

# Iran Daily



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## Iran 'will not hesitate' to respond to any attack on its territory 7 >

### Air power building system in Iran

By Brig. Gen. Nikbaksh Habibi  
Iranian Air Force pilot

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In Iran, a French balloon aviator made his debut during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, captivating audiences with a dazzling balloon show. The year was 1891 when he embarked on a balloon flight, soaring above the capital Tehran and other major cities. The inaugural balloon adventure ignited a profound interest in flight, serving as a critical moment that opened Iran's eyes to the fascinating art of aviation.

Fast forward 23 years to the onset of the First World War in 1914, when the people of Tehran encountered with a French-made Blériot XI plane. The aircraft, skillfully piloted by the Russian aviator Kozminski, graced the skies of Tehran on a daily basis. As April of 1922 arrived, Junkers, a German company, introduced an air transport service in Iran, facilitating flights between Tehran and major cities, providing efficient passenger transportation.

A year later, Iran procured four de Havilland planes from Russia, with the pilots also receiving training in the same country. Simultaneously, the Iranian military sent its first group of students to France for pilot training. In June 1924, the order to establish the Army's Aviation Organization was issued, appointing Colonel Ahmad Nakhjavan as its commander.

Air power embodies an indispensable component of a nation's system, representing a comprehensive and influential force in times of war and military crises. The air force plays a pivotal role without which military endeavors would fall short of achieving goals.

The concept of air power encompasses the ability to leverage the third dimension (altitude) to exert influence on a situation or the enemy. Expanding this notion, space can also be regarded as part of the third dimension. This enhanced form of air power includes the utilization of various aerospace systems, such as manned and unmanned aircraft, guided missiles, balloons, space-ships, satellites, and more. These systems are capable of serving military purposes in the air, ultimately impacting the outcome of wars and other situations.

In times of war, comprehensive defense becomes imperative. Embracing the approach and strategy of "all-round air power" within the context of independent self-reliance becomes unavoidable. This entails that governments, while exercising their sovereignty and bolstering national power, have the capability to strike and destroy targets from the third dimension, i.e., the sky and the air. Moreover, they must provide air support to maintain stability on the ground, defending against friendly and backed forces. Furthermore, in the face of airspace violations and encroachments by intruding objects, a corresponding power (air defense) must be deployed to prevent trespassing and protect sovereignty. [Page 2 >](#)



## Leader Urges Muslim Elites to Push for Cutting Ties with Israel 7 >

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei meets with a group of commanders and personnel of the Iranian Air Force and Army's Air Defense Force in Tehran on February 5, 2024. [khamenei.ir](#)



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## Air power building ...



Additionally, governments have other air requirements. To effectively handle natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, and fires, governments must have air transport support. Such support is crucial, particularly in military and war scenarios, as it can offer reconnaissance, escort, and air monitoring. This helps limit the enemy's utilization of air and maximize a government's potential for power building to advance strategic war goals and national interests.

The Air Force, as a national defense organization, must focus on executing its comprehensive mission and employing air power across seven dimensions: destruction, defense, mobility, warning and surveillance, intelligence and reconnaissance, command and control, and air support. Within these dimensions, specific missions include air attacks, air defense, air transportation, aerial reconnaissance and rescue, air combat surveillance or escort, crisis control air operations, air command and control of the battlefield, air network-oriented and cyber operations, and military meteorological services.

Despite the challenges brought about by the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian Air Force, under the new command system, successfully carried out its missions during the Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s. It executed a "military operation" that not only overcame internal issues but also led to a unification that brought profound changes to the course of the war. This unity proved instrumental in controlling the situation and thwarting Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's military objectives in the war. In addition to showcasing its superior air power, the force achieved air superiority by causing physical and psychological disruption, effectively managing the interplay of time, political considerations, and military necessities. It, in fact, incapacitated its most dangerous adversary. By seizing control of the third dimension of the battlefield, namely altitude, and manipulating the fourth dimension of time, the Iranian Air Force compelled Saddam Hussein to reconsider his war strategy in the second week of the conflict. This provided an opportunity for Iranian politicians and military commanders to foster national unity in fighting back the Iraqi aggression.

Despite enduring fluctuations for decades, the Iranian Air Force remains robust and well-equipped with a substantial fleet of manned and unmanned aircraft. It stands prepared to competently defend across the seven dimensions of its primary mission.



# Iran's major blow to Mossad Israel's hollow intelligence hegemony exposed

International Desk

**EXCLUSIVE**

We commence this writing with quotations from William Burns, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to underscore the significance of the subject and lend credence to the assertion that alongside conventional and classical competitions and wars, an ongoing and potentially more crucial battle persists: the "war or competition of information." Spies, with a longstanding history, are integral tools in this realm of informational warfare. William Burns, in a segment of his recent comprehensive article in Foreign Affairs, states:

"The CIA has committed substantially more resources toward China-related intelligence collection, operations, and analysis around the world—more than doubling the percentage of our overall budget focused on China over just the last two years. We're hiring and training more Mandarin speakers while stepping up efforts across the world to compete with China, from Latin America to Africa to the Indo-Pacific..."

"Meanwhile, we're transforming our approach to emerging technology. The CIA has been working to blend high-tech tools with age-old techniques for collecting intelligence from individuals — human intelligence, or HUMINT..."

"We're developing new AI tools to help digest all that material faster and more efficiently, freeing officers to focus on what they do best: providing reasoned judgments and insights on what matters most to policymakers and what means most for American interests. AI won't replace human analysts, but it is already empowering them." These descriptions not only serve as a portrayal of the functions and operations of the CIA, beyond being a propagandistic tool to showcase the efficiency of the American intelligence agency, but they also reflect certain realities. One such re-

ality is the heightened significance of information warfare in today's context. The information gathered through intelligence and espionage networks has become a primary source for decision-makers and planners. Access to information about competitors or adversaries is crucial in strategizing responses to the policies of opposing parties, and it is inherently instrumental in preventing damage or imposing costs on the interests of a system or country. Moreover, in tandem with technological advancements in the contemporary world, the methods of acquiring information and espionage have also evolved.

