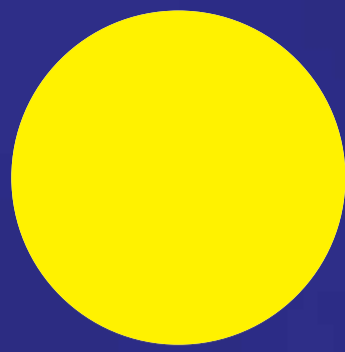




Non-oil exports up 18% in eight months:
IRICA 2 >



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Geneva Conduit for Reviving Iran-Europe Ties

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

On Friday, Geneva will play host to a new round of negotiations between Iran and the European troika. According to the pre-set agenda, deputy foreign ministers from Iran, the UK, France, and Germany will hold talks on a range of bilateral, regional, and international issues, at a time when relations between Tehran and Brussels have hit rock bottom over the past few years. Iran's peaceful nuclear program, the war in Ukraine, Israel's ongoing attacks on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and the fallout of Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election, which could affect ties between Iran and Europe, are

likely to top the agenda. Iran's new government took office with the slogan of engagement with the world and a balanced foreign policy. Many foreign policy experts and analysts have expressed optimism about the start of a new round of talks, emphasizing that Iran and Europe have shared interests that have been harmed by their estrangement. Now, a golden opportunity has arisen for Iran and European countries to take steps toward reducing tensions and getting closer to each other. This path will not only serve the interests of both Iran and Europe but also have a major impact on defusing regional tensions.

To analyze the development, Iran Daily has asked Bahram Qassemi and Abolqassem Delfi to share their thoughts. The two are former diplomats, European affairs experts, and former Iranian ambassadors to France. Qassemi, a former spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, believes that regional and global stability and security depend on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs. He points out that the historical relations between Iran and Europe are a good foundation for building a strong and stable relationship. Delfi thinks that the recent European pressure on Iran over the nuclear issue is a sign of Europe's willingness to engage in dialogue and rapprochement with Iran.



A window of opportunity for restoring relations

Anti-Iran resolution; a precursor to negotiating with Tehran

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

IRAN DAILY: What are the main issues that Iran and Europe currently disagree on as they prepare to start talks?

ABOLQASSEM DELFI: When discussing Iran-Europe relations, we need to bear in mind that Europe is not a monolithic entity. Not all European countries view Iran through the same lens, just as there may be differing perspectives on Europe within Iran. Another point to consider is that Iran and Europe have faced numerous challenges over the past two decades. Once, Europe was Iran's top trading partner, and various European countries had strong bilateral relations with Iran in the fields of science, economy, culture, and politics. However, it's fair to say that Iran-Europe relations are not currently good. The nuclear issue has been the main bone of contention between Iran and Europe since 2002, culminating in the 2015 landmark agreement of JCPOA, which was later derailed by Trump's withdrawal. The nuclear issue remained unresolved until 2022.

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Iran and Europe; a new beginning

By Bahram Qassemi
Former spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In recent days, foreign sources, followed by official sources, have reported on a forthcoming joint meeting between Iran and three European countries at the deputy ministerial level. The news itself, without any premature judgment on its outcome, signals a new beginning, which had been gradually fading into oblivion with the end of president Rouhani's government. The government led president Raisi did not believe in continuing the talks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and argued that the issue was a done deal and non-negotiable. If talks were to take place, they should solely focus on lifting sanctions, making any mention of the JCPOA meaningless and unwelcome. In fact, the word JCPOA seemed to be a "taboo" term in domestic discourse. The insistence on this approach was extremely serious. During the then-Iranian political deputy's trip to the capitals of three European countries after a lengthy hiatus (apparently initiated by the French side and coordinated with the other two capitals), a concerted effort was made to steer clear of mentioning the JCPOA, instead focusing solely on lifting sanctions, and nothing else.

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Hemmati says cooperation roadmap charted with IsDB, OPEC Fund

Economy Desk

Iran's Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati announced plans to strengthen relations with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the OPEC Fund for International Development.

He acknowledged the current challenges in Tehran's interactions with the two institutions, which have been impacted by sanctions, and said future cooperation was mapped out during recent meetings with their leaders, IRNA wrote.

In a statement in Farsi on X, Hemmati detailed his discussions in Riyadh with the heads of both organizations.

"We held extensive meetings and agreed that the OPEC Fund would not only provide loans to developing countries but also utilize the technical and engineering services of Iranian companies and encourage Iranian private investors to participate in joint projects," he said.

Hemmati traveled to Riyadh on Monday to attend the 28th Annual Meeting of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). The three-day event, which began on Monday, focuses on leveraging digital transformation and exploring sustainable growth investment opportunities. During his trip, Hemmati also met Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih. The Global Investment Conference is an international platform aimed at promoting foreign direct investment (FDI), trade, and technology.

Non-oil exports up 18% in eight months: *IRICA*

Economy Desk

The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced an 18% increase in the country's non-oil exports during the first eight months of the current Iranian year, reaching \$38.152 billion.

Foroud Asgari, the IRICA head, presented the latest statistics on Tuesday, highlighting developments in Iran's non-oil trade noting that imports, including gold bullion, amounted to \$45.127 billion during the same period,

IRNA reported.

In terms of weight, Asgari said Iran's imports decreased by 1.73%, reaching 24.525 million tons. Meanwhile, non-oil export reached 103.558 million tons, marking a 14.66% year-over-year increase.

Asgari added that the average value per ton of exported goods rose by 3%, reaching \$368 during the eight-month period.

According to the IRICA head, Iran exported 44.9 million tons of petrochemical products valued at \$17.5 billion during the same period. This represented a 31.43% increase in weight and a 29.79% increase in value compared to the previous year.

China and Iraq were the top destinations for Iranian goods. Asgari stated that China accounted for \$9.9 billion of Iran's exports, followed by Iraq (\$8.3 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$4.8 billion), Turkey (\$4.4 billion), Afghanistan (\$1.6 billion), Pakistan (\$1.5 billion), and India (\$1.2 billion).

These seven countries collectively accounted for 82.29% of the weight and 82.94% of the value

of Iran's total non-oil exports.

The largest sources of imported goods were the UAE (\$13.6 billion), China (\$11.5 billion), Turkey (\$7.8 billion), Germany (\$1.6 billion), Russia (\$1.1 billion), India (\$1 billion), and Hong Kong (\$900 million). Together, these countries represented 76.42% of the weight and 83% of the value of Iran's total imports.

The average value per ton of imported goods rose by 8% to \$1,840 during this eight-month period, Asgari said.

Iran's top export items



included liquefied natural gas (\$5.1 billion), liquefied propane (\$2.2 billion), and methanol (\$1.7 billion). On the import side, the main

items were unprocessed gold (\$4.6 billion), corn for livestock feed (\$1.8 billion), and smartphones (\$1.5 billion).

Speaker urges resolution of major issues causing energy deficit



Economy Desk

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the speaker of Iran's Parliament, said the country faced an energy deficit of more than 15,000 megawatts during the summer of 2024 and stressed that the shortfall caused a 1.5% decline in industrial production and economic growth, resulting in losses for both producers and the government.

