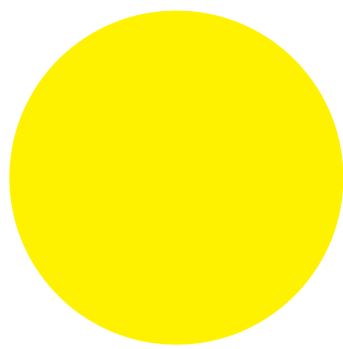


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# Iran Daily

Vol. 7769 • Thursday, February 13, 2025 • Bahman 25, 1403 • Sha'ban 14, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages

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## ***Pezeshkian:*** Iran will not cave in to threats

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### Leader urges further development of defense power

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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei tours an exhibition displaying the latest achievements of scientists in the country's defense industry in Tehran on February 12, 2025. khameini.ir

### Global risks and opportunities in Trump's aggressive economic strategy

Donald Trump's second presidential term is ushering in a wave of global economic uncertainty, with his aggressive "America First" policies setting the stage for major changes. While Trump aims to bolster domestic industries and reduce trade deficits through protectionism, deregulation and potential new tariffs on key trading partners like China and the EU, these measures present both risks and opportunities. Economists warn that retaliatory tariffs could disrupt global supply chains and elevate consumer prices in the US. The Federal Reserve's cautious monetary policy will be crucial in maintaining economic stability, as Trump also promises increased federal spending on infrastructure to create jobs and enhance manufacturing. Meanwhile, the EU braces for challenges, anticipating rising tariffs that could hit critical sectors such as automotive and agriculture. European leaders are preparing to defend their economic interests against Trump's protectionist measures, which could lead to negotiations but also heightened tensions. The automotive sector remains a key flashpoint, with potential tariffs on European car exports looming. Overall, Trump's aggressive economic strategy is set to reshape global trade dynamics, creating both hurdles and potential growth avenues for various economies.

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# Leader urges further development of defense power

## National Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised the country's defense advances, saying that Iran should further develop its defense power, including its missiles. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Defense Ministry officials, defense industry elites and the ministry's experts and staff. "Today, our defensive power is well-known, the friends of the [Islamic] Revolution are proud of it and our enemies are afraid of it. This is very important for our country," he added. He called defending the nation and the country's security an important issue. Ayatollah Khamenei described the country's defense progress as impressive despite sanctions which have been imposed on the Islamic Republic in the past decades. "Progress should not be stopped, we

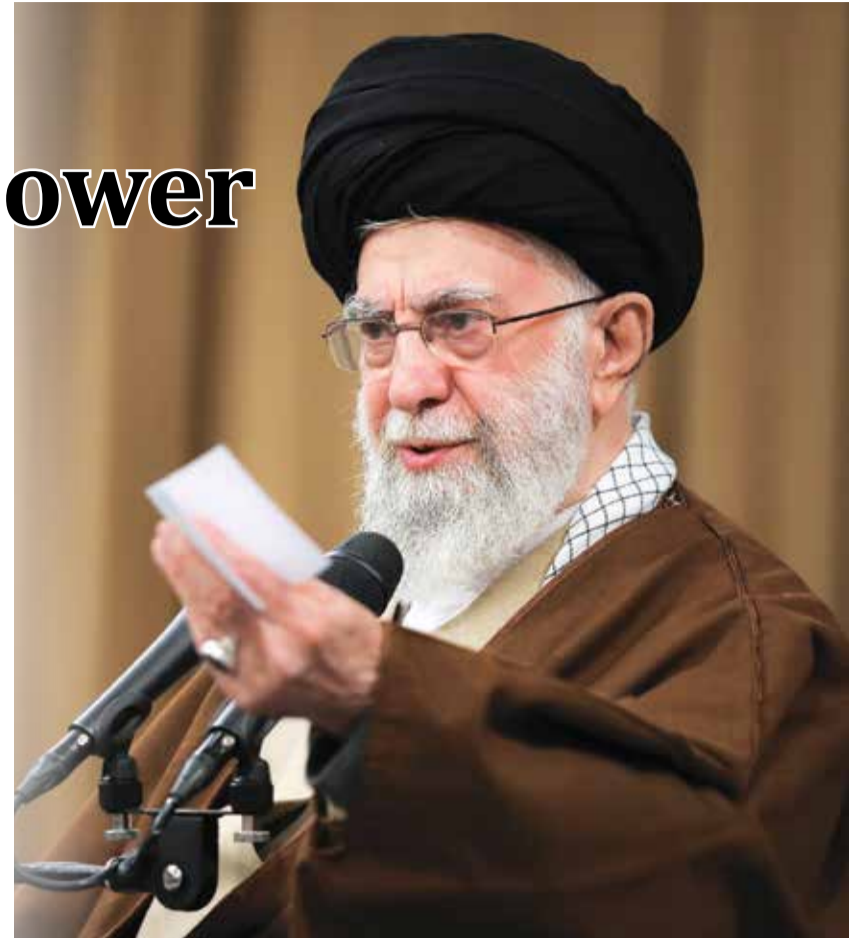
cannot be satisfied [with our current level]. We previously set a limit for the accuracy of our missiles, but we now feel this limit is no longer enough. We have to go forward," he said, citing a need to focus on innovation in the Iranian military. Referring to the era when "world's bullies" were refusing to sell defense equipment to Iran, the Leader said that, "Today, those bullies ask Iran not to sell military equipment." The Leader also visited an exhibition showcasing the latest developments in Iran's defense sector. The event displayed advanced equipment and new technologies used in areas such as air defense, ballistic and cruise missiles, smart munitions, space, drones, aviation, vessels, and energy. During his speech, the Leader also commended the Iranian nation for relaying its "message of unity" to the international community on the 46th anniversary of the country's historic 1979

Islamic Revolution.

On Monday, millions of Iranians took to the streets across the country to commemorate the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the Western-backed Pahlavi regime. He described the day as one of the most significant national events, showcasing the unity and strength of the Iranian people despite relentless external pressures. Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that the celebrations on this year's anniversary were not just a commemoration, but a powerful act of resistance and national unity.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with Defense Ministry officials, experts and staff in Tehran on February 12, 2025  
● [khamenei.ir](#)



## Pezeshkian: Iran will not cave in to threats President warns enemies seeking to sow discord in society

### International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran will not back down and will not surrender in the face of any threat after the US president reimposed his so-called maximum pressure policy and threatened Iran with military attack.