### Capability depends on knowledge

In general, it seems quite natural that capability in competition or warfare is contingent upon knowledge. In other words, a party with more information possesses greater prowess in competition or conflict. A significant portion of the success of Hamas's operations against Israel on October 7 is owed to, or linked with, the intelligence gathered by Hamas over an extended period. Israel's surprise in the face of these operations is nothing but an intelligence failure.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Israeli regime are adversaries. However, despite persistent threats against each other, they have not engaged in direct warfare to date. This does not mean that the two parties have no dealings with each other, or that their enmity is confined solely to their overt positions against each other or international forums. According to common terminology, Iran and Israel are engaged in an indirect or proxy war. Over the past few decades, acts of sabotage and terrorist activities have occurred in Iran, with Israel being identified as the main culprit by Tehran's officials. Conversely, Israel has repeatedly accused Tehran of carrying out destructive actions

against itself. Nevertheless, neither party has claimed responsibility for any actions within the territory of the other.

However, what has become a widely accepted principle for political and security analysts is that Iran and the Israeli regime, within the framework of a proxy war, are actively striking at each other's interests. Certainly, one of the crucial components in this proxy war is information warfare.

### Iran-Israel intelligence warfare

The Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, alongside the CIA, is recognized as a professional and successful organization in collecting information and conducting espionage. Mossad has, through infiltration and manipulation of certain opposition elements, managed to inflict blows on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Among the most significant actions are the assassinations of nuclear scientists and destructive activities against nuclear facilities, although these acts of terror and sabotage did not lead to the peaceful cessation of Iran's nuclear program.

On the other side, Israelis, in the face of any major explosion in occupied territories or cyber-attacks, have pointed accusatory fingers towards Tehran. Just 20 days ago, Israel's internal security organization, Shin Bet, claimed that intelligence agencies of the Islamic Repub-



details of foreign spies active in countries with effective and practical information exchange relationships with Iran have been provided to those countries. Security services, after taking appropriate measures, have detained or strategically utilized the identified spies based on the accuracy of the provided information and in line with their anti-intelligence strategies."

### Israeli intelligence setback

Previously, Iranian intelligence agencies had exposed a terrorist plot referred to as a "major operation", revealing their capability in the realm of information warfare against Israel. According to this operation, with the support and design of Zionists, a terrorist sabotage operation was planned in an industrial facility related to missile construction in one of Iran's cities. However, security apparatuses thwarted the terrorist operation through surveillance and pre-emptive actions, leading to the identification and arrest of individuals associated with it.

The recent success of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence in uncovering Mossad espionage networks in 28 countries marks a more severe blow to Israel's intelligence service. Despite Israel establishing a formidable military and security hegemony, a similar dominance has been created for its intelligence system. Various acts of terrorism worldwide are attributed to this robust Mossad intelligence network. However, Hamas's attack on occupied territories on October 7, and the failure of the Israeli military to achieve its objectives after four months of field warfare have raised questions about the effectiveness of this military and security dominance.

Now, four months after that significant surprise and intelligence failure by Israel against Hamas, the regime faces another major setback in terms of information and security from Iran.

The identification of this extensive spy network, while dealing a heavy blow to the Israeli regime, also indicates Iran's upper hand in the information warfare. The detention of Israeli spies not only prevents planned terrorist activities but inevitably provides new clues about Israel's espionage plans in Iran and other countries.

In essence, the Ministry of Intelligence's discovery is the first step in exposing the intelligence vulnerabilities of the Israeli regime. Gradually, based on shared information from Iran with the intelligence services of other countries, new dimensions of Israel's espionage network may become evident.

Returning to the initial remarks of this writing, William Burns appropriately emphasizes the importance of information and modern methods of information gathering. However, the notion that the CIA and Mossad are invincible professional organizations with no one capable of confronting them is akin to the propagandistic claims about America's global role and the uncontrollable power of Israel. Today, just as America's power and international relations have waned, and the vulnerabilities of the modern Israeli army have become apparent, counter-espionage methods in other countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, have challenged the dominance of the CIA and Mossad in the field of information.

# Darsajin village, a historical gem and tourist haven in Zanjan Province

## Iranica Desk

Darsajin village is a historical and tourist village located 15 kilometers from the city of Abhar in Zanjan Province. It is home to the Bakhtiari tribes who speak the Lori dialect. The historical background of this village dates back to the pre-Islamic era. Situated at an elevation of 1,680 meters above sea level, Darsajin village has a mountainous climate, characterized by cold and temperate weather. It is a serene and verdant village located at the foot of the Molla Daghi Mountain, surrounded by other mountains from the north.

With its architectural features, narrow and winding streets, diverse population, and natural beauty, Darsajin has been recognized as one of the outstanding villages in the country. Known as Abyaneh of Zanjan Province, it annually attracts a large number of tourists due to its numerous natural and historical attractions. In the spring, the hills of this village are adorned with beautiful wildflowers, creating lush and enchanting landscapes. Considering that the Abhar and the surrounding areas are considered one of the earliest human settlements in Iran, the tourist destination of Darsajin also has a long history.

Darsajin is filled with adobe houses featuring stone patterns and benches at the entrance of houses, and the courtyards of the houses are adorned with tall trees. The neighborhoods of Darsajin village, separated by squares, have houses with windows opening onto the squares.

Surrounded by towering mountains and lush valleys, the village features histor-

ical attractions such as the old section, public squares, remnants of an old castle, an ancient mosque, and towers. The abundance of water and natural beauty has attracted tourists from all over the country. The village's orchards are filled with grapes, almonds, and walnut trees.

The village's unique feature is the presence of springs, rivers, and underground water sources, contributing to cool air in the summer, a moderate climate in the autumn and spring, and cold weather in the winter. The houses in this village are traditional and feature balconies with railings for candle holders. The villagers are primarily engaged in agriculture and livestock breeding. Common customs and traditions include celebrating national and religious holidays and wedding ceremonies.

In the past, the women of this village wore long scarves made of several meters of colorful or black fabric and created different styles with them. Traditional attire for women included red velvet clothing and pleated skirts. Men in this village typically wear various types of hats and use plastic and leather shoes, with boots in the winter. The use of large and small beads for long necklaces, earrings, and bracelets was popular among the villagers.

