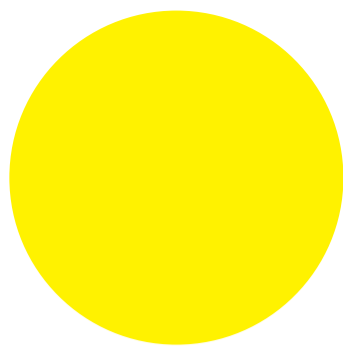


Iran crowned IFCPF World Cup champion

President Masoud Pezeshkian expresses felicitations

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Iran nixes US, UK accusations over Ukraine war

Iran's ambassador to the UN categorically rejected as baseless accusations made by the US and UK against Tehran over the Ukraine war and regional destabilization.

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France spearheading strategy of European defiance against Trump's America



By **Abed Akbari**
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Under the leadership of Emmanuel Macron, France has championed the vision of Europe becoming an independent bloc, distancing itself from trade rivals like China and the United States in areas ranging from defense and security to advanced technologies. Trump's victory offers Macron a new "raison d'être," particularly in matters of trade and security. Yet, Macron was one of the first European leaders to congratulate Trump after his win, even as he prepared for a speech at a European summit in Hungary, calling for a strong and unified European response to the US election. This dual approach reflects the uncertain future of France-US relations, as France seeks to assert its interests robustly.

After the Hungary summit, Macron, disheartened by Europe's lukewarm reaction, announced plans to work with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for a more unified Europe. However, considering Germany's internal fragmentation, this goal seems ambitious at best.

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Could the IAEA resolution prompt Iran to revisit its nuclear policy?



By **Hoda Yousefi**
Middle East affairs expert

PERSPECTIVE

In the early hours of Friday, November 22, 2024, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted a resolution concerning Iran, reflecting the collective stance of its Board of Governors. Of the 35 member states, 19 voted in favor of the resolution, while 12 countries abstained, and Russia, China, and Burkina Faso expressed their opposition. This resolution, proposed by the European Troika—comprising France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—alongside the United States, urges Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities at the 60% level. It also calls for the dilution of its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium to below 5%, aligning with the principles of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The IAEA looks forward to continued dialogue and cooperation to ensure regional stability and progress toward nuclear non-proliferation.

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Exploring Tehran's hidden heritage

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WSA: Iran's crude steel output hits 25m tons in 10 months



By Reza
Abesh
Ahmadlou
Staff writer

Iranian steelmakers churned out 25 million tons of crude steel in the first 10 months of 2024, according to statistics released by the World Steel Association (WSA), indicating that the country stands at tenth place among steel producing countries.

Steel mills of the country kept the rising trend for the 10-month period with a 0.6-percent rise compared to the same period in the previous year amid a major drop in production during the summer due to shortages in power supply.

The country's steel ingot production for October 2024 hit 3 million tons, registering a 1.9-percent shrinkage compared to the figure for October 2023.

World crude steel production for the 71 countries reporting to the association was 151.2 million tons in October 2024, a 0.4-percent increase compared to October 2023. China produced 81.9 million tons in October 2024, up 2.9 percent over October 2023, while India produced 12.5 million tons of steel ingots last month, up 1.7 percent compared to the figure for last year, as Japan produced 6.9 million tons, down 7.8 percent compared to the same month last year.

The United States produced 6.6 million tons of crude steel in August, down 2 percent. Russia is estimated to have produced 5.6 million tons, down 15.2 percent. South Korea produced 4.5 million tons, down 18.3 percent.

Germany stood at seventh place among global steelmakers in October with 3.2 million tons, registering 14.7 percent of rise compared to related figure of last year, followed by Brazil and Turkey with 3.1 million tons and 3 million tons of output, respectively.

The World Steel Association is one of the largest and most dynamic industry associations in the world, with members in every major steel-producing country. The WSA represents steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.

Members represent around 85 percent of the world's steel production.



Iran can serve as transit corridor for Japanese goods: *Minister*

Iranian Minister of Agriculture Gholamreza Nouri-Qezelgeh has said that his country's cooperation with Japan on water and food would benefit the entire region, adding that Iran can act as a transit corridor for the exchange of Japanese products.

Nouri-Qezelgeh made the remarks in a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The minister also said that Iran-Japan cooperation on environmental issues, especially water, is a good basis for further expanding relations between the two sides.

He also announced Iran's readiness to cooperate with Japan in food production and agricultural development, engineering services, and production of vaccines, among others.

Nouri-Qezelgeh pointed to Iran's readiness to host short-term practical training courses in modern agricultural technologies, especially in water-consuming sectors, and said, "Japan's experience in rice cultivation and agricultural irrigation are of interest to us, and we are ready to exchange experts in this area."

In response to the Japanese ambassador's request for the export of Iranian cheese to Japan, the minister added, "The existing obstacles will be removed soon, and the Japanese people will soon experience the taste of Iranian cheese."

For his part, the Japanese ambas-



Iranian Minister of Agriculture Gholamreza Nouri-Qezelgeh (R) meets Japanese Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada in Tehran on November 23, 2024.
● IRNA

sador said Japan's cooperation with Iran dates back to several decades ago, especially in the JICA project, and Japan continues to have effective cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of water and technical engineering services.

Referring to his visit to the north-west provinces of Iran and his visit to Lake Urmia, the diplomat stated, "Regarding agriculture, water management and restoration of Lake Urmia, with the presence of the head of the Iranian-Japanese parliamentary group,

key discussions were raised." Marking the 50th anniversary of his country's cooperation with Iran through the JICA project, he said, "The collaboration between Japan and Iran is extensive and deep, and cooperation in the fields of irrigation systems, rice

production projects, forest management in the province of Golestan, and Lake Urmia restoration with the help of FAO are examples that can be extended and expanded to other areas of cooperation, especially in the field of agriculture."



Chinese refiners pay more for Iranian oil: *Report*

China's small, private refiners are paying up for Iranian oil due to reduced flows and few offers, Bloomberg wrote. The so-called teapots bought Iranian Light crude for December arrival at a discount of \$2 to \$3 a barrel against the ICE Brent benchmark, the smallest gap this year, according to market participants. Traders said they've seen fewer cargo offers over the past weeks, while there have also been talks of cargo delays that have crimped Iran-to-China volumes in recent months. Teapots account for about a

quarter of China's crude processing and are the main buyers of Iranian crude, which has been discounted because of US-led sanctions. Larger government-linked processors tend to avoid the fuel because of fears of economic repercussions. While Chinese refinery import quotas for this year are also running low, the teapots will be allowed to use some of their allocations for 2025 as part of efforts by local governments to hit performance indicators, the traders said, adding that about a dozen have applied to bring in crude using the system.

