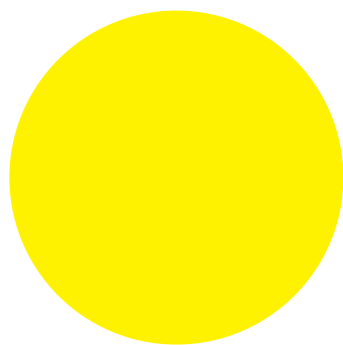


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Hayat Tahrir al-Sham; Israel's game in Syria



By Mohammad Bayat
Mideast affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The sudden eruption of internal tensions in Syria and the advances of anti-Assad groups in Aleppo province, immediately following the cease-fire between the Israeli regime and Lebanon, is highly significant and worth pondering. Since October 7, when Hamas launched its attack on Israel, the West Asia region has been embroiled in intense tensions and conflicts. However, the developments in the region cannot be solely attributed to local and regional factors. Even the Gaza war cannot be reduced to a simple conflict between a military-political organization and Israel. A substantial part of these tensions stems from the conflict of interests among major powers in West Asia, which has reached a boiling point. China, in order to bring its mega-project, the revival of the Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative), to fruition, must have a strong and influential presence in West Asia. A crucial part of China's Belt and Road project passes through West Asia. In response, the West, led by the United States, has drawn up alternative plans and designed new corridors to undermine China's initiative. Before October 7, the Western-planned corridors, including the India-Arab-Mediterranean (IAM) corridor, were ready to be implemented. The final link in this corridor was the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, which has yet to materialize following the October 7 operation. In Western designs for West Asia and in strategic rivalries among great powers, Israel has carved out a privileged and influential role for itself, positioning itself as the region's superior power capable of ensuring its own security and that of the entire region. This, in turn, would safeguard Western and American interests through a demonstration of power. However, the events of October 7 exposed Israel's vulnerability, not by an official state, but by a military organization. Now, concerns are growing that Israel's power and position will be challenged by other powers in the future. In fact, the role that the West had assigned to Israel, and which Israel itself claimed - that of a superior power - is now being contested. Although Israel is seeking to bolster its deterrence capabilities, it aims to reclaim its position as the region's superior power and serve as a representative of Western and American interests in West Asia. [Page 7 >](#)

Diplomacy to attract foreign tourists in full swing: *Minister*



Trump's controversial picks so far



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Sanctions removal key to boosting foreign direct investment: *Hemmati*

Economy Desk

Iran's economy minister said that without lifting sanctions, exiting the FATF blacklist, and facilitating smooth financial and banking transactions regionally and globally, the country's ability to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) will remain severely limited. According to IRNA, Abdolnasser Hemmati, in a note following his participation in the annual World Investment Conference of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) in Riyadh on November 25-27, highlighted the importance of Iran's presence at the event. He described the conference as a valuable opportunity to gain insights into global investment trends and dynamics. Hemmati wrote that the paradigm shift in the relationship between industrial policy and investment promotion strategies not only shapes the future of the global economy but also determines the trajectory of international cooperation and the quality of life worldwide. He cited a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), noting that global FDI in 2023 totaled \$1.3 trillion, while Iran's share accounted for less than one-thousandth of that figure. The minister stressed the critical role of FDI in global value chains urging policymakers in developing countries, including Iran, to consider multinational corporations' commercial strategies and explore ways to create an attractive environment for both international and domestic firms. Despite Iran's vast potential in energy, mineral resources, and a skilled workforce, Hemmati reiterated that the lack of sanctions relief and the FATF issue are significant obstacles to fully leveraging these advantages. Hemmati affirmed that the Ministry of Economy and the Organization for Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran (OIETAI) are committed to intensifying efforts to attract more investment despite the restrictions imposed by sanctions. He highlighted productive discussions with the CEO of the WAIPA during his visit to Riyadh, emphasizing plans to strengthen cooperation. Hemmati announced plans to strengthen relations with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the OPEC Fund for International Development during his visit to the Saudi Arabia capital as he also met Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih.

Gov't not to mount pressure by hiking fuel prices: *Pezeshkian*

Economy Desk

Making decisions regarding gasoline requires careful consideration of various factors, said Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, emphasizing that the government is not determined to raise fuel prices to place additional pressure on people's livelihoods. Iran's daily gasoline production must reach 129 million liters by the end of the Seventh Development Plan (2028), as the country, by keeping the current consumption trend, would face a gasoline supply crisis within the next five years, wrote president.ir. Pezeshkian, in response to a question by Akharin Khabar on updates about gasoline, highlighted that currently gasoline is a serious challenge for the country. "We are facing tough conditions. On one hand, consumption is rising, and on the other, production capacity is limited," he said. Pezeshkian also noted that a significant portion of the country's forex revenue is spent on gasoline imports, especially under

current sanctions. "Additionally, long-lasting issues like low vehicle quality and higher consumption compared to global average exacerbate the problem." Despite these challenges, Pezeshkian reiterated that raising the issue should not be seen as a sign that the government plans to increase gasoline prices and burden citizens. The president affirmed that his government is committed to making no decision without public support and satisfaction. He reemphasized the sensitivity of gasoline policy, stressing that decisions in this area require thorough analysis and expert input. Pezeshkian added that the primary focus should be on increasing the country's gasoline production capacity through refinery upgrades, capacity expansions, or building new refineries. The second priority, he said, should be reducing consumption by improving fuel efficiency in vehicles and expanding public transportation. The president also suggested that reforming the gasoline sub-



sidy system is crucial, but reform does not necessarily mean fully desubsidizing it. "Alternatives such as smart rationing or other

policies could help address the shortages and prevent the waste of national resources." Pezeshkian highlighted that any

decision must take into account the economic conditions of the people and aim to ensure public satisfaction.

EAG awards Tehran for contribution to fighting money laundering

Economy Desk

The Eurasian group on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism (EAG) awarded its certificate of merit to the Islamic Republic of Iran for Tehran's contribution to the activities and development of EAG on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. According to IRNA, EAG Chairman Yuri Chikhanchin on Thursday signed the document as it is for the first time that a certificate has been awarded to Iran in recognition of these efforts. The EAG is a FATF-style regional body which comprises 9 countries: Belarus, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. EAG is an associate member of the FATF. Iran has taken significant steps toward implementing the FATF's action plan, including passing key legislation to align with international standards on anti-money laundering (AML) and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT). Officials have expressed hope that these



measures will improve Iran's standing and facilitate its reintegration into the global financial system.