Speaking at Tuesday's parliamentary session, during a review of the Energy Committee's report on power outages and fuel supply for thermal

power plants, Qalibaf underscored the need for systemic and strategic solutions.

"The energy sector requires serious attention from intellectuals, parliament, and the government," he said.

Qalibaf underlined as two main responsibilities for the oil and energy ministries the ensuring of a stable energy supply for public consumption and creating added value to guarantee economic growth and boost GDP.

The speaker emphasized that energy resources such as oil, gas, and derivatives are the

country's most significant assets, urging their optimal use. Referring to the energy deficit, he stated, "In the summer, we experienced a deficit exceeding 15,000 megawatts, leading to a 1.5% drop in industrial output, according to the Research Center of Parliament's report. This impacts the government as well as it cannot collect taxes from profits when producers face losses."

He added that during last winter, the country faced a 250 million cubic meter gas shortfall despite industrial shutdowns and pressure drops.

Highlighting the consequences of energy deficits on Iran's global stance, Qalibaf said, "There was a time when we could leverage oil in the face of threats. Now, we lack sufficient production and market control, even if sanctions are lifted. Is this not a loss that demands our attention? Both the government and parliament bear responsibility."

He noted that logistical challenges further complicate the situation, even if production increases. "It's not just a question of burning mazut; the issues

are far deeper," he said, adding that coordination between the Oil and Energy Ministries aims to prevent power outages and ensure fuel delivery.

Qalibaf pointed to fundamental flaws in Iran's energy sector. "We need to resolve these structural issues. The Parliament's Research Center, government, and legislature must work together with expert input to address institutional challenges and conflicts of interest between the two ministries," he stated.

Fuel smuggling

He also revealed that 25-30 million liters of fuel are smuggled daily, emphasizing that this is an organized issue involving major producers and consumers. "Recognizing the problem is the first step to finding solutions," he asserted. Referring to a previous parliamentary law concerning removing production obstacles, Qalibaf said under the budget law for the current year, the Energy Ministry was required to set purchase rates for bulk industrial consumers at the beginning of the year. However,

delays in implementation have caused financial shortfalls.

"The 400 trillion rials (approximately \$570 million) allocated for investment last year faced significant issues. This year, the situation remains problematic," he said, citing delays in payments for renewable energy and private sector power purchases, which have tarnished the government's credibility. Qalibaf stressed that the 400 trillion rials represent an opportunity for investment. Under the law, 25% is earmarked for purchasing renewable energy, 20% for private-sector power producers, 20% for modernizing aging infrastructure, 10% for network digitization, and 10% for industrial companies. "We are losing 20% of our energy to inefficiencies. These funds must be used to address such waste," he concluded.

Speaking at the session, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi stated that a plan is in the works to add more than 10,000 megawatts of capacity by the next summer, a measure that could greatly help to reduce power shortages in the coming year.

A window of...

Since then, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war has added another layer of complexity to the Iran-Europe dynamic, with the Ukraine conflict becoming a major economic and security challenge for Europe. Europeans have accused Iran of providing military aid to Russia against Ukraine, essentially viewing Iran as a security threat alongside Russia. As a result, the Ukraine issue has become a top priority for Europe.

Aside from the nuclear issue and the Ukraine war, there's also the challenge of dual nationals in bilateral relations between Iran and some European countries. In recent years, some Iranian dual nationals have been detained in Iran for various reasons, with some released and others still in detention. The recent execution of one such dual national has strained relations between Iran and Germany to the point of almost severing diplomatic ties. These are perhaps the most pressing issues between Iran and Europe on the eve of the Geneva talks.

It seems that with the recent adoption of the anti-Iran resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors, led by

the European troika, the nuclear issue has taken center stage again. Do you think that revisiting the nuclear issue and the new talks between Iran and Europe can either escalate tensions or open a new window for reducing tensions and reaching new understandings?

Both possibilities can be on the table. Over the past month or so, Europeans have been more provocative on the Iranian nuclear issue. This might be because they think that the Iranian nuclear program can be used as leverage against Iran. Europeans have gone back to the Iranian nuclear issue, anticipating Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election. But I believe that these pressures, specifically the adoption of the resolution at the IAEA Board of Governors, are a European attempt to open a new chapter in negotiations with Iran. Because, talking about the nuclear issue is smoother for Europeans and Iran than discussing the Ukraine war.

In fact, do you believe that the willingness to engage in talks is not one-sided and that Europeans are also interested in starting new negotiations with Iran?

Yes, that's right. The new Iranian government has announced its policy of interacting with the world, and Masoud Pezeshkian explicitly expressed the government's willingness to engage with the world, including Europeans, at the UN General Assembly. Talks were also held between Iran and Europeans on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. Following Trump's victory in the US presidential election and his stances on NATO, the Ukraine war, and the Gaza war, Europeans are now interested in dialogue with Iran. In this context, the adoption of the IAEA Board of Governors' resolution against Iran can even be seen as a European attempt to initiate new negotiations with Iran.

Ukraine is currently the top concern for Europeans due to energy and security challenges. They are aware of Donald Trump's stances on NATO, which have rekindled their concerns. They also know about Trump's positions on ending the Ukraine war. If Trump and Putin, the presidents of the United States and Russia, reach an agreement on Ukraine, the Iran issue will likely be affected by this agreement.

In this context, the recent positions of Ali Larjani, an advisor to the Leader

[Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei], regarding the possibility of dialogue with the United States and reaching a new agreement on the nuclear issue are significant and noteworthy for Europeans. In this framework, Europeans are inclined to reopen the channel of communication with Iran.

Can we be optimistic that the new talks will lead to official negotiations and new agreements between Iran and Europe?

Yes, we can be optimistic, provided that there is a consensus among Iran's governing institutions and decision-makers. The controversy and differing views on the alleged meeting between Iran's UN ambassador and Elon Musk, a Trump advisor, show that internal differences in Iran can still hinder the implementation of foreign policy. This is particularly relevant as Europeans and Americans have experience

in the nuclear deal and Iran's internal disagreements.

However, Europeans should also consider another factor: the new US administration. Any agreement with Iran will not yield clear results without US participation and support. During his previous presidency, Donald Trump complained that the 2015 nuclear deal allowed European companies to operate in Iran while American companies were excluded. Therefore, the 2015 nuclear deal and its aftermath should be considered a

tangible experience that Iran, Europe, and the US should draw from. Nevertheless, we can be optimistic about the new talks between Iran and Europe, as Europeans are also eager to revive their relations with Iran.



New archaeological efforts in Masouleh for UNESCO World Heritage status



Iranica Desk

Iranian archaeologists have begun new excavations in the heights of Masouleh to complete the dossier for its UNESCO World Heritage registration. Chinese researchers have joined them in the search for traces of the residents of Masouleh in metallurgy.