France spearheading strategy...

Despite Macron's optimistic declarations, the prevailing sentiment in Europe is one of resignation: Trump's victory could lead Europe to relinquish geopolitical agency to the US, just as it has ceded economic growth to China. France's push for European independence—particularly in assuming responsibility for the continent's security and defense, as demonstrated in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war—faces both strong support and fierce opposition within the EU. Trump's return could upend the status quo in Ukraine. If, as anticipated, Trump takes a stance against Ukraine, Europe might face a geopolitical setback. Europe lacks the capacity to replace the US in providing financial and military aid to Kyiv. Trump's intent to directly negotiate the conflict with Putin would further shift the strategic landscape. While Trump's promise to end

US military support to Kyiv might not materialize overnight, the announcement alone destabilizes Europe's strategic outlook. Without US support and with Trump's alignment with Putin, Ukraine would be forced to negotiate from a position of weakness, fundamentally altering the security dynamic in Europe and normalizing Russian encroachment on the continent.

Macron's goal is to prevent Europe from becoming a backyard for Russia, a scenario Trump's unilateralism could make increasingly likely. Macron is acutely aware that if only Ukraine is invited to Trump-Putin negotiations, it would be a direct affront to Europe, sidelining its role in determining its own future in the region.

While Macron's efforts do not aim to sever transatlantic ties, many European leaders, particularly in Eastern Europe, view NATO and US relations as indispensable to

their peace and security. As such, Macron's proposal for a "strategy of Europe standing firm against Trump's America" risks exacerbating divisions among EU member states, potentially worsening Europe's security challenges. This is evident in the stark differences between Hungary's stance and those of other member states, which often make consensus within the EU elusive.

Amid these security concerns, Europe is witnessing a political shift toward far-right nationalist parties. France is no exception, with Macron forced to share the National Assembly with far-right elements. Trump's "America First" mantra has not only fragmented Europe but also fueled a new wave of far-right populism. Rising anti-immigration sentiment, post-pandemic inflation, and the war in Ukraine have turned societal insecurity into a simmering crisis across Europe, including France.

With the rise of the far-right, European citizens are increasingly disillusioned with liberal ideals, diminishing support for pro-European leaders like Macron and their alignment with the Democratic Party in the US. Ironically, while Europeans wish for Trump-like leaders in their own countries, they simultaneously hope for Democratic victories in the US. This paradox underpins the French public's resistance to Macron's Eurocentric vision.

Today's European and French realities are marked by fake news, escalating violence, overt hostility, relentless attacks on legal norms, drug addiction, unemployment, and middle-class disillusionment with systemic inequality and deprivation. A pervasive sense of conspiracy, xenophobia, and yearning for authoritarian control characterize the public psyche, creating an undercurrent of chaos. Even Marine Le Pen, the far-right leader

in France, has adopted a cautious stance following Trump's victory. Le Pen recognizes three key challenges: first, she cannot govern a country further inflamed by Trump's incendiary rhetoric. Second, she must appear more moderate to win over voters opposed to her racist and anti-Semitic views. Third, supporting Trump risks alienating France's industrial interests, as his proposed tariffs could harm the French economy.

In conclusion, Trump's victory has profoundly unsettled France's domestic and foreign security. While French leaders remain cautiously optimistic, their only recourse appears to be clinging to the fragile unity of the European bloc. Macron still hopes to influence Trump and thus maintains France's cordial relationship with the US, even as Trump's stated policies render France's role in his administration marginal.

Exploring Tehran's hidden heritage

Iranica Desk

In the heart of modern Tehran, traces of a distant past still remain hidden; the bazaars, tea houses, homes, and neighborhoods remind us of the glorious times of old Tehran. These forgotten attractions showcase the authentic history and culture of the capital with their unique architecture and warm atmosphere, offering a nostalgic experience for those interested in the city's heritage.

Old bazaars

The Oudlajan Bazaar is one of the oldest and most traditional bazaars in Tehran. Located near the Grand Bazaar, it features small shops in a charming, traditional space. In ancient times, it was a bustling marketplace where residents from surrounding neighborhoods came to buy their daily necessities. Today, after significant renovations, the Oudlajan Bazaar continues to welcome visitors, and in every corner, one can sense the aroma and spirit of life in old Tehran. If you want to stroll through the heart of Tehran and trace history in its alleyways, the Oudlajan neighborhood is an ideal destination.

You can reach this bazaar via the Imam Khomeini Metro Station and walk a few minutes to the heart of Oudlajan Bazaar, IRNA wrote. The Qavam al-Doleh Bazaar, located in the city center, still evokes the atmosphere of traditional bustling businesses. Also known as Shapur Bazaar and Tarkhani Bazaar, this small bazaar was once one of the city's most important commercial centers. Built during the Qajar era, it was listed as a national heritage site in Iran in 2003. You can take the metro to Has-sanabad Station and walk a bit to reach this bazaar.



Oudlajan Bazaar



Haj Ali Darvish Tea House

Tea Houses

The Azeri Tea House, located near Railway Square, transports you to past decades. This venue is one of the few traditional tea houses in Tehran, and its décor, slender tea glasses, and old architecture create an authentic atmosphere for those interested in Iranian culture and customs. It remains a gathering place for people who want to enjoy tea and

savor the taste of excellent dizi in a warm and intimate setting, away from the city's hustle and bustle. To access this location, simply take the metro or bus to Rahahan Square and walk a little to find it. Haj Ali Darvish Tea House, considered the smallest in the world, is nestled in one of the corridors of the Tehran Grand Bazaar. This cozy coffee house, registered as a national heritage site in 2016, spans

approximately two square meters and has become an attractive spot for tea drinkers and regular customers of the bazaar. With a history of over 100 years, it serves as a nostalgic place filled with memories, welcoming passersby and loyal patrons. To reach it, enter the Grand Bazaar and head to the goldsmiths' alley, asking vendors for directions to Haj Ali Darvish Tea House.

