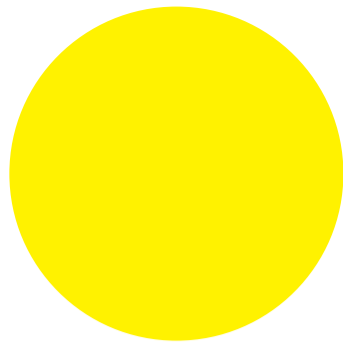


Hemmati to visit Saudi Arabia for economic diplomacy



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## Iran Set to Develop Three Persian Gulf Isles 'With No Strings Attached': MP

'Trio islands have been part of Iran before many Persian Gulf states came into existence'

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### Iran's energy shortages 'threat' to national security, technology development



By Navid Kamali  
Strategic affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In an era where modern computing technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI),

play a pivotal role in shaping the future of global societies and economies, Iran faces a serious multifaceted challenge: the energy imbalance crisis. This challenge, which has increasingly gripped the country's power industry in recent years, extends beyond imposing hourly blackouts and disrupting industrial activities. It represents a fundamental threat to technological development and national security.

According to available statistics, Iran's electricity deficit has reached an alarming 16,000 megawatts - equivalent to the output of 16 nuclear power plants the size of Bushehr. This massive gap between electricity supply and demand occurs while Gartner research institute predicts that by 2027, half of the world's AI data centers will face power shortages. This forecast serves as a serious warning for countries like Iran struggling with structural challenges in energy supply.

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# Iran set to develop three Persian Gulf isles 'with no strings attached': **MP**

'Trio isles have been part of Iran before many Persian Gulf states came into existence'

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza  
Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writers

## INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

A member of the Planning, Budget, and Audit Committee of Iran's Parliament announced that the development of the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf has become a priority, stressing that negligence and restrictions have previously hindered the development of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Bu Musa islands.

"Over the years, some claims about the ownership of the three islands have emerged. In response, we refrained from developing the islands to avoid fueling sensitivities over this matter. However, going forward, we will no longer allow such restrictions to hamper development," Abdolkarim Hashemi said in an interview with Iran Daily.

The lawmaker emphasized that Bu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb are small but strategically vital islands located in Hormuzgan Province near the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route in the Persian Gulf. "These islands play a crucial role in maritime navigation and trade," he said.

Highlighting Iran's historical sovereignty over the three Persian Gulf islands, Hashemi stated, "These islands have been part of Iran since ancient times, including during the reigns of major Iranian empires such as the Achaemenids and Sasanians. This was long before many Persian Gulf nations even came into existence."



He elaborated that the three islands are part of Hormuzgan's 14 islands. "Development plans must extend to all of these islands," he said, pointing to successful investment and infrastructure projects in other regional islands such as

Qeshm and Kish. Hashemi placed a premium on providing similar facilities such as amenities for residents, tourism infrastructure, and commercial opportunities for the three islands.



Hashemi noted that past hesitation to develop these islands stemmed from a desire to avoid provoking disputes over their sovereignty. "This approach must change. Like other islands, the three islands

should benefit from development projects, including job creation and enhanced services for their residents," he said. Reaffirming that the islands are an integral part of Iran, the MP said, "Iran's sovereignty over these islands is absolute and undisputed. Any minor issues raised in this regard will be addressed

regionally. However, there is no doubt neither for Iran nor the global community that these islands belong to Iran."

"Hashemi acknowledged that the far distance of the three islands from Iran's mainland has contributed to slower development compared to closer islands like Qeshm and Kish. Improved transportation infrastructure is essential to accelerate development on these islands," he stated.

While air and sea transport options currently exist, Hashemi emphasized the need to enhance these services for easier access for both locals and visitors.

The three islands have significant potential for tourism and recreation due to their warm and humid climate, especially during colder seasons when other parts of the country experience cold weather. "With their unique environment and beautiful shores, these islands can become a main destination for travelers," the parliamentarian said.

He also pointed to future opportunities for economic and industrial development on the islands, suggesting they could host diverse industrial and commercial projects.

In the current situation, these islands have better capacities in the field of tourism, but in the future, they can be leveraged economically and industrially as various industrial and commercial projects can be implemented there, the lawmaker concluded.

## Hemmati to visit Saudi Arabia for economic diplomacy

### Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Economy is set to travel to Saudi Arabia to participate in the annual World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) conference, which brings together investment companies from 100 countries.

Abdolnaser Hemmati will attend the 28th annual WAIPA meeting on Monday, as the WAIPA's World Investment Conference (WIC) 2024, scheduled from November 25 to 27 in Riyadh, will focus on "Harnessing Digital Transformation

and Sustainable Growth: Scaling Investment Opportunities," IRNA wrote.

"WIC 2024 comes at an important moment in the global economy. As we navigate the nuances of digital transformation and the push for sustainable growth, this event provides an essential platform for leaders to explore the new investment paradigms that will shape our future," said Ismail Ersahin, the CEO and executive director of WAIPA.

"The need for investment promotion agencies to drive economic develop-

ment and foster foreign direct investment has never been more critical. By bringing together the key global stakeholders in international development and investment, we are creating an environment where strategic partnerships and actionable solutions can flourish."

For more than 27 years, WIC has served as the largest and most prestigious gathering of its kind, offering a unique platform for ministers, CEOs, policymakers, and international institutions to build relationships, share knowl-

edge and forge meaningful partnerships. By connecting FDI professionals from across the globe, WIC aims to foster investment strategies that fuel sustainable economic growth.

"The World Investment Conference offers a global platform not only for networking and insights sharing, but also for collectively shaping the future of global investment. Here, corporate executives, policymakers, international institutions and other stakeholders will gather to explore innovative solutions to the pressing chal-

lenges and unprecedented opportunities for investment and development in a rapidly evolving world," said James X. Zhan, chair of the executive board of WIC. The 2024 edition of WIC will offer multiple conference tracks, all designed to deepen the understanding of investment policies and best practices through expert-led discussions and hands-on learning experiences.

With over 130 members representing over 110 nations, WAIPA serves as the primary global organization promoting investment



promotion and facilitation. By encouraging FDI and highlighting the role of its members, WAIPA continues

to drive global economic growth and development, according to its official website.

## Iran's energy shortages...

With electricity demand for AI data centers potentially increasing by 160% within the next two years, Iran will likely face severe difficulties meeting both this growing need and current basic requirements if present conditions persist.

