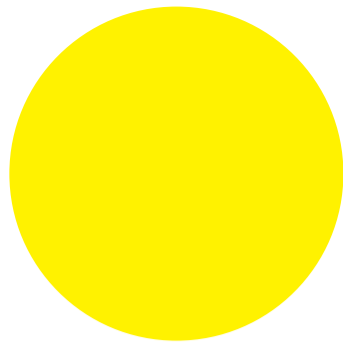


IRGC cmdr. announces purchase of Sukhoi 35 fighter jets from Russia



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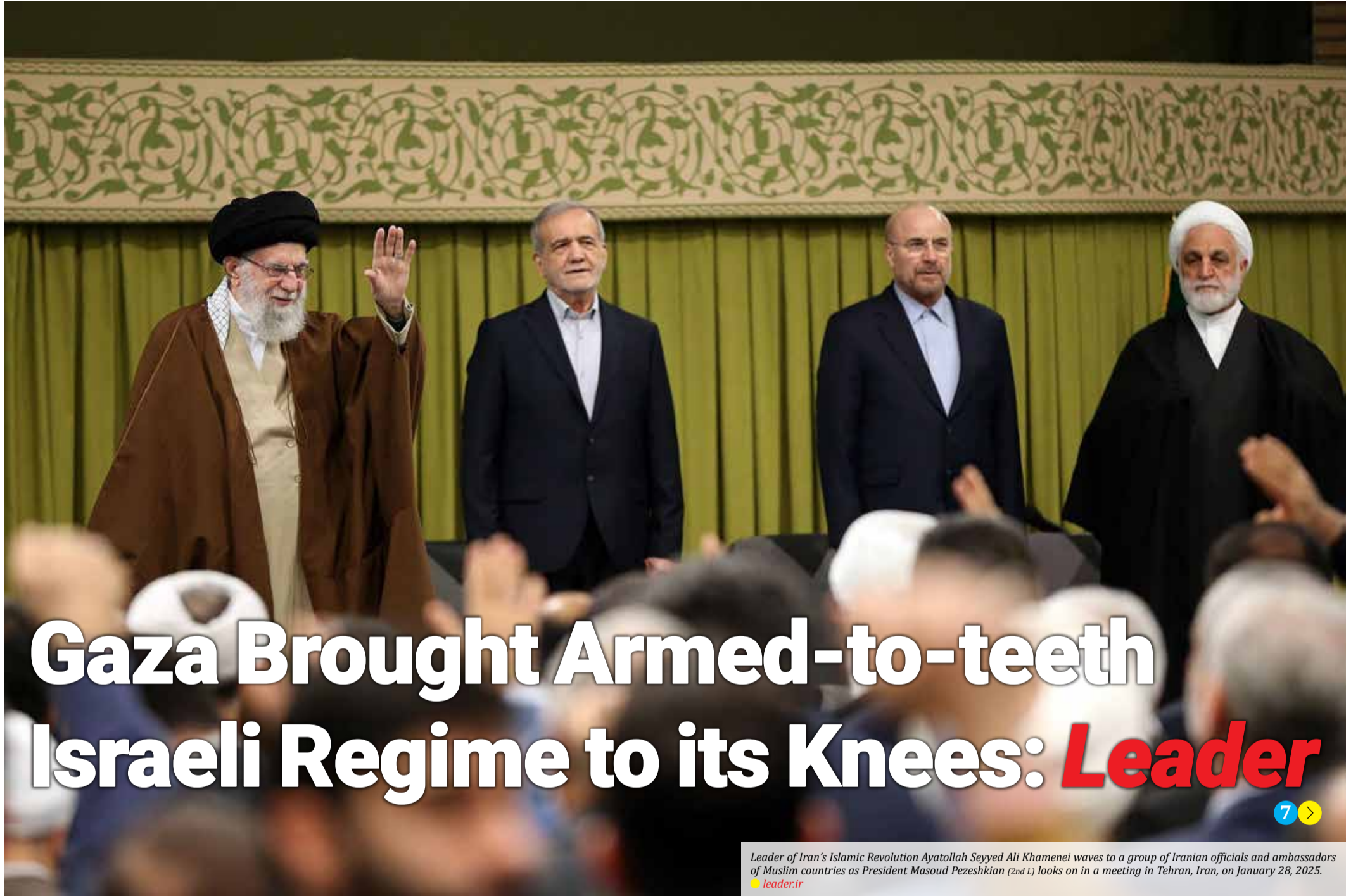
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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei waves to a group of Iranian officials and ambassadors of Muslim countries as President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) looks on in a meeting in Tehran, Iran, on January 28, 2025. leader.ir

Chabahar on Makoran coast could become Iran's economic capital



By Mohammad Anvar Bejarzahi
Iranian MP representing Sistan and Baluchestan

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In recent weeks, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has floated the idea of relocating the capital and government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mo-hajerani has also hinted at the start of debates to move the capital from Tehran to the Makoran region in the south-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. The concept of relocating the capital has been on the back burner for years, given Tehran's environmental woes, including water scarcity and overpopulation. For now, the Makoran coast is just one of the options on the table. Relocating the capital is no easy feat, and there is a long road ahead from idea to execution.

Moving the capital to a new location calls for developing the necessary infrastructure. Right now, the people in Sistan and Baluchestan are grappling with challenges like power shortages and inadequate infrastructure, making the idea of relocating the capital there seem far-fetched. However, relocating the capital to the coast and open seas is a brilliant idea and certainly worth considering. Many major cities and commercial hubs around the world are situated along coastlines and open waters. Among Iran's coastal cities, Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchestan stands out as the country's only oceanic port with access to the high seas. [Page 7 >](#)



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Pezeshkian places premium on comprehensive development plan for Makoran

President underscores AI, advanced techs in strategic decision-makings

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed the importance of adhering to a comprehensive development plan for the Makoran region, ensuring that all actions align with the already-outlined strategy. He emphasized that the strategic region's infrastructure should not be based on past standards but should be designed to meet the needs of the next several decades, according to president.ir.