Historical neighborhoods

Sangelaj neighborhood is one of the oldest and most historical areas of Tehran, retaining its traditional alleys and houses with central courtyards and brick walls. Notable attractions here include the Mostoufi ol-Mamalek House, Sorp Georges Church, Sangelaj Theatre, Shahr Park, and Sheikh Fazlollah House. To access Sangelaj, you can get off at Has-sanabad, Imam Khomeini, or Khayyam metro stations and reach the neighborhood by walking or taking a taxi. Qadim (Old) Lalehzar was once a vibrant street and a cultural hub in Tehran, hosting cinemas, cafés, and stylish shops

during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras. However, urban changes led to the decline of Lalehzar, and many of its buildings were forgotten. Today, walking through this street reveals its proud past. Old Lalehzar is located between Toopkhaneh Square and Jomhuri Street, remaining a sight for those interested in old architecture and Tehran's culture. Masoudiyeh Mansion, a remnant from the Qajar period, is one of Tehran's famous historical buildings. With its traditional bricks, beautiful plasterwork, and spacious courtyards, it reflects the art and Iranian-Islamic architecture of its time. Once a site for political meet-

ings and a stronghold for the Constitutionalists against Mohammad Ali Shah, the mansion is located near Baharestan Square, offering a journey into a distant past. Moghadam House, situated on Imam Khomeini Street, is a historical gem from the Qajar era that functions as a museum due to its unique architecture, antique objects, and decorations. The owner, Mohsen Moghadam, was a professor at the University of Tehran who collected many historical artifacts. Visiting this museum house will deepen your understanding of Iran's history and art.



Sangelaj neighborhood



Nasr Theater

Theaters and cultural halls

Not so long ago, theaters and cultural halls in Tehran were popular gathering spots for artists, writers, and art enthusiasts, playing a crucial role in the city's cultural scene. Among these historic venues, Nasr Theater and the Grand Hotel on Lalehzar Street are particularly well-known. The Grand Hotel, constructed in the late Qajar period, served as a venue for theater performances, poetry readings, and cultural events, recognized at

the time as one of Tehran's most modern cultural centers. Unfortunately, it now stands in a state of disrepair. Nasr Theater, which dates back to the late Qajar period, became a prominent center for the performing arts during the Pahlavi era, hosting many notable Iranian artists. Today, this building is undergoing renovations to be transformed into a theater and museum, offering a unique opportunity for art and history enthusiasts to experience the cultural atmosphere of old Tehran.

Historical bathhouses

Navab Bathhouse and Khanoom Bathhouse are historic yet lesser-known structures in Tehran, each showcasing unique architecture and rich stories. Navab Bathhouse, located in the Imamzadeh Yahya neighborhood, dates back to the Qajar period. Khanoom Bathhouse, also known as Qibleh Bathhouse, is situated in one of Tehran's old alleys. Its small and charming space transports visitors to a time when public bathhouses were centers of social interaction and community conversation.

Historical mosques and religious sites

Old Tehran was filled with mosques and sacred places, each embodying the beliefs and lives of the people of that time through their unique architecture and history. Sepahsalar Mosque, also known as Shaheed Motahhari School and Mosque, is one of the largest in Tehran, built during the Qajar period. Its magnificent architecture and extraordinary tile decorations symbolize the splendor of Islamic-Iranian art. The shrine of Imamzadeh Yahya, located in one of Tehran's old neighborhoods, is another important religious site. With its spiritual and tranquil atmosphere, it continues to attract

visitors and enthusiasts of religious history and architecture. Visiting these places offers an opportunity to understand the spiritual and cultural depth of Tehran, providing deeper insights into its religious and historical identity. Exploring Tehran's forgotten attractions allows for a journey into the city's rich history amidst the chaos of modern life, offering a close experience of its invaluable relics. These sites not only narrate the culture and life of the past but also forge an unbreakable bond with the identity of Tehran and its people, presenting a window into the glorious days of the capital that truly deserve to be revisited.

Old gardens and parks

Amid the hustle and bustle of Tehran, old gardens and parks with ancient trees and serene atmospheres still hold a special place in the hearts of residents. Ferdows Garden, built during the Qajar era, served as a residence and recreational spot for princes and dignitaries. With its tranquil environment and beautiful fountains, it remains one of the city's pleasant

places for relaxation and exploration. Negarestan Garden, established during the reign of Fat'hali Shah Qajar, was once a retreat for the royal family and now welcomes visitors interested in history and nature. Often overlooked by the general public, these gardens provide a green and nostalgic environment for experiencing tranquility and discovering the history of Tehran.



Sepahsalar Mosque

Allies of peace, war

Hezbollah, Iran from defense to offense



By Mohammad Ali
Senobari
Director of New Vision

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and the Zionist entity marks a significant shift in the region's balance of power, reflecting a broader narrative of Resistance against occupation and imperialist agendas. Hezbollah, long regarded as a bulwark against aggression, has moved beyond merely defending its positions to actively reshaping the rules of engagement.

The recent escalation, involving ballistic missile strikes deep into Tel Aviv, demonstrates this evolution from defense to offense, shaking the foundations of the Zionist entity and its American backers. This shift not only underscores Hezbollah's enhanced military capabilities but also highlights Iran's indispensable role as a steadfast ally against Western and Zionist hegemony.



Hezbollah's steady progress in this conflict exemplifies its strategic evolution over the years. The movement has transitioned from traditional guerrilla tactics to incorporating advanced military technologies and strategies — a transformation made possible through Iran's unwavering support in both war and peace. The successful use of ballistic missiles to target Tel Aviv, which bypassed Israel's air defenses, reflects Hezbollah's growing sophistication and its ability to inflict significant costs on its adversaries.

This shift has destabilized the Zionist entity, compelling it to confront a new reality where it no longer enjoys a monopoly on force in the region. The United States and its allies, observing these developments, are scrambling to broker a cease-fire — not out of goodwill, but out of necessity. The Zionist entity's

defeats on the battlefield, compounded by the psychological, material, and human toll inflicted by deep strikes into its territory, have dismantled its carefully crafted image of invincibility. At the core of Hezbollah's resilience lies Iran's unwavering commitment to Lebanon and the broader Axis of Resistance. Iran's support extends beyond military aid, encompassing economic and humanitarian assistance, particularly during periods of Western-imposed sanctions and isolation. When the Lebanese economy was crippled by US-led sanctions and Arab states turned their backs, Iran stepped in with oil, gas, and gasoline, defying Western efforts to starve and subjugate the Lebanese people.

Iran's relationship with Hezbollah and Lebanon is not one of domination but solidarity. Iranian leaders, from Leader to Pres-

ident, have consistently affirmed Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. This partnership is based on mutual respect and shared objectives, rather than a hierarchical dynamic. The sacrifices made by Iranian citizens — offering their gold and savings for Lebanon's cause — speak volumes about the depth of this bond.