This concerning situation has implications beyond economic and welfare issues. In a world where AI is recognized as the cornerstone of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and plays a crucial role in defense systems, cybersecurity, and various strategic and operational decision-making processes, the inability to develop indigenous AI technologies could lead to weakened economic, industrial, and even military power. This technological gap could ultimately create

serious vulnerabilities in national security and challenge the country's strategic independence.

To address this multifaceted challenge, the government must pursue comprehensive, long-term strategies that simultaneously focus on increasing energy production, optimizing consumption, and developing infrastructure necessary for advancement in emerging technologies. Key steps include:

Diplomatic efforts to reduce sanctions pressure, enabling the modernization and optimization of existing power plants. Extensive investment in renewable energies, particularly solar and wind power, leveraging Iran's high potential in these areas.

Reforming the economic structure of the power industry to attract private sector investment and create healthy competition in the energy market.

Developing energy storage technologies to better manage power production and consumption.

Close cooperation between the Ministries of Energy, Oil, and Industry to create a comprehensive energy strategy that addresses both current issues and long-term needs in the era of emerging technologies.

The development of renewable energy sources, especially solar and wind power, can help diversify the country's energy portfolio and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Iran, with over 300 sunny days annually in many regions and

extensive windy areas, has significant potential for renewable energy development. This could not only alleviate pressure on fossil fuel power plants but also create jobs, develop indigenous technologies, and potentially lead to electricity exports to neighboring countries.

Furthermore, reforming the economic structure of the power industry is crucial for raising efficiency and productivity. Incorrect pricing policies and untargeted subsidies in the energy sector have led to resource waste and excessive consumption while eliminating incentives for investment in energy production and optimization.

In conclusion, the energy imbalance in Iran is more than a technical or economic problem - it's a serious threat to

national security. Addressing this challenge requires national determination, precise planning, and immediate coordinated action at various governmental levels. Without such measures, Iran risks not only facing recurring blackouts and economic disruptions but also falling behind in global technological competition, weakening its geopolitical position, and ultimately threatening its national security.

The time has come for energy issues and their intricate connection with emerging technologies and national security to be at the forefront of national policymaking. By adopting a comprehensive and forward-looking approach, Iran can pave the way for sustainable and secure development in the 21st century.

# Story of Reydokht; from forgotten grave to archaeological marvel

By Mehrnosh Khalaj  
Guest Contributor

**EXCLUSIVE**

*For thousands of years, Reydokht was lying on her right side in the ground alone, forgotten all but one dream; to be unearthed by archeologists. The discovery of her grave earlier this month was a dream come true for her.*  
An excavation team from Shahid Beheshti University unearthed her more-than-6,000-year-old skeleton in Cheshmeh Ali, an important archeological mound at the edge of the ancient city of Rey and a few kilometers from Tehran, on November 11. Hamidreza Valipour led the excavation team while Iman Mostafapour acted as his deputy.



IRAN DAILY

Some archeology students, who were cooperating with the excavation team, immediately named her as Reydokht or the daughter of Rey.

Valipour told Iran Daily that the most important achievements of the excavation in Cheshmeh Ali, which opened on October 1, was unearthing the architectural remains of a prehistoric village and this grave, dating back to approximately 4,300-4,000 BCE.

He said these new findings could shed light on the life and burial rites of prehistoric humans.

It was in the closing days of the excavation and the team members were ready to wrap up the fieldwork in their two trenches that they came across edges of a potential grave in the middle of one of trenches. That was a good luck. Therefore, they dug more carefully as excavation of a grave requires an experienced archeologist.

"Excavating a grave is exhilarating but it should be done in such a way that no damage is done," Mostafapour said. As Mostafapour was working carefully to expose the pelvic bones of the prehistoric girl, he was feeling the tremendous sense of joy. "The feeling that you are the first person to see it again and touch it for the first time after 6,000 years is the most fascinating part (of being an archeologist)."

After exposing her pelvic bones, the team stopped their part of excavation and asked Hamed Vahdati Nassab, a prehistoric anthropologist from Tarbiat Modares University, to join them and continue excavation until the skeleton was fully exposed. She was lying there in her grave on her right side in a flexed position.

The next step was to take samples for doing further studies. Archaeogenetics, archaeoparasitology, and carbon-14 dating are but a few of the disciplines and advances that can help an archaeologist's work in any country. Some of the studies can be done in Iran, other ones like radiocarbon dating to determine the exact time of the burial and age of the skeleton need assistance from other countries.

Valipour said the preliminary studies by Vahdati Nassab on the skeleton and her anatomy revealed that she was a mature girl, aged around 15 to 16 years old with a height of about 160 cm. Her skull had an artificial cranial deformation that could be either a sign of her social status, or cultural affiliations or else, he added.

The alteration in the skull of human is an intentional body form modification, predating the written history. It was practiced by distorting normal growth of a child's skull by applying pressure.

Also, evidence showed that the prehistoric girl had tiny shell, bone and stone ornaments and beads, which were worn by her as anklet, necklace, bracelet, and headband. There was also ochre clay in her grave.

"While these ornaments provide hints about the personal aspects of her prehistoric life and the technology used by the prehistoric humans to make them, the ochre clay could give clues about their afterlife beliefs," Valipour explained.

"This burial is not just in the form of a pit that dug in the floor of the residential unit, but a wall or a burial chamber was created for it, the evidence of which was obtained in the form of standing bricks, and more work on it will be done in the next season," he said.

Cheshmeh Ali has been the focus of archeological interest since 1912, leading to two inconclusive excavations at the site in 1912 and in 1924. The US archeologist Erich Schmidt conducted extensive excavation during 1934-36 at the site and identified two historic Islamic and Parthian periods and two prehistoric Chalcolithic and Neolithic levels there. But the record of his excavation remained unpublished due to his sudden death in a plane crash in 1964.

After a 61-year hiatus, a collaborative Anglo-Iranian excavation was conducted in 1997 at the site to focus on the prehistoric sequence of Tehran plain. The result was

published.

Now after another break of 27 years, the archeological department of Shahid Beheshti University has proposed a five-year plan and resumed excavation at the 7,000-year-old mound, focusing on evidences to show whether the sociocultural evolution of the societies shows a pattern of continuity or change in the Central Plateau of Iran.

"This program aims to study the process of the cultural evolution of the societies from the Neolithic to the Chalcolithic periods," a statement by the archeological department of Shahid Beheshti University read. "It also will assess some proposed hypotheses and theories about the reasons for cultural changes in the Central Plateau of Iran and the variables influencing this process."