Excavations are ongoing in the heights of Masouleh, with a number of archaeologists led by Solmaz Raouf stationed at Kohneh Masouleh (Old Masouleh), while another group led by Behzad Ali Taleshi is conducting excavations in Siyapsieh. They are studying a culture and lifestyle linked to metallurgy in Masouleh—an area that was once a center for iron smelting and its use in weaponry, according to ISNA.

Siyapsieh is located at an elevation of about 2,500 meters in a region with a 35-degree slope. Due to the presence of organic compounds, winter snow melts earlier, revealing the dark soil beneath. In contemporary terms, *siyapsieh* means “black boy”, but archaeologists believe the name translates to “burnt black” because there is so much ash that the surface has turned completely black.

To reach this height, archaeologists traverse a difficult and lengthy path through snow, rain, and wind, taking about

seven to eight hours, and lasting up to 12 hours if they go on foot. This area had never before been subject to archaeological excavations; it was first identified and surveyed in 2017, which reinforced archaeologists’ suspicions about the presence of a metalworking furnace in this location. Following excavations that began in October 2024, they have finally succeeded in discovering evidence of a metalworking workshop, iron smelting, and related furnaces.

Excavations in Siyapsieh are ongoing, though their pace has slightly slowed. Archaeologists have identified the surface of the furnace, but the excavation site is located at the end of a snow-prone route. Continuing the excavations could endanger the lives of the archaeologists and workers, and there is also a risk of destroying archaeological evidence due to potential avalanches. As a result, the metal smelting furnace identified in Siyapsieh has not yet been fully unearthed.

As the excavation area expands and hypotheses regarding the possible production of various alloys in Masouleh develop, three specialists have been invited for more comprehensive research: Ali Akbar Vahedi, an archaeologist and researcher; Abolfazl Aali, an archaeologist focused on mining studies and excavations; and Fereydoon

Beiglari, who has previously conducted research in the pre-historic section of Masouleh. The Chinese archaeological team is also assisting the Iranian archaeologists with metallurgical testing. They are specialists in metallurgy and will examine the furnace samples. Based on the test results, they will collaborate with the Iranian archaeologists to determine the locations of the Masouleh inhabitants’ mines, assess the level of their technology, and identify which neighboring and non-neighboring regions they interacted with.

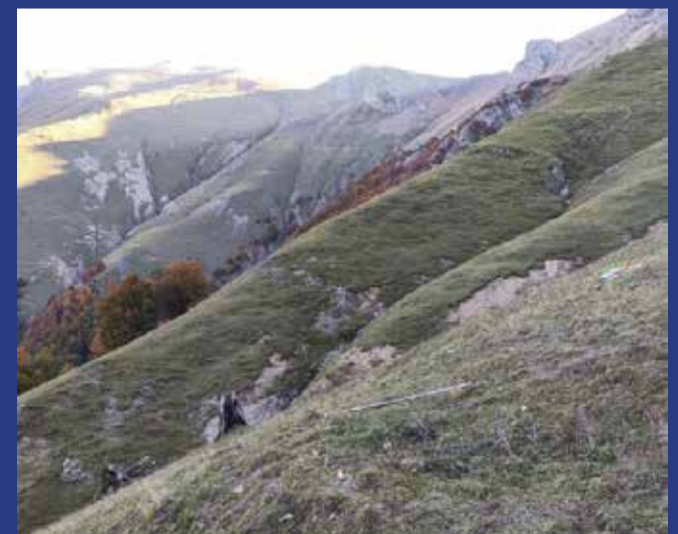
For some time, archaeologists have been systematically excavating the surroundings of Masouleh. They are investigating areas suspected to be related to metallurgy, planning to study and excavate these sites selectively once identified.

The results of the tests remain unclear. It is uncertain when metallurgy began in Masouleh based on the clues gathered so far and how long it continued. Similarly, the timeline for converting iron ore into metal and when metal smelting declined in the region is still unknown. Additionally, it is unclear which neighboring areas (such as Ardebil, Zanjan, Tabriz, etc.) received tools produced in Masouleh and which governing bodies were involved. Answering these questions could help clarify some of the puzzles

surrounding the ambiguous case for UNESCO registration of Masouleh.

Archaeologists who have been intermittently working in Masouleh for several years are seeking scientifically accurate answers to these questions and evidence of the metalworking industry in neighboring regions. They aim to understand the motivations behind the people of Masouleh engaging in metallurgy and operating a metal smelting furnace at an altitude of 2,500 meters.

Masouleh is located 25 kilometers southwest of Fuman in Gilan Province. The terraced village was registered as a National Heritage Site in 1975, and its application for UNESCO World Heritage status has been in progress since 2011. In 2007, Masouleh was included on UNESCO’s Temporary List of World Heritage Sites. The dossier was reviewed on September 17, 2023, during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee; however, it was deferred based on the recommendation of ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites, serving as UNESCO’s advisory body). Following discussions with Iran, the World Heritage Committee has granted the opportunity to resubmit the application for review without the constraints of the annual quota for countries, allowing for the resolution of any outstanding issues.



Shiriki Pich kilims; a fusion of nomadic tradition and innovation



One of the oldest handicrafts in Iran is the kilim, with historical documents indicating that they date back over five thousand years. Kilims are originally flat weaves made without knots, although the Dehkhoda Dictionary also mentions their use as clothing.

Historically, kilim weaving has been a livelihood for nomads, particularly in the southern regions of Iran. Sirjan, a city in Kerman Province, has gained fame for its kilims, which are noted for their high quality and innovative patterns. This reputation led to Sirjan being designated as a global city of handwoven kilims by the World Council of Handicrafts.

Unlike traditional kilims, the *Shiriki Pich*, or *suzani* kilims from Sirjan, are knotted weaves that serve as

an intermediate form between carpets and kilims. These unique pieces are believed to have been developed during the entry of the Afshar clans into Kerman and later during the Afsharid dynasty. The origins of the name *Shiriki Pich* are debated; one theory suggests it refers to a horse cover, while another links *pich-bafi* to a type of kilim. Like many other kilims, they are woven from wool yarns, using looms similar to those for carpets. The weaving technique is akin to carpet weaving, employing two primary knots: *matn* and *abduzi*.

In these kilims, unlike in other woven textiles, the weft does not contribute to the patterns; in-

stead, it is the warp threads that create the designs. Rarely do artisans follow pre-made patterns, which means almost all Sirjan kilims are one-of-a-kind, with no two pieces exactly alike. The backgrounds typically feature cream, milky white, red, blue, and dark blue shades.

These remarkable hand weaves could be described as *hessi baf*, or sensational weaves, as the emotions and moods of the nomadic women weavers significantly influence their color choices during production. The motifs are vibrant, incorporating greens, yellows, pinks, and blues to create geometric designs as well as motifs of fish, giraffes, and various birds, including storks and peacocks. It is rare to find a Sirjan kilim that is plain and devoid of motifs.

American Muslims' vote for Trump; Political gamble that backfired



By **Gholamreza Mansouri**
Political science
researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In a surprising twist during the recent US presidential elections, many American Muslims and other minority groups shifted their support to Donald Trump, a figure traditionally seen as opposed to their interests due to his right-wing policies. This unexpected move helped Trump secure a not-so-narrow victory over Vice President Kamala Harris in key battleground states, especially Michigan. However, the aftermath of this decision has left many Muslims grappling with regret as the gap between campaign promises and the post-election moves of Trump becomes starkly apparent.