In stark contrast to this solidarity stands the Western agenda, driven by a desire to perpetuate instability in the region. The Zionist entity, as an agent of Western imperial interests, embodies this destabilizing force. Its indiscriminate bombing campaigns, violations of Lebanese sovereignty, and brutal aggression against Gaza are not isolated incidents but part of a broader strategy to undermine regional stability and development. History has shown that stability is the foundation of progress. A

stable Lebanon, supported by strong allies like Iran, threatens Western hegemony by challenging the narrative of perpetual dependency and backwardness. Western media distorts the reality of resistance, portraying it as destructive while ignoring the long history of occupation and exploitation, and denying that resistance is the only path to liberation and development. The Resistance led by Hezbollah is more than a military struggle; it is a cultural and ideological stance against erasure and subjugation. This resistance draws strength from a collective identity rooted in Arab, Eastern, and Islamic values. The West, in its relentless pursuit of dominance, seeks to erode these identities, replacing them with narratives of division and fragmentation. Yet the spirit of resistance endures, fueled by a profound sense of belonging, purpose, and



Smoke rises from a building hit in an Israeli airstrike in Tyre, southern Lebanon, on Nov. 16, 2024.
● MOHAMMED ZAATARI/AP



In reality, it is the West — with its wars, sanctions, and occupations — that has consistently disrupted peace and progress in the region. Iran's role as a stabilizing force counters this agenda, offering a path toward self-reliance and dignity for the people of the region.

connection to the land. This struggle is not only against external forces but also against internal betrayal. Certain individuals and entities within the region serve as tools of Western propaganda and manipulation, undermining collective efforts for liberation and self-determination. The people of the region must recognize and reject these internal threats, affirming their commitment to their shared heritage and aspirations. Iran's steadfast support for Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq is not merely a geopolitical strategy but a manifestation of its vision for a stable, independent region. Iran's cultural, historical, and religious ties to these nations form the foundation of this vision. For Iran, the stability of its neighbors is intrinsically linked to its own security and prosperity. This interconnectedness challenges Western narratives that portray Iran as a destabilizing force.

In reality, it is the West — with its wars, sanctions, and occupations — that has consistently disrupted peace and progress in the region. The chaos imposed by the West ensures that the region remains fragmented and dependent. Iran's role as a stabilizing force counters this agenda, offering a path toward self-reliance and dignity for the people of the region.

The Zionist entity, facing unprecedented resistance on multiple fronts, is grappling with a crisis of legitimacy. Its reliance on brute force and blatant disregard for international norms has alienated even its closest allies. The targeting of civilians, destruction of infrastructure, and violations of sovereignty have exposed the true nature of the occupation.

Hezbollah's resilience and Iran's support have not only chal-



Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike on Dahiyeh, in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Nov. 16, 2024.
● BILAL HUSSEIN/AP

lenged the military dominance of the Zionist entity but also its moral standing before its Western backers. The Zionist entity's long-promoted narrative of victimhood is increasingly under scrutiny as the world witnesses the disproportionate and indiscriminate nature of its aggression. The future of the region lies in awakening to its shared iden-

tity and rejecting the divisive tactics of its adversaries. The Arab, Eastern, Islamic, and national identities that unite the region's people are powerful tools of resistance against external domination. This awakening must also expose and confront internal enablers of Western agendas. Resistance, as embodied by Hezbollah, is not merely a military

campaign but a broader movement for justice, dignity, and self-determination. This transformation reflects the strength of unity and the enduring spirit of a people who refuse to be subjugated. Ultimately, Hezbollah's transition from defense to offense signals a new chapter in the struggle against the Zionist en-

tity and its Western allies. This shift demonstrates the group's resilience and the unwavering support of its allies, especially Iran. As the West's attempts to destabilize and divide the region are met with increasing solidarity and resistance, a new era is emerging. The Zionist entity, once unchallenged in its aggression, now faces a for-

midable adversary that refuses to yield. This is not merely a battle for survival but for a future where the region's people can live in dignity, free from occupation and oppression. It is a struggle for sovereignty, justice, and the right to determine their own destiny — a struggle that Hezbollah and its allies are determined to win.

Israel: Beginning of the end

By Stefan Moore
Documentary filmmaker, producer

O P I N I O N

Contrary to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's bellicose July 24 speech before a joint session of the United States Congress pledging to achieve "total victory" over Hamas, Israel is being decisively defeated – militarily, economically and as a society. On the battlefield — despite Israel's genocidal campaign of bombing, mass starvation and assassinations — the prospect of victory over Hamas and Hezbollah is now seriously disputed by many of Israel's former and current military and intelligence officials.

Israel really is "galloping towards the edge of an abyss...losing more and more soldiers as they get killed or wounded," wrote former General Yitzhak Brik in Haaretz. "Every passing day the Israel Defence Force grows weaker and the number of dead and wounded in action among our soldiers rises...If we continue fighting in Gaza by raiding and re-raiding the same targets, not only won't we bring Hamas to collapse, but we'll collapse ourselves." Brik's assessment is shared by other top Israeli officials. "It's evident that we are unequivocally losing [the war]" former Mossad deputy chief Ram Ben-Barak told Israel public radio. "Show me one thing we have succeeded in?" And according to Major General Gadi Shamni, a former commander of the Israeli military's Gaza division, "Our soldiers are winning every tactical encounter with Hamas, but we're losing the war, and in a big way." Even Israel's own military propagandists are countering the Netanyahu cabinet's narrative: "The idea that it is possible to destroy Hamas, to make Hamas vanish — that is throwing sand in the eyes of the public," said Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari. "Hamas is an idea, deeply rooted in the hearts of the residents of Gaza." Former US Marine intelligence officer Scott Ritter describes the unsustainable battle on the ground: "[Israel's] army is exhausted," he says, "their tanks are broken down, they're running out of spare parts, they're running out of ammunition...the desertion rate is now between 12 and 24 percent." Official figures for dead and wounded soldiers in Gaza (almost certainly an undercount) are beginning to leak out. In an interview on Israel's Channel 12, Knesset opposition leader Yair Lapid said that 890 soldiers had been killed and 11,000 injured in the first 12 months of the war.

Battle-hardened Hezbollah
The casualties are also mounting in southern Lebanon as Israeli soldiers encounter a battle-hardened foe. "Hezbollah has had 18 years to prepare for this," says Ritter. "Nothing Israel is doing is taking Hezbollah by surprise. They know what kind of weapon systems they have and they're going to lure Israel in and kill them ...