Valipour and Mostafapour revealed another more ambitious plan too that is turning Cheshmeh Ali into a site museum in the future.

This site museum can give tourists a view of how ancient societies lived; raise awareness and sensitivity among locals towards their heritage; preserve artefacts and objects; protect the site against heightened concern with looting and the last not the least provide financial resources for more archeological excavation and studies at the site.

For the time being until the site museum will open to make people familiar with the archeological works, the immediate concern of the excavation team is preservation of the findings, particularly Reydokht.

Mostafapour said that if the skeleton was left there in the grave, it could draw the attention of looters because "they always think something precious can be found in any ancient grave".

The best option was to mold the skeleton and put it on display in a museum for the public. But this option was not possible because the skeleton was on the verge of pulverization due to earlier irrigation by the municipality in the previous years. Therefore, the team had to walk into another path.

"We had to separate every single bone of her, record them and kept them in Archeological Research Center for later study," said Mostafapour to explain about the fate of Reydokht so far.

Divided to the bone, Reydokht may finally wish that her 6,000-year odyssey will one day end in a site museum in Cheshmeh Ali where she can rest in peace forever.





By Hamid Javadi  
Political  
journalist

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

As the curtain begins to fall on Joe Biden's presidency, one can't help but wonder if his legacy will reflect the hope he once inspired or the uncertainty that now looms large over the United States and its future.

Biden's time in office could have been remembered as a progressive chapter in American history, led by a man who once served as vice president to Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, and who came to power in the midst of a global pandemic after an administration that thrived on the politics of division and hate.

US President Joe Biden (R) meets with US President-elect Donald Trump at the White House in Washington on Nov. 13, 2024.  
ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

# Biden's legacy: The cost of complacency in a Trumpian era



Ironically, it will most likely be viewed as a mere intermission between two Trump terms that threaten to reshape America's future and further erode its values.

For his supporters, Biden's story might be one of triumph against the odds, an improbable political career that has spanned over 50 years—a journey marked by personal loss and resilience as he rose from local Delaware politics, through the halls of the US Senate, to the vice presidency, and finally to the very office he had long coveted; the White House. But even for them, Biden's decision to run again in 2024, despite the murmurs of concern from donors and congressional allies, who questioned whether the 81-year-old could handle the rigors of another campaign, has left his presidential legacy hanging by a thread. In the end, Biden has no one but himself to blame for derailing his presidency and ruining Democrats' shot at remaining at the helm. His insistence on an early and seemingly impromptu debate against Trump turned out to be a double-edged sword. His poor performance exposed the true extent of his cognitive decline and kick-started an unprecedented campaign within his own party to push him off the Democratic ticket.

Biden's decision to finally drop out of the race in July—as was his initial insistence to remain in the race—was arguably an attempt to give the country a chance to close its Trumpian chapter. But he threw in the towel too late, depriving his fellow Democrats of the opportunity to stage an open primary and select a strong candidate supported by the party's rank and file. As Biden exited the race, he

swiftly endorsed his vice president, Kamala Harris, as the Democratic nominee without consulting party leaders, and Harris ended up suffering a bruising defeat to Trump in the November 5 election.

Biden will forever be blamed for that defeat; for running a race he was too complacent—and perhaps too old—to realize he could not win. He will unwittingly become complicit in America's plunge into authoritarianism.

When President Biden took office in January 2021, he faced the daunting task of cleaning up the mess left in the wake of the Trump administration. He made his mission clear: to restore order to the global stage and re-establish the United States as the linchpin of international stability.

While Biden tried to cloak his foreign policy agenda in the rhetoric of democracy and order, it has, in fact, been steeped

in imperial ambition. He oversaw the expansion of NATO, used Ukraine as a strategic pawn to counter Russia, and increased military presence in the Indo-Pacific to keep China in check.

Biden's decision to hastily withdraw troops from Afghanistan in August 2021—driven by a desire to make up for his failure to convince Obama to end the endless war—resulted in a chaotic and embarrassing exit that drew sharp criticism from foes and friends alike. Republicans, who had previously struggled to find a foothold in their attacks, seized the moment to paint him as incompetent.

As Biden's approval ratings continued to nosedive, other political headaches began to emerge: a surge in illegal immigration, soaring inflation, and, by late 2023, the war in Gaza, waged largely with his administration's political and military support for Israel.

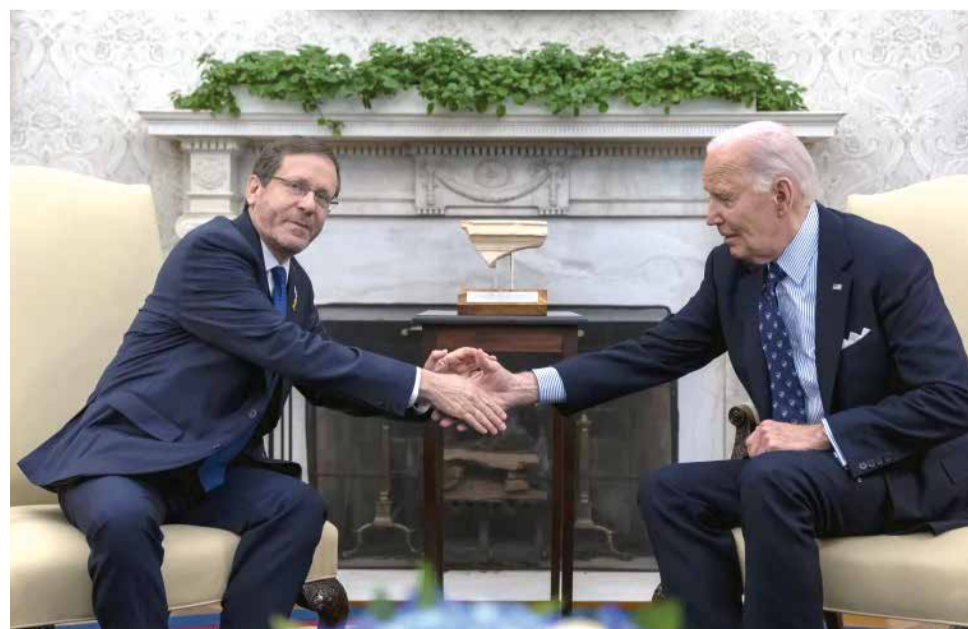
The war, which later spread to Lebanon and other parts of the region, split the nation's opinion on Biden and added a layer of complicity in genocide and ethnic cleansing to his legacy. Biden still has an opportunity, before his term officially ends, to pressure Israel to cease its aggression in Gaza, where approximately 90% of the 2.3 million residents have been displaced, often multiple times, and hundreds of thousands are living in dire tent camps with limited food, water, or basic services. According to the Health Ministry in Gaza, 44,056 people have been killed and 104,268 injured since the onset of the war last October. This could be the chance for President Biden to redefine his fleeting legacy as he nears the twilight of his long political career, at least in the foreign policy arena, which he has long viewed as his strong suit. However, it seems increasingly

unlikely that Biden, a self-professed Zionist, will act on the moral imperative and execute a major policy shift by backtracking on his commitment to multibillion-dollar military aid to Israel.

