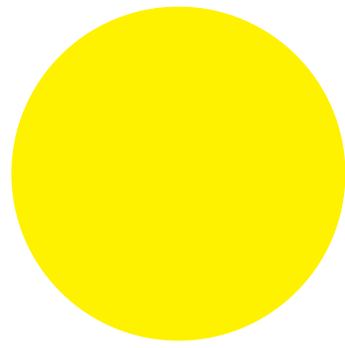


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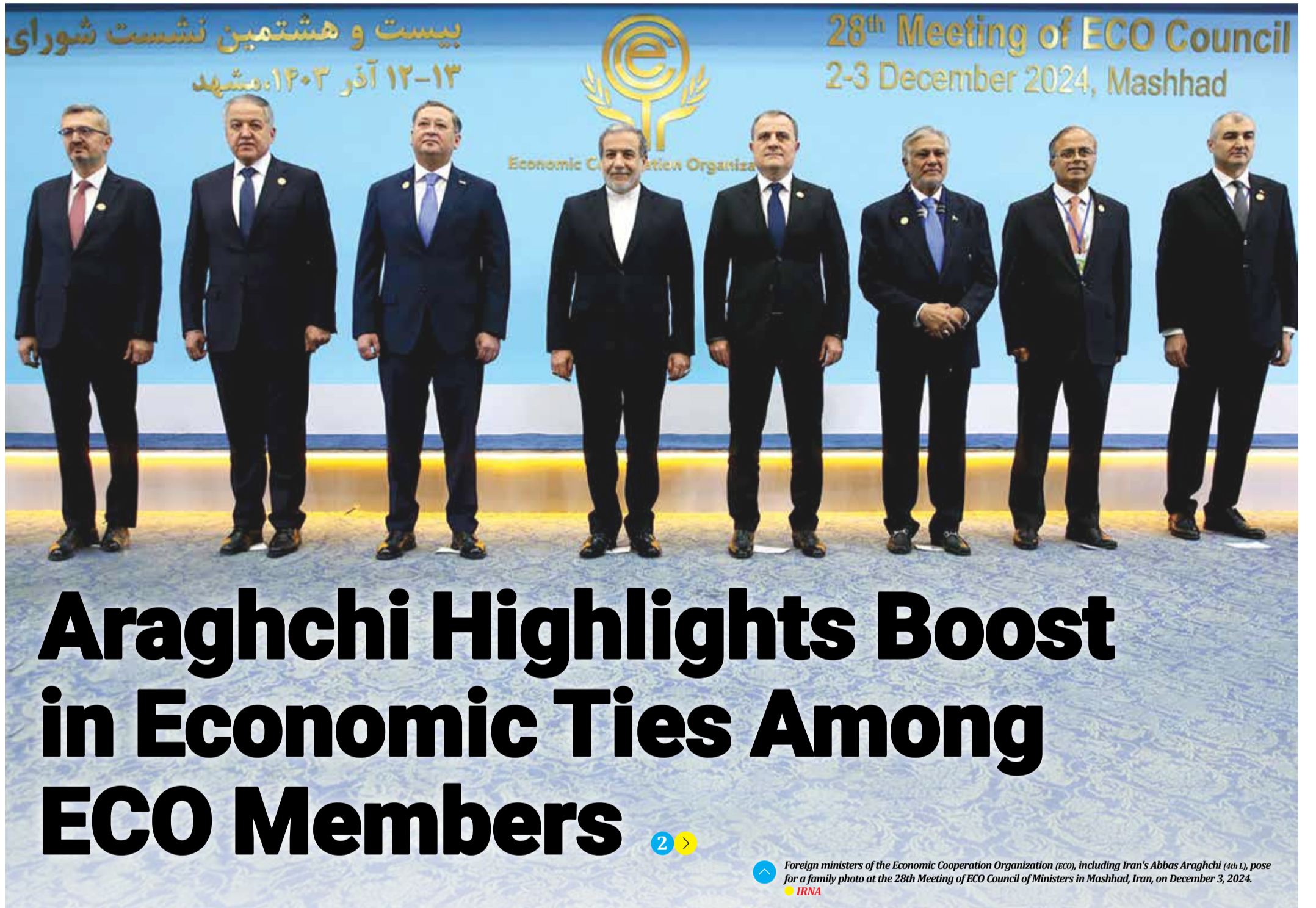
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28th Meeting of ECO Council
2-3 December 2024, Mashhad

Araghchi Highlights Boost in Economic Ties Among ECO Members

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Foreign ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), including Iran's Abbas Araghchi (4th l.), pose for a family photo at the 28th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers in Mashhad, Iran, on December 3, 2024. IRNA

Trump after economic gains not war vis-à-vis Iran



By Farhad Bashiri
Iranian legislator

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

made earlier. As a businessman and a man of economy, Trump is likely to prioritize economic interests over war and military adventurism. People who are into economy tend to shy away from conflict and are more interested in making profits. This trait may also apply to Trump, although he may strike a hawkish pose, talk tough on military matters and make threats, he may not be as gung-ho about it in practice. It is only natural for every country to pursue its own interests and the American people have elected someone to look out for their country's interests. Iran, too, has its own set of priorities and interests that need to be carefully examined and pursued. However, we should not just tie the country's issues to negotiations with the US. Iran is a big country with plenty of resources, capacities, and capabilities. Who becomes the President of the United States should not be a big deal for us; this is a perspective that needs to be promoted by Iranian officials and media across the board. On the other hand, the overall policies of the United States toward Iran and other issues are set in a way that does not change dramatically with a change in presidency.

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Award-winning environmental toxicologist:

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Iranian writers join global peers at Jakarta literary event

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran underscores regional cooperation to combat desertification

Economy Desk

Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Qezelgeh emphasized the need for expanded regional cooperation among Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf littoral countries to address desertification during a meeting with Saudi Agriculture Minister Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadhli in Riyadh.

According to IRNA, Nouri-Qezelgeh, who is attending the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), expressed hope for coordinated efforts to implement effective measures against desertification.

The Iranian minister also thanked Saudi Arabia for hosting COP16, highlighting the significance of the conference in tackling regional environmental challenges.

In a separate meeting, Nouri-Qezelgeh met with his Iraqi counterpart, Abbas Jabir Al-Aliawi, on the sidelines of COP16 to discuss joint efforts in combating desertification.

The two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to bilateral cooperation to address the pressing environmental issue.