Speaking during a meeting on the 'blue economy' on Monday, Pezeshkian highlighted the necessity of following the Makoran development plan in all sectors, including industrial growth, transportation networks such as railways, highways, airports, and urban planning. He warned against actions that might require future demolition and reconstruction, urging that all projects should be executed with long-term sustainability. Addressing the reluctance of contractors and experts to settle in Makoran, the president noted that without adequate residential facilities, it is unrealistic to expect workers to relocate with their families. He called for the construction of high-quality residential complexes equipped with modern amenities to attract professionals and contractors to the region. He criticized the lack of foresight in some projects, emphasizing the need to plan for the next several decades rather than focusing solely on immediate needs. Pezeshkian also pointed to the interest of foreign investors in Makoran's projects, suggesting the formation of a working group to address their proposals and remove obstacles and urged officials to report any issues faced by investors for timely resolution. The president underscored the importance of environmental standards in Makoran's development, advocating for cities to be built with modern transportation systems, and eco-friendly designs to prevent issues like air pollution and empha-

sized the need for solar power plants and clean energy production in the region. Responding to concerns about governance challenges in attracting foreign investment, Pezeshkian assured that the government is working to remove administrative and governance-related obstacles. He also encouraged reporting any issues for prompt resolution. Pezeshkian stressed the importance of involving the local community in Makoran's development, suggesting that priority in education and employment should be given to local residents. He highlighted the region's growth potential, noting interest from Central Asian countries in utilizing Makoran's ports. He proposed creating facilities like storage warehouses to encourage their participation in the region's development. The president also acknowledged the historical trade expertise of local merchants in Sistan and Baluchestan, suggesting their involvement in exports and overcoming trade barriers. He emphasized the need to address the demands of local communities, particularly in fishing and trade, to ensure development improves their quality of life. Pezeshkian called for innovative educational approaches in remote areas, including the use of high-quality remote learning packages to supplement local teaching.

Importance of AI, advanced technologies

Meanwhile, during a meeting of the Strategic Council for Technology and Knowledge-Based Production on Monday, Pezeshkian emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies. He stressed the importance of understanding Iran's current position and learning from the experiences of developed countries to address gaps and chal-



enges. Pezeshkian described a global perspective on emerging technologies as essential for prioritizing actions that align with global trends and national needs. He noted that such an approach would enable Iran to meet domestic demands, produce globally competitive products, and market them internationally. The president highlighted the potential of AI to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and improve service delivery, particularly in healthcare. He suggested that AI could streamline patient care, reduce the need for specialists in underserved areas, and enhance service quality as the top official called for

prioritizing AI in the agenda of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology. Pezeshkian emphasized the importance of prioritizing resources to address unlimited demands, suggesting a scientific and practical approach to decision-making. He also stressed the role of knowledge-based companies in solving national challenges, including energy imbalances, and noted plans to generate 30,000 megawatts of solar power within a year with their participation. The meeting included reports on joint programs between the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Health to develop and localize strategic health technologies.

Additionally, Minister of Oil Mohsen Paknejad presented updates on implementing regulations to support technology-based production and job creation in the oil industry. Reforms to executive instructions supporting tech-based activities, as well as tax incentives for research and development, were approved by the council. Hossein Afshin, the vice president for science and technology also reported on the implementation of the "Law for the Leap in Knowledge-Based Production" over the past year, outlining challenges and requirements for effective execution. The council approved budget allocations for income generated under the law.

Iran's roads minister reaffirms economic cooperation with Turkey



Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd met with Turkey's Trade Minister Omer Bolat in Ankara on Monday, stressing the importance of enhancing economic cooperation between the two nations. Sadeq-Malvajerd expressed gratitude for Turkey's hospitality and highlighted the significance of strengthening ties between the two neighboring countries stating that fostering constructive relations and boosting joint economic collaboration are among the top priorities of the Iranian government in its regional engagements, IRNA wrote.

As the Iranian head of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, Sadeq-Malvajers noted that the commission was recently convened in Iran after years of hiatus. She emphasized her personal commitment to advancing mutual agreements and taking concrete steps to implement them. Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat welcomed the Iranian minister and her delegation to Ankara, expressing satisfaction with the ongoing negotiations under the framework of the joint commission. He affirmed that both countries are working to expand bilateral relations and expressed confidence that Sadeq-Malvajerd's visit as the

head of the joint economic commission would further solidify economic cooperation. Bolat said that Turkey and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in trade, customs, agriculture, investments, finance, transportation, and tourism in Tehran last year. "Turkey's exports to Iran soared approximately \$500 million, while Turkish investors have invested over \$2 billion in Iran so far, we see that trade is mutually accelerating as investments increase," said Bolat. The minister mentioned that joint committees between his country and Iran meet regularly to discuss transportation. Bolat said that the modernization of the Kapikoy Border Gate in the southeastern city of Van, bordering Iran, will be achieved with some arrangements to be made on the Iranian side, and the Sari-su transboundary trade center is waiting to be opened. Following the meeting, Sadeq-Malvajerd addressed reporters, underscoring the long-standing constructive

relationship between Iran and Turkey. She mentioned that her visit to Turkey comes shortly after the joint economic commission's meeting in Tehran, reflecting the seriousness of both nations in advancing their shared goals. The minister also highlighted that the commission's recent session in Iran, after years of hiatus, marks a renewed commitment to addressing mutual interests. She also reiterated the annual target of \$30 billion in trade exchanges between the two countries. The Iranian minister pointed out that discussions during the meeting focused on removing barriers to cooperation, particularly in transportation and transit. "Agreements were reached to facilitate smoother and more cost-effective movement of Turkish and Iranian fleets." Sadeq-Malvajerd expressed hope that a comprehensive framework for bilateral cooperation in transportation and transit would be finalized within the next three months, paving the way for structured collaboration.

SPGC pumps 165 bcm of gas into national grid over 10 months



The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) announced that 165 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas were injected into the national grid during the first 10 months of this year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025), marking a 2% increase compared to the same period last year. Gholamabbas Hosseini stated that employees across the South Pars refineries have mobilized all available resources to ensure maximum and stable gas production during the winter season, Shana reported. He noted that the complex produces nearly 600 billion cubic meters of gas daily. Hosseini highlighted that the SPGC accounted for 73% of the country's total gas production, with its 13 refineries playing a pivotal role. He emphasized the significant impact of the complex's output on ensuring public comfort, energy security, and economic prosperity. In the first 10 months of this year, the complex also produced over 2 million tons of butane, 3 mil-

lion tons of propane, 1.5 million tons of ethane, 500,000 tons of granulated sulfur, and more than 201 million barrels of gas condensates. Hosseini also underscored the complex's critical role in supplying feedstock to the Persian Gulf Star Refinery, delivering over 127.2 million barrels of gas condensates during the same period. Additionally, nearly 3.5 million barrels of gas condensates were sent to the Nouri Petrochemical Plant. Meanwhile, the CEO of Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC) announced a 2 bcm increase in gas transmission from the beginning of this Iranian year (March 20, 2024) compared to the same period last year. Peyman Khazraei, speaking on the sidelines of a visit to gas transmission facilities on Monday, stated that the company has transferred over 228 bcm of gas across the country since the start of the year, marking a 2 bcm increase compared to the same period last year.