OPEC+ meeting on oil output 'rescheduled' to December 5



The OPEC+ alliance of major oil-producing nations postponed a weekend meeting to December 5 in what analysts said were signs of disagreement among the group over plans to increase output. The 22-member OPEC+ group was due to decide on its 2025 output policy at a ministerial meeting originally scheduled for Sunday, AFP wrote. But the Vienna-based Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said in a statement Thursday that the meeting was "rescheduled" to December 5 "as

several Ministers will be attending the 45th [Persian] Gulf Summit in Kuwait City." An OPEC spokesman told AFP that the December meeting will be held online. In a bid to boost crude prices, eight OPEC+ members announced earlier this month they were extending supply cuts until the end of December. The eight nations that have extended production cuts are Saudi Arabia and Russia, as well as Algeria, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Iran's renewable energy capacity surpasses 1,300 MW



Economy Desk

Iran's renewable energy capacity topped 1,300 megawatts, according to the latest report

from the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), as cited by IRNA on Friday. The Ministry of Energy, under

the current administration, has prioritized expanding renewable energy infrastructure and is actively pursuing various initiatives to achieve this goal. President Masoud Pezeshkian has emphasized the importance of removing barriers to the development of renewable energy, according to the report. Currently, Iran's renewable energy portfolio includes solar, wind, small hydropower, expansion turbines, and biomass energy sources. Solar energy leads the mix with 608.03 MW, accounting for 60% of the total. Wind energy follows with 376.3 MW, representing 29%. Small hydropower plants contribute 103.73 MW (8%), biomass plants provide 22.13 MW (2%), and expansion turbines add 9.6 MW,

making up 1% of the total. On November 20, Mohsen Tarzatab, deputy minister of Energy, announced that an additional 3,500 MW of renewable energy capacity would be connected to the national grid by peak demand season next year. The head of SATBA highlighted the urgent need for accelerating development in the renewable energy sector, stating that the organization is expected to deliver over 30,000 MW in the near term to address the country's energy imbalance. Talking to IRNA, Hamid Hosseini, spokesperson for the Union of Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical Exporters, stressed the importance of prioritizing investment in renewable energy over thermal power plants.

He noted that focusing on renewable energy development is the most effective way to resolve the nation's electricity supply challenges. According to the figures by the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, at the end of 2023, about 87% of Iran's electricity is supplied by natural gas. The participation of renewable sources was less than five percent, with wind and sun having a share of about one percent, while the global average of their participation is higher than 13 percent. According to the statistics, Iran has 1150 megawatts of renewable power plants, of which 33% are wind turbines, 56% are solar panels, 9% are hydropower (small scale) and 2% are other renewable sources.

Experience winter sports at Dizin Ski Resort



Dizin Ski Resort, situated in the majestic Alborz Mountains, proudly holds the title of Iran's largest ski destination. It is also notable for being the first winter sports venue in the country sanctioned for competition by the International Ski Federation. This exceptional resort attracts a diverse range of visitors, from casual ski enthusiasts to seasoned professional athletes. Located just 70 kilometers north of Tehran along Chalus Road in Alborz Province, Dizin has been a favored attraction since its establishment in the 1960s. The site's potential was first identified in the early 1960s by a pioneering team led by Kazem Gilanpoor, who was instrumental in the development of skiing and mountaineering in Iran. The installation of the resort's first ski lift in 1964 marked a pivotal moment, quickly transforming Dizin into a crucial training ground for the Iranian national ski team.

Over the years, Dizin has undergone significant infrastructure upgrades. These enhancements include the construction of an access road from Chalus Road and a chairlift leading to the summit of Si Chal Peak. By 1967, the resort boasted a 2,400-meter electrical chairlift, facilitating easy access to its slopes. The resort officially opened to the public in 1972, expanding its offerings with the inauguration of a 650-meter grass skiing route for summer use in 1993. Since then, the private sector has taken the initiative to renovate the resort, with an extensive renovation plan unveiled for 2024, ensuring Dizin remains a top-tier winter sports destination. The ski grounds at Dizin range from an altitude of 2,700 to 3,600 meters above sea level, placing it among the 20 highest ski resorts in the world. The resort features four main pistes: a beginner-friendly slope in the northeast, a challenging 9-kilometer professional piste, a summer grass piste in the northwest, and a snowpark piste situated above the Chaman restaurant. In total, there are 23 slopes that cater to various skill levels, offering something for everyone. Dizin is equipped with extensive lift facilities that include four gondola lifts, nine ski lifts, and three chair lifts to service all

23 slopes. Rental options for snowmobiles and snowboards are available, allowing visitors to explore the expansive terrain of the Sical trail and the surrounding Alborz Mountains.

Ski schools and recreational activities

For those looking to improve their skills, Dizin offers two ski schools: one situated near the entrance of the pistes and another located in the upper parking lot. If skiing is not on your agenda for the day, there are plenty of recreational activities to enjoy. The resort provides options such as snowmobiling, paragliding, snowkiting, biking, shooting, and tennis. A tennis court is conveniently located in the southern section of the resort, adding to the variety of experiences available.

Thrill of skiing at Dizin

Recognized as the oldest and largest ski resort in Iran, Dizin stands out as a premier venue for winter sports enthusiasts. If you plan to visit Iran between December and April, Dizin offers an exceptional destination for both novice and experienced skiers alike, ensuring an unforgettable winter sports experience.