Israel is going to walk into one trap after another." Increasingly, public support within Israel is eroding as news reports pour out about soldiers' funerals and grieving families. Israel is portraying "the string of recent military successes in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Lebanon as proof that its strategy has been right and that the war must continue on every front," writes Amos Harel in Haaretz. "But in reality, it's impossible to ignore the price that continuing the war for much longer would entail." On top of mounting military casualties, that price includes the disastrous economic toll as thousands flee their homes, businesses shut their doors and the consumer economy shrinks. Hamas and Hezbollah shelling in the south and north has displaced an estimated 200,000 Israelis from their homes; foreign labourers are exiting the country and the cancellation of 150,000 Palestinian work permits in the West Bank has brought construction to a standstill. Tourism, a mainstay of Israel's economy, has come to a halt and spending on leisure and entertainment has dropped by 70 percent. An estimated 60,000 Israeli firms have failed this year, Israel's credit ratings have been downgraded multiple times, technology companies are moving overseas and roughly half a million Israelis (many educated high tech professionals) left Israel during the first six months of the war. This trend is not just an economic catastrophe for Israel — the

mass exodus is an existential threat to the very survival of the regime that has been premised on maintaining a Jewish majority since its founding. That was the intention behind the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) that drove 750,000 Arabs out of Palestine and the privately acknowledged goal of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza. Now, the demographic trend is beginning to shift in the other direction. Internally, in the face of impending military and economic collapse Israel is on the verge of civil war. Even before Oct. 7, hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets to protest attempts by Netanyahu's right-wing coalition to abolish the independence of the judiciary. Since the start of the war, Israel has been rocked by mass demonstrations of furious captive families and their supporters; soldiers who are defecting or refusing to serve; war zone evacuees unable to return to their homes and a growing schism between the Israeli cabinet and the military over the goals of the war. "Imagine what will happen when the masses take to the streets," Haaretz journalist Uri Misgav presciently warned a few months into the war: "...protesters will be presented as traitors stabbing the nation and its soldiers in the back... The streets will be aflame. After all, Israel has been flooded with automatic weapons and guns distributed along political lines [a reference to Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's handing out thousands of guns to illegal Jewish settlers on the West Bank] ...



Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu enters the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on Sept. 27, 2024.
● PAMELA SMITH/AP

Democratic Israel is approaching the test of its life. If we don't win it, we simply won't be." Misgav's dystopian prophesy is now unfolding; Israel is collapsing from within while externally it has become a pariah regime in the eyes of the world. Mass demonstrations against Israel's genocidal war have exploded across the Global South and in major cities in the West as the entire international community watches in horror at Israel's genocidal bombing and mass starvation of Gaza's civilian population. Twenty-eight countries in Africa and Latin America have cut all ties with Israel and the UN General Assembly recently voted 170-to-six for a resolute of their own. And now, the International Criminal Court, recognised by 124 countries, has ordered arrest warrants on Thursday for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity." Although the Israel and the United States reject the ICC arrest warrants, unconditional support



Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari: The idea that it is possible to destroy Hamas, to make Hamas vanish — that is throwing sand in the eyes of the public. ... Hamas is an idea, deeply rooted in the hearts of the residents of Gaza.



Israeli soldiers mourn at the grave of Sgt. First Class (res.) Roi Sasson, who was killed in the Gaza Strip, during his funeral at Mt. Herzl military cemetery in the occupied Jerusalem al-Quds, on Nov. 20, 2024.
● MAYA ALLERUZZO/AP

from Israel's staunchest allies is no longer certain according to Scott Ritter. "That which made Israel attractive to the United States — the strategic advantage of pro-American Jewish enclave in a sea of Arab uncertainty — no longer holds as firmly as it previously did," writes Ritter in Consortium News. "The Cold War is long gone," he says, "and the geopolitical benefits accrued in the US-Israeli relationship are no longer evident ... the United States, in the end, will not commit suicide on behalf of an Israeli state that has lost all moral legitimacy in the eyes of most of the world." Twenty years ago, former Knesset Speaker Avrum Burg ominously warned of the inevitability of Israel's defeat. "It turns out that the 2,000-year struggle for Jewish survival comes down to a state of settlements, run by an amoral clique of corrupt lawbreakers who are deaf both to their citizens and to their enemies. A state lacking justice cannot survive." As Burg forewarned, we are witnessing the beginning of the end of Israel — that was created nearly eight decades ago following a non-binding United Nations resolution. Defeat may come in months or it may take years by which time the next generation of Palestinian resistance fighters will have grown larger and stronger. Like every guerrilla war from Algeria to Vietnam, the Palestinians will win the political struggle for liberation as Israel implodes from within. Today, Donald Trump and his rabidly Zionist cabinet appointees may draw out Israel's offensive but they won't fundamentally change the calculus. In the foreseeable future, Israel will cease to exist as a nation, hopefully replaced by a secular, democratic state where Palestinians and Jewish citizens will be able to live side by side in peace.

The full article first appeared on Consortium News.

Iran Greco-Roman team edges out Russia in PWL7



Sports Desk

Iranian Greco-Roman team walked away with a 21-19 victory over Russia at the Poddubny Wrestling League 7 in Moscow.

It all went down the wire at the superheavyweight contest, where reigning world champion Amin Mirzazadeh beat the host's Sergey Semenov to make it tied at 5-5, though it was enough to give Hassan Rangraz's 10-man squad a technical-point edge in the friendly head-to-head – named after late Soviet wrestler Ivan Poddubny.

Russians got off to a flying start on home soil, taking a 2-0 advantage through Emin Sefershaev and Dinislam Bammatorov.

Sefershaev defeated Pouya Dadmarz 2-1 in the 55kg bout, making amends for the last-four loss to the Iranian in October's World Championships, while world under-23 silver medalist Bammatorov came out victorious over Ali Ahmadi Vafa – a winner of double world age-group titles this year – 7-1 in the 60kg contest.

Former world U23 and junior champion Iman Mohammadi got Iran off the mark, thanks to a 4-0 win over

Anvar Allakhiarov in the 63kg clash, before Saeid Esmaeili produced another thrilling performance, reminiscent of his gold-winning campaign at the Paris Olympics, to outclass Ruslan Bichurin by technical superiority (9-1) in the 67kg bout. Representing Iran in the 72kg event, Mohammadreza Geraei gave the country a first overall advantage of the evening with a criteria win (1-1) against European bronze medalist Narek Oganian, but Sergey Kutuzov defeated Ali Oskou 6-2 in the 77kg class to draw the host level.

A controversy-ridden 82kg contest, which was interrupted by lengthy video reviews on a couple of occasions, saw world champion Mohammadali Geraei rally past Islam Aliev 7-6.