Bazeh Hur; an archaeological treasure trove in Khorasan Razavi Province

Iranica Desk

An associate professor of archaeology at the University of Tehran stated that the archaeological site of Bazeh Hur in Khorasan Razavi Province represents a significant part of the cultural sequence in Greater Khorasan and requires restoration and organization to ensure its preservation for future generations.

Meysam Labbaf-Khaniki noted that the fire temple at Bazeh Hur historical site dates back to the Sassanid period. It is situated on the summit of Kuh-e Dokhtar (Dokhtar Mountain). Constructed from high-quality bricks and plaster, the temple features a dome that rises about 12 meters high and remained active from the late Parthian era until the early Islamic period, ISNA wrote.

Architectural significance

The archaeology researcher continued by stating that, based on the excavations, the fire temple is the most significant one identified thus far in the eastern and northeastern regions of the Iranian Plateau. In the eastern section of the structure, a columned hall has also been uncovered, with its columns adorned with unique capitals and intricate stucco decorations.

Labbaf-Khaniki emphasized that the findings from the architectural complex, which include exquisite stucco work, wall paintings, ritual objects and equipment, Sassanid clay seals, and numerous fragments of Middle Persian inscriptions, underscore the high significance of the site among the inhabitants of Khorasan. Archaeological studies indicate that it is not the sole structure within the complex; associated buildings and facilities extend over an area of approximately half a hectare.

He stated that based on the findings and historical geography, a hypothesis has been proposed suggesting that the building may be one of the three main Sassanid fire temples known as "Azar Barzin Mehr," which are mentioned in religious and geographical texts predating Islam. Although this hypothesis requires further investigation, its importance of as one of the most significant fire temples in Iran is undeniable.

Labbaf-Khaniki also pointed out that considering the historical and cultural significance of this site, its organization and protection could greatly contribute to the development of tourism and the local economy.

He mentioned that transforming the Robat Sefid village into a center for attracting tourists and utilizing the site as a hub for archaeological studies and the history of the region are among the benefits of preserving the temple. The presence of student camp facilities near the site provides the necessary infrastructure for establishing a base and deploying a guard, which would allow for the use of its spaces for research and educational purposes.

Findings from excavations

Referring to the age of the structure, estimated to be between 1,100 to 1,300 years old, he added that during archaeological excavations at the ancient site, very important findings have emerged that significantly enhance understandings of Sassanid art and architecture. One of the most notable discoveries is the remnants of a fire altar with a unique structure. It is designed as a shallow depression, featuring bases positioned at its corners and columns upon which the altar was placed. The

discovered pieces indicate that the altar bears similarities to Sassanid altars depicted on the coins of Ardashir. He emphasized that one of



the most astonishing aspects of the altar is the discovery of its plaster mold, which reveals the altar's base that has undergone several repairs. Additionally, the masses of raw plaster and raw sand found near the mold suggest that this location was likely a workshop for constructing altars, where ceremonial altars were produced and possibly exported to subsidiary temples. This finding raises the hypothesis that sacred fire embers may have been transferred along with the altar's base.

Labbaf-Khaniki stated that, in addition to the altar, wall paintings have been unearthed at the site for the first time in the cultural area of northeastern Iran. These paintings, executed with valuable colors, reflect the significance of the location during the Sassanid period. Its brick walls are also noteworthy, as altars in the region are typically constructed using stone and plaster.

He emphasized that the discovery of approximately 3,500 broken pieces of plasterwork is another valuable finding from the site. Among these plaster fragments, pieces depicting human faces with characteristics of Sassanid art have been found.

Additionally, on one of the walls, a portion of the plasterwork remains intact, illustrating a scene where an individual is seated on a throne while others stand before him. These findings aid archaeologists in gaining a deeper understanding of the art and clothing of the Sassanid period. Labbaf-Khaniki added that the discoveries from the valuable archaeological site provide new and valuable insights into the art, architecture, and rituals of the Sassanid period, indicating that the region held special significance during that time. Studies reveal that the four-arch structure was built in the late Sassanid period and continued to be used during the Islamic period. Surrounding it are various architectural spaces, including a columned hall, which appears to have served as a religious structure and possibly a fire temple during the Sasanian period, with its function evolving in the Islamic era.

He stated that the ancient building was not only a religious location but likely also served as a refuge for Yazdgerd III, the last Sassanid king. The new findings, ranging from unique plasterwork to Pahlavi inscriptions,

illuminate new dimensions of its history.

Artistic representations

He noted that unique plasterworks have been discovered in the fire temple, including depictions of a Sassanid king sitting on a throne and wearing a crown similar to those found on the coins of Khosrow Parviz and Yazdgerd III. These artworks, executed with artistic skill, were likely commissioned by the king or the attendants of the temple during Yazdgerd III's stay at this location. An interesting detail is that one of the depictions was left unfinished and was later covered with a mud-brick wall to protect it from damage and deterioration. It suggests that the site held special significance during a particular period in history, and its royal motifs were of great importance.

He added that one of the most important discoveries is the uncovering of over 60 pieces of Pahlavi inscriptions. These inscriptions, currently under examination by prominent specialists, provide valuable information about the administrative and religious structure of the fire temple. The term "Dar-e

Atash," found in three pieces of these inscriptions, translates to "gateway of fire" and refers to a sacred place for the royal fires. This term is also mentioned in Persian religious texts written in Pahlavi, indicating that it likely held a special status. Furthermore, one of the inscriptions details the collection of wood by the fire temple's attendant and references the presence of the king at this location, shedding light on important aspects of daily life in it.

He stated that the archaeologists have also uncovered several Sassanid clay seals featuring depictions of winged horses and humpbacked bulls, as well as pottery dating from the Parthian period to the 3rd and 4th centuries AH. These findings show that the building was utilized for an extended period as a religious and administrative center. During the early Islamic period, the fire temple remained active, even while Neyshabur was recognized as a bureaucratic center. It suggests that it held significant cultural and religious importance for Zoroastrians, and considerable efforts were made to preserve it.