Restoration efforts underway for Parthian soldier relief in Fars Province

Iranica Desk
The relief of the Parthian soldier, intricately carved on a nearly cubic stone situated between the cities of Qir and Firuzabad, has suffered from both natural and human damage, raising significant concerns among enthusiasts of Iran's ancient heritage. According to officials from Fars Province's Cultural Heritage Organization, the preservation and restoration plan for this important historical artifact is currently in its final stages. Reza Norouzi, a faculty member at the Cultural Heritage Research Institute, informed IRNA that, based on studies conducted, the relief depicted on a solitary stone positioned along the route linking the cities of Qir and Karzin to Firuzabad is known as the Par-

thian soldier. He explained that, through comparisons with other artifacts from the same era, the image of this archer soldier has been attributed to the Parthian period, IRNA wrote. Norouzi further noted that although little Parthian heritage remains in Fars Province, the fact that the foundations of the ancient city of Gur, located in modern Firuzabad, were established during the Parthian era lends credence to the possibility that the relief of the archer soldier along the Firuzabad route also dates back to that period. He emphasized that the ancient artifact has sustained damage primarily due to its roadside location, which has made it vulnerable to both natural elements and human activity. Mohsen Ziyai, the depu-



ty head of Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, confirmed that a comprehensive plan has been developed for the organization, protection, and

restoration of the Parthian soldier relief and that this plan is in its final stages. Ziyai elaborated that the project encompasses not only the restoration of the damaged sections but also the imple-

mentation of a protective covering and reinforcement for the artifact to ensure its longevity. He affirmed a strong commitment to the protection and restoration of this significant relief, attributed to



the Parthian period, assuring that the necessary funding to support this initiative will be secured. This notable relief is located three kilometers from the cities of Qir and Karz-

in and approximately 215 kilometers from Shiraz. It was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1975, highlighting its importance to the country's cultural legacy.

What Broligarchs want from Trump

Elon Musk (R) and US President-elect Donald Trump look at the launch of the sixth test flight of the Starship rocket in Brownsville, Texas, on November 19, 2024.
● BRUNNEN HELL/GETTY IMAGES



By Brooke Harrington
Scholar, author

OPINION

After Donald Trump won November's election, one of the first things he did was to name two unelected male plutocrats, Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, to run a new Department of Government Efficiency. The yet-to-be-created entity's acronym, DOGE, is something of a joke — a reference to a cryptocurrency named for an internet meme involving a Shiba Inu. But its appointed task of reorganizing the federal bureaucracy and slashing its spending heralds a new political arrangement in Washington: a broligarchy, in which tremendous power is flowing to tech and finance magnates, some of whom appear indifferent or even overtly hostile to democratic tradition.

The broligarchs' ranks also include the PayPal and Palantir co-founder Peter Thiel — Vice President-Elect J. D. Vance's mentor, former employer, and primary financial backer — as well as venture capitalists like Marc Andreessen and David Sacks, both of whom added millions of dollars to Trump's campaign. Musk, to be sure, is the archetype. The world's richest man has reportedly been sitting in on the president-elect's calls with at least three heads of foreign states: Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky, Serbia's Aleksandar Vučić, and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Musk joined Trump in welcoming Argentine President Javier Milei at Mar-a-Lago and, allegedly, according to *The New York Times*, met privately in New York with Iran's ambassador to the United Nations in a bid to "defuse tensions" between that country and the United States. Recently, after Musk publicly endorsed the financier Howard Lutnick for secretary of the Treasury, some in Trump's camp were concerned that Musk was acting as a "co-president," *The Washington Post* reported.



The broligarchs' sense of their innate superiority has led many of them to positions on taxation quite similar to Trump's. In 2016, the Republican presidential nominee bragged about avoiding tax payments for years — "That makes me smart," he crowed from the debate stage. The broligarchs have quietly liberated themselves from one of the only certainties in life.



Musk doesn't always get what he wants; Trump picked Lutnick to be secretary of commerce instead. Even so, the broligarchs' ascendancy on both the foreign- and domestic-policy fronts has taken many observers by surprise — including me, even though I wrote last August about the broligarchs' deepening political alignment with Trump. Though some of them have previously opposed Trump because of his immigration or tariff policies, the broligarchs share his politics of impunity: the idea that some men should be above the law. This defiant rejection of all constraints by and obligations to the societies that made them wealthy is common among the world's ultra-rich, a group whose practices and norms I have studied for nearly two decades. Trump has exemplified this ethos, up to the present moment: He is currently in violation of a law — which he signed into effect during his first term — requiring incoming presidents to agree to an ethics pledge.

Trump — who infamously said of sexual assault, "When you're a star, they let you do it" — cites his celebrity as a basis for his elevation above the law. Many broligarchs also see themselves as exceptional beings but arrived at that view through a different path: via science fiction, fantasy literature, and comic books. Ideas from these genres have long pervaded Silicon Valley culture; last year, Andreessen published a manifesto calling for "Becoming Technological Supermen," defined by embarking on a "Hero's Journey" and "conquering dragons".

Superhero narratives also appear to inform many of Musk's more eccentric political views, including his reported belief that the superintelligent have a duty to reproduce, and may help explain why in September he reposted a claim that "a Republic of high-status males" would be superior to our current democracy. Last week, Musk likened Matt Gaetz, Trump's then-nominee for at-

torney general, to Judge Dredd, a dystopian comic-book character authorized to conduct summary executions. Musk seems to have meant this as a compliment. He described Gaetz — who, until his resignation from the House, was under a congressional investigation in connection with an alleged sex-trafficking scheme — as "our Hammer of Justice".

Whatever its source, the broligarchs' sense of their innate superiority has led many of them to positions on taxation quite similar to Trump's. In 2016, the Republican presidential nominee bragged about avoiding tax payments for years — "That makes me smart," he crowed from the debate stage. The broligarchs have quietly liberated themselves from one of the only certainties in life. As ProPublica reported in 2021, Musk paid zero federal income taxes in 2018 and a de facto tax rate of 3.3 percent from 2014 to 2018, during which his wealth grew by \$13.9 billion. Thiel used a government program intended to expand retirement savings by middle-class Americans to amass \$5 billion in capital-gains income, completely tax-free. The Trump-friendly broligarchs' political ascendancy turns the rallying cry of the Boston Tea Party on its head, achieving

representation with minimal taxation.

In their hostility to taxation and regulation, the men who rule Wall Street and Silicon Valley resemble earlier generations of wealthy capitalists who enjoyed outside influence on American politics. Even some tech barons who supported Kamala Harris clamored for the firing of Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan, who favors vigorous antitrust enforcement. But the broligarchs are distinct from old-school American oligarchs in one key respect: Their political vision seeks to undermine the nation-state system globally. Musk, among others, has set his sights on the privatization and colonization of space with little or no government involvement. Thiel and Andreessen have invested heavily in creating alternatives to the nation-state here on Earth, including libertarian colonies with minimal taxation. One such colony is up and running in Honduras; Thiel has also invested in efforts to create artificial islands and other autonomous communities to serve as new outposts for private governance. "The nature of government is about to change at a very fundamental level," Thiel said of these initiatives in 2008. Cryptocurrency is the financial

engine of the broligarchs' political project. For centuries, states have been defined by two monopolies: first, on the legitimate use of coercive force (as by the military and the police); and second, on control of the money supply. Today's broligarchs have long sought to weaken government control of global finance. Thiel notes in his 2014 book, *Zero to One*, that when he, Musk, and others started PayPal, it "had a suitably grand mission ... We wanted to create a new internet currency to replace the US dollar". If broligarchs succeed in making cryptocurrency a major competitor to or replacement for the dollar, the effects could be enormous. The American currency is also the world's reserve currency — a global medium of exchange. This has contributed to US economic dominance in the world for 80 years and gives Washington greater latitude to use financial and economic pressure as an alternative to military action.