An Olympic silver medalist in August, Alireza Mohmadi was stunned 5-2 by Milad Alirzaev in their 87kg encounter, and Artur Sargsian out-muscled Mahdi Bali 7-1 in the penultimate bout (97kg) to put Russia in front.

The visitors, however, had the last laugh when Mirzazadeh came from behind to defeat the European 130kg champion on criteria (2-2) and secure the team triumph for Iran.

● IAWF

Iran crowned IFCPF World Cup champion

Sports Desk

Iran's seven-a-side football team defeated Ukraine 3-0 to lift the men's trophy at the 2024 IFCPF World Cup in Salou, Spain.

Mahdi Bakhshi gave Iran the lead over the defending champion seven minutes into the game, before Hossein Tizbor and Mahdi Shokouhi found the net inside five minutes in the second half (43' and 48') to round off an emphatic run for Ali Raadi's men in the 16th edition of the flagship international event for cerebral palsy football.

Iran began its campaign with a 4-0 victory

over Venezuela and then came out victorious over Ireland (3-0) and Germany (4-0) to win Group D and progress into the quarter-finals.

Tizbor and Bakhshi were on scoresheet in each half with Philip Pincince scoring an own goal as Iran beat the United States 3-0 in the last eight.

In the semifinals, Bakhshi and Shokouhi bagged a couple of goals in the first-half stoppage time, before Moslem Mehrabian and Amirhossein Qorbani doubled the scoreline in the second period to steer Iran to a 4-0 triumph against Brazil for a place in the final showdown.



● IFCPF

Iranian Hazfi Cup: Tractor crashes out; Carteron off to winning start on Sepahan bench

Sports Desk

Tractor was stunned by Golgozar Sirjan in the round of 32 in the Iranian Hazfi Cup – the Memorial of Khorramshahr Liberation – falling to a 2-1 defeat against Mahdi Tartar's men in Tabriz.

Albanian striker Sokol Cikalleshi gave Dragan Skocic's side an 18th-minute lead from the spot, only to see his strike canceled

out by Mahdi Tikdari, whose deflected effort from the edge of the box went past Hossein Pourhamidi with four minutes from halftime.

Pourhamidi, who filled in for Iranian international keeper Alireza Beiranvand, then made a mess of Pouria Latifipour's long-range low drive in the 64th minute as the visitors took a surprise lead and held out for a place in the last 16.

Elsewhere, French head coach Patrice Carteron, who replaced Portuguese Jose Morais last week, celebrated his debut on Sepahan bench with a 2-0 away win against second-tier club Pars Jonoubi Jam.

Kaveh Rezaei put the Persian Gulf Pro League leader in front 12 minutes into the game, before Javad Aqaiepour came off the bench to seal the victory in the third minute of added time. Kheybar Khorramabad progressed with a 1-0 win at Fard Alborz, courtesy of Mehrdad Qanbari's strike in the 43rd minute, while Mes Rafsanjan defeated Shenavarsazi Qeshm by the same scoreline, with Mahdi Sharifi finding the net in the 77th minute.



◀ Golgozar Sirjan's Pouria Latifipour (99) celebrates his goal with teammates during a 2-1 victory over Tractor in the Iranian Hazfi Cup in Tabriz, Iran, on November 22, 2024.
● FFIRI

Antetokounmpo stars as Bucks win again in NBA Cup

BBC – Giannis Antetokounmpo recorded his second triple-double of the season as the Milwaukee Bucks led wire-to-wire to beat the visiting Indiana Pacers.

The NBA's two-time Most Valuable Player claimed 37 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists as the Bucks won 129-117 on Friday to improve to a 2-0 record in the NBA Cup. Damian Lillard added 24 points and 13 assists for his third straight double-double, and the result means Milwaukee have won five of their last six since opening the season with a 2-8 record.

Jaylen Brown had 31 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics to a 108-96 win at the stubborn Washington Wizards.

Jayson Tatum and Jrue Holiday added 16 points each for last season's NBA champions, who have won three straight overall and are 2-1 in the NBA Cup. James Harden had 22 points and nine assists as the Los Angeles Clippers extended their winning streak to four games

with a 104-88 victory against the visiting Sacramento Kings. Last season's MVP Nikola Jokic returned for the Denver Nuggets after missing three games for the birth of his second child and had a triple-double of 33 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists.

However, that was not enough to stop the Nuggets losing 123-120 at home to the Dallas Mavericks, for whom Naji Marshall scored a career-high

26 points.

Jared McCain declared to the crowd that he is "the rookie of the year" after scoring a three-pointer in the Philadelphia 76ers' 113-98 win over the visiting Brooklyn Nets.

The 20-year-old, who was the 16th overall draft pick in June, scored 30 points as the Sixers halted a five-game losing streak, despite playing without Joel Embiid and Paul George.



Iran nixes US, UK accusations over Ukraine war

Iran's ambassador to the UN categorically rejected as baseless accusations made by the US and UK against Tehran over the Ukraine war and regional destabilization.

"I categorically reject the identical accusations made by the representatives of these two countries against Iran concerning the conflict in Ukraine," Amir Saeid Iravani wrote in a letter to rotating President of the UN Security Council Barbara Woodward.

He said that Iran's position on Ukraine is "clear, consistent, and remains unchanged," Press TV reported.

Iravani said the US,



● AFP

through its unconditional political, military, and financial support for Israel, bears direct responsibility for the destabilization of the region and the atrocities committed against civilians in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

"It is an irrefutable fact that the civilian deaths, devastation, and destruction of infrastructure in Gaza and Lebanon are enabled by US-made weapons and its unwavering support, while its repeated vetoes of cease-fire resolutions in the Security Council shield Israel from accountability," Iravani said. The US, he said, has paralyzed the Security Council, and granted Israel a

license to continue its aggression and carnage under the pretext of self-defense with full impunity as evidenced by the recent US veto of the cease-fire resolution on Gaza.

"Similarly, we reject the baseless allegations made by the UK's Foreign Minister [David Lammy] in the meeting, accusing Iran of regional destabilization. These unfounded claims are an obvious attempt to obscure the UK's own historical and ongoing role in creating instability and turmoil in the region.

"The UK's colonial imposition during the Mandate for Palestine coupled with its calculated political engineering to deprive the

Palestinian people of their rights, laid the foundation for the injustices and brutalities we witness today," Iravani said.

He said the UK played a pivotal role in the establishment of the usurping Israeli regime and is directly complicit in the displacement, suffering, and oppression of the Palestinian people.