Why did Muslims support Trump?

Donald Trump's campaign targeted Muslim and Arab American voters with a clear and resonant message: "No new wars, family values, affordable groceries." This strategy was particularly evident in Dearborn, Michigan, home to the largest Arab-American community in the United States. Trump's anti-war rhetoric and criticism of the Biden-Harris administration's handling of

Israel's war in Gaza played a significant role in swaying voters. Polling conducted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in October 2024 revealed that 98% of Muslim respondents disapproved of President Biden's handling of the Gaza war. Discontent with the Democrats pushed 42% of Muslims to back third-party candidate Jill Stein, while only

41% supported Kamala Harris, a sharp decline from the 71% who had voted for Biden in 2020. Trump's campaign capitalized on this dissatisfaction, framing him as the candidate who could hold the Biden-Harris administration accountable for its perceived failures in Gaza. At campaign stops, Trump criticized Kamala Harris for her connections to figures

like Liz Cheney, labeling her a supporter of the "Muslim-hating establishment". He further reminded voters of Dick Cheney's role in initiating wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which had devastating effects on Arab and Muslim populations. Trump's rhetoric resonated with many voters seeking to hold the Democrats accountable, leading to a significant shift in support.

Aftermath

Despite the American Muslim community's support for Trump, his post-election appointments have sparked widespread disappointment and criticism. One of the most controversial moves was Trump's nomination of Mike Huckabee as ambassa-

dor to Israel. Huckabee, a staunch supporter of Israeli control over the occupied West Bank and an opponent of the two-state solution, has made inflammatory remarks over the years denying Palestinian identity. His views align with far-right Israeli poli-

cies but clash with the aspirations of Palestinians and many Arab Americans. Another contentious appointment was Elise Stefanik as US ambassador to the United Nations. Stefanik has referred to the UN as a "cesspool of antisemitism"

for its condemnation of civilian deaths in Gaza. These decisions have fueled a sense of betrayal among Muslim voters who had hoped Trump would act as a peace candidate committed to ending Middle Eastern conflicts.

Misguided punishment of Democrats

Muslim voters who supported Trump often viewed their decision as a way to punish the Democratic Party for its perceived complacency and mishandling of international crises, particularly in Gaza. However, many now realize that their vote for Trump has not resulted in meaningful change. Instead, his administration appears to uphold the same pro-Israel

policies they had hoped to challenge. In retrospect, the move to back Trump underscores a painful lesson: for American Muslims, the partisan divide offers little reprieve when it comes to US foreign policy in the Middle East. Both parties have shown unwavering support for Israel, and Trump's rhetoric during the campaign has proven inconsistent with

his measures in office. His appointments and alliances highlight his administration's alignment with hardline pro-Israel interests. The American Muslim community's shift toward Trump in the 2024 election reflects deep dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party's foreign policy, particularly regarding Israel and Gaza. However, the

post-election reality has underscored the risks of relying on campaign rhetoric without scrutinizing broader policy implications. As Trump's administration unfolds, it serves as a reminder that, for many minority communities, the US political landscape often offers limited options, particularly on issues of justice and peace in the Middle East.



Senator Marco Rubio makes a speech during a Jewish community rally against anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activism in Miami Beach, Florida, on November 15, 2015.
JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



Mideast looks to Saudi Arabia to rein in Donald Trump



By **Andrew England**
News editor

OPINION

Arab states are banking on Saudi Arabia to use its relationship with Donald Trump and political heft in the region to act as a check on the president-elect's Middle East policies amid fears that he will pursue a staunchly pro-Israel agenda.

After Trump named a number of ardently pro-Israeli nominees and Iran hawks for key positions, Arab officials worry his incoming administration might approve any moves by Israel to annex the occupied West Bank, occupy Gaza, or escalate tensions with Tehran.

But they hope Riyadh can temper the incoming administration's policies in the region by leveraging Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's relationship with Trump, the president-elect's appetite for financial deals, and his expected desire to strike a "grand bargain" that would lead Saudi Arabia and Israel to normalise relations.

"The key player in the region is Saudi Arabia because of their known relations with him, so it will be the linchpin of any regional actions the US might decide to do," said an Arab diplomat.

Another Arab official said Prince Mohammed would be "key" in influencing Trump's policies toward ending Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza and more broadly on Palestinian issues, using the potential for normalisation with Israel as leverage.

"Saudi Arabia could heavily influence how Trump deals with Gaza and Palestine," the official said. "A lot of the countries in the region are concerned about what comes next."

During Trump's first term, Saudi Arabia embraced his transactional style and his "maximum pressure" campaign against its regional rival Iran. Trump stood by Prince Mohammed when other Western leaders cold-shouldered the kingdom's de facto leader after Saudi agents murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

Trump also boasted that he would broker the "ultimate deal" to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But those plans, overseen by his son-in-law Jared Kushner, fell flat, with the Palestinians and Arab states viewing the proposals as being far too tilted in favour of Israel. Trump also cut aid to the Palestinians, closed their diplomatic mission in Washington, moved the US embassy to Jerusalem — the status of which is disputed — and recognised Israel's claim to sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. He did, however, broker the so-called Abraham Accords, in which the UAE and three other Arab states normalised relations with Israel.

Trump told al-Arabiya, a Saudi television channel, last month that relations between the US and Saudi Arabia during his presidency were "great, with capital letters, G.R.E.A.T." "So much respect for the king, so much respect for Mohammed who's done so great, he's really a visionary," he said. After US President Joe Biden took of-

fice, Riyadh maintained ties to Trump, with its Public Investment Fund (PIF) — the sovereign wealth fund chaired by Prince Mohammed — investing \$2b in a private equity fund set up by Kushner.

The PIF's governor, Yasir al-Rumayyan, shared front-row seats with Trump at a UFC fight in New York recently. Trump's courses have also hosted events run by LIV Golf, one of the PIF's highest-profile sporting ventures.

But Prince Mohammed has recalibrated Saudi Arabia's regional policies since Biden took office. Riyadh restored diplomatic relations with Iran in 2023 in a policy of détente it has continued to pursue since Hamas's October 7 attack triggered a wave of conflict across the region.

While a Biden administration plan to normalise relations with Israel as part of a three-way deal that would include a Saudi-US defence treaty was upended by the war, the US still considers the kingdom critical to efforts to any

Persian Gulf states wary of return to 'maximum pressure'

By Ahmed Al Omran & Chloe Cornish
Journalists

OPINION

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have signalled they remain committed to de-escalation with Iran as they prepare for the return of Donald Trump, hoping he can end a year of war in the Middle East but wary his unpredictability could inflame tensions further.