So far, mass protests, student activism, and internal dissent within the State Department and other federal agencies regarding the administration's complicity in genocide have all failed to rekindle a reckoning for Biden. His historical allegiance and personal bond to Israel will likely constrain his ability to do the right thing in the remaining days of his lame-duck presidency.

With Trump's landslide victory, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, can expect a freer hand than he had under Biden to advance the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and pursue his expansionist agenda in the occupied West Bank. There will be no talk of a Palestinian state and threats of cutting military aid. It's a harsh reality of politics that President Biden will be remembered not for his promise of transcending America beyond the age of division, nor for his ability to remove Donald Trump from the White House, but for setting the stage for his astonishing comeback. The true measure of Biden's presidency may rest not in his accomplishments but in what he could not achieve. Five years ago, he positioned himself as a bulwark against Trump and all that he represented; now, he faces the prospect of being blamed as the architect of a return to that very chaos.

It is not far-fetched to suggest that President Biden's legacy will be overshadowed by Donald Trump's second term in office



President Joe Biden shakes hands with Israel's President Isaac Herzog (L), during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, on Nov. 12, 2024.  
BEN CURTIS/AP



As Biden's approval ratings continued to nosedive, other political headaches began to emerge: a surge in illegal immigration, soaring inflation, and, by late 2023, the war in Gaza, waged largely with his administration's political and military support for Israel. The war split the nation's opinion on Biden and added a layer of complicity in genocide and ethnic cleansing to his legacy.



By Andrew Mitrovica  
Al Jazeera columnist

## OPINION EXCLUSIVE

If a Pulitzer Prize was handed out for the (unintentionally) funniest, stitch-inducing headline drafted by a "major" news organisation in 2024, then *The New York Times* – which craves such frivolous baubles – would win it without question.

# On genocide, Trump will be no different from Biden

Here's the "award-winning" headline, published last week in the aftermath of US President-elect Donald Trump's diplomatic selections that, according to the Times, will "help shape President-elect Trump's strategy" on the Middle East.

"Trump's Middle East Picks Signal Staunch Pro-Israel Policy," the Times wrote. It is just so comical, isn't it? An identical headline could have been recycled verbatim after every Democrat or Republican president-elect made public his "Middle East picks" since Israel's engineered inception in 1948. My goodness.

The headline's implicit suggestion is that, somehow, for some puzzling reason, there may have been a scintilla of doubt that Trump was not going to adopt a "Staunch Pro-Israel Policy" like all his deferential predecessors.

East is not necessarily a prerequisite in the White House or the State Department, when it comes to electing or appointing people to take carriage of America's "policy" or "strategy" for that troubled part of the world.

Do the discredited names George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and the late Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell spring to anyone's mind – particularly at the complicit New York Times?

Lest we forget.

Predictably, Joe Biden and Antony Blinken followed the "shock and awe" gang's ruinous footprints by giving the indicted prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, all the money, arms, and "strategic" cover he required to commit genocide in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. Biden, Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Lin-



Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House on Oct. 08, 2019.  
CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

ator Marco Rubio and Representative Elise Stefanik

means the erasure of Gaza and the West Bank, then so be it — decency, human and civil rights conventions, and international law be damned. Beyond the rhetorical edges about a mythical "two-state solution", there is no "daylight" between Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield and Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik concerning the "future" of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. They have no "future".

Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield have permitted Israel to do to Gaza and the West Bank what Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik have long hoped to do to Gaza and the West Bank – turn what remains of Palestinian land into dust and memory by, if need be, lethal and indiscriminate force.

Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik represent the slightly more blunt and profane continuum of America's defining "kill first, think later" attitude towards the Middle East.

That is why Democrats' and the cognoscenti's fuming "outrage" over Trump's "scandalous" cabinet and other high-profile administration choices has been largely reserved – surprise, surprise – for his "controversial" picks for attorney general and defence secretary.

The methodical, more than yearlong destruction of Gaza and the West Bank is stale news.

Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield gave Israel the "green light" to kill as many Palestinians as it wants to for as long as it wants to and Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik will do precisely the same.

On genocide: the new White House gang is the same as the old White House gang.

Hold on. There's still hope. The Arab leaders (pawns) who met with Trump towards the end of the campaign – in rebuff of Kamala Harris – have sent him a letter asking the president-elect "to apply [his] political influence in demanding an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Palestine" with a view towards negotiating "a lasting peace". Of course, a letter – assuming Trump bothers to read it – is bound to change Washington's ingrained view that Palestinians are always the perpetrators and never the victims, and that their lives are as disposable as they are inconsequential.

Yes, a pretty-please-worded letter should finally do the elusive trick.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



A man kisses the body of one of three children as they are carried for burial in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Nov. 21, 2024. Seven-year-old Hamza, his five-year-old brother Abdelaziz, and his four-year-old sister Laila Hassan were among 9 people killed by an Israeli strike in Khan Younis on Wednesday.  
ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

Sure, Trump played nice-nicey with a bunch of gullible Arab "leaders" (pawns) in swing-state Michigan during the presidential election campaign to curry fleeting favour with a "community" he would immediately abandon once he scored 270 electoral votes.

The headline's second underlying inference is that any US president-elect – Democrat or Republican – would consider, let alone be capable of, embracing anything other than a "Staunch Pro-Israel Policy".

Finally, and perhaps most absurdly, in its ongoing and signature efforts to normalise a fascist president-elect, the Times's uproarious headline and sub-headline imply that Trump, who will soon occupy the Oval Office for a second time, has a nuanced understanding of the Middle East that will translate into a well-defined "policy" and "strategy" for the region. My goodness – the sequel. This may be a revelation to the Times, but I don't think that Trump can even distinguish between Iran and Iraq on a map.