Nouri-Qezelgeh is attending COP16 from December 2 to 13, 2024, in Riyadh. The event, recognized as a pivotal global platform, brings together governments, businesses, and civil society to address land degradation and drought resilience. His agenda includes discussions with agriculture ministers from other UNCCD member countries to explore strategies for mitigating desertification and drought.

300 domestic, foreign firms partake in Iran IPCC 2024

The 24th edition of Iran's International Exhibition on Paint, Resin, Coatings, Composites and Plating Industries (Iran IPCC) has kicked off in the Iranian capital with the participation of 300 domestic and foreign companies. Companies from Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, India, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, France, Italy, the Switzerland, Germany, and China are represented at the show, which started on Tuesday, IRNA reported. The exhibition showcases the latest technological developments in the fields of industrial paint and will run until November 6.

Araghchi highlights boost in economic ties among ECO members

Economy Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi placed a premium on the significance of fortifying the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and expanding economic collaboration among its member states, calling the 28th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers a key opportunity for dialogue.

According to IRNA, addressing the 28th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers in Mashhad on Tuesday, the top diplomat said that the Islamic Republic of Iran, having chaired the organization over the past year, has focused on advancing the major objectives of ECO to promote regional unity and development.

"This meeting provides an opportunity to exchange views with my counterparts from ECO member countries and the organization's secretary-general on the latest developments," Araghchi said.

He also pointed out the significant economic, commercial, tourism, and agricultural potential of Khorasan Razavi Province, where Mashhad is located and expressed hope that the foreign ministers visiting the region would observe some of its economic opportunities.

Araghchi added that Khorasan Razavi's proximity to Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, as well as its strategic role in connecting the landlocked countries of Central Asia to southern Iran's high seas, enhances the north-eastern province's importance.

During the main session of the meeting, the foreign ministers discussed ways to further strengthen ECO and boost economic cooperation.

According to IRNA, the final session on the second day was attended by Araghchi, ECO Secretary-General Asad Majeed Khan, and the foreign ministers of Turkey, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan.

On the first day, Monday, ambassadors, deputy foreign ministers, and experts from ECO member states prepared draft agreements on various economic, cultural, and social cooperation initiatives, which were reviewed and approved by the foreign ministers during the main session on Tuesday.

Need for competitive economy

Speaking at the event on Tuesday, Majeed Khan said that the region needs a competitive economy, ex-

pressing hope for support in organizing regular dialogues among the economy ministers of ECO member states.

He noted that all members share religious, geographical, and regional commonalities as well as economic ties but have yet to achieve the necessary cohesion.

Majeed Khan stressed the need for significant efforts to harness ECO's potential for the benefit of its members.

He emphasized the importance of strong leadership and active political engagement as key components of ECO.

Majeed Khan also called for various meetings and exhibitions to identify the trade limitations and capacities of member states.

He highlighted ECO's ongoing activities in travel and transportation, stressing the need to expand existing corridors, digitize transportation processes, and leverage the transportation summit held in Iran. "Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including security, financing, procedural inconsistency, and other limitations," he said.

Majeed Khan underscored the importance of strengthening connections with partners, engaging with international institutions, and securing adequate fi-



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi chairs the 28th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers in Mashhad, Iran, on December 3, 2024. IRNA

ancing through collaboration with different banks. He addressed the urgent need for regional measures to combat climate change, glacial melting, and deforestation and lamented the lack of ministerial meetings on these issues over the past decade, stressing that climate change poses a critical threat requiring decisive action, with ministerial support essential for ECO initiatives.

Majeed Khan highlighted tourism as a vital tool for fostering regional connections, emphasizing the importance of expanding tourism to showcase the historical and cultural sig-

nificance of member cities. He noted ECO's efforts in promoting the organization's Tourism Capital initiative as part of these endeavors.

Majeed Khan also expressed gratitude for attendance on his first ECO meeting as secretary-general, commending Iran's leadership in 2024 under the theme, "Building a Resilient Region through Intra-Regional Trade Development."

He thanked Araghchi and his professional team for successfully hosting the meeting in Mashhad, along with other meetings throughout the year.

ECO, a regional intergovernmental organization, was established in 1964 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to promote economic and cultural cooperation among its members. In 1992, the organization expanded to include seven new members—Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—bringing the total membership to 10 countries.

The 29th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting will take place in Kazakhstan in 2025, marking the next step in ECO's mission to advance regional prosperity.



Tehran to host meeting of world's largest gas exporters

The deputy minister of international affairs and commerce at Iran's Ministry of Oil announced that the world's largest gas exporters, who collectively hold 70% of global gas reserves, 40% of production, 47% of pipeline exports, as well as 51% of LNG exports, will gather in Tehran for the 26th Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) from December 6 to 8, with Mohsen Paknejad, Iran's oil minister, chairing the event. Ali-Mohammad Mousavi said 16 key gas-producing and exporting countries are expected to attend, Shana reported on Tuesday. The GECF comprises 12 member nations, including Iran, Russia, Qatar, Algeria, and

Venezuela, alongside eight observer countries such as Angola, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Malaysia.

Mousavi emphasized the strategic importance of the forum, which serves as the GECF's chief policy-making body. He highlighted the agenda, including the approval of the budget, the election of the secretary-general, and the selection of the next meeting's leadership. The meeting will also provide updates on the global gas market outlook.

Iran, a founding member, hosted the GECF's inaugural meeting in 2001. The GECF secretariat is based in Qatar. Iran has hosted several high-profile GECF events, including the 3rd Heads of State Summit in 2015.

On December 6, an extraordinary executive board meeting will take place, followed by industry site visits and bilateral meetings on December 7.

The ministerial meeting on December 8 will feature an open session, including speeches from the GECF president and secretary-general, followed by a closed-door session. A press conference will conclude the event.

Mousavi confirmed that six member countries, including Iran, Qatar, Russia, Nigeria, Libya, and Algeria, representing half of the world's gas reserves, will participate at the ministerial level. Oman will attend as a guest, and invitations have been extended to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Iran-Eurasia trade hits \$5b

Economy Desk

Iran's total trade with the five Eurasian countries has surged from nearly \$2 billion before the implementation of a 2023 trade agreement to \$5 billion, according to a senior official.

Mehdi Seyedi, advisor for international affairs and trade agreements at Trade Promotion Organization, explained that over 87% of goods are covered under the free trade agreement, which reduces customs tariffs to zero. "We expect the implementation of this agreement to significantly boost trade volume between both sides," Seyedi noted.

He highlighted that during the first year of the Eurasian agreement—from October 27, 2019, to October 27, 2020—Iran saw

an 82% increase in exports on items that benefited from tariff reductions, which expanded trade with Eurasian nations.