Leaders like Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were among Trump's most enthusiastic Arab backers during his first term as US president, welcoming both his adversarial approach to Iran and his transactional style after years of Persian Gulf frustration with American policy. But in the years since, the Persian Gulf's two powerhouses — Saudi Arabia and the UAE — have changed tack, seeking to engage with Tehran amid doubts about the US's commitment to their security. This became more urgent after Hamas's October 7 attack against Israel triggered a wave of regional hostilities and heightened tensions between the US and Iran, with both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi seeking to remain on the sidelines.



Then-US president Donald Trump (4th-R) is greeted by Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (2nd-R) after arriving in the Kingdom in May 2017.
● STEPHEN CROWLEY/NYT

Persian Gulf leaders, who traditionally prefer a Republican presidency, have welcomed Trump's re-election and hope the self-styled dealmaker fulfils his campaign pledge to bring peace to the region. But diplomats and people close to regional governments say they are also wary he could give Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu more licence to escalate against Israel's foes and to raise tensions with Iran, risking an all-out conflict that could spill over into the Persian Gulf states. "If Trump puts you in a situation where you have to decide [which side to take] because he's going against Iran, it's a big problem," a senior Arab diplomat said. "Trump is not the kind of guy who takes 'no' for an answer." In a sign of Riyadh's desire to maintain its cold peace with Iran, Prince Mohammed on Monday hosted senior Iranian officials at an Arab-Muslim conference in Jeddah, in which he accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza. He also condemned Israel's strikes on Iran, calling on the international community to stop hostile actions on Iranian territory. Separately, Anwar Gargash, the UAE's presidential adviser, told a conference in Abu Dhabi on November 11 that the incoming

Trump administration must pursue a "comprehensive" approach instead of "reactive and piecemeal" policies. The comments underlined the shift in Saudi and Emirati thinking since they actively courted Trump after he took office in 2017 following years of Arab frustration with US policy swings and a sense of disengagement from the region. Both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi cheered the Trump administration's hawkish stance on Iran, his decision to abandon the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers, and to impose crippling sanctions on the republic. But as Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign sent tension soaring across the region, they became aware of their own vulnerability. Persian Gulf rulers' faith in the US's willingness to defend them was particularly shaken after a missile and drone attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure in 2019 temporarily knocked out half of the kingdom's crude production. While Washington blamed Iran, Trump chose not to respond beyond imposing more sanctions. Giorgio Cafiero, chief executive of Washington-based Gulf State Analytics, said that by the time Trump's first term ended, re-

gional leaders "realised that in practice [it] had not succeeded in making the Persian Gulf Arab monarchies more secure". With confidence in the US security umbrella undermined, Saudi and the UAE decided de-escalation with Iran was the best bet to protect their states and allow them to focus on economic diversification. This culminated in a China-brokered agreement in March 2023 that re-established diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran after a seven-year rift. Persian Gulf leaders' concern now is that an even broader conflagration in the Middle East could undermine their domestic development plans. "The deal supported by China is for the good of the region," said a person familiar with the Saudi government's thinking. "Saudi Arabia will remain committed to it as long as [Iran is] committed." The kingdom "believes the focus should be on economic development and the success of its vision, which ultimately will offer the region a vision for a way forward beyond conflict, a vision that should benefit everybody". Fayyad al-Ruwaili, chief of staff of the Saudi armed forces, was with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Baqeri in Tehran on

November 10 to discuss defence co-operation as part of the Beijing agreement, the kingdom's Ministry of Defense said. But while vowing to bring peace to the Middle East, Trump has also expressed support for Israel's military offensives and appears set to appoint Iran hawks to his administration. Elise Stefanik, Trump's pick for US ambassador to the UN, wrote on X that "the US is ready for a return to President Trump's MAXIMUM PRESSURE campaign against Iran". Persian Gulf leaders fear the president-elect, who implemented a string of pro-Israeli policies in his first term, could embolden Netanyahu rather than rein him in. "We'll stand on the sideline, we are protected," the diplomat said but added: "Any defence system can be exhausted. It's not a joke." Still, both Prince Mohammed and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, the UAE's president, will look forward to having closer personal relationships with Trump than they had with President Joe Biden. The relationship with Trump and his entourage continued after he left the White House, with his son-in-law Jared Kushner and former Treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin receiving billions of dol-

lars from Persian Gulf sovereign wealth funds for investment firms run by the two former officials. Biden was initially critical of Saudi Arabia and Prince Mohammed after he entered office, vowing to reassess Washington's relations with the kingdom after the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi. But ties improved as Biden pushed for a three-way deal that would have led to the US agreeing to a defence treaty with Saudi Arabia in return for the kingdom normalising relations with Israel. Those plans were upended by the war in Gaza. Trump, who counted the 2020 Abraham Accords normalisation between Israel, the UAE, and three other Arab states as one of his biggest foreign policy successes, may seek his own grand bargain. But that would require both ending Israel's wars against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon and getting it to make concessions towards the establishment of a Palestinian state. "The sense we get [is that] President Trump wants a deal to end the war in Gaza," another Arab diplomat said. "Will it be what everyone wants? Maybe not. But it would end the war."

The article first appeared on The Financial Times.

regional settlement to the crisis. Riyadh has, however, hardened its criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right cabinet as the Palestinian death toll has soared. In October, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said normalisation with Israel was "off the table until there's a resolution to Palestinian statehood". And Prince Mohammed two weeks ago used an Arab and Islamic summit in Riyadh to accuse Israel of committing "genocide" in Gaza, while condemning its war against Hezbollah in Lebanon and its strikes against Iran. Diplomats and analysts interpreted his speech as a message to Washington and Netanyahu that the Muslim world was united in its condemnation of Israel's military offensives and their support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. On Tuesday, Riyadh decried what it described "as extremist Israeli statements about imposing sovereignty over the West Bank". During his campaign, Trump promised

to bring peace to the Middle East and end the war. But many of his nominees are ardently pro-Israel, including Mike Huckabee, his pick for ambassador to Israel, and Steven Witkoff, a real estate magnate he has appointed Middle East envoy. Trump has said, however, that he wants to expand the Abraham Accords, telling al-Arabiya that "the framework is there, all they have to do is reinsert it, and that will happen very quickly". "If I win, that will be an absolute priority... just getting everyone in peace in the Middle East," Trump said. "It will happen." Saudi Arabia would be important to unlocking any expansion of the Abraham Accords, but Arab officials believe Trump will succeed only by pressuring Netanyahu to make concessions to the Palestinians on the establishment of a Palestinian state, something the Israeli PM vociferously rejects. A second Arab diplomat argued this meant "Trump is not in need of any other player in the Middle East right now

more than Saudi Arabia." "Trump is somebody who likes to be handed ready-deals he can take credit for," the diplomat said. "So, if MBS presents him with a deal... it's a possibility, but it might be the only possibility." Arab officials also hope it will be harder for Trump to sideline the Palestinians as the level of outrage caused by the devastation in Gaza has put their cause back at the top of the regional agenda. Leaders worry about the conflict radicalising segments of their own populations, particularly among the youth, Prince Mohammed's main constituency. "Trump will need to end the war in Gaza, and to do that, you need to address the day after," said the first Arab diplomat. "He will need some focus on the Palestinian track, or the regional element won't work. Saudi Arabia has said bluntly that unless there's a Palestinian state, normalisation is not an option." This has provided Prince Mohammed with an opportunity to project himself, and his kingdom, as the regional leader. But the role comes with pitfalls given



Trump's unpredictability and Netanyahu's refusal to countenance any concessions to the Palestinians. "The only issue that unites the Arab world is the Palestinian issue," the second diplomat said. "The question is

how much Saudi Arabia can invest in this... and how much Netanyahu will have the ability to torpedo it."