Undercutting the dollar could enrich broligarchs, who hold considerable amounts of wealth in cryptocurrencies, but would also weaken the United States and likely destabilize the world economy. Yet Trump — despite his pledge to "Make America great again" and his previous claims that crypto was a "scam" against the dollar

— now seems fully on board with the broligarchs' agenda. Signaling this alignment during his campaign, Trump gave the keynote speech at a crypto conference last July; he later pledged to make crypto a centerpiece of American monetary policy via the purchase of a strategic bitcoin reserve. The day after the election, one crypto advocate posted on X, "We have a #Bitcoin president." The incoming administration is reportedly vetting candidates for the role of "crypto czar".

If American economic and political dominance recedes, the country's wealthiest men may be well-positioned to fill and profit from the power vacuum that results. But is a weakened country, greater global instability, and rule by a wealthy few really what voters wanted when they chose Trump?

Musk spent millions of dollars to support Trump's campaign and promoted it on X. He's now doing everything he can to capitalize on Trump's victory and maximize his own power — to the point of sacking his X followers on obscure individual government officials. Some evidence, including Axios's recent focus-group study of swing voters, suggests that Americans may already feel uneasy about the influence of the broligarchs. "I didn't vote for him," one participant said of Musk. "I don't know what his ultimate agenda would be for having that type of access." Another voter added, "There's nothing, in my opinion, in Elon Musk's history that shows that he's got the best interest of the country or its citizens in mind." Even so, we can expect him and his fellow broligarchs to extend their influence as far as they can for as long as Trump lets them.

The article first appeared on *The Atlantic*.



Donald Trump makes a speech at the Bitcoin 2024 conference in Nashville, Tennessee, US, on July 27, 2024. The former president said he would make the US the world's cryptocurrency leader.
● MARK HUMPHREY/AP



Ambassador Mike Huckabee will push for 'end times' in Palestine



By Rev. Graylan
Scott Hagler
Pastor Emeritus

OPINION

"Genocide Joe" was an accurate descriptor for Joe Biden. However, no matter how bad Biden was on Palestine — and he was horrible — early signs are that Donald Trump and his cronies are going to be a million times worse. This is most clearly seen by the appointment of Rev. Mike Huckabee as ambassador to Israel.

Huckabee is a former presidential candidate and governor of Arkansas. But those things are not the problem. The problem is that Huckabee is a Christian Zionist and believes in the "End of Times" prophecy, namely that Jews must be established in a sovereign state of Israel to usher in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this theology, Jesus will come again and reign over Israel and the world, and he will create a new age where all will be called to worship Christ. Christ will sit in judgment separating the righteous — believers from nonbelievers. Those who believe will be welcomed into his kingdom and graces, and those who don't will be condemned into Hell and torment.

Mike Huckabee is a Southern Baptist minister. The Southern Baptist Church was founded as a break from the Baptist movement over the issue of slavery in 1845. The Southern Baptist Church on its founding supported slavery and after the Civil War, were ardent supporters of the politics of the "Lost Cause," which included segregation. It wasn't until 1995 that the church formally apologized for its support of slavery. And to right its historical wrongs, in 2017, condemned white supremacy. However, the church recently voted in 2023 to ban women from serving as Pastors in its churches. In 2024, a proposal was put forth to affirm the 2023 decision, but that vote failed narrowly missing the 2/3rds required to pass. Some proponents of the ban suggested that there were already ways to remove churches from its ranks that had women pastors, so the proposal was not necessary. This is relevant because this is the denominational and theological/ideological base of Mike Huckabee, and as a Minister of the Southern Baptist tradition he brings these predilections into public life.

You can sometimes catch Huckabee on late-night or early-morning TV raising funds or engaging in his monologues on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). TBN billed Huckabee as "America's favorite front porch" talk show. His show is described as "the hour-long program... a down-home slice of wholesome Americana in all of its patriotic, God-honoring, and family-friendly glory." But what signals his bias towards Is-



rael are his appeals on behalf of the International Fellowship for Christians and Jews (IFCJ) whose agenda is to support Israel, offer assistance to indigent Jews, and assist with Aliyah (financially assisting Jews to make a home in Israel). This fits with his theological agenda of bringing Jews to Israel in fulfillment of his understanding of prophecy where the sovereignty of Israel as a Jewish "homeland" is a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ. IFCJ's website reads, "As the war shows no signs of slowing down, many Jewish people are struggling"; "YOU can give hope today with your best gift. Donate to provide food, medicine, and other necessities"; and "I will bless those who bless [Israel]", citing Genesis 12:3.

Huckabee, shortly after the announcement of his ambassadorship to Israel, spoke to Israel's Army radio stating, "Of course," the annexation of the West Bank is a possibility. This is his latest statement in a litany of other problematic statements. As a candidate for president in 2008, Huckabee stated that Palestinian identity was "a political tool to try and force land away from Israel". Huckabee has maintained throughout his years in ministry and public life that the West Bank belongs to Israel, rationalizing it in this way, "the title deed was given by God to Abraham and to his heirs." Furthermore, Huckabee believes that there is no such a thing as a Palestinian — "There really isn't such a thing," he said earlier on



Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee attends a ceremony marking the construction of a new housing complex in the illegal Israeli settlement of Efrat in the occupied West Bank, on August 1, 2018.
● AMIR COHEN/REUTERS

this year. There is a lot to be concerned with in the appointment of Huckabee as the point person in Israel.

