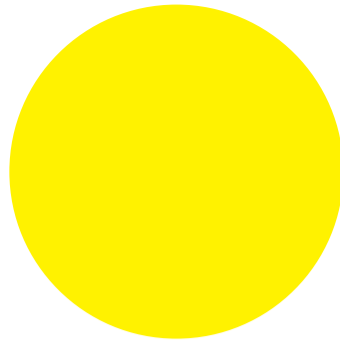


Expedite construction of Rasht-Astara railway: **Pezeshkian**



2 >



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# TRUMP 2.0

## Seeking Credit for Détente with Iran

Calm Mideast to better serve US interests 7 >

Donald Trump's "America First" slogan has raised the question of whether the US under his leadership will abandon its interventionist policies and influence on international developments. Specifically, what will be the foreign policy of the new US administration towards the Middle East and the Gaza war?

**INTERVIEW**

**EXCLUSIVE**

New Trump will not be like anything we have seen before 4-5 >

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

### In an about-face, Israel seeking direct confrontation with Iran

By Gholam-Reza Mansouri  
Political science researcher

**PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE**

Over the past 45 years, Iran and Israel have repeatedly threatened each other but these threats have always been made through a mediator. To the extent that even Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has always said in his statements that Iran supports those who fight against Israel. On the other hand, Israel has been so cautious in this confrontation that it has never taken official responsibility for menacing actions against Iran, such as the assassination of nuclear scientists, including the assassination of Fakhrizadeh, known as Iran's nuclear father, sabotage of nuclear facilities, arming of terrorists in the region against Iran and etc. Page 8 >

### Iran, Russia sign agreement to boost library cooperation

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### Iran's plasma technology enters industrial phase: AEOI chief

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### Tehran, Riyadh improve defense ties at crucial time

By Syed Ali Hassan  
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

**OPINION**

Iran and Saudi Arabia's senior military officials have discussed ways to improve defense relations, enhance bilateral cooperation in this field, and launch joint projects. Last Sunday, the Chief of Staff of Saudi Arabia's Armed Forces General Fayyad bin Hamed al-Ruwaili arrived in Tehran leading a high-level military delegation and met with senior Iranian military officials, including his Iranian counterpart, General Mohammad Baqeri. In November 2023, during a phone conversation with Saudi Arabia's Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, Iran's top military commander stated that the Iranian Armed Forces are fully prepared to enhance military ties with Saudi Arabia. Page 2 >

## Tehran, Riyadh improve...

It is also worth noting that talks are underway between Iran and Saudi Arabia to establish security agreements, which include strengthening border security and increasing cooperation to combat terrorism. Preparations for this framework have reached their final stages.

On October 24, Saudi Ministry of Defense spokesperson Turki Al-Maliki stated that the Royal Saudi Naval Forces participated in a multinational joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Oman, alongside Iran. Furthermore, the two countries are planning joint military exercises in the Red Sea. During his meeting with his Saudi counterpart, Major General Baqeri formally invited the Saudi navy to participate in Iranian naval exercises next year.

The meeting between the heads of the Iranian and Saudi armed forces can be seen as a breakthrough in Iran-Saudi relations. Regional political and defense experts believe that increased defense cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia will help stabilize the region, which is considered a significant advancement for Muslim countries.

Historically, due to decades of rivalry and opposing stances in the region, military cooperation or joint exercises between Iran and Saudi Arabia were not possible. Since the end of the monarchy in Iran, external forces have exploited the animosities between Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, with China's mediation, the two countries restored diplomatic ties on March 10, 2023. With the ongoing efforts to restore defense cooperation and plan for joint military exercises, the prospects for future collaboration have greatly improved. The nature of the defense cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia is still in its initial stages, and its primary goal is to normalize relations and address shared threats. If this cooperation continues to grow, it could not only contribute to the stability of both countries but also benefit the entire Middle East and help counter the aggressive actions of a common adversary, Israel.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



# Pezeshkian: Expedite construction of Rasht-Astara railway

## Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the need to expedite the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway, the ultimate segment of the North-South corridor rail line.

During a meeting with his minister of roads and urban development and ambassador to Russia, the president reviewed the latest reports on the project and made the remarks, according to president.ir. Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh explored the obstacles facing the project, citing limited resources for land acquisition as the main challenge. The president issued instructions to facilitate assistance in this area and stressed the need

to speed up land acquisition along the route.

Iran and Russia see the 162 km Rasht-Astara railway as an important link in the International North-South Transport Corridor.

Kazem Jalali, Iranian ambassador to Russia, reported on the Russians' enthusiasm for implementing the project and their desire to expedite the transportation of goods from the south.

"The Russians are willing to invest in a railway line with a standard Russian gauge from Parsabad to Bandar Abbas, in addition to the Rasht-Astara line," Jalali reported.

The President welcomed the construction of both railway lines, saying that "the expansion of railway lines from north to south is in the interest of the peo-

ple and the country's economy, and we welcome it."

## Calling for energy-saving movement

Later in the day, the president highlighted the need to honestly disclose the country's energy crisis to the people during a meeting with the minister of energy and the minister of petroleum.

"We must ask the people to take the first step in conserving energy to overcome the current critical situation," Pezeshkian said.

The president noted the high energy consumption in the country, saying that it is not logical that Iran consumes three times more electricity than European countries.

"We must examine all ways to reduce consumption and implement the most



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) meets with Iran's minister of roads and urban development and ambassador to Russia on November 16, 2023.  
● president.ir

cost-effective solutions. We can contribute to energy conservation by reducing the temperature in governmental offices, which will help us allocate more electricity and gas to people's homes."

Pezeshkian noted that the further development of

energy distribution networks, including electricity and gas, does not work well with the existing infrastructure, and that there is no alternative to conserving energy, especially gas, in the current cold weather conditions.

The minister of petroleum

reported an increase in crude oil production over the past three months, adding that gas supply to the network has also increased during this period. "However, this year, the cold weather started earlier, and we are witnessing increased consumption."

## Iran's plasma technology enters industrial phase: AEOI chief

### Economy Desk

In a groundbreaking move, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has elevated plasma technology from research to industrial application, inaugurating the country's first plasma-based dry fruit processing and decontamination plant in Rafsanjan, southeastern Iran.

The facility, unveiled on Saturday, represents the culmination of two decades of research into plasma technology, which was previously limited to medical applications, said AEOI director Mohammad Eslami at the opening ceremony, IRNA reported.

"Plasma technology has been used in the medical field for 20 years, but with the efforts of our colleagues and by passing the research phase, we have entered the industrial phase, the result of which you saw today in Rafsanjan," he said.

Eslami explained that plasma technology is now



● TASNIM

being utilized both in pistachio orchards and in the processing of their products, representing a critical step in reducing damage to pistachios and improving their quality.

He expressed hope that it will mitigate damage to exports and encourage broader adoption of plasma technology in agriculture.