"The United States and the United Kingdom cannot absolve themselves of responsibility while enabling Israel's crimes. Their unconditional support of Israel perpetuates conflict and undermines the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security."

Navy chief: Iran seeking 'more successful presence' in seas

National Desk

Iran's Navy chief Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said the Navy has prioritized updating and modernizing its vessels for "more successful presence" in the seas.

Given the challenges facing the countries in the world at seas such as smuggling, piracy and maritime terrorism, protecting and safeguarding the country's interests requires having powerful navy at the regional and

international levels, Irani said while addressing a press conference held on the occasion of Iran Navy Day on Saturday.

Referring to the Navy's measures in this regard, Irani said the Iranian Navy is currently manufacturing a number of new submarines that will be soon brought to service.

Hailing the Navy's missile power, the commander said his forces have missiles with a range of over 1,000 kilometers, adding that the Iranian Navy

has also enhanced its electronic warfare capabilities.

Admiral Irani added that the Navy has begun to build destroyers more powerful than the Mowj-class ones, saying that two such military ships are being manufactured.

All ships of this class have a displacement of 1,500 tons and are the largest class of domestic warships, after drone carriers. Due to their function, they are classified as destroyers.

Irani also said strengthening floating military bases in the oceans is on the agenda.

Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

Last year, the Iranian Navy's 86th flotilla of warships successfully completed a round-the-world voyage after sailing 63,000 kilometers of sea routes over a period of eight months.

Iran's Navy chief Rear Admiral Shahram Irani addresses a press conference held on the occasion of Iran Navy Day on November 23, 2024. ● IRNA



Italian court rules Jerusalem al-Quds cannot be Israel's 'capital'

An Italian court has ruled on the status of the occupied Palestinian city of Jerusalem al-Quds, underlining that the holy city cannot be acknowledged as the "capital" of the Israeli regime.

The significant ruling by the Rome court is based on international legal principles and represents worldwide attempts to negotiate the Israeli-Palestinian dispute by taking an impartial position on the controversial matter of the city's ownership.

Jerusalem al-Quds is a highly contested city globally due to its profound historical, cultural, and religious importance to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Ever since Israel proclaimed Jerusalem al-Quds as its capital in 1980 with the "Jerusalem Law," there has been widespread international opposition

to this unilateral decision. Many countries keep their embassies in Tel Aviv in order to remain neutral in the conflict, as Palestinians also demand East Jerusalem as the capital of their own state in the future.

The United Nations, with resolutions like UN Security Council Resolution 478, has clearly stated that Israel's declaration is invalid, advising member countries against setting up diplomatic offices there.

The decision from the Italian court was a response to a legal case questioning the official acknowledgment of Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel. The court stated that acknowledging the city as Israel's capital would go against international law and go against Italy's promises to support peace and neutrality in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The court emphasized the significance of diplomacy and dialogue over unilateral declarations by not acknowledging Jerusalem al-Quds as the capital of Israel.

The court's decision implies disapproval of actions taken by countries like the United States, who acknowl-

edged Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's capital in 2017 during the Donald Trump administration and later moved its embassy there.

More than 700,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

The international community views the settlements as illegal under international law and the Geneva Conventions due to their construction on the occupied territories.

The choice made by Italy could strengthen the EU's united position and confirm its importance as a crucial intermediary in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the rights situation in Palestine, also reacted to the Italian court's ruling and praised the "important" decision.

"Today it doesn't rain, it pours. Important decision in the Italian justice system re the status of [al-Quds]: stop calling it the capital of Israel, it is not. And the judge's motivation is really touching," Albanese wrote in a post on her X social media account.



Israel pounds central Beirut, kills over 15



Firefighters battle the flames after a building was hit in an Israeli airstrike in the Hadath neighborhood of Beirut's southern suburbs on November 23, 2024. ● AFP

Lebanon said an Israeli air strike in the heart of Beirut that brought down an eight-storey residential building and jolted residents across the city killed at least 15 people on Saturday.

The attack in the capital was followed by others in the city's southern suburbs after calls by the Israeli military to evacuate the area, AFP reported.

"The strike was so strong it felt like the building was about to fall on our heads," said Samir, 60, who lives in a building facing the one that was destroyed.

The Israeli strike, which hit the working-class Basta neighborhood, killed at least 15 people and wounded 63, Lebanon's Health Ministry said, adding it had also left behind "a large amount of body parts that are being identified."

"The final death toll will be determined after DNA tests are carried out," the ministry said in a statement.

The state-run National News Agency (NNA) said Israeli jets had launched six missiles at the structure, causing "wide-

spread destruction in buildings" nearby. The predawn attack in Basta was not preceded by an evacuation warning from Israel's military.

A Lebanese security source told AFP on condition of anonymity that the strike had "targeted a leading Hezbollah figure", though it was unclear if they were killed. The official did not name the figure.

Another strike hit the neighborhood of Hadath in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Israel stepped up its campaign against the resistance group in late September, targeting its strongholds in the east and south as well as south Beirut, and later sending in ground troops after nearly a year of limited cross-border exchanges of fire.

Lebanon's Health Ministry says at least 3,645 people have been killed since October 2023, when Hezbollah began trading fire with Israel in solidarity with its Palestinian ally Hamas. Most of the deaths have been since September this year.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran's 'In the Arms of the Tree' awarded at Asian World Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian family drama 'In the Arms of the Tree' won the Snow Leopard Special Jury Prize at the 10th Asian World Film Festival (AWFF). Over 60 films and special screenings, including 24 Academy Award submissions for Best International Feature Film, were presented over the nine days of the AWFF, held in Los Angeles, US, November 13 – 21. The film, written and directed

by Babak Khajeh Pasha and produced by Sajjad Nasrollahi Nasab and Mohammad Reza Mesbah, was selected as the representative of Iran's best international feature film for the 97th Academy Awards, ISNA reported. 'In the Arms of the Tree' tells the story of Kimia and Farid, a couple married for twelve years, whose life crisis shatters their children's world, children who know nothing but simplicity and kindness in life. This year, 'In the Arms of the Tree'

was screened at the AWFF, which showcases the best of Asian cinema in Los Angeles to promote Asian film talent and strengthen ties between the Asian film industry and Hollywood. The festival is supported by diverse Asian communities in Los Angeles and is open to the general public who are interested in foreign and independent cinema. Maral Baniadam, Javad Qamati, Rouhollah Zamani, Ahoura Lotfi, and Rayan Lotfi are in the cast among others.