But, as we know, a nuanced understanding of the Middle

da Thomas-Greenfield have pursued the same "kill first, think later" "policy" or "strategy" – take your pick – that the "shock and awe" gang employed with such disastrous and inhumane consequences.

You would have reasonably thought that the calamitous invasion of Iraq would have given Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield pause. You would be wrong.

Instead, true to "kill first, think later" form, Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield have enabled a genocide – that has already claimed the lives of more than 43,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women – with the patina of faux seriousness that Trump and halting company lack and that is so valued by the learned cognoscenti at the Times, CNN and MSNBC. So, why anyone, anywhere, would be "shocked" that Trump has chosen an evangelical Christian and wannabe rampaging Israeli settler, Mike Huckabee, to be America's next ambassador to Israel is a silly mystery to me.

Why anyone, anywhere would be "shocked" that pro-Israel zealots like Sen-

would be appointed secretary of state and UN ambassador respectively is also a silly mystery to me.

Like Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield, Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik believe that Israel enjoys the absolute, uncontested "right to defend itself". If that



American armored SUVs carried to Israel are seen on a military plane in an airport in Tel Aviv, Israel on October 19, 2023.



Trump has picked 'staunchly pro-Israel' cadres for his administration, just like all other US presidents of the past 75 years.

# Freestyle fightback as Iran completes double over Russia in PWL7

## Sports Desk

A sensational freestyle fightback saw Iran make a clean sweep of double team victories over Russia at the Poddubny Wrestling League 7 in Moscow.

The triumph came after the Iranian Greco-Roman team had also edged out the wrestling powerhouse 21-19, despite a 5-5 deadlock, in the event – named after late Soviet wrestler Ivan Poddubny – on the preceding night.

The freestyle contest was decided by an even more razor-thin margin as Iran only managed to emerge victorious thanks to a 2-1 record in superiority wins, though Pejman Dorostkar's 10-man squad still had to overcome a 5-0 deficit.

Former world silver medalist Magomedrasul Idrisov handed the host a first win of the night, beating Ali Mo'meni 3-0 in the 57kg bout, before Zaur Uguev, an Olympic champion in Tokyo, doubled Russians' lead with a 5-1 win against Reza Mo'meni in the 61kg clash.

A thrilling 65kg contest saw Russia's Shamil Mamedov come out on top against Olympic silver winner Rahman Amouzad 10-7, and then Kurban Shiraev beat Sina Khalili 5-2 in the 70kg bout. Four-time world and Olympic champion Zaurbek Sidakov dominated Amir-Mohammad Yazdani 12-1 in their 74kg encounter to



put Russia on the cusp of team victory, but the rest of the Iranian squad had other ideas. Fresh from an under-23 world title in October, Mahdi Yousefi got Iran off the mark with a

massive 7-5 victory over Magomed Magomaev in the 79kg meeting, despite trailing the world silver medalist by four points with less than 40 seconds left on the clock.

Two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour also had to come from behind to beat Ibragim Kadiev 8-5 in the 86kg class and find a little consolation after finishing Oc-

tober's World Championships with a loss to American David Taylor in the bronze-medal contest. Amirhossein Firouzpour – also a gold medalist in last month's



Amirhossein Zare', pictured at the Paris Olympics in August, defeated Shamil Musaev by technical superiority in the 125kg bout to steer Iran to a freestyle team victory over Russia at the Poddubny Wrestling League 7 in Moscow.

● OLYMPIC.IR

under-23 world event – rallied past Magomed Kurbanov 5-4 in a 97kg clash marked by refereeing controversy, with Dorostkar threatening to withdraw the Iranian wrestler after his challenge was rejected by a lengthy video review.

Mojtab Goleij conceded the first point for caution against Samdan Bady Maadyr in the 97kg bout but went on to finish off the Russian with an 11-1 rout, meaning it all went down to the wire in the 125kg clash, featuring Amirhossein Zare' and Shamil Musaev.

A winner of five world and Olympic medals, Zare' was caught off guard by a Musaev's early single-leg takedown but again proved to be in a league of his own in the superheavyweight class, easing to a superiority win (12-2) with 50 seconds remaining. Zare's victory leveled the overall scoreline at 21-all but the emphatic wins in the final two bouts saw Iran ultimately come out on top.

**AFC** – Victory is the only option Esteghlal and Pakhtakor have when they square off in their AFC Champions League Elite tie today.

Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal are in eighth place in the standings with three points while Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor – on two points – are 10th with the top eight teams to advance to the knockout stage from the West Zone.

Three defeats have followed Esteghlal's opening day 3-0 win against Qatar's Al Gharafa and another loss would make it their longest run without victory on the continental stage. The Tehran Blues have been struggling domestically as well, sitting 10th in the standings on 11 points, 10 behind pacesetters Sepahan SC.

Goals have also been hard to come by as their last three matches ended without Esteghlal finding the back of the net and they desperately need to have their shooting boots on against

Pakhtakor if they are to challenge for a knockout stage berth.

The Uzbekistan side have also found the going tough with a run of two draws and two defeats and will head into the tie having not beaten teams from Iran on the continental stage in their last six meetings.

The head-to-head is, however, in Pakhtakor's favour with two wins in their previous three meetings but it has been a difficult season for them on the domestic and continental stages, with a 2-0 loss to AGMK on Thursday their ninth defeat in the Uzbekistan Super League.

Meanwhile, Esteghlal's city rivals Persepolis will be hoping to claim a first victory of the campaign when playing away to Al Rayyan SC later today.

Both sides are in desperate need of a win with Qatar's Al Rayyan having accumulated three points from four matches while the Iranian

Reds are one behind.

Al Rayyan ended a run of three consecutive defeats with their 1-0 win over Pakhtakor on Matchday Four and will be hoping to carry that form into their tie against Persepolis.

Inconsistency has been a bane this season, with their form in the Qatar top flight also underwhelming with a 2-1 defeat to Al Shamal on Friday leaving them ninth in the standings on 10 points, 15 behind leaders Al Duhail SC.

Persepolis have also found the going tough on the continental stage, managing just two draws but will count on their record against Al Rayyan to get on the winning trail – having won two and drawn one of their last three meetings with the Qatari side. Their domestic form has been good, advancing to the Round of 16 of the Hazfi Cup with a 3-0 defeat of Songoun on Thursday and sitting just a point behind Sepahan in the Iranian Pro League with a game in hand.