Tourists can spend the night in eco-lodges if they wish to stay in the village. The villagers' handicrafts include various types of carpets and *jajim*. Wooden bracelets decorated with metal coins, as well as neck and hand ornaments worn by rural women are enduring and available for purchase as souvenirs from local vendors in the village.



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# Jegarvaz, a culinary and cultural delight in western Iran

## Iranica Desk

*Jegarvaz* is a popular dish which has turned into a tourist attraction in some western regions of Iran. Lorestan and Ilam provinces have registered it as part of their intangible cultural heritage.

Mohsen Tarhani, an official of the Cultural Heritage Organiza-

tion of Lorestan Province, told ISNA: "Jegarvaz is a popular, high-calorie, and energy-rich food that was once considered a noble dish. This nutritious food is mostly prepared in the mountains, and consumed during lunch," ISNA wrote.

Tarhani explained the method and recipe for cooking jegarvaz: First, the *vaz*, or the fat

strip on the stomach of a sheep or calf, along with a piece of sheep's liver are thoroughly washed and cleaned, then the liver is cut into desired sizes, in a way that it can be easily skewered. Afterward, they are salted and set aside.

Once the liver is prepared, the *vaz* is cut into pieces that can be easily wrapped around the liver

pieces. Then the liver wrapped with *vaz* is skewered and placed on the heat of the fire to slowly grill.

He added, "Due to its fatty and thin nature, when wrapped around the liver and placed on the heat, *vaz* imparts a very delicious taste to the liver. This dish has many fans in Lorestan Province."

He stated that the jegarvaz dish is served in most restaurants of Lorestan Province, especially in Khorramabad, and is accessible to tourists. In fact, this popular food has become a kind of tourist attraction for the province.

Tarhani mentioned that there is no documented history of the dish, and added that the skill of

preparing and cooking jegarvaz was included in Lorestan Province's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2018. Jegarvaz, or liver wrapped in fat, is also a popular kebab in Kermanshah, Ilam, and Kurdistan provinces, as well as in Kurdish areas of Iraq. Ilam has also registered it as part of its intangible cultural heritage.



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## Iran's security strategy

**Deterrence, readiness  
to respond to threats**By Ebrahim Behnam  
Guest contributor**OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE**

Ensuring security is one of the highest priorities for any country. Nations formulate various strategies based on their capacities and potential threats to secure their national interests. The Islamic Republic of Iran is no exception to this rule.

Additionally, historical experience has demonstrated that whenever the central power in Iran weakened, the land became susceptible to greed and aggression. A notable example was the attack by the Baath regime of Iraq on Iran in the early years following the Islamic Revolution. Saddam Hussein, perceiving internal weaknesses in the newly established Islamic Republic, initiated the attack with the hope of capturing Tehran within a week. However, Iranians confronted the aggression and defended itself for eight years.

The eight years of the imposed war by Iraq against Iran, despite causing significant damage, brought valuable experiences. The development and enhancement of defense industries and the formulation of security strategies were among the products of these eight years, which were directed toward addressing potential threats and further securing the nation to prevent a surprise attack.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (C) and Defense Minister Gen. Mohammad Reza Ashstiani (R) attend a ceremony unveiling the domestically-made Mohajer-10 drone on August 22, 2023.  
president.ir

Some countries in the region, convinced by trans-regional powers, interpreted Tehran's focus on modernizing and equipping its defense industries as ambitions for expansion and interference in the internal affairs of regional countries. Simultaneously, with Iran's growing regional influence, support for resistance groups, and the advancement of its peaceful nuclear program, opponents intensified their rhetoric, interpreting these as signs of Tehran's expansionist tendencies.

However, the reality was different. The international system revolves around a unipolar axis, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran had fundamentally conflicting views. Within this context, the United States, as the only pole of this system, increased its military, economic, and political pressures against Iran. Sending the most modern military equipment to countries surrounding Iran in the region disrupted the military balance to the detriment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, it was only natural for Tehran to enhance its defense capabilities qualitatively and quantitatively, relying on domestic capabilities and considering both current and potential threats.

Despite being crucial for national security, Iran's defense capabilities have at times also contributed to regional stability by preventing the spread of terrorist groups like ISIS, for instance.

Alongside these tangible realities, Iran has long been a regional power and a significant player in West Asia. To play this regional role, possessing defense capabilities is necessary. Notably, when the Saudi-led Arab coalition waged war against the Ansarullah (Houthis) in Yemen, the Islamic Republic of Iran openly supported Yemen, taking a stance in line with its genuine concerns about the disruption of the regional power balance against itself.

In addition to the US presence in West Asia and the existence of numerous American military bases around Iran, the threat posed by Israel and its aggressive policies is another factor that the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot and should not ignore. Therefore, Iran's emphasis on developing its defense capabilities is by no means unwarranted or unnatural. It is a policy that ensures the country's readiness to defend its national security and interests. Currently, Iran's military budget and expenditures for purchasing weapons are not comparable to the substantial budgets of some Arab countries in the region, which have fueled the arms industry of Western countries, particularly the United States.

All of these factors constitute one aspect of the situation, meaning the rational policy of the Islamic Republic to enhance its readiness to confront potential threats that undermine its interests and secu-

rity. The more significant aspect, however, is the defensive strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is based on deterrence rather than aggression or expansionism. Despite facing external aggression during its 45-year existence, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never initiated war against any country. So, its deterrent strategy is not merely theoretical but has been implemented in practice.

Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, in a meeting with the commanders of the Revolutionary Guard this year, acknowledged the development of Iran's defense capabilities as a form of deterrence. He stated, "The Revolutionary Guard did not remain stagnant; it increased its capabilities day by day, both with its internal efforts and through inter-organizational cooperation. The increase in capabilities should not be seen only in terms of storing, increasing, and innovating weapons; its meaning is the deterrence of the country, the preservation of the country's security. When the enemy feels you are weak, it is encouraged to attack; when it senses your strength, even if it intends to attack, it is forced to reconsider."

On August 23, 2023, Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Ashstiani, Iran's minister of Defense, emphasized, "The most important

principle in the defense doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the principle of putting up a deterrent defense. According to this principle, the Islamic Republic of Iran adheres to all human and ethical principles respected globally, considering military action only in the face of invasion, occupation, and expansionism."