The factory aims to process up to 6,000 tons of nuts annually in its initial phase. It can handle a range of products, including pistachios, almonds, peanuts, corn, grains, oilseeds, and legumes, with a processing capacity of three tons per hour.

Food irradiation is the process of exposing foodstuffs to rays to kill bacteria that can cause food-borne diseases, increasing shelf life. It has the same benefits as when food is heated, refrigerated, frozen, or treated with chemicals, but does not change the temperature or leave residues.

According to FAO, nuclear techniques help authorities in over 50 countries enhance food safety by addressing the problem of harmful residues and contaminants in food products and improving their traceability systems with stable isotope analysis, according to Mehr news agency.

## New BRICS partner states named

Indonesia has been awarded "partner status" by the BRICS economic group, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Pankin said on Friday. Russian media reports said that Malaysia and Thailand also received the designation.

Pankin made the statement on Thursday while addressing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting in Lima, Peru, according to RT.

The new 'partner country' status was approved at the BRICS Summit hosted by Russia in Kazan last month and is intended to serve as an alternative to membership after more than 30 nations applied to join the organization.

'Partner country' status provides for permanent participation in special sessions of BRICS summits and foreign ministers' meetings, as well as other high-level events. Partners can also contribute to the group's outcome documents.

Russian media quoted Pankin as saying that Malaysia and Thailand had also become partners, but the two nations were not named in the foreign ministry's statement.

BRICS was initially comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and expanded when Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates officially became members on January 1, 2024.



Foreign Minister of Indonesia Sugiono (front) is welcomed to Russia during a ceremony at the Kazan airport on October 22, 2024.  
● ALEXEI DANICHEV/BRICS

Earlier this week, Russian ally Belarus announced that it had also officially become a BRICS partner country. In a statement, Minsk described the organization as "a pillar of a multipolar world" that gives many nations "hope for a fairer world order."

On Thursday, Bolivian Foreign Minister Celinda Sosa Lunda revealed that her nation had received an invitation from Russia to become a partner country of BRICS. "We responded positively to this invitation," she said.

The list of aspiring partners has not been officially announced, but media reports have also mentioned Algeria, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Turkey, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam as potential candidates.

## Economy minister targets non-inflationary growth

### Economy Desk

Iran's Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati said that to get out of the 3% growth trap of the past three decades, the country must target non-inflationary growth, not its inflationary counterpart.

Addressing a conference on financing the production sector, he noted that during the past three decades, the average growth rate of Iran has not been more than 3%. "Based on our historical experience," he added, "If we are just to wait for economic growth to pick up pace, it may not happen, so we

should not rely on it at all." "The law approved by the Parliament will be the main basis for financing, and we will execute it seriously. We will put this law on the agenda seriously, and I hope we will take good measures in this field within the next one or two years."

Hemmati stressed, "We can easily solve a set of complex problems; the law on financing production and infrastructure was a good law that was approved last year. The solutions provided by this law can make some movement in our economic growth."



● MEHR

The minister of economy emphasized that the uncertainty prevailing in the economic environment also affects production. Emphasizing the importance of "physical and institutional capital," he stated that the aforementioned law considers all these is-

suues and reduces the pressure on the banking system. "Instead of allowing banks to over-withdraw, we must stop it and reduce the legal deposit to reduce pressure on banks. We have reached good agreements with the president to provide facilities for production sectors."

# Crafting opportunities in Khur village of South Khorasan Province



## Iranica Desk

The story of South Khorasan Province and the people who have long dedicated themselves to the art of stone carving is a tale of artisans who, each in their small or large workshops, have kept the light of this craft alive by employing and training several individuals. Among these artisans is Mohammad Mahdi Ahaninjan from the Khur village in Khusf, a craftsman who has been turning the wheel of his life with gem cutting for 14 years.

In an interview with IRNA, Ahaninjan shared that for years, driven by a passionate spirit, he has spent countless hours in the surrounding deserts collecting colorful stones, which he then stores in his yard as precious and semi-precious gems. His 14 years of dedication to this profession have not only inspired him but also motivated other residents to follow suit.

This craftsman highlighted that his work has led to job creation for the youth of Khur village, recognized as the National Village of Agate Carving, where more than 25 gem-cutting workshops currently operate. Ahaninjan elaborated on his expertise in gem cutting, describing it as a form of carving or sculpture. "I am the first person in Khur village to learn carving, or sculpturing, without a teach-

er and with great difficulty," he explained.

He noted that as the demand for polished stones and cabochons diminished, he turned to sculpture, teaching himself the craft. "One day, while observing a tree in my yard from my room's window, I was inspired to carve a statue resembling that tree. That was how I began my first sculpture, and I later continued with carvings of horses, leopards, and other animals."

Ahaninjan expressed immense joy in working with beautiful and colorful natural stones, stating, "For hours each day, I

engrave designs and patterns onto the lifeless surfaces of semi-precious stones."

However, he also discussed the challenges facing the industry, emphasizing that marketing remains the most significant issue. "The foremost wish of any artist is the hope of selling their products," he said.

He explained that agate stones can be found in the deserts surrounding the village, where they are transformed into various cabochons and valuable products in local workshops and homes, eventually sold at different exhibitions. "We encounter

no issues securing raw materials, cutting stones, or producing jewelry in the region, but the main problem in the carving industry is marketing and sales," he added.

Ahaninjan emphasized his satisfaction with working in this industry, provided there is effective marketing. He remarked, "With the various support from officials, this industry could thrive much more than it currently does, especially now that livestock and agriculture are not profitable due to ongoing droughts. Engaging in this industry has created jobs and

income for the villagers."

He noted that, for example, in the current year, 80% of his production in the gem carving field has gone unsold. "Our products are primarily sold at provincial, regional, and national exhibitions. Due to the high costs of booths and travel, we are unable to participate in regional and national exhibitions and can only attend provincial ones," he explained.

Ahaninjan expressed hope that provincial officials would support them in covering booth costs so they could sell their products. "Due to various issues, I have not been able to participate in national and regional exhibitions so far," he lamented. He added that most residents of Khur village are engaged in collecting precious and semi-precious stones from the surrounding deserts and storing them in their homes. "Currently, there are 20 to 25 gem carving workshops active in our village, and if the marketing issue is resolved, definitely more individuals will be attracted to this profession, contributing to job creation in the region," he stated.

The artisan shared one of his aspirations: "I wish to have a workshop equipped with all the necessary tools so that I can teach carving to others, allowing them to avoid the hardships

I faced in learning without a teacher."

Hassan Ali Fouladi, deputy head of South Khorasan Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization, stated that various provincial, regional, and national exhibitions are the best venues for selling handicrafts, with the organization of these exhibitions planned annually at both provincial and national levels.

He added, "Usually, due to high costs related to accommodation and travel, artisans in the province struggle to participate in national and regional exhibitions."