Seyedi added that the positive results encouraged Iran to initiate negotiations on November 2, 2020, to convert the agreement into a comprehensive free trade deal with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The negotiations spanned more than three years, culminating in the signing of the free trade agreement on December 25, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Seyedi emphasized, "This is the first agreement in which customs tariffs on more than 80% of goods are reduced to zero."

Export growth among top priorities

According to IRNA, one of the

key objectives of Iran's sitting administration is to enhance trade and economic ties with neighboring countries and boost exports.

In the administration's first 100 days (started July 31), the value of exports from the industrial, metal, and non-metal mining sectors reached \$4.569 billion.

The government has prioritized increasing revenue from non-oil exports, expanding trade relations with target countries, and supporting domestic production by importing essential goods and machinery.

Strengthened trade ties with neighboring countries and new trade agreements have led to industrial exports reaching \$2.091 billion, with a total weight of 1.91 million tons.



The Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade reported that exports of metal mining products amounted to \$2.142 billion, with a total weight of 2.807 million tons, while non-metal mining exports totaled \$335 million, with a volume of 4.776 million tons. Additionally, technical and engineering service exports during the same period reached \$525

million, underscoring significant progress.

Key achievements include the revision of the free trade agreement with Syria, the implementation of a preferential trade agreement with Turkey, and the renewal of a similar agreement with Uzbekistan—all part of the administration's strategy to expand exports and bolster the industrial sector.

Crown imperials of Dehnow; unique natural heritage in need of protection



● karnaval.ir



● karnaval.ir

Iranica Desk

Ali Mashhadi, head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Khomein in Isfahan Province, highlighted the habitat of the crown imperial — an Asian plant recognized for its cluster of bell-like flowers atop a tall, mostly bare stem — in Dehnow village, a unique natural attraction in Markazi Province. This habitat has been officially registered as a national natural attraction, ensuring the protection of this beautiful site while creating new opportunities for sustainable tourism development in the region, chtn.ir wrote Mashhadi noted the area's unique characteristics, including its location in the mountainous region, which

features a temperate climate, springs, and pristine natural beauty. As the birthplace of crown imperial, it lies along the former Khakbar road and is poised to become an appealing destination for nature lovers and local culture enthusiasts.

He emphasized that the national registration of this natural attraction, covering approximately 70 hectares, presents a significant opportunity for sustainable tourism development.

By focusing on tourism alongside environmental protection, Khomein can enhance its economic and social prosperity. This is particularly crucial in the current context, where preserving natural resources has gained increasing importance, making the region

more attractive to tourists and investors.

Mashhadi emphasized the importance of protecting this natural attraction, stating that safeguarding natural and historical sites not only preserves their beauty but also protects the civilization and culture of the land. This responsibility lies with all segments of society, and we must collaborate to safeguard these valuable resources.

He expressed hope that, with the cooperation of local residents and authorities, they can transform the area into a sustainable tourism destination, making the most of its natural attractions. He also noted that planning cultural and artistic festivals can significantly promote these attractions and draw in tourists.

Additionally, they are working on creating the necessary infrastructure for tourists to enjoy the area's natural beauty. This includes improving access, providing facilities and educational resources for visitors, and promoting environmental awareness among both the local community and tourists. In conclusion, Mashhadi stated, "We all need to recognize that protecting these natural sites benefits not only us but also future generations. Therefore, the cooperation of all individuals and organizations is essential for effectively safeguarding these natural treasures."

The crown imperials of Iran are not just flowers; they are emblems of a nation's endurance. Blooming amidst the mountains, their roots burrow

deep into the parched soil, drawing life from the very essence of the earth.

These crown imperials, with their unique inverted beauty, testify to the power of adaptation and transformation. Just as they thrive in the most unlikely conditions, the Iranian people have also adapted to the ever-changing tides of history. They have weathered storms, embraced change, and emerged as a vibrant, resilient culture that continues to captivate the world.

The crown imperials of Iran symbolize hope, a reminder that even in the darkest times, a guiding light exists. They teach us that beauty can be found in the most unexpected places.



● ISNA

Archaeological significance of Kermanshah Province

Iranica Desk

Kermanshah Province holds a unique and prominent position in the history of archaeological studies, particularly concerning the origins of agriculture and permanent settlement in the world, Hojjat Darabi, a faculty member in the Archaeology Department at Razi University of Kermanshah said.

Speaking in an interview with ISNA, Darabi highlighted that the first research in this area began in the late 1950s. In 1960 and 1961, an archaeological team from the University

of Chicago, led by Robert Braidwood, explored several prehistoric sites and examined the plains of Kermanshah and Mahidasht within the province.

At that time, the sites of Tappeh Aasiyab and Tappeh Sarab, located near the city of Kermanshah, were the most significant prehistoric sites studied by the University of Chicago's team. However, subsequent research over the following decades revealed that Kermanshah boasts the largest number of Neolithic archaeological sites in Iran. According to the studies conducted at these archae-

ological sites, the first steps of humanity toward agriculture and settlement in the Central Zagros, including Kermanshah Province, were taken approximately 10,000 years ago. Darabi noted that research on the Ganj Dareh Mound in Harsin has identified it as the first site for the domestication and breeding of goats, with evidence of animal husbandry and plant cultivation also discovered at the Sheikh Abad mound. He stressed that these findings indicate that Kermanshah Province's greatest archaeological potential is linked to the Neolithic

period and deserves special attention. Fortunately, in recent years, there has been a shift in the approach of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Kermanshah Province, emphasizing that archaeological activities should be targeted. However, most current activities have been limited to exploratory drilling aimed at determining boundaries and zones.

Darabi reminded us that while such activities are valuable for protecting archaeological sites, they cannot provide the same insights into past societies as

excavations can. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize archaeological excavations to more thoroughly introduce the rich heritage of Kermanshah Province, particularly given the Neolithic period's unique significance in this region.

He also addressed a common misconception surrounding archaeological excavations in historical sites. Unfortunately, some decision-makers in the field of cultural heritage believe that conducting excavations will lead to increased destruction by illegal diggers. However, it is important to recognize that all sites typ-

ically suffer from damage before any archaeological activities occur, raising concerns that they could be entirely lost.

Darabi pointed out that it is precisely through these excavations that we have gained knowledge about our past heritage, such as Bisotun and Ganj Dareh, of which we take great pride. He noted that the rate of destruction of archaeological sites is alarmingly high and is unfortunately on the rise. Therefore, we should not hesitate to proceed with excavations or use this issue as an excuse to avoid taking necessary actions.