The missile attacks by Iranian armed forces against the targets and positions of anti-Iranian terrorists beyond its borders should be evaluated in this context, i.e., as an effective defensive capability to respond to invasions and terrorist actions and to enhance its deterrence.

It is evident that these defense capabilities are not just for show. The deterrence strategy is dedicated to developing defensive readiness to prevent any aggression against Iran's soil and interests. However, as long as Iran's enemies fail to comprehend the message of this strategy and engage in any kind of aggression against Iran's interests or soil, this defensive preparedness will be employed comprehensively and forcefully to respond to and repel the aggression. What is being emphasized by Iranian authorities these days is a reminder of this point: the Islamic Republic of Iran is not war-seeking and will never initiate a war, but when faced with aggression, it is prepared for a decisive and immediate response.

# US bombing strikes sending wrong message



By Peter Bergen  
National security analyst

## OPINION

Several media reports are echoing Biden administration talking points that the recent retaliatory strikes on more than 85 targets in Iraq and Syria were designed to “send a message” following a drone attack by an Iranian-backed militia that killed three US servicemembers in Jordan.

But what exactly was the message, and how is it likely to be received?

Let’s consider how these strikes have been framed. On Tuesday, US President Joe Biden told reporters he had made his decision about what he was going to do, while the White House national security spokesperson said, “It’s fair for you to expect that we will respond in an appropriate fashion...” That gave any member of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps living in Iraq and Syria several days’ notice to pack their bags and head elsewhere.

The Biden administration has also repeatedly said it doesn’t want to go to war with Iran. But part of establishing deterrence is not to say what you won’t do but to leave some strategic ambiguity about what you can and might do.



US President Joe Biden (C) attends a ceremony held at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, on February 2, 2024, for transferring soldiers killed in the Jordan attack on January 28.  
● KEVIN DIETSCH/AFP

Given the largely unsuccessful history of such US strikes against Iranian proxy groups in the Middle East, the US’ response, along with any subsequent military action, is unlikely to deter Iranian proxies from further attacks on American targets and shipping in the region. To tamp down the possibility of a wider regional war, the US needs to focus its efforts on addressing the underlying cause of this roiling conflict: the continued war in Gaza.

Previous US strikes have failed to deter Iran and its proxies. The US has repeatedly struck Houthi targets in Yemen in recent weeks, but the Iranian-backed Houthis kept launching missiles at commercial shipping in the Red Sea and came close to striking a US warship on Tuesday. On Friday, US forces shot down 12 Houthi drones over the course of roughly 12 hours. On Saturday, the US struck six Houthi anti-ship cruise missiles just hours before the US and the UK conducted additional strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen, hitting at least 30 targets

across 10 locations.

We’ve seen this time and again. In January 2020, the Trump administration ordered a drone strike that killed the most important Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, framing it as an act of deterrence against attacks on Americans in the region. Less than a week later, Iran launched ballistic missiles at two US bases in Iraq, causing more than 100 US soldiers to be treated for traumatic brain injuries.

A US drone strike last month, which killed the leader of an Iranian-backed militia in Baghdad, had similarly undesirable knock-on effects. It gave the Iraqi government more ammunition in its negotiations with the US to call for the withdrawal of 2,500 American troops still based in Iraq — a move that would fulfill an important Iranian policy goal.

Let’s not forget that the Biden administration already made a grave mistake when it pulled all US troops out of Iran’s neighbor Afghanistan in the

summer of 2021. You can imagine the high-fives in Tehran when that happened. Withdrawing from Iraq would be another failure that only serves Iran’s interests.

From Iran’s perspective, its efforts to replace the US as the key regional player in the Middle East seem to be going well.

What we need is a clear-eyed acknowledgement that these strikes are not furthering the US’ strategic goals of stopping Iran’s proxies from attacking American targets and allies and that Tehran is continuing to spread its considerable influence in the Middle East from Yemen in the south to Lebanon 1,500 miles to the north.

The Prussian general and military strategist Carl von Clausewitz famously observed, “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which they are embarking.”

Does the US have any real clue about the kind of conflict it is embarking on?

Of course, there are no easy answers and the armchair warriors in DC who are pressing Biden to blow up targets in Iran don’t have to live with what the “day after” looks like and the knock-on effects that might lead to a wider regional conflict in the Middle East.

And while US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Friday that the strikes in Iraq and Syria were just “the start of our response,” there isn’t much evidence based on what we’ve seen so far to suggest additional strikes will help. It’s possible that US cyber-attacks in Iran could damage key elements of Iranian military command and control structures, but these kinds of attacks can take many weeks to prepare. The US must move quickly to address the underlying driver of the present regional conflagration that is engulfing the Middle East. That involves halting the war in Gaza, releasing the Israeli and American captives held by Hamas, and having a plausible plan for the “day after” the guns fall silent in Gaza.

That plan cannot involve defunding

UNRWA, which is the only institution that can keep Gazans fed, housed, and educated, having done so for decades. UNRWA was right to launch an investigation and immediately fire 13 members of its staff who are alleged by Israel to have had some role in Hamas’ October 7 attack. But the reality is that no Arab countries are going to have the capacity or will to feed and house nearly 2 million Gazans, and the idea that Israel will be able to do so as an occupying force without facing an intense local insurgency is wishful thinking of the highest order.

The Biden administration is forced to choose from a menu of difficult choices as it tries to contain the metastasizing regional conflict in the Middle East while also balancing America’s strategic objectives of helping Israel dismantle Hamas’ military wing and releasing the remaining Israeli and American captives held in Gaza, while also containing the threats from Iran and its proxies.

The article first appeared on CNN.

## Biden’s airstrikes won’t work, nor would hitting Iran



By Marc Champion  
Columnist

## OPINION

The US has hit 85 targets in Iraq and Syria with more to come in response to last weekend’s killing of three US reservists by Iran-backed militias, and it took no time for critics to declare the Biden administration’s action too weak to deter further attacks.

They’re right about that, but the belief that the answer is to bomb Iran itself is magical thinking.