Fouladi emphasized that cyberspace is the best platform for selling handicrafts from South Khorasan Province, stating, "According to documentation, there are about 300 artisans actively working in the field of gem carving in the province, but unofficially, there are over 600 artisans working and making efforts in this area."

He also highlighted the various specialized training provided to gemstone artisans in South Khorasan Province, noting, "In the National Agate Carving Village, we have more than 70 gem-cutting workshops, but a significant portion of the village residents are engaged in collecting precious and semi-precious stones."



● IRNA

## Maragheh's religious heritage and architectural legacy

### Iranica Desk

Maragheh is a significant center for studying the architectural features of rock-cut religious sites. The establishment of a church at the Maragheh Observatory Hill is closely linked to the status of non-Islamic religious followers within the scientific complex and the religious policies of the Ilkhanids.

In an interview with ISNA, Saeed Satarnejad, a Ph.D. archaeologist from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Mohaghegh Ardebili University, emphasized that one of the main characteristics of historical sites in any region is their ritual spaces.

He noted that these spaces have long been regarded with interest, sanctity, and respect by socially devout groups committed

to religious doctrines. From this perspective, Maragheh stands out as an exceptionally significant and enduring center for the study of hand-carved religious architecture in the history and culture of northwestern Iran. Understanding all aspects of this architecture can greatly enhance our knowledge of the religious beliefs of past communities in the region.

Satarnejad further explained that since Maragheh is considered one of the first political centers of the Ilkhanid period, it features worship spaces associated with various religions and sects, some of which have survived to this day.

He pointed out that the hand-carved church on the observatory hill is one of the region's ritual spaces, commonly known

among locals as the "Caves of the Observatory". This architectural monument was created during the Ilkhanid period in the rocky terrain of the hill.

Satarnejad stated that the continuity and expansion of Christianity, unlike the teachings of other non-Islamic religions such as Buddhism, were influenced by the policies of Nestorian leaders in relation to subsequent Ilkhanid khans, particularly Ghazan Khan (Mahmoud). As a result, Christian followers maintained an active presence in the urban structure of Maragheh until the Qajar era, in contrast to Buddhists.

He added that understanding these religious spaces could significantly contribute to recognizing the reasons behind the persistence of certain non-Islamic

religions, particularly Christianity, during that time. Therefore, to obtain comprehensive and reliable information about these events, efforts have been made to study the hand-carved church at the observatory hill, which serves as one of the important centers of these events. This involves field studies, including visits and documentation of the rock-cut spaces, as well as referencing written sources from the Islamic period to reach scientific conclusions.

This archaeologist noted that the results of this research, while introducing and recognizing the largest rock-cut church in Iran during the Ilkhanid period, are also significant for understanding the interactions between Islam and other Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions.



● kojara.com

# What Trump unleashed means for America



US President-elect Donald Trump  
● FINANCIAL TIMES

By Francis Fukuyama  
Political theorist

OPINION

*The blowout victory of Donald Trump and the Republican party on November 5 will lead to major changes in important policy areas, from immigration to Ukraine. But the significance of the election extends way beyond these specific issues and represents a decisive rejection by American voters of liberalism and the particular way that the understanding of a "free society" has evolved since the 1980s.*

*When Trump was first elected in 2016, it was easy to believe that this event was an aberration. He was running against a weak opponent who didn't take him seriously, and in any case, Trump didn't win the popular vote. When Biden won the White House four years later, it seemed as if things had snapped back to normal after a disastrous one-term presidency.*

*Following the vote, it now seems that it was the Biden presidency that was the anomaly and that Trump is inaugurating a new era in US politics and perhaps for the world as a whole. Americans were voting with full knowledge of who Trump was and what he represented. Not only did he win a majority of votes and every single swing state, but the Republicans retook the Senate and held on to the House of Representatives. Given their existing dominance of the Supreme Court, they are now set to hold all the major branches of government.*

*But what is the underlying nature of this new phase of American history?*

Classical liberalism is a doctrine built around respect for the equal dignity of individuals through a rule of law that protects their rights, and through constitutional checks on the state's ability to interfere with those rights. But over the past half-century, that basic impulse underwent two great distortions. The first was the rise of "neoliberalism," an economic doctrine that sanctified markets and reduced the ability of governments to protect those hurt by economic change. The world got a lot richer in the aggregate, while the working class lost jobs and opportunity. Power shifted away from the places that hosted the original Industrial Revolution to Asia and other parts of the developing world. The second distortion was the rise of identity politics or what one might call "woke liberalism," in which progressive concern for the working class was replaced by targeted protections for a narrower set of marginalised groups: racial minorities, immigrants, sexual minorities, and the like. State power was increasingly used not in the service of impartial justice but rather to promote specific social outcomes for these groups. In the meantime, labour markets were shifting into an information economy. In a world in which most workers sat in front of a computer screen rather than lifted heavy objects off factory floors, women experienced a more equal footing. This trans-



The silhouette of Donald Trump is seen gesturing at a campaign rally in Reading, Pennsylvania, on November 4, 2024, the day before the recent US presidential election, which he won.  
● CHIP SOMODEVILLA/  
GETTY IMAGES

formed power within households and led to the perception of a seemingly constant celebration of female achievement. The rise of these distorted understandings of liberalism drove a major shift in the social basis of political power. The working class felt that leftwing political parties were no longer defending their interests and began voting for parties of the right. Thus, the Democrats lost touch with their working-class base and became a party dominated by educated urban professionals. The former chose to vote Republican. In Europe, Communist party voters in France and Italy defected to Ma-

rine Le Pen and Giorgia Meloni. All of these groups were unhappy with a free-trade system that eliminated their livelihoods, even as it created a new class of super-rich, and were unhappy as well with progressive parties that seemingly cared more for foreigners and the environment than their own condition. These big sociological changes were reflected in voting patterns on November 5. The Republican victory was built around white working-class voters, but Trump succeeded in peeling off significantly more Black and Hispanic working-class voters compared with the 2020 election. This was

especially true of the male voters within these groups. For them, class mattered more than race or ethnicity. There is no particular reason why a working-class Latino, for example, should be particularly attracted to a woke liberalism that favours recent undocumented immigrants and focuses on advancing the interests of women. It is also clear that the vast majority of working-class voters simply did not care about the threat to the liberal order, both domestic and international, posed specifically by Trump. Donald Trump not only wants to roll back neoliberalism and woke liberalism but is also a major threat to classical liberalism itself. This threat is visible across any number of policy issues; a new Trump presidency will not look anything like his first term. The real question at this point is not the malignity of his intentions, but rather his ability to actually carry out what he threatens. Many voters simply don't take his rhetoric seriously, while mainstream Republicans argue that the checks and balances of the American system will prevent him from doing his worst. This is a mistake: we should take his stated intentions very seriously. Trump is a self-proclaimed protectionist, who says that "tariff" is the most beautiful word in the English language. He has proposed 10 or 20 percent tariffs against all goods produced



Trump seems congenitally averse to the use of military power and is easily manipulated, but one exception may be the Middle East, where he is likely to be wholeheartedly supportive of Benjamin Netanyahu's wars against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran. There are strong reasons for thinking that Trump will be much more effective in accomplishing this agenda than he was during his first term.