He emphasized the need to support archaeological excavations through scientific planning and analysis, utilizing skilled specialists in the process. The best way to protect these sites is to enhance local people's awareness of their significance, which can be achieved through public educational activities stemming from archaeological work.

Darabi expressed hope that the cultural officials of the country recognize the role and importance of cultural heritage as a unifying force within society, thereby giving it the attention it deserves.



● Ganj Dareh Mound
● KOJARO.COM



● Tappeh Aasiyab
● ANYJA.IR



● Tappeh Sarab
● CAFETARIKH.COM



● Bisotun
● MEHR

Award-winning environmental toxicologist: US, Israeli use of banned uranium ammunition in Mideast war crime

'One man, one vote; that is coming to Palestine'



By Zohreh
Qanadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

It is now over a year since the Gaza Strip has been gripped in an Israeli aggression triggered by the Hamas resistance group's attack on Israel. With over 40,000 people dead and many more injured, the war for Palestinians in Gaza means continuing misery under an Israeli campaign that has demolished much of the territory and driven almost the entire population - 2.3 million - from their homes. Hundreds of thousands are going hungry while living in squalid tent cities as the second winter of the war brings cold rains and flooding.

Amidst this dire situation, the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense chief Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. Meanwhile, the US, a key supporter of Israel, is set to swear in a new president, Donald Trump, in January. Against this backdrop, Iran Daily spoke with Dr. Mozghan Savabieasfahani, an advocate for justice in Palestine. Based on her research in the region, the award-winning environmental toxicologist shares insights on the use of banned depleted uranium ammunition in the Middle East by the US and Israel and its devastating consequences for the region's children, which constitutes a war crime.

The Assistant Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Michigan also expresses her optimism about the end of the Gaza war and the prospects for freedom for the people in the Middle East.

Here is the full interview:

IRAN DAILY: Do you think the US President-elect Donald Trump will break with the policies of his predecessor, Joe Biden, on the Gaza war, given that he campaigned as an anti-war candidate?

SAVABIEASFHANI: Donald Trump showed us his essence the first time he became the president of the United States. He is the guy who said Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Trump has done everything even more for Israel than Biden has. So, I do not expect anything different and what I do expect is worsening of the situation under Donald Trump. So, it would be a mistake to think that the policies of the United States are going to change towards the Middle East at all between Biden and Trump.

The truth is that over the past 30-40 years, the Republicans and the Democrats have handed each other policies and they all followed each other specifically about the Middle East. So, I don't think that there will be much of a difference. It would be more violence; it would be more massacres, and more slaughter. The only way this war can end is with international bodies and the resistance of people across the globe to force a cease-fire and stop this genocide. Other than that, I do not have any hope for any sort of governments in the European Union or the United States to make any changes in their behavior.

With several European countries vowing to uphold the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Netanyahu and Gallant, do you believe this development could be a turning point in curtailing the Israeli prime minister's aggressive actions?

The fact that the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest war-

rant for Netanyahu and Gallant is an example of success of global resistance against apartheid, against colonialism. The International Criminal Court, as you know, is a very conservative body and if they were actually on the side of the oppressed, they would have immediately [called for the arrest of these killers]. It wouldn't take them a year and a half to call for the arrest of these killers. It would have been immediate. Because they are conservative and [so,] they don't respond to the needs of the population. Typically, financiers here are European rich countries, therefore it has taken them a year and more to say that this genocide has to stop and those who are perpetuating it should be put in jail. This should have been done a year ago.

But the fact that they have actually done this [issuing an arrest warrant] and the fact that the global community is taking this - as such an important step - is very promising.

Throughout the past year and few months when this slaughter has been happening in Gaza, and also in Lebanon, and Syria, Europeans who have been calling themselves champions of legality and democracy have been forced by the public to say we have to observe this; we have to obey the rule of the law, which the ICC is putting forward, which is to arrest these people (Netanyahu and Gallant).

So, I think it's a very significant step, which tells us that mass protest and mass resistance, which has been happening in favor of both Gaza and Lebanon is the only way we can stop these wars and

aggressions; we can stop genocide and apartheid.

The only tool that the global population has is mass resistance, which is in the form of mass protest and things like that which has been happening.

So, I'm very hopeful and I think that it's the sign that we have won. Humanity has won over apartheid, genocide, and colonialism. Humanity has won over torture, rape, and mass murder. We should be very happy. And this will continue. I think we have learned a big lesson.

You've emphasized the importance of mass resistance and global protests against Israel as a crucial means to end the war and genocide. Notably, such protests in the United States across the universities have gained momentum. What's your take on this significant shift in public opinion and its potential impact on the war?

The student protest in the United States is ongoing. It's ongoing on the campus of University of Michigan where I interact with. It's ongoing on the campus of Columbia University and many universities in the United States.

What's more important than this student protest is a massive change of mind among student bodies across the United States.

A few years ago, maybe 3-4 years ago, while Israel was massacring people in Palestine and was doing all kinds of nasty stuff to Palestine, if you talk to [the American] students, they would say, "Oh we're not political. We don't want to talk about".

Israel had a very clean face only a few years ago. Today that mask is off and the students are clearly a 100% against Israel and apartheid, and Zionism. [They are] against colonialism and racism



Police in Riot gear stand guard as demonstrators chant slogans outside the Columbia University campus, on April 18, 2024, in New York, US.
● AP



A displaced child carries filled water bottles at a makeshift tent camp in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, Aug. 29, 2024.
● AP



It's a very significant step, which tells us that mass protest, mass resistance, which has been happening in favor of both Gaza and Lebanon is the only way we can stop these wars.



Columbia University professors rally in solidarity with their students' rights to protest free from arrest at the Columbia University campus in New York, on April 22, 2024. ● AP

Mozhgan Savabieasfahani is an advocate for justice in Palestine and also an assistant professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Michigan, the US. ● IRAN DAILY



The US and Israel are using depleted uranium ammunition in Lebanon and potentially in Gaza. What we need to do is to bring that to the attention of the world and say that they are using banned weaponry in these areas. ... Therefore, our duty right now to the children of the Middle East is to expose this and make sure that the world knows that what the US and Israel are throwing at us will damage our DNA and our next generations and this is a war crime.



and they see those connections with each other.

There has been a qualitative change in the minds of American students about global relationships and it comes from the fact that they see how their government has been lying, how their government has been hiding a genocide and massacre, torture, and rape. They can see that all of that has been happening and their government, the one that they put their trust in, has been hiding the truths from them.