Deterrence is too often seen just as a question of being tough enough: The bigger the threat or harder the hit, the greater the deterrent. But that’s as likely to force an opponent to scale their attacks up as down because for deterrence to work, what you do is no more important than what the other side is thinking. Or as a Rand Corp. study on the issue put it, you have to understand your opponent’s “interests, motives, and imperatives” and make use of those. In Iran’s case, the imperatives are clear, and regime survival is at the top of the pile. So, to back down in the wake of any American attack, the leadership in Tehran would have to believe their rule was more at risk of striking back than of appearing weak to a population that loathes it. That’s anything but clear.

We also know that Iran’s Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei wants the US and Israel out of the Middle East, allowing Iran to take up what he sees as its rightful role as the region’s dominant power because he has been telling that to the world for decades. From Tehran’s point of view, it’s been making great progress on that score ever since the US did it the enormous favor of invading Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein, the dictator whose Sunni-dominated regime fought a grueling war with Iran from 1981 to 1988. The Israeli and US responses to Hamas’ October 7 attack on Israel have been another gift.

With Saddam gone and Shiite allies in charge in Baghdad, Iran’s immediate priority is to get the US out of Iraq. It is very close to succeeding. Despite losing elections to a multi-ethnic coalition and westward-leaning government in 2021, Iran and its proxies used their control of the Supreme Court and other Iraqi institutions to take over the government a year later.

As Michael Knights and a team monitoring Iraq have documented, Iran-backed militias have been busy since, installing their own people in the intelligence, security, and other key services, as well as at the revenue-critical oil ministry. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ Al-Sudani represents a coalition of mainly pro-Iran Shiite parties, and before Hamas set the region ablaze on October 7, he was getting ready to negotiate the departure of the remaining US troops from Iraq.

The umbrella group that claimed responsibility for the January 28 drone strike on US forces at the border between Jordan and Syria, Islamic Resistance in Iraq, includes Kataib Hezbollah, one of the Iraqi militias closest to Iran. At least some of its fighters get state salaries and it has commanders in the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), or Hashd al-Shaabi, a consoli-

dation of mainly pro-Iranian militias that are now part of the regular Iraqi military. So, it should come as no surprise if — as the Iranian news agency Tasnim reported — the PMF was among the targets the US bombed on Friday. It is in effect an Iraqi version of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in training.



Members of Iraq’s Hashd al-Shaabi paramilitary forces carry portraits of people killed the previous day in US strikes in western Iraq, ahead of their funeral procession in Baghdad on January 4, 2024.  
● AP

In those circumstances, the few thousand US troops left in Iraq are inherently vulnerable. Still more so the few hundred in Syria. To think that Tehran and its proxies won’t pursue that advantage until the US presence is gone is naive. Their campaign merely accelerated under the cover of the war in Gaza. The attacks will no doubt continue once the current US airstrikes blow over, or at some later time convenient to Tehran because they contribute to a core Iranian foreign policy goal. That makes hitting Iran directly look like a natural alternative. Some have pointed to the example of Operation Praying Mantis in 1988, when the US Navy pounded Iranian naval vessels and oil platforms, to deter it from laying sea

mines, after one damaged a US warship. It was a great example of when a muscular deterrence policy has worked. Yet that doesn’t mean it would work again today, against a much stronger Iran and in a radically different geopolitical situation.

In 1988, Iran was exhausted by the war with Iraq and, genuinely, isolated inter-

nationally. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini considered the soon-to-collapse Soviet Union as a lesser Satan because of its atheism and war in neighboring Afghanistan. China was impoverished and absent from the Middle East, and there was no Axis of Resistance for Iran to deploy as a force multiplier abroad. The US, meanwhile, was near the height of its power.

Today, Iran has built up a large arsenal of drones and ballistic missiles, with ranges of 1,500 kilometers and perhaps beyond, as well as an as-yet untested but on paper sophisticated air defense system. It has proxies it can call on across a potential battlefield that stretches from Yemen in the south, to Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and

Iraq. It is internationally isolated only in Western imaginations. China has moved in to replace European investment, while Russia has become a key security partner, supplying high-end combat jets and other technologies. In Iraq, with a \$264 billion economy that dwarfs those of Lebanon and Syria combined, the IRGC is trying to replicate for its proxies the industrial and energy empire it built at home.

In this context, attacking Iran directly would be more likely to get the exposed US troops in Iraq and Syria killed. The aforementioned study found that there has been just one fatal attack on US forces among more than 160 since October because many were performative. With gloves off, that would change. The US, of course, still has a vastly superior force should it come to open warfare, which is why Tehran wants to avoid it. Yet it also knows the reluctance of Americans to get involved in yet another major Middle Eastern conflict, and for a deterrent strike to work, the Iranians would have to believe Washington was willing to go all the way.

If the US wants to put Iran back in a box, it will have to start by either withdrawing or reinforcing its troops in Iraq and Syria to make them safe. There are other, less satisfying financial, cyber, and other tools the US can use to put pressure on the Iranian regime. Whether those will be able to change its behavior after more than 40 years of trying is uncertain. But together with a rolling campaign of airstrikes against Iran’s proxies across the region and a deal that brought a sharp reduction in casualties in Gaza, they’re worth a try. That would have a better shot at success than bombing Iran and with a much lower risk of sparking the kind of war neither side can afford.

The full article first appeared on Bloomberg.

## Iranians bag four medals at Fujairah Open



● WORLD TAEKWONDO

### Sports Desk

The first day of the Fujairah Open taekwondo competitions in the United Arab Emirates saw Iran's five-man squad collect four medals, including double golds.

Iranians dominated the men's -58kg contests in the Sheikh Zayed Sport City as Mahdi Hajmou-saei came out on top against Abolfazl Zandi - in a repeat of last September's all-Iranian Grand Prix final in Paris - to walk away with the ultimate prize.

Alireza Hosseinpour, a silver medalist in last October's Asian Games, had to settle for a consolation bronze in the weigh class after a last-

four defeat against Zandi - sharing the third podium with Afghanistan's Mohsen Rezaei.