He further explained that archae-

ological research indicates that the original fire temple was built of mud bricks in the late Parthian period. The Sassanid period saw the dismantling of this structure, which was then replaced with a brick construction. In the second half of the Sassanid period, further additions, such as plasterworks and columns, were made. These architectural changes vividly illustrate the cultural continuity in the region.

Labbaf-Khaniki continued by stating that despite these significant discoveries, the site remains at risk from illegal excavations and destruction.

"We urge more attention from officials and relevant institutions towards the area. It is not only an archaeological treasure but can also be utilized as a research and cultural center."

He emphasized that these discoveries not only open a new window into the history of ancient Iran but also remind us of the importance of preserving and maintaining cultural heritage. "We hope that with increased attention from officials and researchers, the archaeological site will reach its rightful place and become an inspiring resource for those interested in history and culture," he concluded.

Trump's return to White House: Resumption of maximum pressure or new plan for Iran?

International Desk

Donald Trump returned to the White House on January 20 for his second term as President of the United States. During his first term, he implemented unexpected policies, even for US' allies, which drew significant reactions. According to numerous international media reports, Trump is poised to bring a different set of plans this time around, for the world and Iran, which could be a blend of his previous and new policies. For the second time, Trump has returned to the Oval Office, where the world might witness some of his most turbulent days, or, as American Democrats and European policymakers suggest, the least conflict-prone period in contemporary US history.



US Donald Trump, from left, takes the oath of office as Barron Trump and Melania Trump watch at the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington, on Jan. 20, 2025.

● KEVIN LAMARQUE/AP



Trump's anti-Iran policies during his first term went far beyond a simple approach and encompassed a coordinated and multifaceted set of actions aimed at applying maximum pressure on Iran to alter its regional, military, and nuclear behaviors.



An Iranian flag at Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran, 2019

● AFP

By analyzing Trump's first term, which began with the unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and continued with severe anti-Iran policies and the maximum pressure campaign, it is reasonable to expect that Trump's political behavior in his new term at the White House will not change significantly. This is particularly important for us Iranians as we observe Trump's return.

The mental image of Trump's approach and the rhetoric that his new U.S. administration's foreign and national security team will adopt toward Iran is of paramount importance during these days of his return. Given the analysis of his first term, which started with the unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and continued with harsh anti-Iran policies and the initiation of the maximum pressure campaign, it is expected that Trump's political behavior in his new term will remain largely unchanged.

This perception is reinforced by the aggressive statements and adversarial stances taken by the new US president and those close to him, such as Marco Rubio, the nominee for Secretary of State, and Mark T. Walters, the national security advisor, during the election campaign and afterward.

A brief look at Trump's anti-Iran policies

Trump's anti-Iran policies during his first term went far beyond a simple approach and encompassed a coordinated and multifaceted set of actions aimed at applying maximum pressure on Iran to alter its regional, military, and nuclear behaviors. This complex policy included various dimensions, some of which are detailed below:

1. Withdrawal from JCPOA, reimposition of sanctions

This move formed the cornerstone of Trump's maximum pressure campaign. Trump viewed the JCPOA as a weak and inadequate agreement that failed to curb Iran's nuclear program and did not secure US interests in the long term. Instead of negotiating to improve the JCPOA, Trump withdrew from the agreement on May 8, 2018. Following this, he reimposed the previous sanctions against Iran, which had been suspended under the JCPOA, and added new sanctions. The primary goal of these sanctions was to exert maximum economic pressure on Iran, ultimately forcing it to negotiate a more stringent deal.

2. Secondary sanctions

In addition to reimposing previous sanctions, the Trump

administration imposed new sanctions that extended beyond the scope of the JCPOA. These secondary sanctions targeted foreign individuals and companies, and governments that engaged in trade with Iran. This move put significant pressure on international companies and governments, leading many to

sever ties with Iran. As a result, Iran was largely isolated from the global financial system and faced severe limitations in accessing international financial resources.

3. Military pressure and threats

Alongside economic sanctions,

the Trump administration increased the US military presence in the Persian Gulf and the region. This included deploying aircraft carriers, increasing troop numbers, and conducting joint military exercises with regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The aim was to heighten the sense of insecurity and instability in Iran and the region.

4. Focus on Iran's regional activities

Trump's policies not only targeted Iran's nuclear program but also its regional activities. The administration provided cautious and indirect support to groups opposing the Iranian government and simultaneously offered military and logistical support to Iran's regional rivals. Forming regional coalitions against Iran was also a key component of this strategy.

5. Tough and provocative rhetoric

President Trump frequently used strong and sometimes provocative language against Iran. This rhetoric, coupled with practical actions, was aimed at increasing the sense of insecurity in Iran and further destabilizing the region.

Trump's policy had a range of outcomes

Given the above, it must be said that Trump's maximum pressure policy had diverse consequences. While some argue that these policies have managed to





deter Iran from advancing its nuclear program, others point to increased tensions, regional instability, and severe economic impacts on Iran as the negative consequences of these policies. The long-term effects of these policies remain a subject of ongoing debate and political controversy, both within Iran's political spectrum and among US political parties.

Trump's criticisms of Biden's foreign policy

During the four years of Democratic rule at the White House, Trump did not remain idle. He actively criticized the foreign policy programs of the Joe Biden administration, particularly on issues such as the Ukraine conflict and Iran, through domestic, international media, and even on social media platforms. The peak of these criticisms occurred during his campaign for the 2024 presidential election, which provided insight into his views on the most critical issues of US foreign policy.

Trump's statements on Iran

To better grasp Trump's approach to his policies toward Iran, it is crucial to consider the stances and views of influential figures and the proposed cabinet members of the new US president, who align with the policies of the Republican government. This can offer a more comprehensive and accurate understanding. A more detailed analysis of Trump's anti-Iran rhetoric, key foreign policy figures, and the future US government's approach to Iran:

1. Trump's anti-Iran statements in 2024 campaign

Throughout the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump emphasized his role as a strong and decisive leader in foreign policy, particularly regarding Iran. Key elements of his statements and positions included:

- Continuation of first-term policies: Trump frequently referred to his 2018 decision to withdraw from the JCPOA as a cornerstone of his strong stance

against Iran. He criticized the Biden administration for seeking to return to the JCPOA, accusing it of "weakness" in dealing with Tehran.