The full article first appeared on The Financial Times.

Pace of the punches: Iranian boxer Imani on shattering Guinness records



By Sadeq
Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iranian boxer Yousef Imani has written his name into the Guinness Book of Records for most full-extension punches in one and three minutes, with the two milestones achieved on the Kish Island, southern Iran, on January 11 earlier this year.

The 32-year-old knockout artist from Khorramabad, Lorestan Province, realized his potential in the ring and decided to throw in the towel on his hometown, deeming it a tough corner to turn his career around, and moved to the Iranian capital, looking to take his boxing career to the next level.

Yousef has now been living in Tehran for the past five or six years, chasing his dreams. Life in a big city can be a real slugfest for a small-town kid, but he's managed to roll with the punches, earning a living by teaching boxing while still pursuing his own athletic goals. And it's paid off – he's racked up several boxing records at both the national and international levels.

"I've been boxing for over 18 years, and from the very start, my punching speed caught the attention of the people around me. Everyone encouraged me to take on the challenge of setting records, and for the past five years, I've fully dedicated my time to that aspect of the game, establishing multiple national and international records," Imani told Iran Daily, after the unveiling of his Guinness certification plaques at a ceremony held by the Iranian Sport for All Federation in Tehran on Tuesday.

"I've had a successful streak in breaking records in various catego-



ries at the national level, including most full-extension punches in one minute with 497 hits, most full-extension punches while holding 1kg dumbbells in one minute with 356 hits, as well as most uppercuts in one minute with 493 hits." The Iranian then took his skills to the global stage, where "the competition is fierce and the rules are strict."

"In 2021, I set a new Guinness World Record for most full-extension punches in one minute with 403 hits, surpassing the previous record of 334 hits set by a Slovakian athlete just a year before.

"My record, however, was short-lived as an Egyptian boxer threw 411 punches in one minute a year later, and then an American boxer took the title with 412."

Imani also set his sights on another Guinness World Record: Most full-extension punches thrown in three minutes.

"A Slovakian boxer had initially set the record with 919 punches, but

it was later broken by a Dutchman with 929 punches. An Egyptian boxer then raised the bar with 1085 punches.

The new milestones only fueled the Iranian's determination to push the boundaries even further.

"I successfully broke both records on the Kish Island in January, with officials from the Iran Records Committee and sports authorities of the island watching. I threw 1,155 punches in three minutes and 449 punches in one minute, securing my place in the record books once again," added Imani, who participated in several age-group competitions in the country, and was called up for a juniors' national team training camp, before embarking on a new chapter in his career.

On the challenges he faces, Imani said: "Setting records, especially at the international level, comes with a price tag. From nutrition and training expenses to travel costs and record registration fees, the expenses can add up quickly. Since Guinness officials rarely send representatives to Iran, I had to document my record attempt and submit it to them for ver-

ification. As a boxing instructor in Tehran, my main source of income is from teaching, and I've covered all the costs of record registration out of my own pocket, without any sponsorship.

"For now, my name is in the Guinness record books as the fastest boxer in world, but to be honest, I'm not keen on setting new records under the Iranian flag anymore, because I've received zero financial support for

my record attempts, and it seems like no one really cares about my achievements unless I'm making headlines. I've shelled out a hefty sum of money for documentation and other expenses to get my records verified by Guinness. And that's just for submitting my documents – if I had to

travel abroad to set a record, the costs would skyrocket. On top of that, I've been dealing with a nagging injury that's left me in agony, and I've been pushing through the pain to set my records. For now, I need to focus on nursing my injury and see what the future holds."



IRAN DAILY

Economic implications of introducing modern sports in Iran



By Mehdi
Jalilian
Guest contributor

PERSPECTIVE

Iran, with its rich history in traditional sports, stands at the threshold of expanding its sports culture by embracing modern sports, which encompass a broad range of new sporting categories, such as: Action sports (such as skateboarding and BMX racing), extreme sports (such as parkour and freestyle skiing), hybrid sports (like Spikeball), e-sports, and urban sports.

These are the kinds of sports that may please younger, more dynamic populations; hence, they have the ability to generate new job opportunities, boost tourism, and fix local infrastructure, which is very important to Iranian economic development. Wherever modern sports will come into place in Iran, creation of jobs will happen in the following activities:

1. Coaches and trainers: Most of the modern sports require specialized coaches, and with increased interest, there will be a proportional increase in the need for such employment.

2. Event management: Regional economic development is furthered by the events them-

selves, which require suitable organizers, referees, and hospitality staff for tournaments and leagues.

3. Retail and equipment supply: Increased participation in modern sports would bring with it a corresponding increase in demand for specialized sports

equipment and attire that will stimulate demand in retail and manufacturing sectors.

4. Sports clubs and fitness centers: Due to the modern importance of sports, new sports clubs and gyms will open, leading to jobs in the fitness industry.

Boost in Tourism

This shows that sports tourism offers a number of economic and financial benefits. Iran will update most of the traditional sports competitions by organizing skateboarding championships or spikeball tournaments. Events like these will

also draw international athletes and tourists to generate foreign exchange earnings through transportation and hotel industries, among other business activities. More foreign visitors will increase Iran's visibility internationally as a site for tourist sports and would thus create more interest for hosting international events in the country in the near future.

Modern sports require designing new sport facilities and thus create a job opportunity in construction and engineering besides encouraging renovation of public spaces for the benefit of the locals. Renewing local neighborhoods and improving public space makes cities more livable and encourages further investment into the region. The establishment of such facilities may spur businesses within the same area since people visiting parks and sports centers are more likely to boost the local economic activities.

The modern sport event encourages physical activities that have long-term economic gains as far as public health is concerned. A fitter population has a tendency to cut costs as far as health expenditure is concerned because such physical activities help people avoid such lifestyle

diseases as obesity and heart ailments. Healthier workers will become more productive with lesser medical claims, which in turn saves money for the country in the long term.

It is in this regard that modern sports have been uniquely positioned to encourage social inclusion and cohesion. These are sports that can be played by everyone, irrespective of background or ability, and as such often act as a bridge between cultural divides. By fostering teamwork, fair play, and respect, modern sports can contribute to developing a stronger social fabric and help with positive behavior in society.

Consequently, the establishment of modern sports in Iran has great economic importance. The avenues they provide include those pertaining to employment, construction, tourism, and health among members of the public. Through modern sport, Iran is in a position to diversify its economy and gain more foreign investment aimed at improving standards of living among the people. In this way, it is not only that Iran will have established a culture of sport, but also one stronger internationally.