Meanwhile, Arian Salimi, also a silver winner in Hangzhou, came out victorious against Azerbaijan's Iranian-born Milad Beigi - a two-time world champion and an Olympic bronze medalist in 2016 - in the +87kg final to take the country's gold count to two.

Mir-Hashem Hosseini was the other Iranian in the heavyweight class but left Fujairah empty-handed following a second-round defeat against Roslan Zapparov of Kazakhstan.

More than 450 athletes had been taking part at the 11th edition of the four-day Fujairah Open.

## Iran slams decision to exclude country from MuayThai World Fest



● IRNA

### Sports Desk

Farid Naqdi, the head of Iran Muaythai Association, lamented the WBC MuayThai's decision to axe the country's 18-athlete squad from the 2024 Amazing MuayThai World Festival over a dispute between two members of the team and the organizers in Bangkok, Thailand.

The quarrel, which reportedly led to a physical altercation, involved Iranian men's captain Ali Takallou and head coach Jalal Mo'tamedi and a couple of organizing officials during a weigh-in session. "Takallou was deemed overweight in the initial weighing but had his name registered in the draw sheet after losing a couple of extra kilos," Naqdi said of the incident. "However, another of-

ficial apparently interfered to prevent Takallou from participation for unknown reasons which was met by Mo'tamedi's objection," added Naqdi. The Iranian denied any physical fracas happening after the coach's complaint, adding: "It was truly unfair to leave out a whole team for one person's misbehavior."

"The Iranians had worked hard to prepare for this competition and 14 members of the team had secured a medal after reaching the final show-downs of their respective weight classes," said Naqdi, insisting the country will lodge a complaint to the international governing body of the sport. Featuring 600 contestants from 58 countries, the global extravaganza came to an end in the Thai capital's iconic Lumpinee Boxing Stadium on Monday.

# Mohebbi hails Taremi's tips in Japan victory



Iran's Mohammad Mohebbi celebrates after scoring the equalizer in a 2-1 victory over Japan in the AFC Asian Cup quarter-final win against Japan on Saturday despite the striker being suspended.

● AFC

The 26-year-old Mohebbi was picked to replace Taremi in the starting line-up, scoring the equaliser that sparked Iran's comeback win at the Education City Stadium, with the FC Rostov player eager to share how his teammate motivated him.

"I want to thank Mahdi Taremi, who is not only one of the best in Iran but one of the best in Asia," said Mohebbi. "He talked with me for about half an hour because he wanted to help bring out my best qualities. This showed the unity that we have within this national team. "Special thank you to (head coach) Amir Qalenei and the staff for giving confidence and belief to me. Also the medical and masseuse team for the recovery that enabled us to

perform this well after the short time from the win over Syria."

Mohebbi came off the bench in Iran's earlier four matches but Taremi's red card against Syria meant a start for him against four-time champions Japan. His goal in the 55th minute, off a smart pass from Sardar Azmoun, was not significant only for the match but also because it was the first goal Iran have ever scored against Japan at the AFC Asian Cup, with Team Melli unable to find a

way through in four previous meetings at the continental showpiece.

"I'm very happy for the win and the performance. This match highlights the high quality within Asian football. I want to thank my teammates, everyone in the stadium and everyone back home.

"Hopefully we can continue this form to become champions of Asia so that we can make all Iranian fans proud and happy." Iran will play Qatar in the semi-finals on Wednesday.

## Lyles targets Bolt's records after stunning personal best

**THE GUARDIAN** - If you thought Noah Lyles's 2023 was impressive, wait till you hear what track and field's biggest star has planned for the Olympic year. After laying down an early marker for 2024 by winning the 60m at the New Balance Indoor Grand Prix in 6.44sec - a personal best by 0.07sec and the fastest time of the year - the American then set his sights towards the stratosphere.

For Lyles is targeting four gold medals this year, starting with the world indoors in Glasgow next month, followed by the 100m, 200m and 4x100m at the Paris Olympics.

"I didn't know I was in that good shape," said Lyles, after beating the Jamaican Akeem Blake by 0.01sec. "World lead, meet record. Now let's go out there and get a world indoor medal in Glasgow."

But that isn't the limit of his ambition. "Last year I went out there and won three gold medals," he then explained. "This year I want to get four.

And if I don't get four, I am going after three world records."

And yes, that means going after Usain Bolt's 100m and 200m world records, as well as Jamaica's in the 4x100m.

But he is undeterred. "If I don't succeed, I will try, try, try again," he added.



● AFP

## Fans angry as Messi does not play in Hong Kong

**BBC** - Angry fans in Hong Kong booed Inter Miami during a pre-season friendly after Lionel Messi did not play.

The Argentina World Cup winner, 36, who had a hamstring injury, was left on the bench as Inter beat a local League XI 4-1 in front of almost 40,000 fans.

There were chants of "refund", while a speech by Inter co-owner David Beckham was drowned out by booing.

The Hong Kong government said Messi had been contracted to play at least 45 minutes.

Kevin Yeung, Hong Kong's secretary for culture, sports and tourism, said government officials were repeatedly told that Messi would play.

They were only informed that an abductor injury would prevent the former Barcelona star from featuring with 10 minutes of the match remaining.

Match organisers Tatler Asia may be paid less money as a result of Messi not taking the pitch.

"Regarding Messi not playing the match today, the government, as well as all



● SAM TSANG

football fans, are extremely disappointed about the organisers' arrangement. The organiser owes all football fans an explanation," the government's major sports events committee (MSEC) said. "The MSEC will take follow-up actions with the organiser according to the terms and conditions, which includes reducing the amount of funding as a result of Messi not playing the match."

The MSEC said it had granted 15m Hong Kong dollars

(£1.5m) for the event along with a grant of one million Hong Kong dollars for the venue.

"One of the key terms of our funding agreement with Tatler Asia was for Messi to participate in the match for at least 45 minutes, subject to fitness and safety considerations," Yeung added.

A near-capacity crowd of 38,323 at Hong Kong Stadium had each paid more than 1,000 Hong Kong dollars (£101) for a ticket.