Former US president Donald Trump greets a Border Patrol agent before speaking about border security at a rally at Million Air, a private airplane terminal at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, on October 25, 2024.  
● JAY JANNER/AMERICAN-STATES-MAN



abroad, by friends and enemies alike, and does not need the authority of Congress to do so.

As a large number of economists have pointed out, this level of protectionism will have extremely negative effects on inflation, productivity, and employment. It will be hugely disruptive of supply chains, which will lead domestic producers to request exemptions from what amount to heavy taxes. This then provides the opportunity for high levels of corruption and favouritism as companies rush to get on the president's good side. Tariffs on this level also invite equally massive retaliation by other countries, setting up a situation in which trade (and therefore incomes) collapse. Perhaps Trump will back off in the face of this; he may also respond as former Argentine president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner did by corrupting the statistical agency reporting the bad news.

With regard to immigration, Trump no longer simply wants to close the border; he wants to deport as many of the 11m undocumented immigrants already in the country as possible. Administratively, this is such a huge task that it will require years of investment in the infrastructure needed to carry it out — detention centres, immigration control agents, courts, and so on.

It will have devastating effects on any number of industries that rely on immigrant labour, particularly construction, and agriculture. It will also be monumentally challenging in moral terms, as parents are taken away from their citizen children, and would set the scene for civil conflict, since many of the undocumented live in blue jurisdictions that will do what they can to prevent Trump from getting his way.

With regard to the rule of law, Trump during this campaign has been singularly focused on seeking revenge for the injustices he believes he has suffered at the hands of his critics. He has vowed to use the justice system to go after everyone from Liz Cheney and Joe Biden to former Joint Chiefs of Staff chair Mark Milley and Barack Obama. He wants to silence media critics by taking away their licences or imposing

penalties on them. Whether Trump will have the power to do any of this is uncertain: the court system was one of the most resilient barriers to his excesses during his first term. But the Republicans have been working steadily to insert sympathetic justices into the system, such as Judge Aileen Cannon in Florida, who threw out the strong classified documents case against him. Some of the most important changes will come in foreign policy and in the nature of the international order. Ukraine is by far the biggest loser; its military struggle against Russia was flagging even before the election, and Trump can force it to settle on Russia's terms by withhold-

ing weapons, as the Republican House did for six months last winter. Trump has privately threatened to pull out of Nato, but even if he doesn't, he can gravely weaken the alliance by failing to follow through on its Article 5 mutual defence guarantee. There are no European champions that can take the place of America as the alliance's leader, so its future ability to stand up to Russia and China is in grave doubt. On the contrary, Trump's victory will inspire other European populists such as the Alternative for Germany and the National Rally in France. East Asian allies and friends of the US are in no better position. While Trump has talked tough on China,

he also greatly admires Xi Jinping for the latter's strongman characteristics, and might be willing to make a deal with him over Taiwan. Trump seems congenitally averse to the use of military power and is easily manipulated, but one exception may be the Middle East, where he is likely to be wholeheartedly supportive of Benjamin Netanyahu's wars against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran. There are strong reasons for thinking that Trump will be much more effective in accomplishing this agenda than he was during his first term. He and the Republicans have recognised that policy implementation is all about personnel. When he was first elected in 2016, he did not

come into office surrounded by a coterie of policy aides; rather, he had to rely on establishment Republicans. In many cases, they blocked, deflected, or slow-walked his orders. At the end of his term, he issued an executive order creating a new "Schedule F" that would strip all federal workers of their job protections and allow him to fire any bureaucrat he wanted. A revival of Schedule F is at the core of the plans for a second Trump term, and conservatives have been busy compiling lists of potential officials whose main qualification is personal loyalty to Trump. This is why he is more likely to carry out his plans this time around. Prior to the election, critics in-

cluding Kamala Harris accused Trump of being a fascist. This was misguided insofar as he was not about to implement a totalitarian regime in the US. Rather, there would be a gradual decay of liberal institutions, such as occurred in Hungary after Viktor Orbán's return to power in 2010. This decay has already started, and Trump has done substantial damage. He has deepened an already substantial polarisation within society, and turned the US from a high-trust to a low-trust society; he has demonised the government and weakened belief that it represents the collective interests of Americans; he has coarsened political rhetoric and given permission for overt

expressions of bigotry and misogyny; and he has convinced a majority of Republicans that his predecessor was an illegitimate president who stole the 2020 election. The breadth of the Republican victory, extending from the presidency to Congress as well, will be interpreted as a strong political mandate confirming these ideas and allowing Trump to act as he pleases. We can only hope that some of the remaining institutional guardrails will remain in place as he takes office. But it may be that things will have to get a lot worse before they get better.

*The article first appeared on The Financial Times.*

# Trump 2.0 will not be like anything we have seen before

By Donald Earl Collins  
Lecturer, author  
**OPINION**

**The horrible truth is, Donald J Trump is back. He has made one of the most stunning political comebacks in American history. All this means is that the world will not only witness a repeat of his first term in power. There is also every reason to believe, once back in office, he will build an administration much more oppressive, racist, and consequential than the one he led in 2017-2021. Trump's second inauguration on January 20 will unleash a far-right, semi-autocratic regime, and an assault on what remains of representative democracy in the US on a federal level.**

Trump's plan for the US centres around old-style laissez-faire economics, isolationism, and white male supremacy — a real attempt at bringing the US back to the 1890s.

On the foreign policy front, Trump 2.0 will see an exacerbation of existing policies that already proved destructive and costly.

The first presidential term of Trump, and that of Joe Biden after him, were marked by an insistent refusal by Washington to engage in any effort to uphold international law and defend the rules-based order the US helped build after World War II. Under Trump 2.0, this purposeful disengagement, which had horrific consequences across the world, will intensify into a new era of American isolationism and likely pave the way for new conflicts and power struggles.

Trump has hinted that, as president, he would not support Ukraine in its ongoing war effort against Vladimir Putin's Russia. "That doesn't mean I don't want to help him because I feel very badly for those people. But he should never have let that war start. The war's a loser," Trump recently said in reference to Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine's war-time president. There are widespread fears that Trump's reluctance to back Ukraine in this war could lead to losses on the battlefield and on the diplomatic front that could prove devastating not only for Ukraine but the security and stability of all its European neighbours.

And when it comes to Palestine, Trump appears in favour of giving Israel even more freedom to continue with its genocide than Biden, who did next to nothing to try and stop the carnage. "I'm glad that Bibi decided to do what he had to do" despite Biden's attempts to restrain him, Trump said last month in reference to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slaughtering tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, supposedly to defeat Hamas in Gaza.