"You cannot scare Iran and Iranians; Iranians will not back down in the face of any threat and will not surrender. We are not at war with any country, we have established friendship with all our neighbors, all our neighbors are our brothers and sisters and friends," Pezeshkian said while addressing a group of Iranians in the southern port city of Bushehr on Wednesday. Pezeshkian's remarks were in response to recent measures and threats made by the US President Donald Trump against Iran.

After taking office on January 20, the US president restored his so-called "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran that includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero. Trump has also repeatedly talk-



ed about Israel's military attack on Iran if Washington and Tehran fail to reach an agreement on the latter's nuclear program. "I would like a deal done with Iran on non-nuclear. I would prefer that to bombing the hell out of it... They don't want to die. Nobody wants to die," Trump told New York Post on Saturday. "If we made the deal, Israel wouldn't bomb them." In a separate interview with Fox News on Monday, the US president reiterated its threats, saying that, "I think Iran would love to make a deal and I would love to make a deal with them

without bombing them." "Everybody thinks Israel with our help or our approval will go in and bomb the hell out of them," Trump added, stressing that Israel would need the US support for such a strike. "I would prefer that not happen. I'd much rather see a deal with Iran where we can do a deal, supervise, check it, inspect it." The US president says he wants to negotiate with Iran while closing all the doors for negotiations. He threatens the world not to establish relations with Iran and on the other hand, he says let's negotiate,



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a group people in the southern port city of Bushehr on February 12, 2025.  
● [president.ir](#)

Pezeshkian said. Pezeshkian also warned that the enemies are seeking to sow discord among Iranians in order to make people pessimistic about the management and the leadership of the country. "We must join hands and build our country with unity," Pezeshkian underlined.

## Hamas rejects US, Israeli threats of return of war

Hamas said Wednesday it would not bow down to threats from Israel and the United States, which demanded the resistance group release hostages this weekend or face a return to war in Gaza.

Mediators Qatar and Egypt were pushing to salvage the cease-fire agreement, a Palestinian source and a diplomat familiar with the talks told AFP, while Hamas said its top negotiator was in Cairo, AFP reported. The truce has largely halted more than 15 months of fighting and seen Israeli captives released in batches in exchange for Palestinians in Israeli custody. But the deal, currently in its 42-day first phase, has come under increasing strain.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said on Wednesday that Israel was "evading the implementation of several provisions of the cease-fire agreement", warning that hostages would not be released without Israeli compliance with the deal.


"Our position is clear, and we will not accept the language of American and Israeli threats," said Qassem, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to "resume intense fighting" if hostages were not released by Saturday.

His threat echoed US President Donald Trump, who said on Monday that "hell" would break loose if Hamas failed to release "all" Israeli hostages by then. Netanyahu did not specify whether he was referring to all captives.

Hamas has said it would postpone the next hostage release scheduled for Saturday, citing Israeli violations.



● [Hazem Qassem](#)

 **Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iran envoy decries Trump's threat to use force against Tehran

Iran strongly condemned US President Donald Trump's threat to use force against the country as deeply alarming and irresponsible. Iran's permanent ambassador to the UN made the remarks in a letter to the UN chief and the president of the Security Council on Tuesday. Amir Saeid Iravani said Trump's reckless and inflammatory statements flagrantly violate international law and the UN Charter, Press TV reported. "Upon the instructions from my Government, I am writing to draw the Security Council's attention to deeply alarming and irresponsible remarks made by the President of the United States, in which he openly threatened the use of force against the Islamic Republic of Iran,"

Iravani said. Trump said he would prefer to make a deal with Iran rather than "bomb the hell out of it," in a media interview published on Saturday. "I would like a deal done with Iran on non-nuclear. I would prefer that to bomb the hell out of it," Trump told the New York Post. "They don't want to die. Nobody wants to die." In yet another belligerent statement, during an interview with Fox News on Monday, Trump reiterated the same language of war. "I would like to make a deal without bombing them." Iravani said Trump's "reckless and inflammatory statements flagrantly violate international law and the UN Charter, particularly Article 2(4), which prohibits

threats or use of force against sovereign states."

The Iranian diplomat also slammed Trump's so-called maximum pressure policy against Iran as a blatant violation of fundamental principles and norms of international law.

Iravani called on the Security Council not to remain silent in the face of such brazen rhetoric and condemned it unequivocally.

He warned that any act of aggression against Iran will have severe consequences, for which the US will bear full responsibility.

He emphasized that Iran will resolutely defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national interests against any hostile action.

Trump's threats came a few days after he signed an order seeking to cut Iran's oil exports to zero, while also claiming that he wanted to work towards a nuclear deal.

## Economy Desk

# Tehran, Ashgabat bent on expansion of energy ties

Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov emphasized deepening cooperation between the two countries in the fields of oil and gas as well as exploring avenues to expand collaboration.

During a meeting on Tuesday evening in Tehran, Paknejad expressed optimism about strengthening bilateral ties, stating, "In the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, constructive engagement with neighboring countries, especially Turkmenistan as a friendly and brotherly nation, holds significant importance."

Paknejad highlighted that during the 14th Iranian administration and following the election of President Masoud Pezeshkian, the development of economic relations, particularly in oil and gas, became a priority.

He noted that this focus was reiterated during discussions between Iran's president and Turkmenistan's national leader during the summer visit to Ashgabat, as well as in recent phone conversations between the two leaders. According to Shana, Paknejad canceled his Wednesday trip to Bushehr Province and Asaluyeh, where he was scheduled to accompany the president and members of the cabinet.

The cancellation was due to the presence of Meredov, and his accompanying delegation in Iran as the decision was made to follow up on discussions with the Turkmen delegation.

## Iran as Turkmenistan's second gas partner

During the meeting, Meredov



congratulated Iran on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution and noted the historically strong ties between the two nations.

He stated, "Iran and Turkmenistan have always enjoyed good relations, and in recent years, these ties have taken on a new dimension, with both countries eager to expand cooperation in various sectors."

Meredov referenced the recent phone conversation between Turkmenistan's national leader and Iran's president, underlining that the strategic issues for expanding cooperation, including in electricity, gas, and transportation, were discussed. He added, "These discussions can help deepen bilateral cooperation."

The Turkmen FM underscored the success of negotiations with Iran's Oil Ministry, stating, "I always emphasize that Iran has been Turkmenistan's second

partner in gas cooperation since our independence."

He pointed to the start of gas cooperation between the two countries in the 1990s, noting that approximately 107 billion cubic meters of gas have been exported from Turkmenistan to Iran during this period.

"These figures and projects reflect the depth of relations and the growing gas ties between Iran and Turkmenistan. Both countries have valuable experience in this field, and I believe we can take further steps to expand relations based on this positive experience," Meredov concluded.