# Leader urges Muslim elites to push for cutting ties with Israel

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the elites of the Muslim world shoulder a heavy responsibility vis-à-vis the ongoing developments in Gaza and should create a public demand to cut relations with the Israeli regime. Speaking at a meeting with a group of commanders and personnel of the Iranian Air Force and Army's Air Defense Force in Tehran on Monday, Ayatollah Khamenei cautioned against "humanitarian catastrophes" unfolding in Gaza following US support for the Israeli regime, Press TV reported. He stated that nations are capable of pressing their governments to end their support for the Israeli regime.

Although this "cruel and wolflike" regime has taken the lives of women, children and the sick and killed more than 27,000 people, some Muslim countries still provide it with economic aid and even weapons, the Leader noted. "A decisive blow does not mean going to war with the Zionist regime (Israel), but it

means cutting off economic relations with it," he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader warned of the enemy's "specific plot" against Iranian elites inside and outside the country, saying the enemy primarily seeks to prevent the elites' growing role in the country and raise doubts among them.

He urged Iranian elites to thwart the enemy's plots aimed at raising doubts in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei asserted that national power boosts national security, saying that the enemy's plots will be neutralized when it witnesses the Iranian people's presence and preparedness as well as the Islamic establishment's power.

He added that the elites can play a major role in high-turnout parliamentary elections on March 1, whose outcomes, he contended, would boost national might. He further said the elites' negligence toward their duties would lead to a devastating blow to the Iranian nation.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with a group of commanders and personnel of the Iranian Air Force and Army's Air Defense Force in Tehran on February 5, 2024.

khameini.ir

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Iran 'will not hesitate' to respond to any attack on its territory**

### International Desk

Iran said Monday it "will not hesitate" to respond in the event of US attacks on its territory after the White House declined to say whether strikes on Iran were ruled out.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday the US will press on with its retaliation against resistance groups in Iraq and Syria, which the US says are being supported by Iran.

Asked whether the United States would rule out the possibility of striking Iran directly, Sullivan told NBC, "It would not be wise for me to talk about what we're ruling in and ruling out."

"If (Iran) chose to respond directly to the United States, they would be met with a swift and forceful response from us," he said. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani hit back on Monday, saying: "The Islamic Republic has shown that it has always reacted decisively to any threat to its security, territorial integrity and sovereignty."

Iran "will not hesitate to use its capabilities" to respond to any attacks on its soil, said Kanaani during his weekly press briefing. He, however, reiterated that Iran "does not seek to aggravate tensions and crises in the region."

**Pakistan calls on int'l community to halt India's use of force against Kashmiris**

### International Desk

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu called on the international community to urge India to halt the brute use of force against the Kashmiri people. He made the remarks during a ceremony organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran to commemorate the Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The Pakistani diplomat said, "For over seven decades, Kashmiris have been victims of India's state-sponsored terrorism, including gross and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, which have further intensified under the BJP-RSS combined "Hindu Rashtra" project, under which sinister anti-Kashmiri policies are also being pursued to change the demographic composition of the occupied territory."



## Raisi: Restored ties to help Iran, Sudan compensate for lost opportunities

### International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said Tehran considers restoration of ties between Iran and Sudan as a basis for compensating lost opportunities.

Raisi made the remarks at a meeting with visiting Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq Ali in Tehran on Monday.

Referring to the existing capacities in the two countries and their mutual will to improve political, economic and cultural relations, the Iranian president said the exchange of ambassadors and the reopening of embassies in Tehran and Khartoum can pave the way for the revival and development of ties between the two countries.

Back in October 2023, Iran and Sudan agreed to re-



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq Ali in a meeting in Tehran on February 5, 2024.

president.ir

store diplomatic relations after seven years following a thaw in ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March 2023, which led to restorations of ties between many regional countries. Earlier on Monday, the Sudanese foreign minister also held a separate meeting with his Iranian coun-

terpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Both officials expressed the determination of their countries to strengthen cooperation as a new chapter has opened in mutual ties after a seven-year hiatus.

"The presence of the Sudanese delegation in Tehran

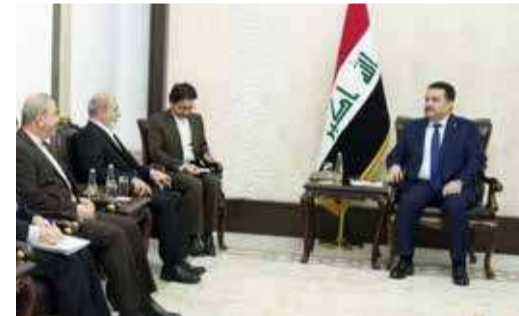
indicates the firm determination of high-ranking Sudanese officials to expand relations," said Amir-Abdollahian.

He added that the reopening of the two countries' embassies would play an important role in improving bilateral cooperation.

The top Iranian diplomat noted that the country has great capacities and experience in the industrial sector, technical and engineering services, modern technologies, medicine and pharmacology, which it can share with Sudan to help the African country achieve development and progress.

The Sudanese foreign minister, for his part, regretted that Tehran and Khartoum had severed relations, and said his country is resolute on boosting ties with Iran in various fields.

## Iraqi PM: Baghdad against unilateral actions that contradict int'l principles



### International Desk

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said his country will not accept any unilateral action by neighboring countries that contradict the international principles based on mutual respect of the countries' sovereignty.

In a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian in Baghdad on Monday, al-Sudani said that Iraq has proved it is seeking good relations with countries in the region, but will not compromise on its security and sovereignty.

The Iraqi prime minister stressed that Baghdad has made enormous efforts in line with ensuring stability and peace in the region.

Ahmadian, for his part, reaffirmed Iran's commitment to Iraq's security and stability, saying that Tehran insists on the continuation of cooperation between the two countries in accordance with a security agreement signed between the two neighbors.

In a separate meeting with Iraqi national security adviser Qasim al-Araji, Ahmadian said that Iran respects the national sovereignty of Iraq, and that the two countries can resolve their problems through constructive negotiations.

The meeting came weeks after Iran launched missile strikes on anti-Iran groups and an Israeli spy headquarters in Erbil, the capital of the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan.

Iraq condemned the strikes as "attack on its sovereignty," recalled its ambassador from Tehran, and summoned Iran's envoy in protest at the attack.

