".

"We continue to believe that allegations of genocide are unfounded and note the court did not make a finding about genocide or call for a cease-fire in its ruling," a US State Department spokesman said.

"Today marks a decisive victory for the international rule of law and a significant milestone in the search for justice for the Palestinian people," said the Foreign Affairs Ministry of South Africa, which brought the case before the ICJ.

Saudi Arabia welcomed the ICJ's decision and called for the international community to "hold Israel accountable" for "violations" of international law.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry "welcomed the provisional measures" ordered by the ICJ, calling them a "victory for humanity... and international justice".

Kuwait welcomed an "important step" in the conflict, emphasizing the "imperative" for Israel to "respect this decision as well as the principles of international law, humanitarian law and UN resolutions," according to a Foreign Ministry press release.

"We will continue to advocate for peace and an end to war, the release of hostages, access to humanitarian aid and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, so that both nations coexist in peace and security," Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said.

The French Foreign Ministry emphasized "the importance" of Israel's "strict compliance with international humanitarian law" and welcomed the ICJ's call "for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers".

"We hope that Israel's attacks against women, children and the elderly will come to an end," Turkish President Recep Tayyip

Erdogan said, calling the ruling "valuable".

## Win and setback

Palestinians said the World Court let them down by failing to order a halt to the Israeli military offensive in Gaza, but they also described the proceedings as a victory which had inspired hope of accountability.

"The ICJ order is an important reminder that no state is above the law," Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said in a video statement, adding that the ruling "should serve as a wake-up call for Israel and actors who enabled its entrenched impunity".

"The (International) Court of Justice's decision is an important development which contributes to isolating Israel and exposing its crimes in Gaza," said the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

"Orders of the International Court of Justice are binding on the parties and they must comply with them. The European Union expects their full, immediate and effective implementation," the bloc said.

"The World Court's landmark decision puts Israel and its allies on notice that immediate action is needed to prevent genocide and further atrocities against Palestinians in Gaza," said Balkees Jarrah, associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch.

The UN Security Council will meet next week over the decision by the global body's top court calling for Israel to prevent genocidal acts in Gaza, the council's presidency announced Friday.

The Wednesday meeting was called for by Algeria, whose Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it would give "binding effect to the pronouncement of the International Court of Justice on the provisional measures imposed on the Israeli occupation".

# Raisi prioritizes security at Iran-Pakistan border



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) receives the credentials of Pakistan's new Ambassador to Tehran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu on January 27, 2024. [president.ir](#)

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said the border between Iran and Pakistan must be safeguarded against any sort of insecurity.

Raisi made the statement in a meeting with Pakistan's new Ambassador to Tehran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu on Saturday as the diplomat submitted his credentials to the president, Press TV reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes borders are an opportunity for economic exchanges and the promotion of security of the neighboring countries," the president said.

He urged the two countries to implement common plans to battle terrorism and organized crime.

The Pakistani envoy, for his part, hailed Raisi's effective role in settling recent tensions between the two countries and welcomed the Iranian president's roadmap to a coherent community of regional countries.

In a post on his X account earlier in day, Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president's deputy chief of staff for political affairs, also pointed to the meeting between Raisi and Mudassir. "It's the US that benefits from terrorism. Our borders are opportunity, not threat," Jamshidi wrote.

"Strong Pakistan and Iran are critical for region and to promote historic people to people ties. Time to turn a new leaf," Mudassir wrote in his X account.

# Yemen's Houthis hit Trafigura fuel tanker

## International Desk

Yemen's Houthis on Friday stepped up attacks on vessels transiting the Red Sea, including a hit that sparked a fire on a fuel tanker operated on behalf of trading firm Trafigura.

Trafigura said a missile struck the fuel tanker Marlin Luanda as it transited the Red Sea. The tanker was carrying Russian naphtha purchased below the price cap in line with G7 sanctions, a Trafigura spokesperson said, Reuters reported.

Firefighting equipment on board was being deployed to suppress and control a fire in one cargo tank on the starboard side, the company said in an emailed statement.

"We remain in contact with the vessel and are monitoring the situation carefully," it said, adding military ships were underway to provide assistance.

The Al Mayadeen Network, citing informed sources, announced that the British ship was carrying fuel for Israeli bombers. The network added that the ship was heading towards the occupied Palestinian territories, not Greece, IRNA reported.