This non-interventionist approach will likely embolden rogue regimes across the world to end any pretence of adherence to international law and the liberal order. Trump 2.0 will



US President-elect Donald Trump takes the stage to address supporters at his rally after winning the election, at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, on November 6, 2024.  
BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

usher in a new era of renewed devastation to nations and communities already suffering from conflict and overall geopolitical instability.

On the economic front, Trump says he will introduce higher tariffs on goods from China and other nations, all in an effort, supposedly, to help the US economy. Except in this era of globalisation, such tariffs will likely have a chilling effect on US finances. At least one study on Trump's tariffs plan suggests that, if the policy is implemented, the median income of Americans would drop between two and four percent and unemployment will rise, particularly in the manufacturing sector. There would also likely be a global economic ripple effect, causing higher inflation rates, stock market volatility, and trade wars. Domestically, he will eagerly implement the Heritage Foundation's much-feared Project 2025 and use it as a blueprint to ensure that the US remains a safe haven for unbridled, corrupt capitalism and the rich white men and megacorporations who benefit from such corruption. Meanwhile, the marginalised groups Trump identified during his campaign as America's enemies — undocumented immigrants, Arab and Muslim Amer-

icans, among others — will face increased oppression and discrimination. Once again, white male supremacy will openly become the law of the land.

"We will get them out of our country. I will ban refugee resettlement from terror-infested areas like the Gaza Strip and we will seal our border and bring back the travel ban," Trump said at an event marking the first anniversary of Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, referring to his

infamous "Muslim ban". In 2017, Trump directed his threats of deportation and entry bans specifically at people from Muslim-majority countries who he called "jihadists". But throughout his 2024 campaign, he made it clear, over and over again, that his ambition is to deport and ban all undocumented migrants, and any other brown and Black migrant and refugee he can, whether they are from Central and South America, the Caribbean,



Protesters at LA airport show their opposition to then-president Donald Trump's 2017 travel ban on people from several Muslim-majority countries.  
REUTERS

Africa, or the Middle East. The entire structure of the federal civil service will also face significant threats. Under Project 2025, Trump and Congress would eliminate the US Department of Education (DOE) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). They would privatise the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the National Flood Insurance Program run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the federal housing loan giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and all federally subsidised student loans. Trump himself has said that he would go after leading government officials personally after he takes the oath of office on January 20. "Oh, it's so easy. It's so easy. I would fire him within two seconds," Trump said last month about special counsel Jack Smith.

Smith has been prosecuting the now president-elect for the January 6 insurrection and the mishandling of classified documents since 2023. Smith is not the only official in Trump's crosshairs. According to NPR, Trump has issued more than 100 threats to his opponents, including Vice President Kamala Harris and former US representative Liz Cheney.

Trump will now be able to get away from his conviction in New York, his various trials and lawsuits across the US, and his debts in the US and abroad, possibly even through pardoning himself for all his actions since 2016.

Make no mistake. Trump's upcoming second term in office will see efforts at all levels to remake the US into a conservative, evangelical, capitalist theocracy. The coming four years will be marked by persecution, oppression, retribution, and needless death from forced pregnancies, mass deportations, nonsensical public health decisions, and preventable wars. America is going back to Trump. The US and the world should be prepared for the second coming of Trump and the new global order he will try to create. The world should prepare and resist.

*The full article first appeared on Al Jazeera.*

# Iranian athletes win gold, silver at 2024 IFSC Youth Asian Championship

Iranian athlete Sarina Ghaffari won the gold medal at the 2024 International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) Youth Asian Championship in Jamshedpur, India.

Ghaffari secured gold in Boulder category at the 2024 edition of the Youth Asian Championship, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Sara Zarezadeh, another member of Iran's national team, reached fifth place in the final.

In this age group and category, climbers from Japan won second and third place.

Also, Mahdisa Hamidnezhad of Iran won a silver medal at the IFSC Youth Asian Championships Jamshedpur 2024.

She came second in the youth female boulder division with 2 tops and 3 zones each in positions 4 and 9.

Japanese climber Saaya Ishikuro claimed the gold medal and her compatriot Miu Ito seized the bronze.

Tata Steel Adventure Foundation (TSAF) is hosting Asia's biggest sport climbing championship, IFSC Asian Youth Sport Climbing Championship 2024 at the TSAF Sport Climbing Academy, JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur from November 14 to 17.

The event is organized in association with the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) Asia Council and the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF). The event witnesses the participation of 184 athletes from 13 countries. TSAF has successfully hosted two IFSC Sport Climbing Championships in Jamshedpur in 2022 and 2023. Asian Kids Sport Climbing Championship 2022 and 2023, which featured over 100 athletes from 11 countries in each edition. The events were organized by TSAF in association with the IFSC Asia Council and the IMF at the same venue.

The 2024 IFSC Youth Asian Championship features some of the best young climbers from the Asian region competing in the disciplines of lead climbing, bouldering, and speed climbing.

The IFSC Youth Asian Championships are held annually in various countries across Asia, showcasing the best young climbers from the region. The event not only provides a platform for climbers to demonstrate their skills and talent, but also serves as a stepping stone for many to advance in the sport and potentially qualify for the IFSC Youth World Championships.



● IRNA

## Iran's women football team to play Jordan



● TASNIM

Iran's women football team will play two friendly matches with Jordan in Amman.

Team Melli Banovan will hold a six-day training camp from November 21 to 26 in Tehran, wrote Tasnim News Agency on Saturday.

The team will travel to Amman, capital of Jordan on November 26.

Maryam Azmoun's team will meet Jordan on November 28 and December 1 in two friendly matches.

Azmoun has called up 24 players to the national team.

Iran's women football team has been active in international competitions, participating in various tournaments and friendlies. In recent years, the team has had

some notable results, including: In 2022, Iran's women's national team qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time after finishing second in the AFC Women's Asian Cup. In 2019, Iran's women's national team won the West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) Women's Championship for the first time, beating Jordan in the final.

## LeBron James records career-best 4th straight triple-double

LeBron James is still doing things he's never done, at the age of 39.

On Friday, the Los Angeles Lakers superstar recorded a fourth straight triple-double for the first time of his career, posting 15 points, 16 rebounds and 12 assists in a 120-115 win over the San Antonio Spurs. The game was the Lakers' NBA Cup opener as they try to defend last year's trophy.

Four of those points put the game away, as James gave the Lakers a three-point lead with 25.1 seconds, left then made both free throws when the Spurs started fouling.

Yet Anthony Davis was the true star of the game, scoring 40 points with 12 rebounds in a superstar center matchup with Victor Wembanyama. The veteran shot 14-for-26 from the floor (including 2-of-4 on 3-pointers) and made 10-of-12 free throws. However, Wem-

banyama more than held his own, scoring 28 points with 14 rebounds.