Meanwhile, the head of the Iran-Iraq Chamber of Commerce, Yahya Al-e Eshaq, rejected media reports about the revocation of the license of Iran's Bank Melli in Iraq, saying that the Iranian bank has not been active in the country over the past two years.



## Calling for graphite electrode manufacturers and suppliers

Arvand Jahan Ara Steel co. is located near the city of Khorramshahr in Khouzestan province, south west of Iran, intends to invite qualified suppliers/manufacturers to supply 500 tons of Graphite Electrodes for electrical arc furnaces.

Therefore, any company that is interested can send a request to participate in the tender and its reference list to the following email address till February 13, 2024.

Address E-mail: [Edris-s@ajs.co.ir](mailto:Edris-s@ajs.co.ir)

Web site: [www.ajs.co.ir](http://www.ajs.co.ir)

# Minister: Criticisms against Fajr Int'l Film Festival show dynamism

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, stated that criticisms regarding the organization of the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival signify its dynamism. He added that the ground is paved for those interested in filmmaking, emphasizing the diverse cinematic presence at the 42nd edition. He highlighted this as indicative of the event's growing artistic significance, according to IRNA. Esmaeili, during the second national conference on the Islamic Revolution and the future horizon of civilization, expressed that the modern Islamic civilization embodies governance, rationality, justice, spirituality connected to revelation, Sharia, and the rule of jurisprudence.

He credited the Islamic Republic for determining its path of power through a network of ancient civilizations, contrasting it with the Western world facing challenges and losing societal foundations. He acknowledged the festival's constructive criticism, discussions, and controversies, attributing them to its greatness. The minister welcomed all discussions and criticisms, expressing gratitude for the warmth and contributions of cultural and artistic figures to the cinema. He described the current phase as a new bloom for promoting content in the film industry, moving away from a negative cinematic atmosphere that primarily focused on violence and controversial communications. Esmaeili said, "We are witnessing a new era in cinema, with a significant part of the festival

productions dedicated to the great achievements of the Islamic Revolution, the people of Iran, and historical events such as the event of Karbala and martyrs." In response to concerns about some films not being fully prepared, Esmaeili explained that considering the workload of filmmakers to meet the festival's deadlines is natural. The minister highlighted the importance of the Islamic system, contemporary Iranian civilization, and issues related to the growth of artificial intelligence, governance, opportunities, and threats in the online space in achieving a new Islamic civilization. The event also covered topics such as artificial intelligence, the modern order of civilization, the role of universities in Iran, and the structuring of contemporary Iranian civilization.



## Armenian pianist to perform in Iran



Hayk Melikyan, a distinguished Armenian pianist, is set to participate in the 39th Fajr International Music Festival in Iran. His performance is scheduled for February 12 in Rudaki Hall, ISNA wrote. The festival will feature seven music groups from eight countries, including India, Belgium, Iraq, Armenia (Melikyan), Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and

the Netherlands. Melikyan, born in Yerevan, is the grandson of Sokrat Khanyan, a renowned poet, translator, and journalist. Melikyan, who has released two solo albums through NAXOS Grand Piano, showcasing piano solos from the works of Arno Babajanian and Alexander Arutunian, has performed on prestigious global stages throughout his career. Some of these include the Gulbenkian Grand Auditorium in Lisbon, Portugal, the Victoria Hall in Geneva, and the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall in Yerevan. This isn't Melikyan's first visit to Iran; in 2015, he performed in Rudaki Hall and cities such as Shiraz, Yazd, and Ahvaz. Melikyan, a highly acclaimed pianist, has received numerous awards, including the gold medal from the Union Of Composers Of Russia, the Honorary Artist of Armenia, and more.

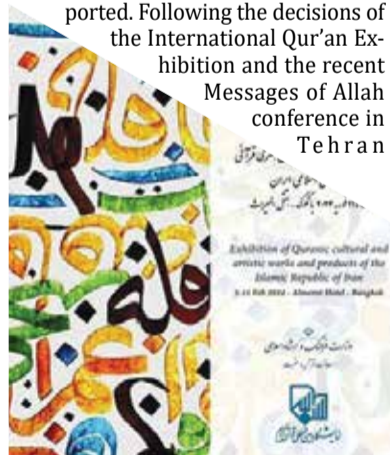
 **Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
 Cartoonist



## Iran's first Qur'anic exhibition in Thailand

### Arts & Culture Desk

The first international exhibition of Qur'anic cultural artifacts and products from the Islamic Republic of Iran opened at Thailand's Al Meroz Hotel Bangkok on February 5 and will run until February 11. The exhibition is being held with the presence of the Deputy for Qur'an and Etrat of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Alireza Moaf, IRNA reported. Following the decisions of the International Qur'an Exhibition and the recent Messages of Allah conference in Tehran



with the participation of 10 countries, the first major Qur'anic exhibition in Thailand has been organized, inviting the participation of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) and the Qur'an and Etrat Deputy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The exhibition is showcasing Qur'anic artistic works, handicrafts, printed publications, and digital software. Aiming to facilitate the global economic and artistic presence of Qur'anic artworks and handicrafts, the exhibition features 24 Qur'anic paintings by Iranian artists and over 20 Qur'anic-themed handicrafts. The event also highlights the introduction and presentation of written

works conveying Qur'anic teachings. With over 130 pieces catering to both adults and children, the works will be presented in English in the event. The Qur'anic, artistic, and literary monthly magazine 'Shabnam,' (dew) targeting the age group of 6-11 and supported by the Qur'an and Etrat Deputy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, translated into English and is also on display. Multilingual digital products, including Qur'anic applications, are among the items available at the exhibition.

## 35th Tehran Int'l Book Fair date announced

The 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) is scheduled to take place from May 8 to 18, according to Ali Ramezani, the spokesperson and deputy of Iran Book and Literature House. He emphasized increased interaction among committees and proposed the establishment of teams for each committee to enhance their activities and richness, ILNA wrote. Ramezani also highlighted the need for facilitating actions, such as the registration of foreign and domestic publishers, to ensure the fair's timely and optimal

organization. Regarding the venue, Ramezani mentioned that recent visits to available options were reported, and

the policymaking council will quickly review the choices to make a decision on the location.