# Iran: No restrictions on scientific activities in aerospace field

## National Desk

The Iranian Foreign Ministry dismissed "interventionist comments" from the European troika about the recent launch of a homegrown satellite, saying there are no restrictions on Iran's scientific and practical activities in the field of aerospace.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Saturday criticized the "interventionist" stance of France, Germany, and Britain, laid out in a joint statement on January 26, about Iran's launch of Soraya satellite into a low Earth

orbit (LEO), with the Qaem-100 space launch vehicle (SLV).

"In spite of a series of arbitrary interpretations rooted in the unilateral tendencies of certain parties, there are no limits to the Islamic Republic of Iran's scientific and applied activities in the sphere of space research under international regulations.

"Accordingly, our country categorically rejects the imposition of such unconventional approaches," the Iranian official stated.

In a joint statement released on Friday, France, Germany, and the UK alleged that Qaem-100 space

launch vehicle uses technology essential for the development of a long-range ballistic missile system that could allow Iran to launch longer-range projectiles.

"We remain committed to taking every diplomatic step to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and to hold Iran to account for its destabilizing activity in the region and internationally," the European troika's statement said.

Tehran, Kanaani said, does not wait for permission from certain countries in order to use peaceful technologies for scientific advances.

He also said Iran reserves the "inalienable and legitimate right" to make scientific and research advances in the field of aerospace.

The "interventionist comments" from the European troika, which denote their egotistical views regarding Iran's progress, will by no means make a dent in the Iranian nation's determination to make steady headway in science and technology, the official stated.

The Soraya satellite, developed by the Iranian Space Research Center, was sent into a 750-km Low Earth orbit on January 20. The launch was overseen by the aerospace division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Iran has defended the satellite launch, with the IRGC saying that it will serve both scientific and defense purposes, enhancing Iran's capabilities in space exploration and technology.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



Soraya satellite is being prepared to be launched into a 750-km orbit with the Qaem 100 satellite launcher on January 20, 2024. [IRNA](#)



## Iranian photojournalist Babaei wins at 2023 Tokyo contest



### Arts & Culture Desk

IRNA – Iranian photojournalist, Mohammad Babaei, received an honorary diploma in the 2023 Tokyo International Foto Awards. Babaei, known for his work for the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), was awarded for his photo series 'Iran's Female Boxers'.

With three decades of experience in photo journalism, Babaei has previously received several international awards for his work in women's sports.

Babaei has already won the Winter Sports Photo Awards of World Media Summit in China in 2021.

He has covered such events as the 2018 World Wrestling Championships in Budapest and the FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia among others.

The 2023 Tokyo International Foto Awards aimed to discover talent among both professional and non-professional photographers, including students, in various categories.

A jury of renowned photography experts, curators, and international gallery owners meticulously evaluated entries in 10 categories in both the Professional and Non-professional branches of the contest. In addition to naming the Photographer of the Year, they also awarded the top image in each category and selected one photographer as the Discovery of the Year.

That honor went to Tiziana Sonia Spelta for her work in documenting rallies in support of Palestine that took place in Italy in late 2023. Her powerful images also won the Non-professional Editorial category. Spelta will receive a \$2,000 cash prize for her win, while Leroy will walk away with \$3,000.

Photographer Francis Leroy rose to the top of the competition and was named Photographer of the Year at the 2023 Tokyo International Foto Awards. The photographer's artistic look at how the waves of the ocean merge with a sandy beach beat out thousands of entries to the contest.

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Travelers can drive personal vehicles between two countries

# Iran, Armenia collaborate to facilitate tourism



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

The vice president of the Iran-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group announced the signing of a cooperation agreement to facilitate tourism between the two countries.

Ara Shaverdian, in an interview with Iran Daily, added that according to the agreement facilitated by the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the supervision of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Armenian

and Iranian tourists can travel to either country with their personal vehicles, and without the previous requirement of a deposit.

Shaverdian emphasized the need to strengthen campsite facilities in Iran to facilitate ground travel for tourists from various European and Caucasian countries to Iran.

He highlighted the importance of providing the necessary infrastructure for road, highway, and tourist facilities to attract foreign tourists through neighboring countries.

He urged the development of campsites and accommodations to enable tourists from different parts of Europe and Armenia to

enter Iran with campervans and engage in tourism, allowing them to enter and exit Iran from various borders after traveling to different parts of the country.