In response to the news of the Huckabee pick, Luis Moreno, a former chief of mission to Israel and former ambassador to Jamaica, wrote on Twitter, "I unfortunately was exposed to him during his visits to Israel back in the day. Full blown (and knowledgeable) fanatic of the End of Times, Apocalypse, Israel's destruction, etc. A true and utter nutcase. Couldn't

be a more dangerous selection." Yet, this is the choice that is before us, and his influence in the Trump administration will not fare well for the Palestinians of Gaza or the West Bank. The fact is that Mike Huckabee is going to go further in advocating for the destruction of Palestine than the Biden administration has, offer justification for stepping up the holocaust in Gaza, and push for the annexation of Gaza and the West Bank. Huckabee obviously believes that God is hate-filled and delights in the murder and genocide of men, women, and children. He believes that God is a homicidal maniac that only wants to have God's agenda addressed as interpreted by those steeped in religious bias and coming from a historical framework of slavery, misogyny, and white supremacy. This pick will make things a million times worse for the cause of a free Palestine.

This means that those of us in the Palestinian Justice Movement must double our efforts of agitation and education. We must push these next four years for Palestinian self-determination and to dismantle the Israeli apartheid system. We must show up and speak out. We must challenge Congress and politicians at the local level to keep Palestine on their lips and in the consciousness of the public. Trump and Huckabee will seek to erase Palestine along with the crimes of the West Bank and Gaza (and now Lebanon), and it is up to us whether they succeed in this erasure or not.

The article first appeared on Mondoweiss.

I'll never forget what Kennedy did during Samoa's measles outbreak



By Brian Deer
Journalist,
author

PERSPECTIVE

In November 2019, when an epidemic of measles was killing children and babies in Samoa, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — who in recent days became Donald Trump's pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services — sent the prime minister of Samoa a four-page letter. In it, he suggested the measles vaccine itself may have caused the outbreak. He claimed that the vaccine might have "failed to produce antibodies" in vaccinated mothers sufficient to provide infants with immunity, that it perhaps provoked "the evolution of more virulent measles strains" and that children who received the vaccine may have inadvertently spread the virus to other children. "Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance," he added, writing in his role as the chairman of Children's Health Defense, an anti-vaccine group.

At the time of his letter, 16 people, many of them younger than 2, were already reported dead. Measles, which is among the most contagious diseases, can sometimes lead to brain swelling, pneumonia, and death. For months, families grieved over heartbreaking little coffins, until a door-to-door vaccination campaign brought the calamity to a close. The final number of fatalities topped 80.

I was in Samoa during that outbreak as part of my more than 16 years of reporting on the anti-vaccine movement. The cause of the outbreak was not the vaccine, but most likely an infected traveler who brought the virus from New Zealand, which that year had had the biggest measles outbreaks in decades, especially among that country's Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities. Migration and poverty were likely factors in a sudden spread of measles in Samoa and New Zealand. But, as an editorial in The New Zealand Medical Journal reported, so too was a factor that Mr. Kennedy specializes in: "increasing circulation of misinformation leading to distrust and reduced vaccination uptake". Samoa's vaccination rates had fallen to fewer than a third of eligible 1-year-olds.

Vaccine skepticism has ballooned worldwide, and Mr. Kennedy and others who back him have encouraged it. Americans may be

well aware that their possible future health leader holds dangerous beliefs about vaccines. The consequences of his views — and those of his orbit — are not merely absurd but tragic.

In my reporting, parents have mentioned fearing vaccines after watching "Vaxxed," a 90-minute documentary, which had also toured countries such as New Zealand. The film, focused on unproven allegations, was released more than three years before the Samoa measles outbreak. Among much else, it claimed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had committed fraud.

Two of the filmmakers — Del Bigtree and Andrew Wakefield — are buddies of Mr. Kennedy. The director, Mr. Wakefield, is a former doctor whose medical license was revoked in his native Britain in 2010 amid charges of ethical violations. One of the producers, Mr. Bigtree, became Mr. Kennedy's presidential campaign communications chief.

In the years before the documentary was released, I revealed, in a series of articles, evidence that Mr. Wakefield's research in the 1990s had been rigged at a London hospital to make it look as if the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine was linked to autism. This research was retracted in 2010. Mr. Kennedy certainly didn't seem fazed by Mr. Wakefield's professional downfall. "In any just society, we would be building statues to Andy Wakefield,"



Samoa's then-prime minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi (front-r) shakes hands with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. before the latter left the country's 2019 Independence celebration.
● MISIONA SIMO/SAMOA OBSERVER

he yelled, for instance, from a platform he and Mr. Wakefield shared at an event in Washington, D.C., a few days before he sent his letter to Samoa.

Reports say Mr. Kennedy is reviewing résumés for his possible Health and Human Services Department empire. He's reportedly eyeing Dr. Joseph Ladapo, a Florida health official who has questioned the safety of COVID vaccines. I'd say Mr. Bigtree may get a role; Mr. Wakefield is trickier, given how discredited he is, even in the United States. But there are plenty of others in Mr. Kennedy's circle whose claims ought to concern everyone.

Consider Sherri Tenpenny, a doctor who has been declared by Mr. Kennedy as "one of the great leaders" of the anti-vaccine movement. She has falsely

claimed that a "metal" attached to a protein in the COVID shots was making their recipients magnetic. "They can put a key on their forehead and it sticks," she told Ohio state lawmakers in June 2021. "They can put spoons and forks all over them and they can stick." I could pluck plenty more outrageous characters from Mr. Kennedy's circle over the years, including veteran AIDS denialists. In recent days, Mr. Kennedy appears to have tried to change the conversation around his vaccine views to focus on America's junk food diets. But his views on vaccines shouldn't be forgotten. In January 2021, speaking to a gathering of loyalists in Ohio, he outlined a three-point checklist that had to be met for him to consider a COVID vaccine. First, he said, "You take one shot, you

get lifetime immunity." Second, side effects are only "one in a million." Third, "herd immunity" is achieved at 70 percent public uptake — after which, he stipulated, "nobody in this society" ever gets the disease again.

"If they came up with that product," he said, "I'd be happy to look at it."

His audience laughed. But it's not funny.

The article first appeared on The New York Times.

Iran calls on AFC to reinstate hosting rights

Sports Desk

The Iranian Football Federation called on the Asian Football Confederation to restore the country's hosting rights in the international and club games.

The Iranian national team had to host Qatar in Dubai when the two teams met at the World Cup qualifiers on October 15, while Persian Gulf Pro League sides Persepolis, Esteghlal, Sepahan, and Tractor have been forced to play their home fixtures at the Asian club competitions in neutral venues in recent months amid regional tensions between Iran and Israel.

The AFC made the decision after the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched a missile strike on targets in the Israeli-occupied territories on October 1 – days after the assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli air strike in Beirut, Lebanon.