- Middle East tensions: Trump condemned the tensions in the Middle East and vowed to do everything possible to protect US interests and the Israeli regime.

2. Views of key foreign policy figures

Undoubtedly, some of Trump's cabinet members and advisors will play a crucial role in shaping and implementing US foreign policy objectives. Reviewing their positions can provide valuable insights into the decisions and actions of the future US government.

- Marco Rubio (Secretary of State in Trump's Second Term)

Background and rhetoric: Rubio has long been a vocal critic of Iran, opposing the JCPOA and advocating for sanctions to counter Iran's regional influence and missile program.

Political orientation: Rubio emphasizes strengthening alliances in the Middle East, particularly with Israel and Persian Gulf states, and calls for increased U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf.

- Mike Waltz (National Security Advisor)

Background and focus: Waltz, a former veteran and former congressman, is known for his strong support of Israel and emphasis on maintaining maximum pressure on Iran. He has stated that stability in the Middle East is a fundamental aspect of US foreign policy.

- Peter Hegseth (Secretary of Defense Candidate)

Background: Hegseth, a veteran and media personality, has consistently supported Trump's foreign policy approach.

Political role: His influence is expected to drive more practical actions in regional foreign policy.

3. Trump's approach to Iran in his second term

American media reports on the

potential approach of the new US government toward Iran include the following:

- **Updated maximum pressure strategy:** Trump's second-term policy toward Iran will build on the "maximum pressure" strategy from his first term.

- **Strengthening of sanctions:** The goal is to target Iran's oil exports, financial sector, and various military and non-military entities.

- **Economic isolation:** Encouraging global partners to cut trade ties with Iran and effectively isolating it from international markets.

- **Increased military sales in region:** The US will increase arms sales to regional allies in the Middle East.

- **Advancing Israel-Arab peace agreements:** The Trump administration will work to formalize peace agreements between Israel and Arab countries (based on the Abraham Accords). Efforts to pressure the Netanyahu cabinet to negotiate with Palestinian resistance forces and accept a cease-fire are also anticipated, as one of Saudi Arabia's key conditions for joining the Abraham Accords is the establishment of peace and a two-state solution in Palestine.

- **Engaging European allies:** The US government will strive to involve European allies more actively in the stricter enforcement of sanctions.

- **Weakening resistance network:** The US government will undertake extensive efforts to weaken the Resistance Axis in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon.

According to media reports, Trump's anti-Iran rhetoric and policies proposed before his return to the White House indicate a continued strategy aimed at increasing economic pressure, countering regional influence, and preventing Iran's nuclear program. However, official statements from the new US government, starting from Trump's re-entry into the White House, will be considered the official positions of the second Trump administration.

A key point is that the presence of a group of hardline Republi-

cans in key positions within the Trump administration has increased the likelihood and speculation that the new US government's approach will shift towards confrontation rather than diplomacy.

According to foreign media reports, immediately after the inauguration ceremony, entered the White House and issued several executive orders, including the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization, the implementation of strict laws against foreign immigrants and Mexican immigrants, the pardon of over a thousand of his supporters who were arrested during the 2021 Capitol attack, and the revocation of some of Biden's executive orders.

The article was provided by the Persian service of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).



Throughout the 2024 presidential campaign, Trump condemned the tensions in the Middle East.

US Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., Donald Trump's choice to be Secretary of State, appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his confirmation hearing, at the Capitol in Washington, Jan. 15, 2025. ● ALEX BRANDON/AP

US President Donald Trump holds up an executive order after signing it at an indoor Presidential Inauguration parade event in Washington, on Jan. 20, 2025. ● MATT ROURKE/AP



Taremi scores his first goal for Inter in Serie A



Sports Desk

Inter Milan delivered a commanding performance as it cruised to a 4-0 victory at Lecce Sunday night to stay on the heels of Serie A leader Napoli.

The result kept Inter second in the standings with 50 points, three behind Napoli and with a game in hand.

With Napoli having opened up a six-point lead following its 2-1 home win against Ju-

ventus on Saturday, Inter was determined to close the gap again and started aggressively.

Six minutes into the match, Davide Frattesi opened the scoring against Lecce: always in the thick of the action and lethal in front of the goal, the midfielder is on four goals this season for a total of 12 goals in the league with Inter.

Lautaro Martinez made it 2-0 for Inter six minutes before the break.

Denzel Dumfries scored Inter's third goal in the 57th minute. Dumfries continues to make his mark. He opened the year 2025 with a super brace in the Supercoppa Italiana against Atalanta. From there, he has hardly stopped: three goals in a row in Serie A, against Bologna, Empoli, and Lecce. That's five goals since the beginning of the year, eight in the season. In the league, he is currently on six, a personal record.

After getting on the scoresheet in the Champions League and Supercoppa Italiana, Mehdi Taremi got his first goal for the Nerazzurri in Serie A with perfect penalty, as soon as he entered the pitch, to ensure the final 4-0 win over Lecce.

Taremi is the third Iranian player to bag in Serie A after Rahman Rezaei (six goals between 2001 and 2007 with Perugia and Livorno) and Sardar Azmoun (three goals between 2023 and 2024 with Roma).

Inter have scored 55 goals after 21 games this season: this is only the second time that the Nerazzurri have scored at least as many goals after the



Inter Milan players celebrate their fourth and last goal by Iranian Striker Mehdi Taremi (99) against Lecce on January 26, 2025.

inter.it

first 21 matches of a single top-flight league tournament (58 in 1949/50). Lecce sits fourth from the bottom with 20 points.

'Two-horse race'

Rafa Benitez believes the fight for the Serie A title is close to becoming a "two-horse race" as Napoli and Inter have something more than Atalanta, although La Dea still retain "a chance to get back in".

The former Liverpool manager was particularly impressed by the Partenopei's seven consecutive wins, a streak which included "two incredible comebacks" against Juventus and Atalanta, demonstrating the "stature" of Antonio Conte's players and the "personality" he has managed to instill in the team, Football Italia wrote. While the 64-year-old expects the upcoming weeks to give "interesting indications" on which team could get an edge, he suggests that Simone Inzaghi's side and Napoli could keep the title race alive until the final stretch of the season, as even their head-to-head in early March may not determine who is favorite.

"I'm happy to see them both there,

fighting for this title," Benitez told in an interview with La Gazzetta dello Sport. "You could say it's become a two-horse race, although Atalanta still have a chance to get back in: seven points seem like a lot, but they're not insurmountable. However, the two teams ahead have something more, as we've already said."