So, they are questioning, "Is this democracy? Is this human rights?" So, they are questioning all these things that the government of the United States was insisting. They're questioning it, saying, "Are you?" "No, you're not."

If you (US government) support this genocide, and continue to fund it, if you continue to give weapons to it, while watching children burn to death, then we know what the fabric of you is. We know that you lie and that you are on the wrong side of history.

And that is a qualitative change in the minds of - I want to safely say - a 100% of students in the United States, from University of Michigan to UCLA, Columbia University and Ohio State University and all of these places and as a result of that there's continuous protest.

You mentioned the protests in Columbia University. As I know these students are not from the ordinary class of the American society; rather, they are the children of congressmen, senators, businessmen and the ruling political class in the country. In fact, these students will be the new leaders of the US. This revolution has started in a prestigious American university such as Columbia University in New York - the city that is a stronghold of the Zionist lobby. Does this suggest that the future generations of the US may not be influenced by Zionism like their fathers and ancestors were.

I think that's completely true. Columbia University is a very expensive University. It's a private university and the tuition is extremely high. So, the students, who make it to Columbia come from extremely rich echelon of society. Yes, they usually are children of the ultra-rich. What has happened is that even their minds have been changed because they can see what the structure of liberal democracy is. They can see what liberal democracy accomplishes - death, genocide, weapons manufacturing, and bombing all over the world. They can see that and they put two and two together. They're very smart students. They can see that, and as a result, this kind of US policy is becoming extremely distasteful.

Another point is that at Columbia [University], where US policymakers

claim to uphold the bastion of free exchange of ideas and free speech, they have banned students from wearing Keffiyehs or displaying Palestine solidarity emblems on their computers. For example, students are banned from using posters of Palestine or little stickers "Free Palestine" on their computers at the library, because these things are illegal. So, what kind of freedom of speech is there? What kind of freedom of expression is it, if you can't even put a sticker on your computer and sit in a library?

So, these things have really made it vividly clear that Columbia University is not about the freedom of speech. Columbia University is not about freedom of exchange of ideas and these things have been a big blow to the minds of young people, who for all of their lives thought they were living in a society that free speech is cherished and all of this is encouraged. So, when I tell you that this events in Gaza have been a huge wake-up call to the student body all over the United States, this is what I mean.

Over the past year, over 44,000 people in Gaza have been killed, tens of thousands injured, and millions displaced. Meanwhile, the narrative of the Palestinian people's victimhood and the Israeli aggression has become more apparent to the world. Do you also think like many others in the world that the Palestinian outburst on October 7 was inevitable?

First of all, there is a lot more than 44,000 dead people in Gaza. Because there was an estimate study done by Lancet that wrote in July, "In recent conflicts, such indirect deaths range from three to 15 times the number of direct deaths. Applying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death to the 37,396 deaths reported [by June 19, 2024, according to the Gaza Health Ministry], it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza. Using the 2022 Gaza Strip population estimate of 2 375 259, this would translate to 7.9% of the total population in the Gaza Strip. A report from Feb 7, 2024, at the time when the direct death toll was 28 000, estimated that without a cease-fire there would be between 58,260 deaths (without an epidemic or escalation) and 85,750 deaths (if both occurred) by Aug 6, 2024."

And your question. The outburst is inevitable. The outburst - the October 7th event - is a result of what happens in a society when it has been tortured, abused, jailed, and had its children and parents killed in front of each other for 75 years. What happens to such a society is that it becomes a construct of the mind where the only response is to break out. And a portion of that society will inevitably break out. Imagine the mental picture of the

world for the youth, who attacked Israel on October 7. They've grown up under extreme limitations. The Gaza Strip is completely closed off, and Israel has imposed severe sanctions, effectively turning it into a closed death camp. They have no control over their lives, and every few months, Israeli forces break in, kill hundreds, and leave.

What does that do to your mindset? You don't see the world as having the worst to offer; instead, you're driven to get out. And when they break out, it's not a surprise. This is something that could happen in any society that's been pushed to the brink. The population has been resisting, and they've been doing so without regrets. They knew this resistance was inevitable, and they knew it would happen. And now, it's happening.

I think the burden of this death and destruction is not only on the Palestinians, but also on the Lebanese, Syrians, and Yemenis, as they're all entangled in this war. It's also on the Iranians, because we're constantly aware of it. We're constantly thinking about what's happening in the world. Yes, the outburst was inevitable. It wasn't something that could have been prevented, because the mental state of nearly three million Palestinians had reached a point that you could not choose. You had to break out. So, this event was not preventable.

How do you envision the end of this war?

I think that very positive things are coming to the Middle East. The total dismantlement of Israel will happen just like in South Africa. South Africa was an apartheid state and it was dismantled and it was replaced by a popular government. One man, one vote; that is coming to Palestine. It will be one person, one vote. There will be no distinction between who is Jewish, who is Muslim, or who is Christian, and that is a very good thing. Freedom for Palestine means freedom for the Middle East. It means across the Middle East countries that their governments are in the grip of Western imperialism, my guess is that they would fall or they would weaken if not fall. They would become weaker and at the end of it the situation will improve for people of the Middle East when once Israel is gone.

Israel and Zionism will be dismantled and a lot more freedom will come to the Middle East. So, there will be huge political changes in the Middle East. It is coming - and it's coming fast, not slowly. I think it will come quickly. What it will mean is that in the Middle East, people will be better in charge of their lives. They will have the freedom to manage their resources as they please, and that will be very good for the Middle East. Freedom for Palestine means freedom for the entire Middle East.



Important note from interviewee

Exposing devastating consequences of war

By profession, I'm an environmental toxicologist and I have done extensive research in Iraq. Looking at pollution caused by US wars, we have found that increase in birth defects and congenital anomalies have been at the same time as increase in war contamination. So, right now the US and Israel are using depleted uranium ammunition in Lebanon and potentially in Gaza. What we need to do is to bring that to the attention of the world and say that they are using banned weaponry in these areas. They've been doing this in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza and in multiple other places, in the Balkans in the past. Therefore, our duty right now to the children of the Middle East is to expose this and make sure that the world knows that what the US and Israel are throwing at us will damage our DNA and our next generations and this is a war crime.

AFC Champions League Elite:

Garrido hails 'fighting spirit' as Persepolis pulls off dramatic comeback

Sports Desk

Persepolis head coach Juan Carlos Garrido had said in his pre-match press conference that his team would need a touch of fortune against Al Shorta in their AFC Champions League Elite encounter.