"Over the past two months, there have been no safety or security concerns in our country. However, our teams have been subjected to substantial financial burdens for playing outside the Islamic Republic of Iran," Mahdi Taj, the chairman of the Iranian Football Federation, wrote in a letter to AFC president Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa.

"It is evident that the situation that led to the suspension of all international and domestic flights for approximately 36



● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

hours on October 1, 2024 has returned to normal, and all domestic flights and some international flights have resumed their regular schedules as of the morning of Friday, October 3," the letter wrote, adding that

airlines from Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, China, and Turkey have resumed their services to Iran.

"Other sport federations in Iran have been hosting international tournaments and participants

from different countries have been traveling to Iran without any problem.

"Therefore, our Federation and clubs wish to hold all their home matches in Iran as previously scheduled, in order to

provide fair and satisfactory conditions for all participating clubs in the ACL Elite and ACL Two competitions, as well as the Iranian national team in the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup."

19-year high

Meanwhile, the Iranian national team reached its highest spot in 19 years in the FIFA Men's World Ranking, coming in 18th in the latest monthly list released on Thursday.

Amir Qalenoee's men tallied 1635.31 points to move up by one spot from the previous ranking, though they remained second to Japan among the Asian teams as the Blue Samurai retained the 15th place with 1652.79 points.

The latest ranking comes after Iran defeated North Korea 3-2 in Laos and then went on to beat Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek by the same scoreline in November's international break to maintain its hold on the top spot in Group A of the World Cup Asian qualifiers with 16 points – three clear of second-place Uzbekistan and six above the United Arab Emirates – with four games to spare. With the top two of the group progressing to the World Cup finals, Team Melli can clinch a place in the 2026 showdown in North America when taking on the UAE and Uzbekistan in late March.

Japan opened a nine-point gap on Australia on top of the Group C table, thanks to comprehensive away wins against Indonesia (4-0) and China (3-1), and is on the verge of an eighth successive World Cup participation.

Following the top two in the list of AFC's member states in the FIFA ranking are South Korea (23rd), Australia (26th), and Qatar (48th).

ITTF World Youth Championships: Faraji wins historic U15 bronze

Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis wunderkind Benjamin Faraji bagged a historic bronze at the ITTF World Youth Championships in Helsingborg, Sweden – a first global medal of the sport for the country.

Faraji, who is fourth in the under-15 category of the ITTF World Ranking, suffered a 4-2 loss (6-11, 11-4, 13-11, 12-10, 10-12, 11-4) to Chinese world No. 1 Li Hechen in the

U15 boys' singles semifinals in Helsingborg Arena, though it still saw the 14-year-old prodigy etch his name into history books of Iranian table tennis.

Having beaten the host's Adam Wallin 4-1 on in his first matchup, Faraji came from behind twice to defeat Japanese Shunto Iwaida 4-2 in the round of 16.

The Iranian then came out on top against world No. 17 Lin Ching-Ting of the Chi-

nese Taipei 4-2 (11-6, 6-11, 11-8, 4-11, 12-10, 11-9) in a thrilling last-eight encounter on Thursday, before sharing the third podium with South Korean Lee Sengsoo, who was beaten 4-1 by China's Tang Yiren in the other semifinal on Friday.

Faraji stole all the table tennis headlines in October's Asian Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, where he rallied from behind to stun world seniors' No. 1 Wang

Chuqin 3-2 (11-8, 3-11, 9-11, 13-11, 11-9) during a 3-1 loss to China in the men's teams quarterfinals.

Faraji then came within touching distance of another major upset in Astana, going neck-and-neck with China's Lin Shidong – second to Wang in the World Ranking – but ultimately relinquished a six-point lead in the deciding game to suffer a 3-2 defeat in the men's singles competitions.



● ITTF

Amorim enjoys 'special' first Man Utd win despite 'anxiety'



BBC – New Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim celebrated victory on his Old Trafford debut thanks to a thrilling 3-2 Europa League triumph against Bodo/Glimt – but admitted to a sense of anxiety as his players try to understand his demands.

The scream of relief the 39-year-old let out as Rasmus Hojlund scored the first of his two goals to level the contest at half-time underlined the strain Amorim is under.

The Portuguese has moved clubs – a third of the way through the season – with a determination to implement a wing-back formation United have no recent history of using. And this at a point in the campaign when fixture congestion is at its greatest.

Amorim had two full training sessions with his entire squad before his first game at Ipswich on Sunday, and two more in the build-up to this European success.

He has already revealed his only way around the situation is to push those who do not start matches through

full training sessions the day after. And Amorim is not sure how it will work.

"I get anxious because I don't know what will happen," he told TNT Sports. "We don't control anything at the moment."

"I don't know the players and we have not worked a lot together. "We go to the game excited, but at the same time you are nervous because you don't know how the game will go."

Although the lengthy injury list that blighted Erik ten Hag's last weeks at Old Trafford is starting to ease, the lingering issues created by lengthy absences continue.

In his first game for 18 months, Tyrell Malacia lasted just 45 minutes in the left wing-back role that places huge physical demands on the player picked to fill it.

Luke Shaw made a second substitute appearance, coming on for Lisandro Martinez, who was playing his first game since getting injured before this

month's international break.

It was a relief for Amorim, therefore, that his team came out on top, having profited from Alejandro Garnacho's 48-second opener, then recovering – courtesy of Hojlund's double – after falling behind to two first-half goals in seven minutes.

"We improved different things since the last game," he said. "We controlled more of the tempo, pushed the team a bit higher (up the pitch) and created more chances."

Amorim's complaint was that "we should kill the game before the end", as he lamented two wasted opportunities for Garnacho and another that substitute Marcus Rashford flashed across goal, all in the second half.

"I like the way the players tried to play our game," he added.

"Sometimes we won the ball and have had problems in the past giving the ball away too much – the mindset is keeping the ball."

"They are really trying and I think we deserved the win."

Iran, Europe to pursue dialogue ‘in near future’: Deputy FM

International Desk

Iran, Britain, France and Germany have agreed to continue diplomatic dialogue “in the near future,” a senior Iranian diplomat said following talks on Friday focused on Tehran’s nuclear program.

“We are firmly committed to pursue the interests of our people, and our preference is the path of dialogue and engagement,” Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran’s deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, said on X.