He stated that Iran, with its various tourist attractions, must improve road and tourism facilities to attract foreign tourists and facilitate their ground entry through neighboring countries. Comparing the number of tourists in both Iran and Armenia, Shaverdian noted that more tourists have historically traveled from Iran to Armenia than vice versa.

He attributed this to the previous lack of opportunities for Armenian tourists to travel

to Iran with personal vehicles. Shaverdian highlighted the unique atmosphere of ground travel and the cost-effectiveness of ground travel compared to air travel. He mentioned that the peak of Iranian tourist travel to Armenia occurs during Nowruz (Persian New Year), Christian New Year, and the summer season. Regarding air travel between Iran and Armenia, Shaverdian explained that several Iranian airlines, including Qeshm Air and Iran Airtour, operate flights to Armenia, with a minimum of two to three flights per week during high season.

Shaverdian suggested promoting tourist attractions in the

Azərbaycan region of Iran to Armenians and expanding air routes to cities such as Isfahan and Bandar Abbas.

He mentioned that Iran, considered among the top ten countries globally in terms of technical and engineering knowledge, has recently collaborated with Armenian companies to construct a 35-kilometer road project from the Armenian border to Yerevan.

He added that the current 300-km road from Iran to Yerevan takes about seven to eight hours due to road difficulties. However, with the construction of this road, featuring bridges and tunnels, travel time is expected to be reduced by half.

## Iranian, Serbian universities ink scientific agreement

### Social Desk

In a meeting attended by Serbian and Iranian scholars, a scientific collaboration agreement was signed between Tarbiat Modares University and the University of Belgrade, to expand educational and research ties.

The session was attended by Ratko Ristić, vice rector for foreign affairs of the University of Belgrade, and Nikola Živanović, a member of the University of

Belgrade Faculty of Forestry, according to ILNA.

During the meeting, Amir Abdollahzadeh, the deputy of research and technology at Tarbiat Modares University, expressed readiness for collaboration in various scientific areas, including study opportunities, student exchanges, and joint research projects under the international scientific agreement.

Ratko Ristić, expressing satisfaction with their presence at

Tarbiat Modares University, also expressed their willingness for bilateral cooperation.

Abdolamir Allameh, the director of International Scientific Relations, and Hamidreza Sadeqi, a faculty member of the Faculty of Natural Resources and Maritime Sciences at Tarbiat Modares University, evaluated the collaboration with the University of Belgrade as an appropriate opportunity, considering its illustrious history.



Prior to this meeting, the Serbian delegation had visited the Faculty of Natural Resources and Marine Sciences in Iran's northern city of Nour. The University of Belgrade,

with 31 faculties, over 90,000 students, over 4,000 faculty members, and over 7,000 administrative staff, is one of the oldest and best universities in the region.

## 19th Tehran Auction concluded with Sepehri's artworks dominating

### Arts & Culture Desk

The 19th edition of the Tehran Auction, showcasing classic and modern Iranian art, concluded at Parsian Azadi Hotel in Tehran on January 26, with a record-breaking total sales exceeding \$4,834,400. Sohrab Sepehri's

three pieces set a new record by fetching \$752,000 in total.

The auction featured 90 works categorized into classic and modern art. Classic artworks included pieces by renowned artists such as Ebrahim Jabbari, Mahmoud Farshchian, and Mahmoud Zangeneh. Modern pieces were

presented by artists like Sohrab Sepehri, Bahman Mohasses, Sadeq Tabrizi, Parviz Tanavoli, Mohammad Ehsai, and Hossein Zenderoudi, IRNA reported. An untitled oil on canvas painting from Sohrab Sepehri's 'Tree Trunks' series, dating back to the 1970s, was featured in the 19th

Tehran Auction. The artwork, originally presented at Christie's Dubai auction in October 2015, was estimated to be worth between \$400,000 and \$440,000. It ultimately sold for \$408,000 during the auction, marking the most expensive artwork of this edition of the event.

Initiated in 2012, the Tehran Auction is the first of its kind in Iran, aiming to showcase the best in Iranian art. Focused on addressing the growing interest in modern and contemporary Iranian art, the auction facilitates the acquisition of quality works in a reliable manner.

The previous edition of the auction, which concentrated on contemporary Iranian art, grossed over \$1,235,520 on December 15. 'Farangi (Foreign) Woman on Persian Carpet II' by Parviz Tanavoli was the most expensive artwork, sold for \$110,000 at the 18th edition of the event.