The four triple-doubles this season give James 116 for his career. That gives him the fifth-most on the NBA's all-time list. However, James may not move up any higher as he's soon to turn 40 and says he won't play much longer.

Up next is Nikola Jokic with 136. Magic Johnson is third with 138. Oscar Robertson's

181 are second all-time. And Russell Westbrook tops the list with 199.

The most triple-doubles James has ever notched in a season is 18 during the 2017-18 campaign. Perhaps it's surprising that he didn't record any as a rookie in 2003-04. He got two of them during the following season. James also didn't get any triple-doubles in 2011-12 and recorded one in both the 2006-07 and 2013-14 seasons.



● GETTY IMAGES



## Bagnaia on pole for Barcelona MotoGP, Martin fourth

Francesco Bagnaia took his third successive pole position, his sixth of the season, as he booked his place on Saturday at the head of the grid for this weekend's Barcelona MotoGP.

The Italian, who goes into the final weekend of the season 24 points behind championship leader Jorge Martin, did all he could to lay the pressure on the Spaniard who will start on the second row in fourth, AFP wrote. "I'm very happy," said Ducati-Lenovo rider Bagnaia. "We

managed to do a very good job. It wasn't easy because the conditions were very tricky and a bit risky but everything went well." Bagnaia clocked one minute and 38.641 seconds, just 0.055sec ahead of Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro, taking part in his 255th and final race before retiring.

Marc Marquez, of the Ducati satellite team Gresini, was third quickest, nudging Martin off the front row.

The race was due to take place in Valencia but had to be moved

after the region suffered its worst floods in a generation which have killed more than 220 people. The race was switched to the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya and has been dubbed the Solidarity GP to show support for the people of Valencia.



Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia (R) takes his sixth pole of the season in Barcelona on November 16, 2024.

● MANAURE QUINTERO/ AFP

# Iran urges UN action on Israeli crimes against own citizens, sovereignty

Iran's permanent mission to the UN has urged the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to take concrete action to hold Israel accountable for the crimes it has committed against the Islamic Republic for over four decades.

In letters to UN chief António Guterres, Security Council president Barbara Woodward, and General Assembly head Philemon Yang, the mission stated that Israel's anti-Iran actions are exemplified by its sustained campaign of targeted assassinations and terrorist acts, Press TV reported.

It cited Israel's targeting of Iranian nuclear scientists, military advisors, diplomatic premises, and representatives as well as its sabotage of Iran's peaceful

nuclear facilities.

"These unlawful and criminal acts which were perpetrated both within Iran and outside its borders began with the abduction of four Iranian diplomats in southern Beirut, Lebanon, on July 4, 1982," it said.

The mission was referring to three diplomats and a journalist kidnapped north of Beirut by Lebanese Christian militiamen during Israel's invasion of Lebanon.

"Most recently, this pattern of aggression has come to include the terrorist attack employing explosive devices against Iran's ambassador to Lebanon on September 17, 2024, the criminal assault on April 1, 2024, where Israel attacked Iranian diplomatic and consular premises in

Damascus, the Arab Republic of Syria, and was followed by Israel's act of aggression on October 26, 2024, against Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity in a gross violation of international law and the Charter of the UN," the letters read.

The targeting and assassination of Iranian nationals, particularly those engaged in scientific, diplomatic and defense tasks, the mission said, is a gross violation of Iran's sovereign rights and a serious and flagrant breach of the basic norms and principles of international law and the UN Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The mission said the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, has yet to

take concrete action to hold the Israel accountable for its ongoing pattern of aggression, despite repeated reports by the Iranian government detailing these egregious violations.

Such inaction not only emboldens further violations, but also erodes the credibility and core principles of international law upon which the United Nations was founded, it added.

The letter said the Iranian government's obligations towards its citizens "require it to take all necessary measures to protect its nationals, interests, and sovereignty, including exercising its inherent right to self-defense as ensured in the Charter of the United Nations".

Iran, it said, also requests the Security Council to live up to



its responsibility under the UN Charter to take necessary measures to ensure Israel ceases its internationally wrongful acts and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other UN member states.

Tehran calls on the UN chief to ensure that all violations committed by Israel are thoroughly documented in relevant reports to the General Assembly, Security Council, and Human Rights Council, it added.

## EU 'strongly' condemns Israeli killing of paramedics in Lebanon

### International Desk

The EU on Friday "strongly" condemned the killing of 12 paramedics in an Israeli strike near Baalbek district in eastern Lebanon.

"Attacks on healthcare workers and facilities are a grave violation of international humanitarian law. The protection of medical personnel in conflict zones is non-negotiable," Josep Borrell, bloc's foreign policy chief, said on X.

"This pattern of targeting healthcare mirrors appalling trends in other conflicts, from Syria to Ukraine or Sudan. Be it reckless disregard or deliberate targeting, this is a blatant assault on human dignity, endangering lives & flagrantly violating fundamental human rights," he said in another X post.

An Israeli airstrike targeted the town of Douris late Thursday, causing the collapse of the civil defense center and the destruction

of an adjacent building, according to the National News Agency.

Israel this September launched an air campaign in Lebanon against what it claims are targets of the Hezbollah group, in an escalation from a year of cross-border warfare.

The Israeli military pressed on Saturday with its days-long bombing campaign targeting an area near Beirut, while in the country's south, Israeli airstrikes



Smoke billows from south of Beirut after an Israeli strike on November 16, 2024.  
DIEGO IBARRA SANCHEZ/NYT

killed two more paramedics, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry, NYT reported.

## Iran dismisses reports on Musk's meeting with UN envoy

Iran has denied a report by the New York Times that its UN envoy has met with Elon Musk, a top adviser to the US President-elect Donald Trump, in New York on discussing ways to ease tensions between Iran and the United States. The New York Times claimed on Friday that the tech billionaire met with Ambassador Amir Saeid Irvani on Monday in a session that two Iranian officials described as a discussion on how to defuse tensions between Tehran and Washington, IRNA reported.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Esmail Baghaei, on Saturday categorically dismissed the media stories on the meeting.

He expressed surprise at the extent of the speculation the American media outlets have been fueling about the issue.

# Calm Mideast to better serve US interests

## Trump 2.0 seeking credit for détente with Iran



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

Donald Trump's "America First" slogan has raised the question of whether the US under his leadership will abandon its interventionist policies and influence on international developments. Specifically, what will be the foreign policy of the new US administration towards the Middle East and the Gaza war? Iran Daily held talks this issue with Davoud Aqaei, a professor of International Relations at the University of Tehran. Aqaei believes that establishing stability and stopping wars will be in line with Trump's plans and serve US interests best. He also thinks that the conditions are ripe for reducing tensions and resolving differences between Iran and the US.

**IRAN DAILY:** Regarding the resolution of major crises such as the Ukraine and Gaza wars, many believed that the outcome of the US elections should be awaited. On the other hand, some are convinced that the US is in decline, and the persistence of these crises is a sign of the waning of US influence. Do you think the US' ability to shape major global developments has declined?