He added that the latest bilateral, regional, and international developments, especially Iran’s

nuclear issue and the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions were discussed during the meeting.

His remarks came after an Iranian delegation, headed by Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi, held talks with deputy foreign ministers from the three European countries in Geneva on Friday.

The negotiations, which were the continuation of talks in September on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York, were overshadowed by an anti-Iran resolution at the UN nuclear agency last week.

Before the Friday nego-

tiations, Gharibabadi in a separate message on X called on the European Union to change its behavior toward the Islamic Republic.

Referring to a meeting between an Iranian delegation with the EU’s coordinator Enrique Mora on Thursday, Gharibabadi said, “It was reaffirmed to him that EU should abandon its self-centered and irresponsible behavior toward issues and challenges of this continent and international matters.”

The Iranian official said that Europe has failed to be a serious player in Iran’s nuclear issue due to lack of self-confidence

and responsibility after Washington in 2018 broke off an international agreement and unilaterally reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

“Europe is in need of self-recovery,” Gharibabadi said.

Mora, for his part, said the exchange was “frank” and focused on Iran’s military support for Russia, the situation in the Middle East and the nuclear dossier.

Friday’s talks have been overshadowed by the European countries teaming up with the United States against Iran, which was censured by the UN atomic watchdog for what it

claimed to be Tehran’s lack of cooperation on nuclear issues.

The IAEA move provoked a response from Iran, which slammed the move as “politically motivated” and in response announced the launch of “new advanced centrifuges” designed to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium.

The UN nuclear agency confirmed on Friday that Iran plans to install around 6,000 new centrifuges to enrich uranium, according to a report seen by AFP on Friday.

“Iran informed the Agency that it intended to feed” around 6,000 centrifuges



Kazem Gharibabadi

at its sites in Fordo and Natanz to enrich uranium to up to five percent, higher than the 3.67 percent limit Tehran had agreed to in 2015.

Iran warns nuclear debate may shift toward possession of weapons

Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that the nuclear debate inside Iran is likely to shift toward the possession of (nuclear) weapons if the West continues to threaten to reimpose all UN sanctions against the Islamic republic. The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks in Portugal’s capital a day before a meeting between Iranian and European negotiators in Geneva on Friday.

Last week, the EU and the UK announced fresh sanctions against Iran after a censure motion brought by Britain, France, Germany and the US was passed at the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Board of Governors.

Araghchi said IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi had promised to prevent the censure motion after Iran proposed limiting its uranium enrichment to 60 percent purity and allowing four nuclear inspectors to visit its nuclear sites.

Grossi “failed because the Europeans had decided on the course of confrontation,” he told reporters.

Iran subsequently “decided to introduce thousands of new, highly advanced machines into the system. And now they have started to feed

Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

them with gas. So, this is the result of their pressure,” he added.

Araghchi reiterated that Iran has remained within the confines of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, however, it still seeks cooperation.

Araghchi said that Iran’s engagement with the West on its nuclear program was not guaranteed.

“There is a debate right now in Iran that it was perhaps a wrong policy. Why? Because it proved we did whatever they wanted and when it was their turn to lift sanctions, in practice, they didn’t happen,” he said. “So maybe something is wrong with our policy.”

Araghchi stressed that Iran has already acquired the capability and knowledge to develop nuclear weapons, but they are not part of its

security strategy.

“So, I can tell you, quite frankly, that there is this debate going on in Iran, and mostly among the elites – even among the ordinary people – whether we should change this policy or not, whether we should change our nuclear doctrine, as some say, or not, because it has proved insufficient in practice,” he said.

He then wondered what the purpose was of Iran spending 10 to 12 years on negotiations, implementation, and fulfilling its obligations if it was only to be ultimately placed back under Chapter Seven of the UN Charter.

In 2015, Iran signed a nuclear agreement with world powers. However, the US withdrew from the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions against Tehran.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Syrian forces, militants clash amid reports of breach into Aleppo

Iran: Reactivation of terrorists in Syria ‘US-Zionist plot’

International Desk

The Syrian Army said on Friday it had repelled surprise attacks by a coalition of foreign-backed militants on Aleppo as reports suggested that the insurgents had entered the country’s second-largest city.

In a statement, Syria’s Armed Forces said it had been clashing with militants in the countryside around Aleppo and Idlib, destroying several of their drones and heavy weapons. It vowed to push back the assault, saying that the militants were spreading false information about their advances.

The army statement also said troops regained control of positions that had been taken by the militants in the Idlib and Aleppo countryside.

Meanwhile a Syrian security official, requesting anonymity, told the state-run SANA news agency that reinforcements had arrived in Aleppo.

“There are fierce bat-

tles and clashes west of Aleppo, but they have not reached the city,” the official added.

It was the first time the city had been attacked by militant groups, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) since 2016, when they were ousted from Aleppo’s eastern neighborhoods.

The HTS and allied factions claimed that they had seized a number of towns and villages in Aleppo and Idlib Provinces after launching an offensive on Wednesday – the same day that a fragile cease-fire took effect in neighboring Lebanon between Israel and resistance group Hezbollah.

The militants claimed to have captured the critical town of Khan Tuman on the outskirts of Aleppo, local sources reported.

The Syrian Ministry of Defense announced in a statement that the Syrian Army, backed by the Russian Air Force, had inflicted heavy losses on the militants and their equipment in Aleppo and Idlib.



AFP

Oleg Ignasyuk, the deputy head of the Russian Center for Reconciliation of the Opposing Parties in Syria, said that at least 400 terrorists affiliated to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, had been killed.

‘US-Zionist plot’

Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described on Friday the reactivation of militant groups in Syria as a plot orchestrated by the US and Israel following the occupying regime’s defeat in Lebanon and Palestine.

During a phone conversation with his Syrian counterpart, Bassam al-Sabbagh, Araghchi reiterated Tehran’s support for the Syrian

government, its people, and the army in their fight against terrorism, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding regional security and stability.

The phone call came a day after Iranian Brigadier General Kioumars Pourhashemi, a military advisor of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), was killed the north-western province of Aleppo.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-sponsored militancy since March 2011, with Damascus saying the Western states and their regional allies are aiding terrorist groups to wreak havoc in the Arab country.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham...

Within this analytical framework, Israel has immediately opened up a new front in Syria, in coordination with Turkey, following the cease-fire with Lebanon. Anti-Assad groups, mainly the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), cannot take effective action without intelligence support from Israel or Turkey.