## Tehran's Caspian Sea meeting

Meredov on Wednesday met Iranian president during which Pezeshkian reiterated Iran's commitment to fostering good neighborly relations and ex-

pressed the Islamic Republic's desire to strengthen ties with neighboring countries, including Turkmenistan.

During the meeting, Meredov conveyed warm greetings from Turkmenistan's national leader and president to Pezeshkian.

He pointed to existing agreements and joint projects between Iranian and Turkmen companies in various fields, including transportation and energy, and called for further development of bilateral cooperation in all areas.

Meredov expressed hope that the upcoming joint economic cooperation commission between Iran and Turkmenistan would lead to stronger economic ties.

"Relations between the two countries are of great importance to the government of Turkmenistan, and we seek to expand relations in all fields,"

he added.

The Turkmen foreign minister also invited Pezeshkian to attend an international conference on peace and trust in Turkmenistan and announced that Turkmenistan would send a high-level delegation to the Caspian Sea littoral states' summit in Tehran.

Pezeshkian, for his part, emphasized Iran's principled policy of maintaining positive relations with its neighbors, stating, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought to expand relations with its neighbors, including the friendly and brotherly nation of Turkmenistan, and welcomes the development of cooperation in various fields."

The president referenced a recent phone conversation with Turkmenistan's national leader, noting that necessary directives had been issued to relevant authorities to explore further

areas of cooperation with Turkmenistan and to address obstacles hindering the acceleration of joint projects.

Pezeshkian also highlighted the upcoming Caspian Sea littoral states' prime ministers' meeting in Tehran, underscoring Iran's desire to enhance relations among Caspian nations based on peace, friendship and good neighborliness.

He added that this approach would be underscored at the forthcoming Caspian summit, with a focus on achieving practical solutions to expand cooperation.

## Fruitful talks of FMs

In another meeting on Wednesday, Meredov discussed developments with his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, who said that "good consultations" were held with the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan regarding Afghanistan.

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Turkmen counterpart, Araghchi noted the long-standing cultural, civilizational and historical commonalities between Iran and Turkmenistan.

The Iranian foreign minister stated that the Turkmen FM, during his visit to Tehran over the past two days, had held intensive talks with Iranian officials.

Araghchi, said the Turkmen foreign minister was accompanied on this trip by his country's ministers of roads and energy.

Describing Iran-Turkmenistan relations as "very deep," Araghchi said the Islamic Republic of Iran was among the first countries to recognize Turkmenistan's independence, as well as its status as a neutral country.

## Iran hosts first rail transit from India to Afghanistan

## Economy Desk

For the first time, a commercial rail route between India and Afghanistan has been established through Iran, with the debut transit train carrying oil seeds to Afghanistan.

According to ILNA, the train arrived at Roznak Station in Herat on Tuesday as the shipment, consisting of oil seeds, was initially transported by ship to Bandar Abbas and then moved via Iran's rail network to Roznak Station in Afghanistan.

The transit marks the beginning of a new era in transit cooperation between India and Afghanistan via Iran. Managed by the Afghanistan Railway Development Consortium and supported by Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, over 30,000 tons of goods have been transported by rail between Iran and Afghanistan since the Khaf-Herat rail corridor became operational earlier this year.

The corridor has enhanced trade security between the two countries and is expected to reduce transportation costs for traders and producers.

The Khaf-Herat rail corridor, which connects Iran's rail network to Herat in western Afghanistan, plays a key

role in regional connectivity.

Additionally, the corridor is part of the East-West global rail network, creating a 2,000-kilometer route linking China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Europe.

This rail line not only improves the security of cargo transportation but also reduces costs and transit times by 10%, making it more attractive to regional traders.

Mostafa Rezaei, CEO of the Afghanistan Railway Development Consortium, stated that the first rail transit shipment from India entered Afghanistan through the Shamtqi rail border in Khaf, Khorasan Razavi Province, on Tuesday evening.

"The shipment included six containers of almonds and oil seeds, which were transported from India by ship to Bandar Abbas and then via Iran's rail network to Roznak Station in Herat."

The Shamtqi border customs checkpoint between Iran and Afghanistan opened in 2020 in Khaf, a border city in southeastern Khorasan Razavi Province. Located approximately 50 kilometers from Khaf, Shamtqi serves as the official customs checkpoint along the Khaf-Herat railway. Khaf, a city of 150,000, is situated 267 kilometers south of Mashhad.

## New record set in Iran's natural gas production



Iran's natural gas production set a new daily record of 1.106 billion cubic meters, with 716 million cubic meters (mcm) sourced from the South Pars joint field, according to Shana. Currently, raw gas production exceeds 1.1 billion cubic meters per day, while the volume of gas delivered to the National Iranian Gas Company has set a record of 1.021 billion cubic meters daily.

Gas production in South Pars, the heart of the country's gas output, has reached a record high of 716 mcm per day, an unprecedented achievement.

This volume is extracted from 37 offshore platforms, over 300 wells, and 13 refineries across 24 phases, supplying more than 70% of the country's gas consumption.

According to the report, South Pars contributes to over 40% of gasoline

production capacity and nearly 50% of feedstock for petrochemical industries and power plants.

To address the gas shortage crisis caused by rising domestic consumption and declining pressure in South Pars wells, the Oil Ministry has implemented a comprehensive plan.

The report also added that in the coming days, \$17 billion in contracts for pressure boosting in South Pars will be signed with four domestic contractors, leveraging 70% local capacity.

These contracts aim to mitigate pressure decline and production drops in the major gas field, significantly reducing the gas and gasoline imbalance.

The first phase of the pressure-boosting project is expected to become operational by the Iranian calendar year 1407 (2028-29).

The Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC), a key player in onshore gas production, has achieved a record output of 248 mcm of gas, added the report.

Currently, about 25% of the country's gas is produced within the company's operational area, with some stored in the Sarajeh (Qom) and Shourijeh (Khangiran) reservoirs for use in the second half of the year.

In the Khangiran region, the only gas field in the northeast, approximately 8% of the country's daily gas production meets the needs of six provinces: Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Golestan, Mazandaran, and parts of Semnan. The ICOFC, responsible for about 80% of the country's oil production, has also made significant efforts in gas production, currently supplying a portion of the nation's gas needs.



IRNA

# Global risks and opportunities in Trump's aggressive economic strategy

## International Desk

Experts suggest that the onset of Donald Trump's second presidential term has ushered in a period of economic uncertainty globally. While Trump has laid out an extensive aggressive economic plan targeting various sectors around the world, amidst the looming economic storm, what are the economic risks and opportunities for countries?