**AQAEI:** The level of influence of major powers is linked to various factors, such as the policies of Joe Biden, the current US president. Has he effectively utilized US capabilities to resolve crises? However, contrary to the

views of some experts who believe the world has entered a multipolar order, I think the US remains a major player in shaping global developments. Even in the current crises, such as the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, we see that the US has been the most influential power. Other powers, like Europe and China, have been largely inactive, and Russia, embroiled in its own war, has been unable to make a significant impact. As a result, the US remains the dominant player, backed by its military and economic might and capabilities, as other major powers have largely ceded the field.

**Some believe that President-elect Donald Trump will focus more on domestic issues, as he has stated in his campaign slogans. Will we see a decrease in Washington's influence and impact outside of the US, particularly in West Asia, during the Trump era?**

The US' role in global developments will not diminish, but rather change in its approach. Trump has stated that he will seek to stop the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. He has also vowed to restore America's position as the world's top power. It appears that in his new term, Trump will attempt to reduce international tensions and cut costs for the US in various crises. Notably, the US has provided significant aid to Ukraine and over \$18 billion to the Israeli regime. Logically, if wars are stopped and stability is established, these foreign aid funds can be redirected to welfare and economic issues within the country. Trump aims to increase US interests

through this approach. Furthermore, improving relations with Russia could also bring economic benefits for both Moscow and Washington. In reality, when stability is established, the US will not only reduce its crisis-related costs but also better secure its interests.

Since the Obama administration, the US has focused seriously on China. Trump also views China as the main threat to the US and, in the real world, the only power that can challenge US interests. Therefore, Trump will likely focus more on containing China in the international arena. A natural consequence of this focus on China is that the US will stop regional crises like the Ukraine and Gaza wars. Of course, achieving this is no easy task and is not solely dependent on Trump's will, but it appears that the incoming US president will operate within this framework.

**Can the US-Iran relationship also be evaluated within the framework of Trump's approach; in other words, will Trump pursue a policy of reducing tensions with Iran as well?**

Yes, the issue of Iran is also defined within the framework of US foreign policy in West Asia. Moreover, the two countries have experienced a tumultuous relationship over the past four decades. I hope that during the new administrations in Iran and the US, we will see steps taken to reduce tensions and ultimately reach understandings and agreements between the two sides. There is a willingness among Iranian officials to prevent the

escalation of tensions with the US. In the past, there have been opportunities to strengthen relations and cooperation that have been missed by both sides. Resolving the differences between Tehran and Washington is in the interest of both parties, and the longer it takes, the more damage will be done to both sides. It appears that the Trump administration is prepared to take a serious decision about its tie with Iran. He is willing to establish a relationship. All US presidents over the past four decades have wanted to be the hero who establishes a relationship with Iran. However, this has not happened yet. Trump, naturally, wants the credit for establishing a bilateral relation with Iran to be recorded in his name. Additionally, this would be a great prestige and success for the Republican Party as well. I hope that the decision-makers in Iran will also make a new assessment about their bond with the US, based on domestic, regional, and international conditions, and within the framework of securing national interests.

**Recently, the Iranian president has said that we will eventually come face to face with this country in the regional and international arenas, and it is better to manage this issue ourselves. And the Iranian foreign minister has also said that we will negotiate with the US to secure Iran's national interests. From your explanations, I understand that reducing tensions and possibly establishing a relationship between Iran and the US will better serve both**

### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE



Davoud Aqaei

**sides' interests.**

The main plan of President Pezeshkian in the field of foreign policy is constructive engagement with the world and balancing foreign policy. This is a wise approach. The more a country engages with powerful and influential nations and participates in regional and international agreements, conventions, and unions, the more it demonstrates its strength and stature. The path that Iran and the US have taken in the past has not yielded desirable results. What is important is national interest. Iran and Iraq were sworn enemies for eight years and clashed with each other, just as the US and Vietnam fought a historic war, but when national interests came in, Iran and Iraq became close friends, just as the US and Vietnam have also put the past behind them and enjoy good relations now. Enmities and conflicts are not meant to last forever. The art of diplomacy is to build bridges from differences to commonalities and secure interests. It seems that in the new era, the ground has been laid for a new path in the relations between Iran and the US. The interests of both countries lie in the fact that the path of de-escalation and resolving conflicts should be taken seriously.

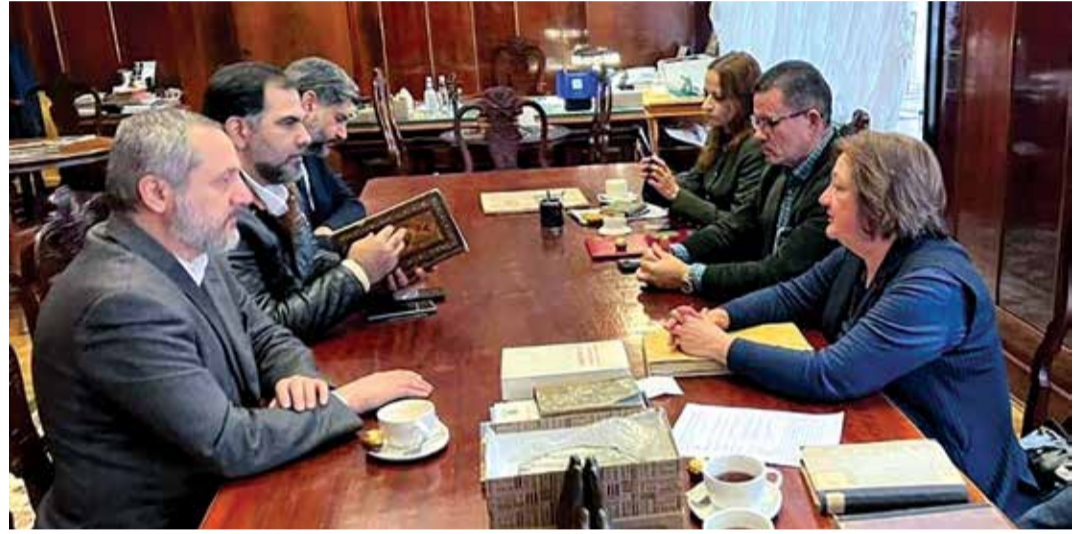
# Iran, Russia sign agreement to boost library cooperation

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Library, Museum and Document Center of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Russian State Library signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in research, knowledge sharing, and exchange of works, marking a significant milestone in bilateral relations between the two countries. The agreement was signed during a meeting between the heads of the two libraries in Moscow, where Masoud Moinipour, the Director of the Library, Museum and Document Center of the Islamic Consul-

tative Assembly, met with the Director of the Russian State Library Vadim Duda. During the meeting, several rare Persian manuscripts, including the works of Saadi a, were showcased to the Iranian delegation. The Russian side also requested support and training in the field of manuscript restoration and preservation of old printed works. The two sides agreed to hold joint conferences on Iranian studies, Oriental studies, and Islamic studies, and discussed the flow of scientific knowledge and the impact of classification theories on the field.