MARZIEH SOLEIMANI/IRNA

Gov't to weigh US proposals based on national interests: *SpoX*

International Desk

Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said the administration considers any proposal which is in line with the country's interests, including possible talks with the United States. Mohajerani made the remarks during her weekly press briefing and in response to a question about the US possible request for negotiations with Iran.

"The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will consider any proposal that is in line with Iran's interests, based on the three principles of dignity, erudition, and expediency that the Leader has outlined for international interactions." Her remarks came as Iran, France, Britain and Germany are set to hold talks in Geneva on Friday. US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday that

Washington will not participate in the talks in Geneva. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei on Sunday announced the meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and the three European powers, which will focus on several issues including Iran's nuclear program. "A range of regional and international issues and topics, including the issues of Palestine and Lebanon, as well as the nuclear issue,



Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani speaks during a weekly press conference in Tehran, Iran on November 26, 2024.
● IRNA

will be discussed," Baghaei said. He 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.



Iran's response to Israeli aggression 'beyond imagination': *Baqeri*

Iran's highest-ranking military commander said the Armed Forces have planned a "crushing" response to Israel's last month assault against the country, stressing that the retaliation will be "different" and "beyond the imagination" of the regime.

Speaking on Tuesday, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said that Iran already conducted two "different" anti-Israel operations in terms of tactics and weapons and that similarly, its future "response to the recent Israeli assault has been planned beyond the imagination of the regime's leaders," Press TV reported. "The Islamic Republic of Iran will never tolerate aggression against its soil or leave it unanswered, and in this case, too, it will definitely give an appropriate response," he added.



Mohammad Baqeri
● TASNIM

"For years, the Iranian Armed Forces have designed their defense doctrine based on a crushing, deterrent, and appropriate response to the highest level of threats by the enemy." On October 26, Israeli war-

planes used US-controlled airspace over Iraq to fire projectiles at military installations in Iran's Tehran, Khuzestan, and Ilam provinces in flagrant breach of the country's national sovereignty, killing four Army officers and one civilian.

Israel continues strikes on Lebanon before cease-fire deal

International Desk

Israeli warplanes struck central Beirut and the city's southern suburbs on Tuesday hours before a planned vote by the Israeli regime on whether to accept a cease-fire aimed at ending more than a year of fighting with Hezbollah.

The Israeli military issued a flurry of evacuation warnings and the occupation troops also reached parts of Lebanon's Litani River for the first time in the conflict.

The evacuation warnings covered many areas, including parts of Beirut that have not been targeted throughout the war. The warnings, coupled with fear that Israel was ratcheting up attacks in the final hours before a cease-fire is reached.

At least seven people were killed in Israeli attacks on a Beirut building housing dis-



● AFP

placed people.

"The Israeli enemy ... seeks revenge on supporters of the resistance and on all Lebanese," Lebanese lawmaker Amin Sherri said.

The cease-fire deal calls for a two-month initial halt in fighting and would require Hezbollah to end its armed presence in a broad swath of southern Lebanon, while Israeli troops would return to their side of the border. Thousands of Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers would

deploy in the south, and an international panel headed by the United States would monitor all sides' compliance. "There is not an excuse for not implementing a cease-fire. Otherwise, Lebanon will fall apart," The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell told reporters in Italy on the sidelines of a Group of Seven meeting. He said France would participate on the cease-fire implementation committee at Lebanon's request.

Iran and Europe...

The world is increasingly interconnected and complex, with momentous, rapid, and decisive developments that challenge countries and render their priorities obsolete for an extended period. The world is a realm of moments and opportunities. With the previous government's shift in approach and the unfolding events, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine (which is seen as an attack on Europe by a European citizen and official) and the release of news about Iran's alleged military aid to Russia, which dominated Russian and European media headlines, Europe has become increasingly disillusioned and pessimistic about engaging with Iran. The lack of any direct contact and face-to-face dialogue, coupled with other unresolved issues, as well as the absence of any economic ties, cooperation, and exchange which resulted in a lack of economic benefits, incentives, and efforts in the relationship, caused Iran's regional stances to go off the rails and its external relations to lose balance, rolling back the Iran-Europe relationship. Undoubtedly, in a historical assessment of Iran-Europe relations since the 1979 Revolution, the current state of relations has never been as chilly, tense, and fragile as it is today, despite the numerous ups and downs. Since 2022, all bonds that could have provided a semblance of dynamism and vitality to the relationship have

been cut off. All aspects of the relationship, including cultural, academic, artistic, oil and energy, banking, investment, and academic exchanges between researchers, have been dismantled, leaving no tangible attraction for the continuation of relations. The heinous and distressing events in the Middle East, the humanitarian crimes and genocide perpetrated by the occupying regime of Israel, and Iran's distinct and divergent regional policies, have, coupled with policies European leaders who claim to advocate human rights and numerous other unthoughtful and ill-informed events, driven Europe, replete with pride and prejudice, to take hostile actions, such as imposing sanctions on several Iranian airlines and, subsequently, Iran's shipping industry. The EU's ill-advised and malignant stance, marked by a new and misguided approach, has further complicated these already fraught relations, as exemplified by their unjustifiable position on Iranian islands at the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and EU meeting, and, in a recent ill-timed move, their resolution against Iran at the recent Board of Governors meeting, adding to the complexities of these enchanted relations.

A review of recent years shows that, as a nation that has long suffered under numerous sanctions, we must not waver in our effective presence on the global stage, not

even for a moment. We must not get bogged down in trivial protocols. What is crucial is leveraging all tools at our disposal, at every moment, to counter adversity and protect national interests.

In the early days of the previous government, and in a regional conference that Iran had previously viewed negatively and one-sidedly, France took the initiative to host a summit of regional leaders in Baghdad, which Iran attended at the foreign minister level. On the sidelines of this summit, the French president invited Iran's foreign minister to visit Paris, an invitation repeated by France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. However, Iran did not respond, as if a faction or school of thought in Tehran had concluded that relations with these countries might not be in Iran's best interest. This entire story could have unfolded differently, particularly in light of the Iranian foreign policy priorities announced by this government, which, despite using different words, always conveyed the same message.

The priorities began with neighboring countries, followed by Russia, China, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and, finally, Europe. Even it was emphasized that Europe was not just a few countries. This explicit and repeated statement carried a connotation of disdain for Europeans, especially major countries, who, due to their pride and arrogance, would not easily forget such

words. Everything that transpired in the early months was enough to create a rift between Iran and Europe. Europeans wanted to continue their professional relationship with the previous Iranian government, but conditions had changed. Later, when Iranian officials and diplomats made a concerted effort to establish contact and meet, it was too little, too late. Other events further strained the already ailing relationship, pushing it to a new low.

Now, both sides are gearing up for another round of talks to tackle a host of challenging issues. The significance lies not in the outcome, but in the fact that the meeting will take place, and perspectives will be shared. Every meeting, no matter how difficult, will not be in vain. Negotiations may drag on longer than either side would like, but that should never be used as an excuse to call off the talks. What matters is that face-to-face, eye-to-eye negotiations can yield breakthroughs that would not be achieved through phone calls, tweets, or other means of communication.