Napoli have inflicted Juventus their first Serie A defeat of the season by coming back from behind at the Stadio Maradona, only one week after their crucial 3-2 win at Atalanta. "And these victories alone would give you an idea of the strength of Conte's team and his coaching," the coach continued.

"They've gone through a series of very difficult matches — first Atalanta, then Juventus — and emerged not just with two wins, but with two incredible comebacks."

"This shows the stature of the players, the personality their coach has instilled in them, and the work behind this achievement."

Inter, Napoli 'devour matches'

Both sides will have to deal with dangerous opponents in the next

Serie A rounds, but while such matches will tell more about how the title fight could play out, the Spanish manager believes the season is still "very long" and we will have to wait before having a "definitive verdict".

"This competition raises the spectacle of Serie A, makes it more exciting, and keeps it vibrant as long as possible," he observed.

"I think that in the next two rounds, we could get some very interesting indications: Napoli will go to Rome, and Inter will have the Milan derby. Then, after 15 days, there will be a big test for Inzaghi's side at Juventus, while Napoli will return to Rome to face Lazio, a team in good form, doing very well in Europe, with consistency and already having beaten Napoli twice."

"It's unlikely we'll have a definitive verdict, but it's clear we'll know more," he concluded.

"I suspect that even from that match [Napoli vs Inter], we won't reach a decision because the season is very long, and the conditions can change," he concluded.

Sepahan beats Kheybar to go top

10-man Persepolis stuns Tractor

The Sepahan football team defeated struggling Kheybar 2-0 to move top of Iran's 2024-25 Persian Gulf Pro League on Sunday.

In Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium, Reza Shekari opened the scoring for Sepahan in the 17th minute and Mohammad Karimi made it 2-0 from the penalty spot in the 76th minute, according to Tasnim news agency.

Earlier in the day, 10-man Perse-

polis defeated Tractor in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Soroush Rafiei was on target in the 11th minute and Giorgi Gvlesiani found the back of the net with a header in the 76th minute.

Persepolis was reduced to 10-man in the 45th minute after Mohammad Khodabandelou received a red card. In other games, Foolad came from 2-0 behind to defeat Mes 3-2 in the city of Rafsanjan.

Sepahan went top with 38 points, followed by Tractor and Foolad with 35 and 34 points, respectively. Persepolis currently sits fourth with 33 points.

Sepahan's Reza Shekari (front-R) and Mahdi Limouchi celebrate the former's goal during a 2-0 victory over Kheybar in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium on January 26, 2025.

IMNA



IRNA

Iran's Toosi breaks record in running indoor 200m

Iranian national female sprinter Maryam Toosi has broken the Iranian women's indoor 200m record at the Women's Nevada

track and field competition. Toosi managed to record a time of 23.60 to win the first title of the indoor track and

field competition in Nevada, USA, in the 200 meters event, setting a new national record for Iran in indoor 200 meters

competitions, IRNA reported. Opening the 2025 indoor season, UC San Diego track and field will head to the Nevada

Invitational & Multis in Reno, Nevada. The meet will be hosted by the Wolf Pack from February 23 through February 25.

Gaza brought armed-to-teeth Israeli regime to its knees: *Leader*



National Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Gaza brought Israel "to its knees" after the regime was forced to accept conditions proposed by Hamas resistance group for a cease-fire deal in the besieged Palestinian territory.

"The small, limited Gaza brought the Zionist regime, armed to the teeth, and fully supported by

America, to its knees," Ayatollah Khamenei said on Tuesday while addressing a group of Iranian officials and ambassadors of Muslim countries in the capital Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the resistance front in the region, which began with the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, has awakened Muslim and non-Muslim countries, stressing that the kneeling of the Israeli regime is the result of the same resistance.

Israel and Hamas reached a cease-fire agreement on January 15 which came into effect on January 19 after 15 months of war.

The deal aims to bring a permanent end to the fighting and free captives held by Hamas in Gaza

in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Since the beginning of the cease-fire several Israeli captives and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners have been released.

The Leader described the US's award for the commander of the missile cruiser that shot down an Iranian passenger plane in 1988 and Congress' standing ovation for murderer of thousands of Gaza children (Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu) as examples of the enemies' "evil nature and their enmities and grudges which are hidden behind the smiles of diplomacy."

He called for vigilance in global contacts, saying, "We must watch out who we are dealing with, and with whom we are making a deal or negotiate."



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (L) addresses a group of Iranian officials and ambassadors of Muslim countries in a meeting in Tehran, Iran, on January 28, 2025.

● khamenei.ir

IRGC cmdr. announces purchase of Sukhoi 35 fighter jets from Russia



A commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Monday that Iran had purchased Russian-made Sukhoi-35 fighter jets.

Ali Shadmani stopped short of specifying how many jets had been bought and whether they had already been delivered to Iran.

"Whenever necessary, we make military purchases to strengthen our air, land, and naval forces. ... The production of military equipment has also accelerated," the deputy coordinator of the Khatam-ul-Anbia central headquarters said, according to the Iranian Students News Agency.

"If the enemy acts foolishly, it will taste the bitter taste of being hit by our missiles, and none of its interests in the occupied territories will remain safe," Shadmani warned.

This is the first time an Iranian official has confirmed the purchase of Su-35 jets. However, Russia has yet

to comment on the issue.

In November 2023, Iran's Tasnim news agency said Tehran had finalized arrangements to buy Russian fighter jets.

The remarks by the IRGC commander came after Iran and Russia signed a 20-year comprehensive strategic partnership earlier this month to further expand their cooperation in various fields including defense area.

The Sukhoi-35 is a multipurpose fighter jet that is manned by a single pilot. The latest version of the aircraft has a maximum altitude of 20,000 meters (65,600 feet) and has a maximum speed of 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) per hour, according to Russia's official TASS news agency. Iran's current fleet of fighter aircraft mostly consists of American planes acquired before the 1979 Iranian Revolution when Iran and the United States had diplomatic ties, as well as Soviet planes from the 1970s and 1980s.

Araghchi: US needs to win Iran's trust before new nuclear talks

International Desk

The Iranian foreign minister said nice words from the US are not enough to win Iran's trust for the resumption of nuclear talks, adding that, "Lots of things should be done by the other side to buy our confidence."