And that was exactly what came the Iranian Reds' way as they fought back to beat the Iraqi side 2-1 in the most dramatic fashion for their first victory in the continent's flagship club competition.

Persepolis looked drab and lackluster for the best part of what was a must-win contest in Doha's Hamad bin Khalifa Stadium, and just when the Reds fans thought their team was heading for yet another frustrating Champions League result, substitute Oston Urunov gave Garrido's side a lifeline by bagging an 89th-minute equalizer to cancel out Mohanad Ali's first-half opener.

It could have still been a third defeat of the campaign for Persepolis when referee Kim Dae-yong blew his whistle for an Al Shorta spot-kick, courtesy of Mohammad Khodabandelou handling the ball on the line to block Hussein Ali's goal-bound shot in the 97th minute.

Mahmoud Al Mawas' penalty kick came back off the post and, in a roller-coaster of events, the ref pointed to the spot at the other end, after a VAR review deemed Salomon Bindjeme to have cleared a cross with the help of his hand.

Georgian center-back Giorgi Gvelesiani held his nerve to send Al Shorta keeper Ahmed Basil the wrong way in the 13th minute of added time and put a lid on the Reds' 405-day winless



Persepolis players and coaching staff celebrate after the 2-1 victory over Al Shorta in the AFC Champions League Elite in Doha, Qatar, on December 2, 2024. ● PAYAM PARSAEI/FFIRI

run in the continent.

"This victory was the result of the efforts of the players and our analysis of the opponents and until the last moment, we fought to win," said Garrido, who celebrated a first Champions League victory in 12 outings in charge of Persepolis and Emirati club Al Ain - back in the 2019 season. "This game was full of events, but we tried until the last minute. We knew that this game was important and when a penalty was awarded to Al Shorta, the goalkeeper and players believed

they would not score.

"We had opportunities during the game, but we had to work until the last moment to win and we reached our goal," added the Spaniard. Garrido was also full praise for Uzbekistan international Urunov, who marked his long-awaited return from a groin injury with a vital goal. "Urunov showed today that he is working hard for the success of the team and scored a goal at a very important moment for Persepolis.

"It was very difficult to make a comeback and get back into the game and I congratulate the team and the players for their fighting spirit."

The victory lifted Persepolis into sixth in the West's 12-team table with six points, leaving the club in contention for a knockout spot ahead of February's crunch encounters with Saudi heavyweights Al Hilal and Al Nassr.

Brave Blues

Meanwhile, 10-man Esteghlal looked destined for a sen-

sational victory over Al Ahli Saudi, only to be denied maximum points by an Ivan Toney's 86-minute penalty in a 2-2 draw in Jeddah.

Brazilian defender Raphael Silva gave the Tehran Blues a 42nd-minute lead, before Didier Ndong's challenge on Fahad Al Rashidi convinced referee Ma Ning to point to the penalty spot with seconds left in the first-half added time.

Toney's cool touch from the spot drew the home side level, but Mohammad-Hossein Esлами

restored the visitors' advantage with a sumptuous left-footed volley from behind the box seven minutes after the break.

With Al Ahli digging deep for a second equalizer, Esteghlal went down to 10 men with nine minutes left on the clock after Esلامي was shown his marching orders for stamping Saad Yaslam's leg.

Al Ahli was awarded with a second penalty, in controversial manner though, minutes later as the ref ruled that Esteghlal keeper Seyyed Hossein Hosseini had clipped Toney while punching the ball away.

The Englishman's second penalty ensured that the host retained its unbeaten run in the competition.

Despite his team letting victory slip away, Esteghlal head coach Pitso Mosimane was pleased with his men's display, saying: "My team took the lead twice and we caused problems for the opposition, forcing them to come back twice. I am completely satisfied with the players' performance."

"The match was as challenging as we had anticipated. We faced a big team like Al Ahli in their home stadium in Jeddah. My team believed in their abilities and showed great composure by taking the lead twice."

The draw took the Blues to five points, though they still fancy their chances of progress when taking on Al Shorta and Qatari side Al Rayyan in their remaining fixtures in the league stage.



● IRNA

Chess quadruple wins Iran's first gold in Asia Pacific Deaf Games

Sports Desk

Iran bagged a first gold medal at the Asia Pacific Deaf Games, walking away with the ultimate prize in the chess team event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Nayyereh Golizadeh, Zeinab Golshani, Armin Rahmatpour, and Pouria Jamali teamed up on Tuesday to take the country's haul to five medals at the 10th

edition of the Games.

Rahmatpour had won a men's chess bronze on the preceding night in the Malaysian capital, with Alireza Kermani standing third in the men's bowling contest.

Karim Khodabandeh and the Iranian four-man poomsae team had also settled for a couple of bronze medals in the taekwondo event.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Hossein Mesbahi, Sina Saber, Ali-Akbar Ahmadvand, and Ali Salimi were all on the scoresheet as the Iranian men's football team defeated Uzbekistan 4-1.

This was a second victory for the Iran in the Games - following the first-day 3-1 win against Japan - ahead of Thursday's game against Oman in the final round of the group fixtures.

LeBron's jumper is off, Lakers struggling on offense

AP - LeBron James is in quite the shooting slump - especially from long distance. James missed all four of his 3-point attempts for the Los Angeles Lakers in a 109-80 loss at Minnesota on Monday night, stretching his skid to 0 for 19 from deep over the last four games.

After going 4 for 16 from the floor overall with six of his team's 20 turnovers for a season-low 10 points against the Timberwolves, James was asked to reflect on the Lakers reaching the quarter mark of their 2024-25 schedule under rookie coach J.J. Redick at 12-9.

"I wouldn't say I'll take it. I would never want to say that," James said. "It is what it is. This is our record. We've just got to continue to get better at both ends of the floor."

Particularly offensively, and it's not only James, the four-time NBA MVP whose average of 22 points per game is his lowest since he was a rookie 21 years ago.

"We're just not good offensively right now. I think we spent so much time trying to get our defense corrected that our offense took a toll and took a back seat to that," he said. James hasn't made a 3-pointer since he tied

Kyle Korver for seventh on the league's career list (2,450) last week. His fourth attempt against the Timberwolves from behind the arc was an air ball, causing an audible gasp from the crowd at Target Center.

The long ball isn't the only shot he's struggling with. The mid-range is on his list, too. "Just period, just everything," James said. "Just a rhythm. I just feel off rhythm the last few games."

His stated goal of playing in all 82 games this season is still intact, but his recent performances have raised the question about whether such a quest would be wise.