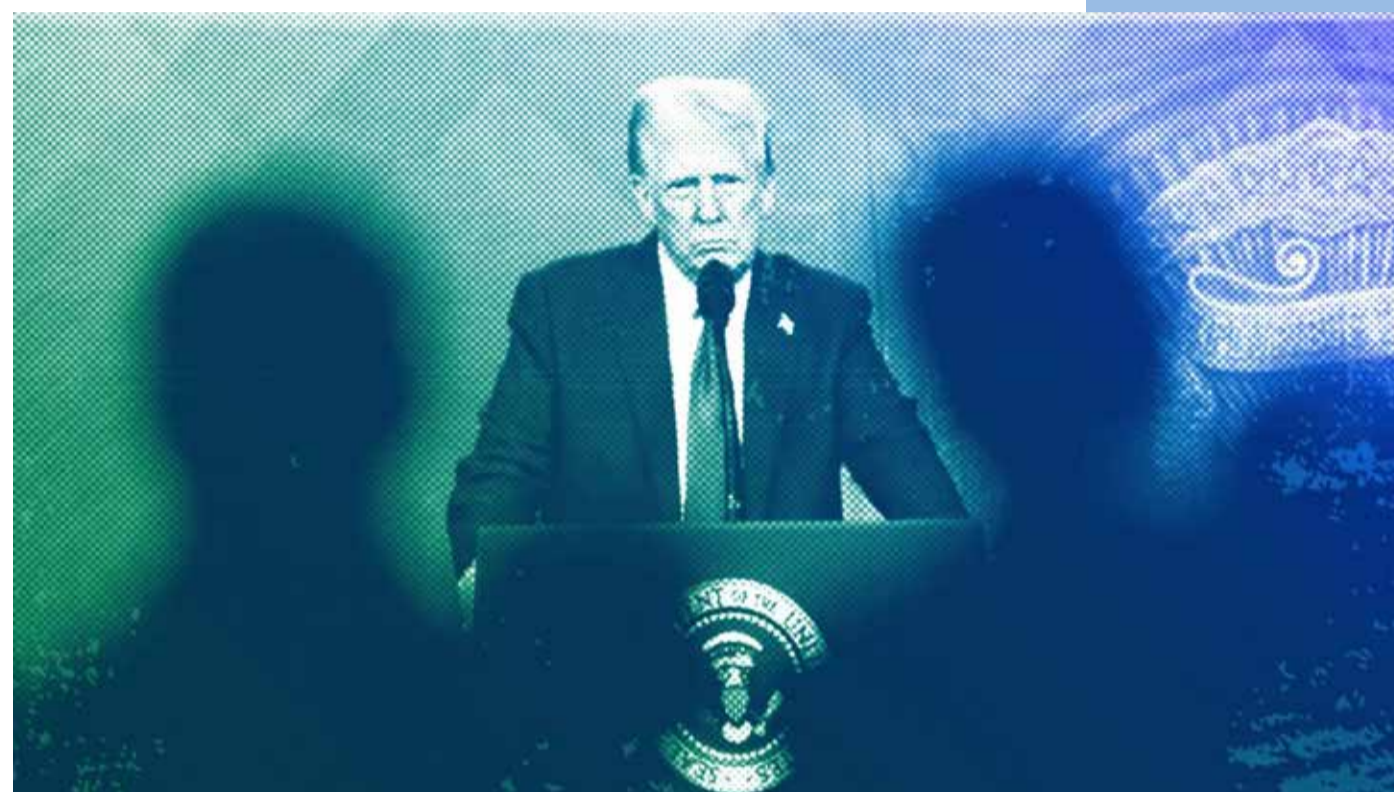
As Trump commences his second term in the United States, the world is bracing itself for the economic changes his administration intends to bring about. Trump's administration approach, characterized by "America First" policies, emphasizes protectionism, deregulation, and a combative stance on trade. His anticipated policies—including new tariffs, renegotiation of trade agreements, and domestic financial measures—are expected to impact economies across the globe in diverse ways. This article delves into the economic outlook for different regions under Trump's leadership.

## US: Focusing on domestic strength and protectionism

Trump's reelection signifies a continuation of policies aimed at bolstering domestic industries, reducing the trade deficit, and prioritizing American jobs. However, these policies carry both opportunities and risks for the US economy.

It is likely that the Trump administration will impose additional tariffs on key trading partners, including China, Canada, and the European Union. The objective of these measures is to protect domestic producers, particularly in industries such as steel, aluminum, and automotive manufacturing. While tariffs may provide short-term relief for American industries, economists are warning of potential retaliatory actions from trading partners, which could disrupt global supply chains and drive up consumer prices.

The Federal Reserve's monetary policy will play a crucial role in determining economic stability throughout Trump's second term. Having significantly cut



MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP

interest rates over the past year, the Fed is expected to take a cautious approach, balancing inflation concerns with the need to support economic growth. Jerome Powell, the Fed Chair, has stressed the importance of financial transparency from the government to guide future monetary decisions.

One of the key promises of Trump's campaign was the revitalization of America's infrastructure. Experts anticipate an uptick in federal spending on roads, bridges, and technology, which could create jobs and strengthen the manufacturing sector. Nonetheless, questions remain about how to fund these projects without exacerbating the national debt, which has al-

ready reached unprecedented levels.

## Europe: Challenges and adaptations facing US policies

Trump's second presidential term is expected to challenge the European Union (EU) as well, with rising tariffs and trade barriers. The US government's protectionist approach, epitomized by the "America First" slogan, is likely to target key European industries, from automobiles to agriculture. Historically, the EU has faced criticism from Trump, particularly regarding car imports and agricultural products. European leaders are gearing up for the potential imposition of new tariffs on essential exports,

including cars and agricultural goods. Such actions could harm major EU economies like Germany and France. In response, the EU has indicated a willingness to negotiate but remains committed to defending its economic interests.

The automotive sector remains a critical flashpoint. During his first term, Trump threatened to impose tariffs of up to 25% on European car exports, justifying this move with national security concerns. Although these tariffs were postponed following negotiations, they may come into effect during his second term. The European Automobile Manufacturers Association estimates that such tariffs could cost the EU approximately \$5 billion an-

nually, reducing exports in this sector by up to 25%. Germany, as the automotive hub of the bloc, would be disproportionately affected by these policies, with noticeable repercussions for its economy.