On Thursday, US President Donald Trump hinted he would prefer a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear issue, saying a new deal with Iran would be "nice."

Asked by a reporter in the Oval Office on the same day whether he would support Israel striking Iran's nuclear facilities, Trump said, "Obviously, I'm not going to answer that question."

"It would really be nice if that could be worked out without having to go that further step ... Iran hopefully will make a deal, and if they don't make a deal, I guess that's okay too," the US president said.

In an interview with Sky News, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said although he was prepared to listen to Trump, it would take a lot more than that for Iran to be convinced it should begin negotiations with the US to strike another deal, given what happened to the first.

"The situation is different and much more difficult than the previous time," he said. "Lots of things should be done by the other side to buy our confidence... We haven't heard anything but 'nice' words, and this is obviously not enough."



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) talks with Sky News' international affairs editor Dominic Waghorn during an exclusive interview in Tehran released on January 28, 2025.

● SKY NEWS

'Decisive response' to anti-Iran strikes

Responding to a question about talks of Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, the Iranian foreign minister said, "Any attack against our nuclear facilities would be faced with an immediate and decisive response."

He added that such a move would be "crazy," and would "turn the whole region into a very bad disaster."

Positive signals are coming from Tehran and Washington as the two countries' presidents prioritize negotiations to settle their disputes, not least over Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Since taking office in July, the new Iranian administration has repeatedly voiced its readiness to hold talks with the Western countries to resolve their disputes over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

In recent months, Iran and European parties to the nuclear deal – France,

Germany and the UK – have held several rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear program and have agreed to resume the negotiations in the future.

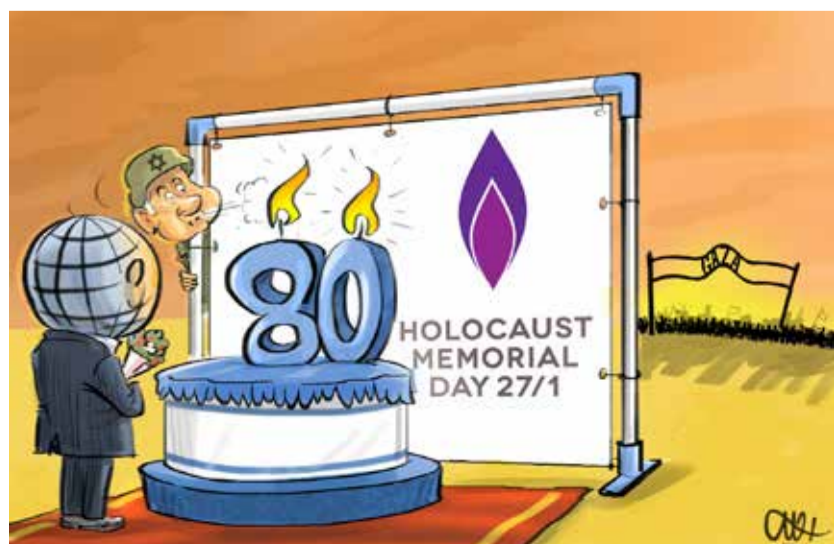
Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi said last week Tehran is ready to start negotiations to lift "illegal and unilateral" sanctions imposed on Iran.

"We have always been ready for this, and if there is (readiness) on the other sides, we believe that the negotiations will take shape and will reach a conclusion," Gharibabadi said.

In 2015, Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program to the world by signing the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with six world powers.

However, Washington's unilateral withdrawal and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions left the future of the deal in limbo.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Chabahar on Makoran ...

Chabahar has several ports and piers for trade, as well as fertile land suitable for agriculture and habitation.

While relocating the capital to this region is not yet prominently on the agenda, and I believe the President's comments about relocating the capital need to be unpacked for the public.

The Makoran coast and Chabahar have the potential to step up as Iran's economic nerve center rather than its political capital. Relocating the political capital is an uphill task. Moving the economic capital would involve shifting several economic ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, and the Customs Administration, to this region. Such a process will not break

the bank or take a long time and it is feasible to relocate these institutions within a reasonable timeframe. Simultaneously, the groundwork can be laid for establishing automobile, steel and iron ore industries in the area. Therefore, economic, commercial and industrial hubs will follow suit and Iran can meet its industrial and commercial needs from this strategic location.

To transform Chabahar into Iran's economic powerhouse, completing key infrastructure projects in the region is essential, including hospitals, highways and an international airport. Tapping into the economic and commercial potential of Chabahar and the Makoran coast could help the country turn the tide in terms of economic growth and curb inflation

rates. This requires cutting down on bureaucratic red tape in trade, capital investment and the establishment of industries and businesses in the region, while encouraging investment in infrastructure and development projects. In doing so, Chabahar could not only become a catalyst for the country's development but also serve as a launchpad for exporting Iranian goods—and even products from various regional countries—to global markets. Harnessing the vast potential of the Makoran coast benefits the entire nation.

President Pezeshkian, recognizing this, has made it a point to visit the province several times during his brief tenure, demonstrating his commitment to the holistic development of Sistan and Baluchestan.

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43rd Fajr Theater Festival

Iraqi playwright: Theater connects diverse cultures

Arts & Culture Desk

Iraqi director Abdulhamid Abdulhussein, whose play 'Déjà vu' is being showcased at the 43rd Fajr Theater Festival in Iran, believes that theater is a bridge that connects different cultures. "Theatrical art in Iran is very important and influential, and despite the difficulties and challenges, Iranian artists are doing their best to preserve this art form and present diverse performances, both technically and in terms of content," Abdulhussein said. "I had the opportunity to watch several performances at the festival, and they were all excellent in every aspect. The Fajr festival has successfully showcased the global status of Iranian theater, and we are keen to see more collaboration between Iran and Iraq in this field."

Abdulhussein, commenting on the interactive atmosphere of the festival, said, "The philosophy behind organizing a festival in any country is to bring together artists from various nationalities and create a platform for them to exchange ideas by watching each other's diverse performances. Each country has its own culture, and when they come together at a festival, we witness a gathering of diverse cultures. I believe theater is a bridge that connects different cultures."