Tehran wins top booth prize in Almaty

Arts & Culture Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran was awarded the top booth at the 12th Kazakhstan International Book and Printing Exhibition, held in Almaty from November 20 to 22. According to the organizers' evaluations, Iran's booth stood out among those of other participating countries from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Asia, IRNA reported. The organizers awarded the Iranian cultural center a certificate and plaque for the best booth,

citing its artistic design, variety, and innovative ideas. The exhibition was attended by high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and Information, Writers' Union of Kazakhstan, and other prominent figures, including Iranian Consul General Mohsen Faghani and Cultural Attaché Hossein Aghazadeh. At the exhibition, Iran's Cultural Center showcased the country's scientific, educational, tourism, and artistic capabilities, as well as the achievements of Iranian

women. The University of Tehran's School of Medicine also participated in the exhibition, offering information on medical education opportunities. Visitors to the Iranian booth were provided with a wealth of information on the benefits and opportunities of studying and traveling to Iran, in Kazakh, Russian, and English. Two websites from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education were introduced to the audience, allowing them to select universities and register for courses. The Iranian cultural center also organized two competitions for young Kazakhs, one of which tested their knowledge of Persian poetry and offered five educational opportunities in Iran as prizes. The second competition, held on social media, awarded 10 handmade crafts to participants.



Iran's tourism industry a crowd-puller at Ankara fair

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's rich cultural heritage and tourism industry were a major draw at the 7th International Tourism and Travel Fair (TRAVELEXPO) held in Ankara, Turkey, from November 14 to 17. The event drew in visitors from over 40 countries, as well as Turkish provinces and tourism-related institutions and companies. Iran's booth was a standout attraction at the fair, showcasing the country's traditional crafts and tourist attractions. The stall, set up by Iran's cultural center in Ankara, proved to be a major crowd-puller, with many visitors eager to learn more about traveling to Iran. Visitors to the booth were treated to a wealth of information on Iran's cultural and historical significance, including its shared civilization with Turkey. They also learned about the benefits of traveling to Iran, including its rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and natural beauty. The booth's popularity was a testament to the growing interest in Iranian culture and tourism, and it provided a unique opportunity for visitors to experience the country's rich heritage firsthand. The booth's attractive display and informative materials made it a must-visit destination for

anyone interested in learning more about Iran. The opening ceremony of the fair was attended by Turkish officials, ambassadors, and representatives of various countries, including Iran's cultural attaché. Russia was the guest of honor at the event, with several tourism companies in attendance. On the sidelines of the event, Iran's cultural attaché, Qassem Nazari, held meetings with political representatives and cultural attachés from various countries, including Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, and Ethiopia, during which the expansion of relations and exchange of experiences were emphasized.



Could the IAEA...

The resolution requests that Iran provide clarification regarding the uranium particles detected at undeclared sites in Turqzabad and Varamin. This request is presented in light of the broader understanding that, since the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, the European signatories have faced challenges in fully adhering to their commitments under the agreement. The resolution encourages the IAEA chief to provide a thorough report on Iran's nuclear activities and its cooperation with the Agency prior to the upcoming Board of Governors meeting. Observers have noted that the adoption of this resolution may potentially set in motion a process that could lead to the activation of the snapback mechanism, thus reinstating the sanctions that were in effect before the JCPOA.

Context surrounding adoption of resolution

In the lead-up to the recent Board of Governors meeting, Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the IAEA, undertook a visit to Tehran, where he had the opportunity to inspect various Iranian nuclear sites. Throughout his discus-

sions with Iranian officials, Grossi was able to reach constructive agreements. Following these discussions, he shared in a press conference that Iran had committed to refraining from any further increases in its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium. It appears that members of the Board of Governors have been influenced by the Quad, comprising the US, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. As we approach Donald Trump's anticipated return to the presidency in approximately two months, it is noteworthy that his "maximum pressure" policy concerning Iran's nuclear program has garnered significant attention. His associated lobbying efforts seem to have encouraged some Board members to lend their support to the resolution. This resolution marks the third notable action taken by European nations concerning Iran in recent months, following sanctions that have targeted Iran's shipping and aviation sectors. These measures come at a time when a reformist Iranian administration is actively pursuing de-escalation and constructive engagement with Western powers. The intent behind these actions appears to be to enhance the

negotiating leverage for future discussions and encourage Iran to consider making further concessions. Advocates of the resolution suggest that Iran has been augmenting its uranium stockpile to levels that could be seen as a step towards weaponization, particularly in light of escalating tensions with Israel. However, it's important to note that these claims were addressed shortly before the meeting, following inspections of Iranian facilities conducted by Grossi, which provided a different perspective.

Iran's response

Following the adoption of the resolution, Mohsen Naziri Asl, Iran's ambassador and representative to the IAEA, expressed Tehran's steadfast commitment to fulfilling its obligations as a member of the Agency. He also underscored that Iran would consider its response to the latest developments with due diligence and care. The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran have collaboratively issued a statement expressing concern that the recent resolution may undermine the constructive atmosphere that has been

fostered. They believe it could have adverse effects on future dialogues. The statement reaffirmed Iran's commitment to ongoing technical and safeguards cooperation with the IAEA in accordance with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Furthermore, it indicated that directives have been issued to commence operations of a new set of advanced centrifuges. Russia's Foreign Ministry expressed concern regarding the resolution, characterizing it as a misstep that may not align with the objectives of non-proliferation. Moscow emphasized that the resolution could be seen as a diversion from the pressing situation in Gaza.

Future Scenarios for Iran

Iran is presented with a variety of potential pathways, which can be broadly outlined as follows:
 1. Demonstrating goodwill: Tehran has the opportunity to lower uranium enrichment levels to below 5%. This gesture could reflect its commitment to constructive engagement with the IAEA and potentially alleviate some international pressures.
 2. Reassessing own nuclear doctrine: The recent decisions from the Board

of Governors may encourage Iran to reconsider its nuclear doctrine. There have been discussions among some members of Iran's parliament encouraging the Supreme Leader to reflect on the existing religious edict (fatwa) that prohibits the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Advocates of this perspective suggest that a withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a commitment to developing nuclear capabilities could enhance Iran's deterrent strength and improve its leverage in diplomatic negotiations.
 3. Implementing threshold strategy: A prudent and cautious approach might involve Iran enhancing its technical, scientific, and infrastructural abilities essential for nuclear weaponization, while refraining from actual production or testing. This strategy would allow Iran to maintain a form of latent nuclear deterrence while steering clear of the potentially serious repercussions associated with openly advancing its nuclear ambitions. Each of these scenarios carries unique implications for Iran's role in the region and its relationship with the broader international community.