## Agricultural disputes

The agricultural sector is another contentious area. The Trump administration has criticized EU policies that restrict imports of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and hormone-treated beef. Efforts to pressure the EU to relax stringent food safety regulations could intensify, impacting European farmers and consumers alike. According to the European Commission, agriculture accounts for about 6% of the EU's GDP, highlighting the vulnerability of this sector to trade disputes.

President of the European Central Bank (ECB) Christine Lagarde has called for greater economic integration within the European Union to tackle external pressures. Europe aims to cut down its reliance on foreign trade by strengthening internal markets and promoting innovation. Analysts are spotlighting green energy and digital technologies as potential areas for significant growth for the EU.

## Investment opportunities

Despite the challenges arising from US policies, some investors remain optimistic about Europe's prospects. Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, has argued that negative sentiments surrounding the European economy are overstated. He points to opportunities in sustainable finance and technology as reasons for long-term optimism.

The European Union has announced that it will respond in kind to any aggressive trade actions taken by the United States. In 2020, following a ruling from the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding subsidies, the European Commission imposed tariffs worth \$4 billion on American goods, including airplanes and agricultural products. This tit-for-tat approach is expected to continue, likely leading to further trade disruptions.

The combination of tariffs and retaliatory actions is predicted to dampen trade flows, raise business costs, and create economic uncertainty across the EU. A report from the ECB warns that a rise in protectionist policies could trim the bloc's GDP growth by up to 0.5% annually. This scenario would exacerbate existing challenges, including the recession stemming from post-pandemic recovery and fluctuations in energy markets.

In light of these challenges, the EU is exploring ways to counter US tariffs, including bolstering trade partnerships with Asia and Africa. Initiatives such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) with China and the EU-Africa trade partnership underscore Brussels' commitment to diversifying its



China continues to be at the forefront of Trump's trade agenda and foreign policy. The trade war between the US and China, which dominated much of Trump's first term, is expected to escalate during his second term.



A woman gestures as people wait for Donald Trump on the day the US president attends an event on the economy on January 25, 2025.  
LEAH MILLIS/REUTERS





trade relations. Experts at the Brookings Institution believe that such alliances could help mitigate the effects of US protectionist policies.

#### Asia's complex ties with new Trump admin

The economic outlook for Asia during Trump's second presidential term will be shaped by its intricate trade relations with the United States. While some countries see opportunities to strengthen ties, others are bracing for ongoing tensions.

The government's focus on reducing the US trade deficit with China and addressing claims of intellectual property theft will remain central issues in bilateral relations. China continues to be at the forefront of Trump's trade agenda and foreign policy. The trade war between the US and China, which dominated much of Trump's first term, is expected to escalate during his second term. The government's emphasis on reducing the US trade deficit with China and tackling intellectual property theft claims will continue to be key topics in their relationship. Meanwhile, experts predict that China will persist in diversifying its supply chains and lessening its dependence on American technology. Initiatives like the Belt and Road project are likely to play a significant role in China's strategy to expand its global influence.

The tariffs imposed during Trump's first term have already disrupted China's export-driven economy, particularly in sectors such as electronics, machinery, and textiles. As the US considers more restrictions, including technology bans, China is responding by diversifying its export markets and bolstering domestic consumption. According to a report by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, tariffs have led to a decline of over \$300 billion in trade flows between the US and China from 2018 to 2021, significantly impacting global supply chains.

Trump's administration has placed emphasis on limiting China's access to critical technologies, particularly in the semiconductor and 5G sectors. In response, China has ramped up its efforts to achieve technological self-sufficiency. Initiatives such as "Made in China 2025" and substantial investments in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and green technologies illustrate Beijing's strategy to reduce reliance on imports from the US. Analysts at McKinsey believe that China's focus on innovation could position the country as a leader in renewable energy technologies over the next decade.

#### Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

China's Belt and Road Initiative, aimed at developing infrastructure and strengthening trade relations across Asia, Africa, and Europe, continues to expand. The onset of Trump's second presidential term is expected to challenge these efforts through the promotion of alternative trade alliances and increased scrutiny of Chinese investments abroad. The Council on Foreign Relations underscores that US opposition to the BRI may encourage China to bolster ties with regional partners like ASEAN countries to alleviate external pressures.

One of the main points of contention between the US and China is financial decoupling. The Trump administration has taken steps to limit access for Chinese companies to US capital markets, particularly those linked to state-owned enterprises or the military. In response to these moves, China is striving to internationalize the yuan and is utilizing platforms such as the Shanghai International Energy Exchange to conduct oil transactions in its currency. A recent report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicates that a more prominent role for the yuan in global trade could reduce China's vulnerability to US sanctions.

#### Geopolitical considerations

Beyond trade issues, geopolitical tensions over Taiwan, the South China Sea, and human rights concerns will also impact economic relations. Trump's administration's explicit support for Taiwan and criticism of China's policies in Xinjiang has added further strain to an already tense relationship. Analysts warn that escalating tensions could spill over into economic domains, potentially affecting investment flows and the stability of global markets.

Japan's economic outlook during Trump's presidency is cautiously optimistic. The Bank of Japan recently raised interest rates to their highest level in over 16 years, reflecting confidence in the country's economic resilience. Strong trade relations with the United States are expected to persist, although potential tariffs on auto exports remain a concern. Emerging economies like India, Vietnam, and Indonesia may find new opportunities as companies diversify away from China. However, these markets face challenges such as inflationary pressures and the potential for capital flight if US interest rates rise. Additionally, Trump's immigration policies could impact labor markets in countries that are heavily dependent on remittances.

Africa's economic relationship with the United States has historically been limited compared to other regions. However, Trump's second term may bring

new opportunities and challenges for the continent.

#### Trade partnerships

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides preferential trade access to the US market, is set to expire in 2025. Experts are closely watching whether the Trump administration will extend or amend this program. Broader trade partnerships could bolster industries such as textiles and agriculture in African nations.

China has been the dominant partner in Africa's infrastructure development, but there is potential for increased US engagement. The Trump administration has expressed interest in countering China's influence on the continent, particularly through private sector investments in energy and technology. Trump's focus on countering terrorism and strategic alliances may impact economic policies in Africa. Increased military cooperation could lead to investments in infrastructure and training, especially in conflict-affected areas.

#### A shifting landscape for Latin America

The economic outlook for Latin America during Trump's second term is shaped by trade dynamics, immigration policies, and geopolitical considerations. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaced NAFTA, remains the cornerstone of US-Mexico trade relations. While this agreement has provided stability, experts



The EU has announced that it will respond in kind to any aggressive trade actions taken by the US.... The union's tit-for-tat approach, which led the European Commission in 2020 to impose tariffs worth \$4b on American goods, including airplanes and agricultural products, is expected to persist, likely resulting in further trade disruptions.

warn that the potential imposition of new tariffs by Trump could sour relations and disrupt supply chains.