Lakers forward LeBron James walks downcourt during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Timberwolves in Minneapolis, MN, US, on Dec. 2, 2024. ● ABBIE PARR/AP

Pezeshkian: Gov't diplomacy based on interaction with world

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his government's foreign policy is based on interaction with the world, especially the neighboring countries.

During a televised interview on Monday, Pezeshkian underlined that Iran should open up its economy and expand its cooperation with other countries.

Pezeshkian called the interaction with the world a solution for the country to overcome its economic "crises."

In this regard, he said, Iran is seeking to expand its economic relations with Eurasian countries and plans to follow up and implement the agreements signed with China and Russia.

He also pointed to the agreements that have been reached with India and Iraq, saying that his government will do its utmost to implement them.

Since taking office in July, Pezeshkian has vowed to prioritize the consolidation of ties with Iran's neighbors.

Relations between Iran and Iraq have

grown closer over the past two decades.

Negotiations with Europe

The Iranian president also pointed to recent negotiations between Iran, France, Germany and the UK, saying that the three European countries followed the United States and imposed new sanctions against Iran.

Pezeshkian added that, "Despite all this, we are seeking to prove that we are not looking for war and that we are looking for peace."

Countering terrorists

Pezeshkian also expressed Iran's resolve to utilize all capacities at its disposal to counter terrorists in Syria in coordination with the country's neighbors.

Pezeshkian said that his telephone conversations with his Syrian and Russian counterparts, as well as the Qatari emir and the Iraqi prime minister, focused on the issue that, "Terrorists and conspirators should not be allowed to drag the region into war and bloodshed again."

"We respect the territorial integrity of all countries, which we believe should not be violated under any pretexts," he added.

The remarks came after foreign-backed terror outfits waged a surprise attack on Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, on Wednesday and captured several areas.

In response to a question about a new law on hijab approved by the parliament, Pezeshkian said, "As a person in charge of enforcing this law, I have many reservations about it."

"We risk laying waste to a lot of things in society due to this law," said the Iranian president.

The new law requires the president's signature on December 13 to take effect.

Pezeshkian also complained about the small budget that has been allocated to the universities, which is about \$1.5 to 2 million for a year.

He also referred to the shortage of energy in the country which has one of the largest energy reserves in the world, saying, "To solve the problems,



we must accept that experts and specialists should make decisions and provide solutions. We welcome anyone who can help solve the problem of energy shortage in the country."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) speaks during a televised interview in the capital Tehran on December 2, 2024. president.ir

Israeli strikes kill 12 in Lebanon in breach of cease-fire



AFP

International Desk

Israel unleashed its largest wave of airstrikes across Lebanon since agreeing to a cease-fire with Hezbollah last week, killing at least 12 people.

The deadly attacks came after the Lebanese resistance group fired a volley of projectiles as a warning over Israeli truce violations.

The projectiles were apparently the first time that Hezbollah took aim at Israeli forces after the 60-day cease-fire went into effect last Wednesday.

The increasingly fragile truce aimed to end more than a year of war between Hezbollah and Israel — part of a wider regional conflict sparked

by the devastating Israel's war in Gaza.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said on Tuesday that an Israeli drone strike on a southern town killed one person. An Israeli airstrike on the southern village of Haris killed five people and wounded two while another airstrike on the village of Tal-lousa killed four and also wounded two, the ministry said on Monday.

Israel's military carried out a string of airstrikes late Monday against what it said were Hezbollah fighters, infrastructure and rocket launchers across Lebanon, in response to Hezbollah firing two projectiles toward Mount Dov in the occupied Shebaa Farms in Lebanon.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it fired at an Israeli military position in the area as a "defensive and warning response" after "repeated violations" of the cease-fire deal by the regime. It said complaints to mediators tasked with monitoring the cease-fire "were futile in stopping these violations."

Before the Hezbollah projectiles, Israel carried out at least four airstrikes and an artillery barrage in southern Lebanon, including a drone strike that killed a person on a motorcycle, according to Lebanese state media. Another strike killed a corporal in the Lebanese security services.

US-backed militants open up new anti-Syria front in northeast

'Terrorists plotting chemical attacks on Aleppo, Idlib'

International Desk

Militants from a US-backed, Kurdish-led coalition battled Syrian government forces in northeast Syria early on Tuesday, both sides said, opening a new front for Syrian government which lost parts of Aleppo in a sudden militant advance last week.

Airstrikes also targeted groups supporting Syrian forces in the strategically vital region, a security source in eastern Syria and a Syrian army source said.

The sources both blamed the airstrikes on the US-led military coalition which operates in Syria and has a small detachment of American troops on the ground, Reuters reported.



AFP

Foreign-backed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group and allied factions broke through government defense lines in Syria's second largest city Aleppo on Friday and entered the city's western neighborhood. The insurgents launched their shock offensive in Aleppo and Idlib countryside on Wednesday and wrested control of dozens of villages and towns along the way, including a strategic town south of Aleppo.

HTS is an alliance led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria branch, and has faced accusations of human rights abuses.

Russia's RIA Novosti news agency, citing an informed source, said that terrorists affiliated with the HTS are planning chemical attacks in the northwestern provinces of Aleppo and Idlib amid advances by government forces.

The heaviest fighting on Monday and overnight was along the frontline just north of Hama, another major Syrian city, where several villages have changed hands repeatedly over recent days.

Syrian and Russian warplanes also intensified airstrikes against militants alongside government jets over recent days, both sides have said.

Jockeying for territory

The retreat by Syrian forces over the

past several days has led to jockeying for control among other groups that dominate pockets in the northwest, north and east.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an umbrella group which controls territory in Syria's east with US support, said early on Tuesday that its Deir al-Zor Military Council had "become responsible for protecting" seven villages previously held by the Syrian army.

The Deir al-Zor Military Council comprises local Arab fighters under the SDF, an alliance mainly led by a Kurdish militia, the YPG.

Syrian state media reported that the army and allied forces were repelling an SDF assault on the villages, the only Syrian government presence along the east bank of the Euphrates River, an area otherwise mostly held by the SDF.

A return of fighting to northeast Syria, where the United States, Russia, Iran and Turkey are all involved, underscores the messy global politics at play in the conflict and the dangers of escalation in a potentially crowded battlefield.

Iran said late on Monday there would be a foreign ministers meeting with Turkey and Russia in Doha next weekend as part of a diplomatic process used to stabilize borders earlier in the conflict.

Trump after economic...

Therefore, Iran's national interests need to be prioritized and defined in coordination with all sectors within the country, establishing what international goals the country aim to pursue internationally. Based on this, we need to engage in dialogue with anyone, taking into account their characteristics and attributes and speaking their language.