## AFC Champions League Elite:

### Esteghlal, Persepolis desperate for much-needed wins



● AFC

## Verstappen lights up Las Vegas with fourth F1 title



Max Verstappen celebrates after securing his fourth Formula One title in a row at the Las Vegas Grand Prix on November 23, 2024.  
● MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

**REUTERS** – Red Bull's Max Verstappen lit up the Las Vegas night after securing his fourth Formula One title in a row on Saturday in a race won by George Russell in a Mercedes one-two with Lewis Hamilton.

Verstappen finished where he started in fifth but that was all the Dutch driver needed to put the championship, already effectively over, out of reach of McLaren rival Lando Norris with two rounds to spare.

Norris took the chequered flag in sixth, also where he started, making a late pitstop for fresh tyres to secure a bonus point for fastest lap that still left him an insurmountable 63 points adrift.

"What a season. Four times. Thank you guys. Thank you to everyone," Verstappen said over the radio after being con-

gratulated by team boss Christian Horner.

"It was a little bit more difficult than last year but we pulled through and we gave it all."

Norris was quick to recognise his rival's achievement: "As much as it hurts a little bit, saying congrats doesn't hurt," he said.

"He drove an incredible season and when you have the quickest car he dominated and when he didn't he was still there and always on my heels. He made my life tough, we made his tough at times I'm sure, but he drove a better season."

Russell led away cleanly from pole position, fending off Charles Leclerc who surged from fourth to second at the start, and was never troubled as Hamilton charged back from 10th on the grid

on a cold desert night.

"I was planning on flying in a couple of hours but I'm definitely not getting on that flight," said the race winner. "I will enjoy this evening with all my team."

"It's been a dream of a weekend. I don't know how I've been so quick but I'm just enjoying this ride right now."

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was third with team mate Leclerc unhappy in fourth, after suffering early tyre trouble, as the Italian team cut the gap in the constructors' standings to McLaren to 24 points. Oscar Piastri was seventh for McLaren, despite collecting a five second penalty for a false start, and Nico Hulkenberg was eighth for U.S.-owned Haas.

Yuki Tsunoda took points for RB in ninth and Verstappen's struggling team mate Sergio Perez got himself back on the scoreboard in 10th.

# Iran to hold talks with three European powers on Friday

'UK seeking de-escalation in Iran nuclear issue via diplomatic channels'

## International Desk

Iran said on Sunday that it would hold talks with three European powers in the coming days in the Swiss city of Geneva on several issues including Iran's nuclear program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said the meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of Iran, France, Germany and the United Kingdom would take place on Friday.

"A range of regional and international issues and topics, including the issues of Palestine and Lebanon, as well as the nuclear issue, will be discussed," the spokesman said in a Foreign Ministry statement.

Baghaei described the upcoming meeting as a continuation of talks held with the countries in September on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The meeting on Friday may lead to the revival of Iran's nuclear talks to which the three European countries are parties.

## UK warning

On Sunday, a spokesperson for the British Foreign Office told IRNA that London is seeking to reduce tensions over the Iranian nuclear issue through various diplomatic channels.

The spokesperson, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the UK will spare no diplomatic efforts to "prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," and will even resort to triggering the snapback mechanism if necessary.

In 2015, Iran and world powers reached an agreement that saw the easing of international sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But the United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump and re-imposed biting economic sanctions.

Tehran scaled back its commitments to the deal in a series of pre-announced and clear steps after witnessing the failure of other parties, including the

European ones, to secure its interest under the agreement.

The meeting on Friday also comes after the 35-nation Board of Governors of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted an anti-Iran resolution initiated by the three European countries. The resolution denounced Iran for what it called a lack of cooperation.

In response to the resolution, Iran announced it was launching a "series of new and advanced centrifuges."

Centrifuges enrich uranium transformed into gas by rotating it at very high speed, increasing the proportion of fissile isotope material (U-235).

"We will substantially increase the enrichment capacity with the utilization of different types of advanced machines," Behrouz Kamalvandi, Iran's atomic energy organization spokesman, told state TV.

The country, however, also said it planned to continue its "technical and safeguards cooperation with the IAEA."



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in office since July and a supporter of dialogue with Western countries, has

said he wants to remove "doubts and ambiguities" about his country's nuclear program.

## Ayatollah Khamenei: All Israel's figureheads must be prosecuted

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called for the prosecution of all the political and military figureheads of the Israeli regime over their atrocities.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a post published in Hebrew language on X, former Twitter, on Saturday, Press TV reported.

"All the political and military captains of the criminal Zionist terrorist gang must be prosecuted," the post read.

The post was published amid the Israeli regime's October 2023-present war of genocide against the Gaza Strip, and the regime's escalated deadly aggression towards Lebanon ever since as well as its many assassination operations throughout the region that has led to the death of venerable resistance commanders and other leaders.

The war has claimed the lives of at least 44,176 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and wounded 104,473 others, in Gaza, while the escalation has killed more than 3,645



people across Lebanon.

The regime's targeted killing operations have also killed such resistance leaders as former Hamas political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, former Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and the former head of the Lebanese resistance movement's Executive Council Sayyed Hashem Sa-

fieddine.

Ayatollah Khamenei's comments came after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the regime's former minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant over war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

## Hezbollah hits Israel's sites in Tel Aviv and nearby

### International Desk

Hezbollah resistance group fired at least 185 rockets and other projectiles into Israel on Sunday in response to recent deadly Israeli strikes on Beirut.

Hezbollah resistance group said on Sunday it launched missiles at an Israeli Army intelligence base in the Tel Aviv suburbs.

It also said it had "launched, for the first time, an aerial attack using a swarm of attack drones on the Ashdod naval base" in southern occupied territories.

Medical agencies reported that at least 11 people were wounded, including a man in a "moderate to serious" condition.

The wave of projectiles followed at least four deadly Israeli strikes in central Beirut in the past week, including one that killed Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif.

The Lebanese Army, meanwhile, said that a soldier was killed on Sunday and 18 others injured as a result of an Israeli attack targeting an army center. Israeli strikes have killed 19 Lebanese soldiers in the last two months.

Since September 23, Israel has intensified its Lebanon air campaign, later sending in ground troops after nearly a year of limited exchanges of fire with Hezbollah.

Lebanon's Health Ministry says at least 3,670 people have been killed in the

country since October 2023, most of them since September this year.