Trump's stringent immigration policies have significant economic implications for Latin America, particularly for countries dependent on remittances. A reduction in migration opportunities could place pressure on local economies and exacerbate inequality.

#### Opportunities in energy and agriculture

Trump's emphasis on energy independence may open up avenues for Latin American countries to increase oil and natural gas exports to the US. Similarly, agricultural trade agreements could benefit countries like Brazil and Argentina, although environmental concerns remain a contentious issue.

Trump's aggressive policies, including his calls to lower oil prices and interest rates, could destabilize global markets. Critics argue that his protectionist approach undermines the principles of free trade and heightens the risk of geopolitical tensions.

Despite the challenges, there is potential for constructive collaboration between the US and its trade partners. Open dialogue on issues such as climate change, technology, and global health could pave the way for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Trump's preference for fossil fuels over renewable energy has prompted other countries to ramp up their green energy initiatives. Particularly, Europe and China are positioning themselves as leaders in the transition to sustainable energy.

The beginning of Trump's second presidential term marks a period of economic uncertainty worldwide. While some regions see opportunities for growth and collaboration, others face challenges stemming from protectionist policies and geopolitical tensions. The global economic outlook is likely to be shaped by how countries adapt to and maneuver through Trump's aggressive economic agenda. As the world watches, the balance between risk and opportunity remains precarious, underscoring the interconnected nature of today's global economy.

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



## AFC Champions League Two:

## Tractor fights back to beat Al Khaldiya



Tractor striker Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (9) celebrates his goal with teammates during a 2-1 victory over Al Khaldiya in the AFC Champions League Two in Riffa, Bahrain, on February 11, 2025.  
● AFC

## Sports Desk

Tractor will take a 2-1 lead into the second leg of the AFC Champions League Two last-16 meeting with Bahrain's Al Khaldiya in Tabriz next week after the Iranian top-flight side fought back to claim a narrow victory in Riffa on Tuesday. Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and Domagoj Drozdek found the net inside five minutes for the visitors to cancel out Mohamed Al Romaihi's 48th-minute opener for the home side. Gleison fed the ball to Mahdi Al Humaidan on the right and then the Brazilian, who had continued his run into the penalty area, stepped over the low cross to allow Al Romaihi's tap in past Tractor keeper Alireza Beiranvand. The host's lead, however, was to last for just two minutes. Tractor fullback Mohammad Naderi surged down the left flank and teed up Hosseinzadeh in the six-yard box, before the striker's deft flick found the bottom corner – a seventh goal for the Iranian in the competition. It took January signing Drozdek 10 minutes to make an impact after coming off the bench at halftime. A fine piece of individual skill saw the Croatian flick the ball past Filip Ivanovic before curling home from the edge of the box

to give the away side a well-deserved lead. Tractor still had Beiranvand to thank for making a double save to deny Al Khaldiya a late equalizer, as the Iranian league leader remains on course for a maiden Asian silverware. Despite the victory, Croatian head coach Dragan Skocic was not pleased with his team's performance. "I congratulate my players and Tractor fans for this victory, but we were not close to our real level. "I hope we do better in the second leg. In some games where the team is not performing well, it is important to win. We played against a strong team and our performance will definitely be better in the second leg," said the former head coach of the Iranian national team. Meanwhile, Skocic's opposite number Ali Ashour was frustrated by the final outcome for his side, saying: "For me, it is important to play beautiful football but the most important thing is to achieve results. Everyone is sad and shocked by this result, as we prepared the players mentally because this match is the first half of the challenge. "We have to recover and plan for the return match and it doesn't matter that we have to play away from home," said Ashour. The two sides will square off in Tabriz's Yadegar-e Imam Stadium on Tuesday.

## Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championship:

## Nasiri, Nouri win golds as Iran bags three cadet medals

## Sports Desk

There was further glory for the Iranian girls at the Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championship as Aynaz Nasri and Parnian Nouri grabbed a couple of cadet gold medals in the United Arab Emirates. A world junior champion in South Korea last year, Nasri walked away with the ultimate prize of the -63kg contests, thanks to a final victory over her Russian opponent. Nouri, also a reigning world junior gold medalist, had

won a first cadet gold for the country at the expense of the Egyptian participant in the -52kg final. Meanwhile, Rozhan Heidari suffered a final defeat against the Moroccan athlete to settle for the silver medal in the -55kg class. Tuesday's cadet competitions came after the Iranian women had collected 11 medals, including four golds, to finish atop the team table in the seniors' event. Hasti Valinejad (-46kg) and Mahla Mo'menzadeh (-49kg) won double golds after beat-

ing fellow-Iranians Sogand Shiri and Saeideh Nasiri respectively in the final. Nastaran Valizadeh stole the headlines by defeating reigning Olympic champion and world No. 1 Viviana Marton of Hungary to the -62kg title, with Melika Mirhosseini beating Jordanian Rama Abu Al-Rub for the -73kg crown. Elsewhere, Mobina Ne'matza-deh, an Olympic bronze medalist last summer, took the silver medal in the -53kg contests after a defeat against Saudi Arabia's Dunya Abutaleb, who made up for her loss to

the Iranian girl in the third-place bout at the Paris Games. Saghar Moradi also finished her campaign with a silver medal in the -67kg event, with Sogol Shiri (-49kg), Tina Madanlou (-57kg) and Zahra Pour-Esmaeil (+73kg) adding three bronzes to Iran's medal haul.

Parnian Nouri (R), Aynaz Nasri (2nd R), and Rozhan Heidari (L) pose with their medals at the Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championship in the UAE, on February 11, 2025.  
● taekwondo.ir



## Dubai Para Athletics Grand Prix:

## Iranians win four medals on Day 2

## Sports Desk

The second day of the Dubai WPA Grand Prix – Fazza International Open Championship saw the Iranians collect four medals, including double golds. Two-time Paralympic champion Saeid Afrooz registered a best attempt of 37.76m to win a javelin throw gold in the men's F34 class on Wednesday. There was a one-two finish for the Iranian duo in the blind and visually impaired contests, as Hassan

Bajoulvand claimed the top spot in the men's discus throw F11 class, thanks to a 41.6m effort, with Amirhossein Alipour in second on 35.94m. In the women's competitions, Ma'soumeh Tourani finished with 4.97m in the shot put F54 class. The second-day results took the Iranian 10-athlete squad's haul to three golds, four silvers, and a single bronze medal at the season-opening WPA Grand Prix Series in the Dubai Club for People of Determination.