Some of the unconventional actions taken by Trump in the past, including the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, were due to his lack of experience for president and his limited understanding of international issues. However, with time, he has grown older and become one of the oldest US presidents, gaining more

experience and mellowing out with age. Unconsciously, these factors will impact his decisions, and overall, I believe he has become more "benign" than before.

Everyone knows that Trump himself pulled out of the JCPOA. Unfortunately, Iran's partners to the deal have not been reliable or committed and Iran cannot bank on their promises. They have not honored their commitments so Iran cannot put stock in their promises.

The negotiations have been stuck in a rut and the broken promises under the JCPOA have rendered the issue stale and lifeless. It seems that the enthusiasm for this topic has waned. However, Iran still seeks to engage with the world and is not looking

for adventure, but any agreement, including the nuclear deal, should be reviewed and negotiated in light of new developments and changes. After all, governments have changed, and issues have evolved since then.

In my opinion, Iran's situation regarding negotiations is improving, as the West has tried every trick in the book and imposed every possible sanction on Iran. The West and Trump have come to realize Iran's capacity and strength, and they know that Iran carries significant weight in regional geopolitics. It would be better to resolve issues through negotiations. Moreover, the world has lost its appetite for new tensions and conflicts, and they too are seeking to reach an agreement.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



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Iranian writers join global peers at Jakarta literary event

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran joined international poets from Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines at the Jakarta International Literary Festival 2024. The festival, which is in its fourth year since its inception in 2019, was officially opened by Indonesia's Minister of Culture, Fadli Zon, and the Deputy Ambassador and Cultural attaché of Iran in Jakarta, IRNA reported. This year's festival is themed "Words and Actions Aligned on Eco Literature," which aims to promote literature, culture, and environmental sustainability. Iranian poet, translator, and ac-

ademic Naghmeh Mostashar Nezami also participated in the festival by sending a pre-recorded video that addressed environmental issues and global peace through poetry in both Persian and English. On the sidelines of the festival, Iran's Cultural attaché Mohammad Reza Ebrahimi, met with Indonesia's Minister of Culture, Fadli Zon, and discussed various issues, including the implementation of a cultural cooperation agreement between the two countries. "We will soon discuss important issues, especially the implementation of the cultural cooperation agreement between Iran and Indonesia, with the Iranian



tion agreement between Iran and Indonesia, with the Iranian embassy officials," Zon said. According to Anton Kurnia, the

festival's director and head of the Jakarta Arts Council Novel Competition, the event seeks to address some of the world's pressing environmental issues through literary and cultural perspectives. "We are trying to offer a literary perspective on this problem," Kurnia said. "As we know, we've seen a number of literary works emerge that offer alternative views on how to create a better world in the midst of this critical situation." The festival features a range of events, including a media exhibition, a book fair, a writers' roundtable with dozens of

speakers, book launches, and a discussion related to the theme, as well as an awards night for a literary criticism competition. Japanese poet Hiromi Kawakami was invited as the keynote speaker for the opening ceremony, sharing her poetic insights and views on environmental criticism and personal stories that highlight sustainability in literature. Kawakami is a renowned Japanese writer known for her gentle narratives that explore the relationship between humans, nature, and the beauty of everyday life, as well as her disaster-themed works.

Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1403/21
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Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 140,000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.5) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty 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 09:00 A.M. on 17. Des.2024 to 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 09:00 A.M. on 17.Des.2024 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %		
Fe%	66.50	Ave.
FeO%	24	Min
	28	Max
P%	0.05	Max
S%	1	Max
SiO2%	3.0	Max
Al2O3%	0.7	Max
CaO%	0.9	Max
MgO%	3.0	Max
Moisture%	6.0	Max
Size ave.	98%<3 mm	
	80%<0.45 mm	

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Notice of tender for export sale No Z/1403/22
Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70,000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65.00) on basis of F.O.B at Barco Jetty 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 09:00 A.M. on 17. Des.2024 to 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 09:00 A.M. on 17.Des.2024 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %		
Fe	65.00	Min
FeO	1.0	Ave
P	0.05	Max
S	0.01	Max
SiO2	3.5	Max
Al2O3	0.7	Max
CaO	0.9	Max
MgO	2.5	Max
CCS (kg/p)	Ave 250	
8-16 mm%	Min 90	
-6 mm%	Ave 5	
A.1%	Max 3.8	
T.1%	Min 95	
Prosity%	19-24	
Reducibility%	Min 90	

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Iranian filmmakers dominate Duhok Int'l Film Festival with record 27 entries

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmakers are making a strong presence at the 11th Duhok International Film Festival, held in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from December 9 to 16, 2024. With three jurors and 27 films competing in various sections, Iranian cinema is set to make a lasting impression on the festival, ILNA reported. Ali Asgari, an Iranian director and screenwriter, is heading the jury for the International Feature Film Competition, while Ghotbedin Sadeghi, a renowned Iranian theater actor and director, is a member of the jury for the Kurdish Cinema Feature Film Competition. Akam Rezaee, an Iranian visual effects manager and director based in the US, is also a member of the jury for the Kurdish Cinema Feature Film Competition. Plus, Khosro Sina, a screenwriter and cinema professor at the University of Kurdistan in Sanandaj, and Salem Salavati, a film director and head of the Mahabad Youth Cinema Association, will be leading a panel discussion on the "Importance of Academic Cinema Education" at the University of Duhok on December 15. In the competitive section of World Cinema, two Iranian films are vying for the top prizes: 'Empty Nets', directed by Behrouz Karamizadeh, a co-production between Iran and Germany, and 'Melody', directed by Behrouz Sebt Rasoul, a co-production between Iran and Tajikistan. Both films are competing for the Yilmaz Guney Award, which is considered the most prestigious award of the festival, as well

as the New Talent Award. In the Kurdish Cinema Competition, Iranian films 'Sakar', directed by Ebrahim Saeidi and 'Caucher', directed by Moshfeq Shojaei are competing for Best Film, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Director, FIPRESCI Award, and the Duhok Governorate Award. The festival also features six Iranian documentary films competing for the Best Documentary Award, as well as six Iranian short films competing for the Best Short Film Award. The 11th Duhok International Film Festival is being held under the theme of "Sports" and features 107 films from Iran and around the world, including feature films, short films, and documentaries. The festival is supported by the Kurdistan Regional Government and aims to promote cultural exchange between Kurdish filmmakers and filmmakers from around the world.