Top EU diplomat Josep Borrell, who had traveled to Lebanon on Sunday, called for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon. Borrell held talks with parliament speaker Nabih Berri, who has led mediation efforts on behalf of ally Hezbollah. "We see only one possible way ahead: an immediate cease-fire and the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701," Borrell said after his meeting with Berri.

Under Resolution 1701, which ended the last Hezbollah-Israeli war of 2006, only Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers should be allowed to maintain a presence in the south.

It also called for Israel to withdraw troops from Lebanon.

"Back in September I came and was still hoping we could prevent a full-fledged war of Israel attacking Lebanon. Two months later Lebanon is on the brink of collapse," Borrell said.



AFP

## Qalibaf rebukes 'politically motivated' IAEA resolution against Iran

### International Desk

Iran's Parliament speaker censured an anti-Iran resolution passed at the United Nations nuclear agency on Thursday, saying that Tehran has activated new centrifuges in response to the agency's "politically motivated" resolution against the country's peaceful nuclear program.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf made the remarks during an open parliamentary session on Sunday, three days after Board of Governors of the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) voted 19 to 3, with 12 abstentions, for the anti-Iran document.

The resolution initiated by the UK, France, Germany and the US, denounced Iran for what it claimed as a "lack of cooperation" with the UN nuclear watchdog.

Qalibaf said that the "unrealistic, politicized, and destructive approach" adopted by the European troika and the United States led to the issuance of the "unjustified and non-consensus" resolution on Iran's peaceful nuclear activities.

"The Islamic Republic's reciprocal response to the political misuse of the IAEA's Board of Governors was immediately put on the agenda, and the launching of a series of new and advanced centrifuges began," he added.

The Parliament speaker also censured the three European states and the US for using Iran's peaceful nuclear program as an excuse for their illegitimate actions aimed at questioning the IAEA's credibility and independence, as well as tarnishing the constructive atmosphere in Tehran's interactions with the agency.

## Iranian FM to attend UNAOC Global Forum in Portugal

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will head to Portugal to take part in the 10th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), according to the diplomatic apparatus' spokesman.

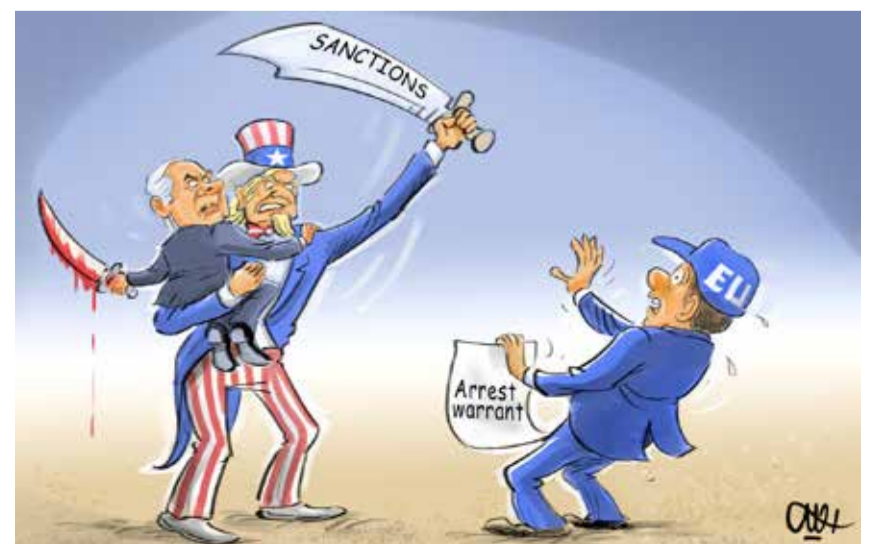
"This trip is in line with Iran's active and influential foreign policy as a representative of one of the oldest civilizations," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei told IRNA on Sunday. The trip is also aimed at cooperating in

diplomatic processes to promote peace based on interaction, dialogue and international understanding, he added.

Araghchi will head to Portugal on Monday to attend the forum set to be held in Cascais on November 25-27.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





## Iran, China ink cooperation agreement in archaeology, heritage preservation

Mostafa Dehpahlavan (l), head of Iran's Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism (RICHT), and Chu Xiaobo, director of the Shanghai Museum, sign an agreement to promote archaeological studies and heritage preservation between Iran and China, in Shanghai, China.

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism (RICHT) and the Shanghai Museum in China signed a cooperation agreement to promote archaeological studies and heritage preservation between the two countries. According to IRNA, the agreement was signed during a visit by Mostafa Dehpahlavan, the head of RICHT, to China, where he and

his delegation toured various sections of the Shanghai Museum, ISNA reported. The agreement aims to develop bilateral scientific and cultural relations in the field of cultural heritage between Iran and China. The agreement covers several areas of cooperation, including "archaeology and interdisciplinary studies", "archaeological survey, conservation, and restoration of historical sites",

"historical research, including archival and library studies", "epigraphic studies", and "research on the history of arts and traditional arts with a focus on comparative studies". The agreement was signed by Mostafa Dehpahlavan, head of RICHT, and Chu Xiaobo, director of the Shanghai Museum. During the signing ceremony, Xiaobo welcomed the Iranian delegation and referred to the successful exhibition of the Na-

tional Museum of Iran at the Shanghai Museum, which was well-received by the Chinese people. Xiaobo emphasized that the Shanghai Museum and the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts have extensive relations, and this agreement is important for enhancing archaeological studies and heritage preservation between the two countries.

He also highlighted the shared heritage of China and Iran, citing the discovery of artifacts from the Siraf port. The director of the Shanghai Museum also mentioned the museum's expertise in archaeological excavations in other regions, such as Sri Lanka, and noted that the agreement with RICHT will lead to more extensive scientific research and cultural exchange along the Silk Road, as well as the preservation of its cultural

heritage. Dehpahlavan expressed hope that the agreement will lead to the launch of a joint archaeological study of the Siraf port, a significant cultural center related to Iranian and Chinese cultures from the Sassanian to the Islamic periods. He also emphasized that the agreement will be a continuous and ongoing operational program between the two institutions.

## Iran's animation 'The Sound of Cloud' picked for Jordan's human rights festival



The short animation "The Sound of Cloud," was selected for the main section of the Karama International Human Rights Film Festival in Jordan. The film, directed by Mohammad Lotfali and written and produced by Hadi Firouzmandi, will be showcased during the festival, which runs from December 5 to December 12, 2024, in Amman, the capital of Jordan, Mehr News Agency reported.