## City's Guardiola can't explain another late collapse in Real defeat

## Sports Desk

REUTERS – Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola had no explanation for yet another late-game collapse as his team lost 3-2 at home to Real Madrid in the Champions League playoffs on Tuesday to leave their campaign hanging by a thread ahead of the second leg. Brahim Diaz and Jude Bellingham struck late to erase City's 2-1 lead, the latter netting the winner in the 92nd minute at the Etihad Stadium where the mood swung from joy to despair. "We arrived at the last minute with a result and we could not keep it," Guardiola told a press conference. "After 2-1, many games it has happened, against Feyenoord in the Champions League (City led 3-0 in the 74th minute but were held to a 3-3 draw), against Brentford in the Premier League, against Manchester United, many games at the end we give away," he added. "Unfortunately it has happened so many times, it's difficult." Erling Haaland's double, including a penalty in the 80th minute, had City poised for a win over the holders and LaLiga pacesetters but leads have proved slippery this season for Guardiola's side, who are fifth in the Premier League. They have conceded seven goals in the final 15 minutes of Champions League matches this term. City defender John Stones acknowledged that the players had to be accountable.

However, Guardiola said the responsibility "belongs to all of us, not just the players. "I don't have a problem to accept. To blame one specific player, that is ridiculous. It's all of us, me first. And of course the players as well," he said. "They want it, how they run, how they do it, but the truth is we are not stable enough in that (crucial) moment." The second leg is next Wednesday in Madrid.



● MIKE EGERTON/PA



Mashq Square

# Mashq Square in Tehran's historical heart

## Iranica Desk

If you wander through the alleys and streets of Tehran and find yourself in the heart of Iran's capital, you will see one of the oldest and most adventurous places in history, which embodies history, culture, beauty, art, and architecture: Mashq Square! Go to Mashq Square in the capital, a square with many historical stories. It is the only one that currently bears no resemblance to a square. Once you pass the National Garden Gate (Sardar-e Bagh-e Melli), with its magnificence, through the sound of horns and the continuous passing of cars and the noise of the street, there is no longer any news of that hustle and bustle, nor of disorder and noise. This gate has done its job and suddenly throws you into a slice of history.

## From military grounds to National Garden

Mashq Square is a relic from the Qajar era, originally serving as a military zone where the Shah's guards would practice military exercises. The term *mashq* means marching in French, which was adopted into Persian. Its name is due to its history of military training and exercises. After the February 1921 coup, the military grounds were no longer needed, so Reza Shah ordered the construction of the National Garden Gate in this location. Flower cultivation in the square led it to

be called the National Garden. After the plan to establish the first public garden in the lands of Mashq Square was planned and implemented, the name of Mashq Square was changed to the National Garden.

## A grand entrance

The National Garden Gate is known as the entrance to the Mashq Square, or today's National Garden, and it can be considered the first structure that attracts your attention. The construction of the entrance, in collaboration with Jafarkhan Kashani and Germans, took place from 1922 to 1925. The width of the entrance originally included two guard and inspection rooms, measuring around 27 meters from east to west, but over time, one of the rooms became part of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company building, while the other was allocated to the Tehran Post Office and later demolished. The columns on the external facade feature designs symbolizing the 1921 coup and the takeover of Tehran.

## A hub of activity and transition

In addition to military objectives, Mashq Square was influential in the political, religious, social, and sporting lives of the people of that era, hosting many religious celebrations. Interestingly, the grounds of Mashq Square were also the site

of some of the earliest sports in Iran, such as the English Embassy staff's football matches, the first cycling completions by Tehran cyclists, as well as the launch of Tehran's first balloon and its subsequent crash.

The square, located on the western side of Imam Khomeini Square (formerly Toopkhaneh Square), includes a collection of museums and important buildings such as the Post and Communication Museum, Etrat Museum, Coin Museum, National Museum of Iran, Malek National Museum, Faculty of Arts, and the building of the first National Oil Company of Iran. The central pedestrian walkway of Mashq Square, also known as the "United Nations" walkway, is the most vast and extensive urban pedestrian zone in Iran, and the square itself is a collection of wonders and tourist attractions. Each of the buildings in Mashq Square in Tehran has been constructed with a unique and distinct style.

The oldest building in the complex is the Qazaq Khaneh (Cossack Quarters), now the University of Art, and the newest is the Malek National Library and Museum. This museum and its library were endowed by Hajj Hossein Malek, Iran's greatest benefactor. The administration of this museum and library is now carried out by Astan Quds Razavi, and it is one of the most exquisite museums in Iran. The first aircraft seen in Iran, piloted by the Pol-

ish pilot Kozminski during World War I, landed in today's Mashq Square on January 4, 1914; as soon as the plane landed, people came to this spot in surprise and fear.

## Mashq Square today

Mashq Square, a historical and vast complex in the heart of Tehran, was once a military shooting range during the Qajar era. It features magnificent historical and cultural buildings, making it a potential tourist destination. This historical building was registered as one of Iran's national monuments on October 4, 1998. According to historical researcher Hamid Naseri Kermanshahi, Mashq Square during the Safavid period was a flat area outside the city, approximately 25 hectares in size, surrounded by many trees and used for military exercises. Eskandar Mokhtari, another historical researcher, suggests that upgrading Mashq Square requires freeing the surrounding areas and transforming the square into a public urban space to attract more tourists. Located in the city center, Mashq Square is close to many tourist attractions, including the Tehran Bazaar and Golestan Palace. Building number nine of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the University of Art, the Malek National Museum, the Post and Communications Museum, and the National Museum are also situated in the compound.



National Garden Gate



Malek National Library and Museum



Qazaq Khaneh

## Legends, history of Bampour Castle in Iranshahr

### Iranica Desk

Bampour Castle in Iranshahr is one of the most significant fortifications in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. Perched atop a manmade hill, it was originally constructed as a military base, strategically positioned to defend against enemy attacks. The

castle's history is believed to date back to the Sassanid dynasty, supported by the existence of similar structures such as Qaleh Dokhtar in Kerman Province and Qaleh Bam, which belong to the same era. In 1960, an English archaeologist excavated parts of Bampour Castle, uncovering artifacts from the prehistoric period.