Tel Aviv and Ankara aim to “Vietnamize” Syria for Iran, as some Israeli officials had previously stated that Syria would become Iran’s Vietnam.

Israel and Turkey ulti-

mately want to either oust Bashar al-Assad from power or isolate him from the Resistance Front and Iran.

As Israel has yet to achieve its primary goal of destroying the Resistance Front, it may try to spread the flames of war in Syria to Iraq, and even Iran, in order to send a message to Arab countries in the region that it is the dominant power and can safeguard its own security and that of its Arab allies, as well as American interests.

Therefore, the situation in Syria has become increasingly complex, and it

remains unclear how long the current conflicts will persist. Israel has conveyed a message to Assad through the UAE, either to cut off the supply lines of Resistance forces from Syria to southern Lebanon or face assassination. Evidence suggests that Assad has not acquiesced to Israel’s demands.

In recent days, numerous messages have been circulating on Israeli social media calling for Assad’s assassination. For instance, a post on the page of the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) on Thursday stated that Syria is facing

a critical test. According to the INSS, now that Aleppo has been thrown into chaos, Israel should intensify its airstrikes against Resistance forces in Syria, particularly Iranian positions, while Arab countries simultaneously pressure Assad to distance himself from the Resistance Axis and Iran and return to the Arab fold.

Thus, the West Asia region remains fraught with new tensions and developments, a major portion of which are the result of the rivalry between big powers and the conflict of interests in this region.



Diplomacy to attract foreign tourists in full swing: *Minister*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, announced that active diplomacy to attract foreign tourists begun in various parts of the world. "Our first goal is the countries of the Nowruz region, which is why we have traveled to Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan for this purpose," he said. Speaking to investors and tourism advocates in Mahmoudabad, Salehi Amiri emphasized that the government has started a new era of cooperation and collective problem-solving, IRNA reported. Iran's tourism minister traveled to Mazandaran province for the second time in two months on November 27 to assess challenges and opportunities in the region's tourism sector. Iran's tourism minister said Iraq is our country's top target in the Persian Gulf

region, with nearly there million Iraqi tourists visiting annually, a number that needs to increase. Iran is also working to revive relations with other nations to boost foreign tourism, with India, China and Turkey next on the agenda. The minister noted that Indonesia and Malaysia are also key targets for growth. Salehi Amiri also stressed the importance of developing infrastructure in the country, including transportation, hotels, and accommodation. "We must not forget about the sea and invest in its development," he said. "The government's will is to develop a sea-based economy, and for this to turn up, we need to create suitable facilities on the coast." The minister also announced that a committee will be formed to resolve problems related to tourism within the government. "We will work together with the Parliament and other relevant bodies to create a com-



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri (c) and his entourage visit a site in the western part of the northern province of Mazandaran, on November 28, 2024.
● CHTN

prehensive strategy for tourism development," he said. In a related development, Salehi Amiri inaugurated the second phase of the Simorgh tourism complex in Mahmoudabad, which has created 110 jobs and features 63 modern games. He also visited the Dasht-e Noor Recreational & Tourist Complex in Noor, which is a combined hotel and recreational facility. The minister emphasized that attracting foreign tourists is crucial for Iran's economy, as it creates jobs, generates revenue, and promotes economic growth. "We must work together to overcome obstacles and develop our tourism industry," he said.



Persian literary treasures on display at Sulaymaniyah book fair

A collection of Iranian books is drawing crowds at the 6th Sulaymaniyah International Book Fair, which opened its doors on November 28. Iranian Book and Literature House is showcasing 300 book titles from 50 active publishers in the country. The booth, spanning 18 square meters, is a treasure trove of literary works covering various topics such as resistance literature, Iranology, ancient and contemporary literature, children and young adult literature, and Persian language teaching, IRNA reported.



The 11-day book fair, which will run until December 8, has brought together over 200 publishers from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan, Oman, the UAE, Lebanon, the US, and the UK. The event is expected to display tens

of thousands of book titles over its duration. The Iranian booth aims to introduce the latest achievements of the country's publishing industry, promote the Tehran International Book Fair, and highlight the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's supportive plans and literary awards.

Iran, China team up to boost arts cooperation

Iran and China signed an agreement to step up cooperation in the arts, paving the way for a new era of cultural exchange between the two nations. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked by Majid Shah Hosseini, Head of the Iranian Academy of Arts, and Zhou Qingfu, President of the National Academy of Arts of China, in Beijing, IRNA wrote. The agreement aims to build on the existing ties between the two countries and take their artistic collaboration to the next level. The MoU brings together various aspects of artistic cooperation, including policy-making, artistic training, and criticism, as well as the promotion of Iranian, Islamic, and Chinese art. Under the agreement, the two countries will work together to translate the works of art scholars, introduce top cinema works, and showcase the national



music of both countries. The MoU also provides for the exhibition of visual arts works by prominent artists from both nations. Shah Hosseini also attended the 2nd Liangzhu Forum held from November 25 to 27, themed "exchanges and mutual learning for a new model of human progress", which brought together representatives from 63 countries. He also met with the Chinese Minister of Culture and visited the Chinese Academy of Arts and cultural institutions in China.

Call for Tender 1st Announcement for the Purchase of Accommodation Units and Offshore Explosion proof & Fireproof Container for Belal Project

First Announcement **Tender No.982083**

Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company intends to Purchase Accommodation Units and Offshore Explosion proof & Fireproof Container for Belal Project, Tender No. 982083, through a public tender. Therefore, the applicants are allowed to have 15 days after the date of 1st publication of the tender notice in the newspaper to participate in this tender.

To download the tender documents, please visit the tender's section of the IOEC's website: WWW.IOEC.COM/EN/TENDERS, and Please do not hesitate to contact with Transaction Committee office with Mr. Amir Nosratzadeh, with Tel: +9821-82841533 or email tc.procurement@ioec.com under sign for any inquiries and more information.

second Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0240005

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
2	PARTS FOR "HYDRA RIG" COILED TUBING INJECTOR HEAD MODEL: HR660, SER. NO: J13471, JOB#302197 REF. HYDRA RIG	120NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 3,466/45 EURO or 1,800,306,144 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

NOTE: Based on enactment issued by Nisoc's Tender committee, foreign companies must submit a Bid Bond Guarantee amounting to aforementioned (paragraph 1)Euro amount. Otherwise, their quotations will not be considered.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644
Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

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