The Karama International Human Rights Film Festival is one of the most significant cinematic events in the Middle East, focusing on human rights issues. Established in 2010, the festival aims to raise public awareness about human rights matters through art and cinema. This year's festival is themed "Justice for the People of the Global South" and emphasizes the legacy of colonialism, racial inequality, and environmental injustices. The main focus of this year's festival is on ongoing struggles for justice, particularly for the people of Palestine and communities in the Global South. "The Sound of Cloud," has already received several international accolades, including the Best Animation Award at the 27th Marano Ragazzi Spot Festival and an Honorary Diploma at the fifth kinofestival "Light of the world" in Russia. This short animation tells a story set between two devastating bomb explosions affecting the innocent children of Gaza.

## Armenian translator celebrates Persian literature's role in 'showcasing Iranian heritage'

### Arts & Culture Desk

An Armenian Iranologist emphasized the importance of Persian literature in showcasing Iranian culture and heritage to the world. Georg Asatryan, who is also a translator, made these remarks during the unveiling ceremony for the Armenian translations of two notable works by Iranian authors on Saturday. The books, 'Shadow of the Monster' by Abbas Jahangirian and 'A Song for Wednesdays' by Farhad Hassanzadeh, were introduced at the Khnko Aper National Children's Library in Yerevan, IRNA reported. Asatryan stated, "Iran is not just introducing itself through its ancient civilization but also through its rich literary achievements." He acknowledged Jahangirian and Hassanzadeh as key figures in contemporary Persian prose, highlighting their contributions to the literary world.

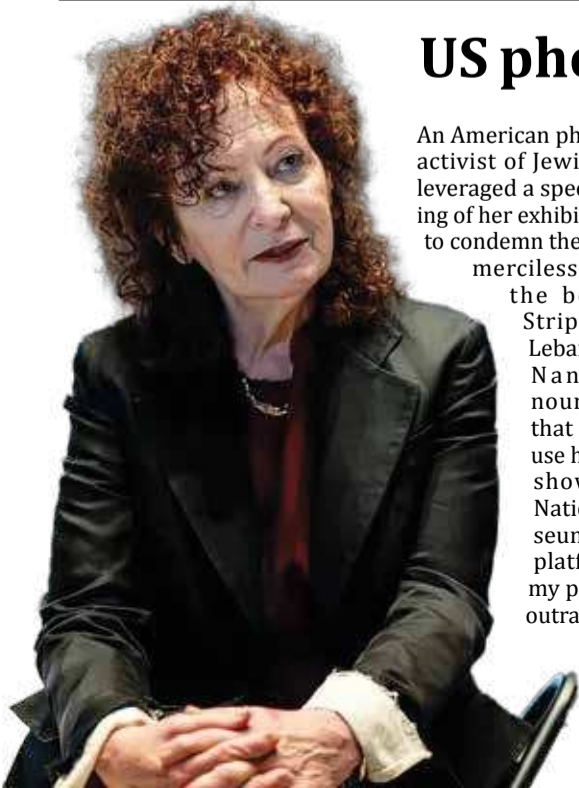
The event saw the attendance of Iran's Ambassador to Armenia, Mehdi Sobhani, along with the authors, translators, and literature enthusiasts, including teachers and students from Persian language schools in Armenia. Rozan Tonoyan, the director of the Khnko Aper National Children's Library, noted the long-standing cultural ties between Armenia and Iran. She described the translation of Iranian literary works as a significant step in strengthening these ties. "The existence of the Iran section in our library, active since 2006, is a clear testament to our cultural relationship," she added. Sobhani spoke about the connection between reading and peace, asserting that societies that value literature tend to be more peaceful. He described children's literature as a vital factor in fostering future peace, stating that the authors of these works are "architects of that peace." He praised Jahangirian and



Hassanzadeh's writings as valuable examples. Jahangirian also addressed the challenges of translating Persian literature, viewing the task as a significant responsibility. He expressed gratitude to Armenian translators for their efforts in introducing Persian literature to Armenian readers.

Asatryan concluded the ceremony by expressing his joy in collaborating with Iranian authors and introducing their works to the Armenian community. He said, "This translation is a valuable opportunity to connect Armenian children with the rich culture and human messages found in Iranian literature."

## US photographer opens Berlin exhibition with anti-Israel speech



An American photographer and activist of Jewish descent has leveraged a speech at the opening of her exhibition in Germany to condemn the Israeli regime's merciless aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon. Nan Goldin announced on Friday that she intended to use her retrospective show at the Neue Nationalgalerie museum in Berlin "as a platform to amplify my position of moral outrage" at "genocide in Gaza and Lebanon."

The 71-year-old photographer said, "My grandparents escaped pogroms in Russia. I was brought up knowing about the Nazi Holocaust. What I see in Gaza reminds me of the pogroms that my grandparents escaped." Goldin pointed to the Israeli regime's displacement and destruction in Gaza, and told a cheering audience that criticism of the occupying entity "should not be conflated with anti-Semitism." The American activist also censured Germany over ignoring Islamophobia in the country, saying, "Germany is home of the largest Palestinian diaspora in Europe. Yet, protests are met

with police dogs and deportation and stigmatization." Goldin walked off the stage to loud chants of "free, free Palestine," which drowned out a subsequent speech by the director of the gallery, Klaus Biesenbach, Press TV reported. Hermann Parzinger, the president of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, to which the Neue Nationalgalerie belongs, rebuked Goldin's talk and the protesters' disruption of Biesenbach's speech. Goldin, who is of Jewish origin, was born in Washington D.C. and is a leading artist and activist whose life and work were documented in the award-winning 2022 film "All the Beauty

and the Bloodshed." Over 44,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and more than 104,000 others wounded in the Gaza war that Israel began on October 7, 2023, following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements. The brutal military onslaught enjoys unreserved military and political support on the part of the Israeli regime's Western allies, including the United States and France. The administration of US President Joe Biden has used its veto power four times to block a ceasefire in Gaza since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war. The US provides Israel with at

least \$3.8 billion in military aid annually, and the Biden administration has authorized \$14 billion in additional assistance to its ally since the war began. The death toll from the Israeli onslaught on Lebanon since October 2023 has surpassed 3,500. More than 15,000 others have also been injured. Most of them have lost their lives in the past month amid the intensified airstrikes and a ground offensive. Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah has been putting up firm resistance in the face of Israeli aggression against Lebanon and vowed to continue its struggle until the regime's onslaught stops.