Although the upcoming meeting between Iran and the three European countries is long overdue, we should have brought them to the negotiating table from the outset of the new government in Iran, whether overtly or covertly. Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity to make amends. Iranian officials are right in saying that they

have never walked away from the negotiating table, but this is only one aspect of the issue at hand. The forthcoming meeting, which comes after the adoption of their resolution at the Board of Governors, presents a different face of Iran, although it was reportedly agreed upon on the sidelines of the General Assembly in September. Perhaps the meeting could have been scheduled earlier or rescheduled to take place before the Board of Governors meeting. However, in diplomacy, timing and circumstances are not always in sync. In other words, with the return of Mr. Trump and the potential escalation of European and American challenges, there is a high likelihood that Europe will seek to increase tensions with Iran to gain leverage in future negotiations. Europe is not pleased with Trump's return, and their irresponsible, hostile, and aggressive actions toward Iran, which have intensified in recent months, are in line with their concerns and needs. Europe may even be worried about potential contacts and openings in the communication between Iran and Trump's America. Therefore, the upcoming negotiations with Europe, although belated, are a commendable and necessary step. If we consider the long-standing debate on the nuclear issue and the JCPOA, which is a crucial and decisive topic, and the limited time available to preserve the JCPOA, we must be diligent in manag-

ing the process and timing with them. We must convey to them a clear understanding of Iran's stance on the Russia-Ukraine issue.

Neither the Russians nor the Europeans have the right to use Iran as a means in their own war, whether to gain an ally or to create a pretext for exerting pressure and exploiting the results in another context. Despite all these troublesome stories of one-sidedness, simplism, and Europe's excessive demands, both sides must acknowledge that Iran's relations with that continent have been historical and multifaceted, characterized by cooperation in various fields. The stability and security of the region and even the world depend on relations based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs.

What is crucial for us today is to move beyond the stagnant bilateral relations and revive meetings, discussions, and negotiations to reach a level of understanding on the nuclear issue and Resolution 2231, considering the limited time remaining. This is a daunting and challenging task, and we hope that this meeting will not be the drop that overflows the already full glass, which would be unwarranted. History has taught us that in our absence from the international, regional, and global arenas, our rivals and adversaries will take advantage of the situation and spare no effort to undermine us.

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Rare space rocks on display at Iran's new meteorite museum

By Hamideh Hosseini
 Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

The Iran Meteorite Museum opened its doors in Tehran, showcasing remarkable celestial artifacts, including the first meteorite discovered from the Moon and the first from Mars in Iran, as well as the largest meteorite found in the country, weighing a staggering 100 kilograms.

The newly inaugurated Iran Meteorite Museum aims to highlight and display meteorites from Iran and around the globe, serving as a scientific and educational resource. With a stunning collection of over 40 meteorites and fragments of celestial objects on display, visitors are invited to embark on an exciting journey through the wonders of the universe.

Hojjat Karimi, the head of the museum, explained to Iran Daily that this museum is actually the second branch of the meteorite exhibit. The first museum

opened in 2019 with the approval of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts at the Azadi Tower, featuring a collection of 1,200 meteorites discovered within Iran. However, the current museum focuses on unique meteorites from both Iran and worldwide.

Karimi noted that all these meteorites are internationally registered and come with their own identification documents.

In addition to the amazing meteorites, the museum also showcases pieces that have been shaped into various forms, such as a meteorite carved in the shape of the Cyrus the Great's Human Rights Charter. This



piece, weighing 1,500 grams, features inscriptions in cuneiform script created by a prominent Iranian scholar.

Karimi highlighted the significance of the museum's collection, stating, "The first meteorite discovered from the Moon in Iran and the first Martian meteorite found in the country are among the museum's key artifacts. The largest meteorite discovered in Iran, weighing 100 kilograms, is another highlight." Furthermore, some meteorites in the collection have been gathered from other parts of the world. Karimi explained that they have exchanged meteorites found in Iran with those from other countries, as foreign museum curators have expressed interest in showcasing Iranian meteorites in their institutions. Additionally, some foreign meteorites have been purchased for the museum.

Discussing the types of meteorites, Karimi explained that they fall into three main categories: Stony meteorites, iron meteorites, and stony-iron meteorites,



● IRAN DAILY

each with its own various types. He also provided details about the status and quantity of meteorites discovered in Iran. According to data from the Meteoritical Bulletin Database and International Meteor Organization, Iran ranked 122nd in the world in terms of registered meteorite counts as of 2016, but has now climbed to the second position.

Vajiheh Kheradfallah, an expert and specialized guide at the Meteorite Museum, elaborated that while the first museum primarily displayed stony meteorites, the new museum features unique meteorites with different structures and textures, predominantly metallic meteorites known scientifically as palasites. She noted that the Martian me-

eteorite, or shergottite, displayed in this museum is one of only 37 Martian meteorites discovered worldwide.

The museum houses over 40 meteorites and more than 300 pieces crafted from meteorite materials, enticing astronomy enthusiasts and curious minds alike to explore the celestial treasures on display.

Notice of tender for export sale No.20/1403/Z

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Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70.000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.50) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaei Bandar-Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 9:00 A.M. on 3rd Dec. 2024 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road) Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 9:00 A.M. on 3rd Dec. 2024 at the office of the Seller.

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Fe%	66.50	Ave
FeO%	Min 24	Min
	Max 28	Max
P%	0.05	Max
S%	1	Max
SiO ₂ %	3.0	Max
Al ₂ O ₃ %	0.7	Max
CaO%	0.9	Max
MgO%	3.0	Max
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Iran proposes art exhibition in Belt and Road countries to foster cultural exchange

Arts & Culture Desk

In a bid to strengthen cultural ties and promote artistic exchange between nations, the President of the Iranian Academy of Arts, Majid Shah-Hosseini, proposed the establishment of a biennial art exhibition in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) route.

Addressing the 2nd Liangzhu Forum, Shah-Hosseini emphasized the significance of culture and art in promoting understanding and cooperation among nations. "Without culture and art, no development or progress can be achieved in today's world," he said. Shah-Hosseini highlighted the long history of cultural and artistic exchange between Iran and China, dating back over 2,000 years, ISNA reported. He stressed the importance of preserving cultural identity and promoting mutual understanding through art, IRNA reported. The Iranian official criticized the West-

ern approach to art, which he said is narrow-minded and dismissive of non-Western cultures. "In the West, art is seen as a means to impose their values and ideals, while neglecting the rich cultural heritage of other civilizations," he said.

Shah-Hosseini praised Iran's approach to art, which he said is rooted in the country's rich cultural and Islamic heritage. "In Iran, art is valued as a means to promote human values and ideals, and not just as a form of entertainment," he said.

The head of Academy of Arts also emphasized the need to use art to promote social justice and solidarity with oppressed nations. "We must use art to amplify the voices of the marginalized and oppressed, particularly in Palestine and Gaza," he said. The forum held in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province from November 25 to 27, brought together representatives from 63 countries to discuss cultural exchange and cooperation.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
 Cartoonist