Regarding his participation in the Fajr Festival, Abdulhussein said, "This is my first time at the festival, and I hope it's not the last. The atmosphere here is



very enthusiastic, and the plays, both in the national and international sections, are rich in content, cultural discourse, and artistic experiences. They are also highly professional from a technical standpoint." On the subject of 'Deja Vu,' Abdulhus-

sein explained, "The play is about the martyrs of the Iraqi army at the Speicher base, who were killed by Daesh terrorist group. When the terrorist group entered Iraq and martyred 1,700 military students of the Iraqi army, it was one of the biggest crimes committed by

the group in Iraq." Abdulhussein continued, "The play is performed without dialogue, using only body language. If I were to describe its style, I would say we have taken reality and transformed it into imagination, allowing the audience to witness

the souls of the martyrs flying towards heaven."

Speaking about the Fajr Festival and his expectations, Abdulhussein said, "I had heard about this festival in previous years, and it motivated me to participate and present my play here. I am glad that I got the opportunity this year to travel to Iran with my team and participate in Iran's most important cultural and artistic event in the field of theater. The Fajr Festival is a significant step for actors, directors, and all theater professionals to grow and gain recognition."

Abdulhussein added, "It is also significant for Iraq, which has strived for years to advance in theater and collaborate with other countries. Our presence at the festival, alongside countries like Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Tunisia, was very impactful, and we discussed important points about the plays, which makes me proud to represent Iraq at this edition of the Fajr Festival and introduce my country's name to other participants."

Abdulhussein, when asked about the status of theater in Iraq, said, "As you know, Iraqi theater has a seven-thousand-year-old history, starting with Chaldean and Sumerian religious performances and then evolving to its current important position. Today, alongside the seven-thousand-year-old Iraqi civilization, we have successfully conveyed this art form, preserving its ancient heritage."

Int'l Fajr Music Festival's poster, global harmony inspired by nightingale: Designer

Arts & Culture Desk

The designer of the poster and statute for the International Fajr Music Festival revealed the inspiration behind the event's iconic symbol, the nightingale.

Speaking to ILNA, Anoushiravan Mani, the designer of the poster and statute of the 40th International Fajr Music Festival, explained his creative process. He said, "The poster and statute for an international music festival should symbolize the art of music, and the first idea that comes to mind is to feature musical instruments, either individually or in a fusion of Iranian and foreign instruments," according to ILNA. Mani further elaborated on the challenges of this initial concept, stating, "The issue with this idea is that it's impossible to include all instruments in a single design, and featuring one instrument over another could be seen as a slight to other instruments in Iranian music. So, I had to think of an alternative concept that drew inspiration from nature."

He continued, "The sounds of rain, wind, rivers, and the sea are all musical elements of nature

that are soothing and delightful. The nightingale, known for its beautiful and harmonious songs, is an innate gift from God, free from any discordant notes. It is a symbol of rhythm and natural harmony, and that's why it became the central motif."

Mani emphasized that the nightingale is not exclusive to Iran, saying, "The nightingale is primarily found in Asia and is particularly visible in Iran during springtime. Its sweet song has been celebrated in various literatures and poems. When the festival's policy council proposed the nightingale as a symbol, I created a graphic design around it, using the broken nasta'liq script to write a beautiful poem by the renowned poet Hafez.

Discussing the importance of simplicity in festival poster and statute design, Mani said, "Internationally, the designs for festival posters and statutes are typically minimalistic, and I wanted to achieve a similar effect. I aimed for a sparse yet expressive design."

When asked about incorporating cultural similarities between Iran and other countries into the



poster design, Mani replied, "The nightingale is universally recognized as a symbol of sweet song, and its melodies are cherished by people everywhere. So, the nightingale is a familiar image. Moreover, Hafez is a global poet, known across Asia and Europe, adding an international dimension to the design while the script preserves the Iranian authenticity."

The 40th International Fajr Music Festival will be held from February 11 to 17 in Tehran and various provinces across Iran. The festival is organized by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic in collaboration with the Music Office, the Iran Music Association, and the Rudaki Foundation.

Oman to host online exhibition of Iranian photographer's 'Let's Remove the Walls'

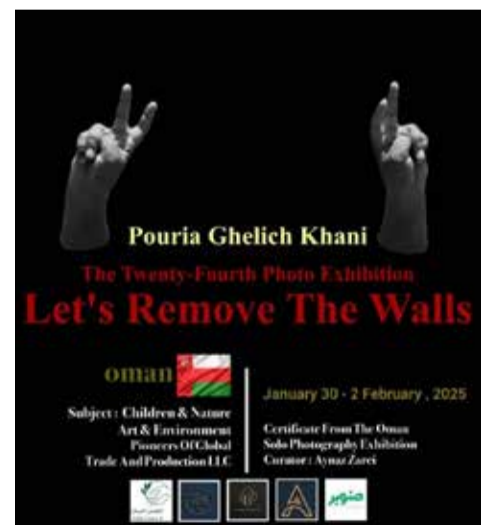
Arts & Culture Desk

The photography exhibition 'Let's Remove the Walls' by Iranian artist Pouria Ghelich Khani will be showcased online in Oman, offering a unique artistic experience.

The solo exhibition, featuring 22 stunning photographs by Ghelich Khani, will be held online from January 30 to February 2. The collection focuses on the themes of nature and children, providing a thought-provoking perspective.

The event is organized with Aynaz Zarei, a painter and the manager of the Artist Group, curating the exhibition.

The artistic statement of the exhibition conveys a powerful message: "There is ample evidence that children's connection with nature is increasingly fading in today's world. With the prevalence of television, computers, and extracurricular activities organized by schools, children are losing the opportunity to enjoy and explore nature freely. By being deprived of direct experiences with nature, our children miss out on crucial opportunities for their physical and mental well-being and the development of long-term responsible behaviors towards the environment. Through my photographs, I aim to remind families of the importance of reconnecting children with nature, merging art and the environment. My photo exhibition tour, titled 'Let's Remove the Walls,' has been held in various provinces of Iran since 2016 and has been presented in 23 exhibitions so far. I hope that through this tour, I can serve as a messenger for reconnecting children with nature through the language of



art. The 24th exhibition marks a new experience, both in terms of its online format and its first-ever presentation beyond Iran's borders, in collaboration with Oman."

Ghelich Khani holds a master's degree in Biodiversity from Shahid Beheshti University and is a pioneer in combining art and environmentalism in Iran. He is the author of the acclaimed photo book 'Let's Remove the Walls,' which received accolades from the National Mehregan Science Award in its 14th and 15th editions. Khani is also a member of the Iranian Photographers Association.

Previously, Ghelich Khani's most recent exhibition was held in December at the Khorshid Gallery.