Beyond historical documents, the castle's legacy is also woven into local legends. According to these tales, the name Bampour is linked to the word Bahman, which gradually evolved into Bamanpour. Constructed from cob bricks and clay, Bampour Castle features cylindrical towers on its western

and eastern walls. Of the original four guard towers, only two remain, each standing approximately two meters tall. A well is located within the castle, which is situated on a manmade hill rising to about eighty meters. The castle is divided into three sections: the lower, middle, and upper areas. The lower section

includes the main walls, entrance and exit doorways, and protective towers. The middle section houses residential chambers, while the upper section was reserved for generals. In the upper section, a deep well can be found, which once featured a cobblestone path providing an escape route during sieges.

Although this path has since been filled with sand and soil, the well itself remains visible. War cannons were positioned in the largest tower of Bampour Castle, and a series of rooms can be found on the southern side of the courtyard. Additionally, the castle's citadel contains a row of windowed rooms.



# Iranian music echoes global influence at Fajr Int'l Music Festival: *Minister*

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, praised Iranian music for its longstanding role in showcasing the beauty and grandeur of Persian arts and culture.

In a message to the 40th Fajr International Music Festival, Salehi said that wherever the melodies of Iranian instruments and the voices of Iranian vocalists resonate, accompanied by the words of the nation's literary giants, they signify the global influence of Iranian thought and artistry, IRNA reported.

Salehi emphasized that art is deeply connected to human nature, guiding the soul towards spiritual elevation and enlightenment.

He added, "Music is among the arts that can refine the human spirit." He highlighted that prominent thinkers and philosophers throughout history have recognized the significance of music, viewing it as a guiding light for discovering the depths of the human soul.

The minister described Iranian music as a clear symbol of the nation's cultural and artistic



identity, with its unique melodies captivating audiences worldwide. He referred to music as the "art of dialogue," an unbounded conversation that transcends borders and speaks directly to people's hearts.

"The language of melody and rhythm, when harmonized, enchants listeners from the East to the West," Salehi noted, emphasizing music's role as a "direct dialogue with the world."

Salehi hailed Iranian musicians as cultural ambassadors, stating, "Iranian music artists are the finest carriers of our cultural heritage to the surrounding world." He expressed his delight that the Fajr International Music Festival, now in its 40th edition, continues to proudly present this valuable heritage through the innovative



works of young artists and the mastery of seasoned veterans. According to Salehi, contemporary Iranian music, with its blend of tradition and innovation, carries the significant responsibility of preserving the country's rich musical legacy while ensuring its continuity for future generations. He highlighted the Fajr International Music Festival as a crucial platform for this cultural

continuity, showcasing the vast diversity of Iranian music, from traditional classical forms to the vibrant sounds of ethnic groups, as well as pop and classical genres. "All these musical forms contribute to fostering unity and harmony within Iranian society," the minister said. Salehi also stressed the unifying power of music, particularly the melodies rooted in Iran's eth-

nic traditions. "When we listen to the tunes of various ethnic groups, it feels as if the voices of all Iranians are united as one," he remarked, calling this a "brilliant testament to the role and mission of arts in today's world." He concluded by affirming that Iranian music has always aimed to portray the beauty and majesty of Persian culture. "Wherever the sound of an Iranian instrument or the voice of

an Iranian singer echoes with the words of our literary giants, it signifies the flow of Iranian thought and art across the globe," Salehi added.

The 40th Fajr International Music Festival runs from February 11 to 17. The event features both competitive segments, including the prestigious Barbad Award, and non-competitive programs focused on promoting national unity.

## Iran offers to host ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism

# Spanish envoy: Iran, appealing destination for European investors

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran expressed its readiness to host the upcoming Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, underscoring its commitment to enhancing regional tourism collaborations.

This announcement was made during a meeting between Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, and Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), on the sidelines of the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition.

Salehi Amiri highlighted Iran's vast tourism potential, citing the country's 40,000 registered national heritage sites, 28 tangible UNESCO World Heritage sites, and 26 intangible cultural assets, IRNA reported.

He added that Iran is prepared to sign a memorandum of understanding to formalize its offer to host the event, aiming to expand cooperation with ECO in the tourism sector.

Reflecting on previous collaborations between Iran and ECO, the Iranian minister stressed the importance of bolstering cultural connections among member states.

"While governmental ties are

crucial, people-to-people connections are even more significant," Salehi Amiri noted.

He called for stronger cultural exchanges to showcase the tourism capacities of Iran and other ECO countries.

In response, Majeed Khan commended Iran for hosting the international tourism exhibition and recognized the cultural commonalities among ECO member nations as a valuable resource for tourism growth. He said, "ECO prioritizes trade, transportation, and tourism, but neglecting people-to-peo-



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri (R), meets with Spain's ambassador to Iran Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar (L) on February 12, 2025, to discuss ways to strengthen cultural and economic relations between the two nations.

ple connectivity could hinder our objectives." Majid Khan also referred to Iran as the 'tourism



To further facilitate tourism cooperation, the ECO Secretary-General underscored the need to ease or eliminate visa requirements among member states. "Simplifying visa procedures will significantly boost regional tourism," he suggested. On the same occasion, Salehi Amiri met with Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, Spain's ambassador to Iran, to explore opportunities for enhancing cultural and economic ties.

He spoke about Iran's unparalleled heritage, tourism, and handicrafts potential and expressed Tehran's willingness

to collaborate extensively with Spain in these sectors. The Iranian minister also highlighted investment opportunities in Iran's tourism industry, portraying the nation as a safe and attractive destination for European investors.

He assured that the Iranian government supports foreign investment in tourism infrastructure, referencing the recent inauguration of a major tourism complex in Kerman as a testament to Iran's commitment to developing its tourism sector. Pointing to the historical and cultural links between the two coun-

tries, Salehi Amiri noted the sister city relationship between Isfahan and Barcelona as a promising platform for expanding cultural and tourism cooperation.

He invited the Spanish ambassador to visit Iran's tourist attractions, particularly in Isfahan and Kerman, which are celebrated for their unique cultural heritage.

Addressing the challenges posed by negative perceptions, the minister criticized anti-Iran propaganda, arguing, "Despite facing Iranophobia, Iran remains a secure and welcoming destination for tourists and foreign investors."

The Spanish envoy welcomed the idea of deepening cultural and tourism partnerships, expressing optimism about enhanced bilateral interactions. Salehi Amiri also announced that Iran has surpassed the six million mark in tourist arrivals this year, with projections to reach over seven million by the end of the year.

Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, he disclosed that 5.7 million tourists had visited Iran by late December. To achieve the target of 15 million tourists set in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, the minister said that the country needs to increase its tourism capacity by 1.5 million visitors annually.