Moinipour provided an overview of the rare manuscripts held by the Iranian library, while Duda expressed his knowledge of the valuable collections and expressed hope for the development of cooperation between the two libraries. The MoU signed between the two libraries outlines cooperation in the fields of research, joint conferences, training courses, joint projects, manuscript restoration, and exchange of works. At the end of the meeting, the Iranian delegation was invited to attend the BRICS library directors' conference.



● MEHR

## Iran's cheetah population on brink of extinction, only 17 remain: Official



## Social Desk

The population of Asiatic cheetah in Iran is teetering on the edge of extinction, with only 17 individuals, including seven adults and 10 cubs, identified in the latest census, according to Hamid Zohrabi, Deputy Manager for Natural Environment of the Department of the Environment of Iran. "We are facing a critical situation and urgent action is needed to protect the species," Zohrabi warned, emphasizing that the population is extremely fragile, ISNA wrote.

The seven adult cheetahs have been identified as "Faraz", "Feqeh", "Hiva", "Mahshad", "Helya", "Harb", and "Khorshid" (also known as Talkhab), with Mahshad having four cubs and Helya, Harb, and Talkhab each having two cubs. To combat the crisis, the Department of the Environment is updating its conservation program and forming a committee of experts to review and implement the plan. The committee will work to identify the best course of action to protect the cheetah and its habitat. "We will work with local communities,

NGOs, and international organizations to protect the cheetah and its habitat," Zohrabi said, highlighting the importance of collaboration. A breeding center is being established in the Khar Turan National Park in Semnan Province, which will provide a safe and natural environment for the cheetahs. The department hopes to eventually release the offspring into the wild. In an effort to reduce the risk of cheetahs being killed by cars on highways, a project to install fencing along the Abbasabad-Miami highway has been launched. The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has provided funding for the project. Furthermore, the speed limit on the Abbasabad highway has been reduced to 90 km/h, and the department is working to ensure that the speed limit is enforced. A semi-natural reserve is being created to provide a safe space for the cheetahs to roam and hunt, and to serve as a breeding ground for the species. Plus, efforts are underway to increase the population of prey animals in the cheetah's habitat, which will help to increase the cheetah population.

## Fakhteh ensemble to perform at three int'l music festivals

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Fakhteh ensemble, led by composer and director Khashayar Parsa, is set to take the stage at three international music festivals, showcasing traditional Iranian music and the Systematist School. According to ISNA, the ensemble will perform at the Wuxi International Ethnic Music Festival in China on November 19, followed by the Marco Polo International Ethnic Music Festival in China on November 21, and finally at the Daira International Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia on December 3, ISNA reported. The ensemble's performances will feature pieces by Abdolqader Maraghei and other Iranian composers from the Ottoman court, as well as original compositions by the group. The music will be performed in two of the most important and well-known modes in Iranian classical music, helping to promote this aspect of Iran's cultural heritage on a global scale. The ensemble's members, including singers Ahmad Shakouri and Fereshteh Shamsi, *tar* player Mohammad Mehdi Sheikh, oud player Abouzar Hosseini, *kamancheh* player Arman Heydarian, and Parsa on *tonbak* and *daf*, will come together to create a unique harmony for the performance of ancient Iranian and Ottoman music. This international appearance is a significant step towards showcasing Iran's musical capabilities on the global stage and strengthening cultural ties with other countries. By performing at these reputable festivals, the Fakhteh ensemble aims to further solidify Iran's position in the world of music.



## In an about-face...

But the October 7, 2023 retaliatory attack by Palestinians turned the indirect threat equation into a direct threat. A few months after this conflict, Israel attacked Iran's territory in Syria — Iranian Embassy in Damascus — and martyred five commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force. In response to this crime, Iran carried out Operation True Promise One and directly targeted Israel with its drones. Israel claimed responsibility for the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh on the day of the inauguration of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to start a new round of military clashes between Tehran and Tel Aviv. The subsequent assassination of Nasrallah and his successor Hashem Safieddine in Lebanon led to Iran's strong military response and the conflict between the two sides was exacerbated.

As the probability of Trump's victory in the US elections increased, Netanyahu, who is known as a child killer, made two important changes in his cabinet. He fired Yoav Gallant, his military affairs minister, who was supported by Biden, and replaced him with radical Israel Katz. Gideon Sa'ar succeeded Katz in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sa'ar, who was Netanyahu's rival in the previous elections, joined the "New Hope" party, which is even more extreme than the ruling Likud party. Regardless of these changes, the first announcement of the position of the new foreign minister of Netanyahu's extremist cabinet was very important and controversial, which showed that Israel is entering a new offensive strategy. The coincidence of his statements with Netanyahu's video message to the Iranian people is not a coincidence and indi-

cates a strategic turn in Israel's plans. Regardless of the crimes he committed and the hatred he has among the Iranians, Netanyahu addressed the people. "Don't lose hope. And know that Israel and others in the free world stand with you," Netanyahu said. In his message, he referred to Iran's October 1 ballistic missile attack on Israel, claiming that it cost about \$2.3 billion of "your precious money" but caused marginal damage to Israel. The regime hit back on Iran on October 26. Netanyahu has made previous appeals to the Iranian people directly, as well as to civilians in Gaza and Lebanon. He said life in Iran could be different if the country were free and that funds could be used for education, roads, water and hospitals instead of war. "But that's what Khamenei...denies you every single day. They obsess about de-

stroying Israel, rather than about building Iran," he claimed. "I know that you don't want this war. I don't want this war either. The people of Israel don't want this war." Israel's new foreign minister has also said Tel Aviv should look to Kurds, Druze and other minorities in neighboring countries, in addition to Saudi Arabia, for support. "The Kurdish people are a great nation, one of the great nations without political independence," Sa'ar said at his ministerial exchange and inauguration ceremony on Sunday, describing Kurds as "our natural ally." "It is a national minority in four different countries, in two of which it enjoys autonomy: de facto in Syria and de jure in the Iraqi constitution." Sa'ar claimed that Kurds are "a victim of oppression and aggression from Iran

and Turkey," and that Israel needed to strengthen ties with them. "This has both political and security aspects," he added. His statements, which have a taint of conspiracy against Iran, are considered a direct threat to Iran. To sum up, as I said before, the confrontation between Iran and Israel has always been indirect and through proxies until last October. But since then, direct military confrontations between the two have started. The important point is that Israel is trying to directly activate all possible fronts for war with Iran. It means that they are changing their defensive and covert strategy to and invade and direct one. Meanwhile his open support for the separatist ambitions in Iran clearly shows that Tel Aviv has prepared itself for a full-scale conflict with Tehran.