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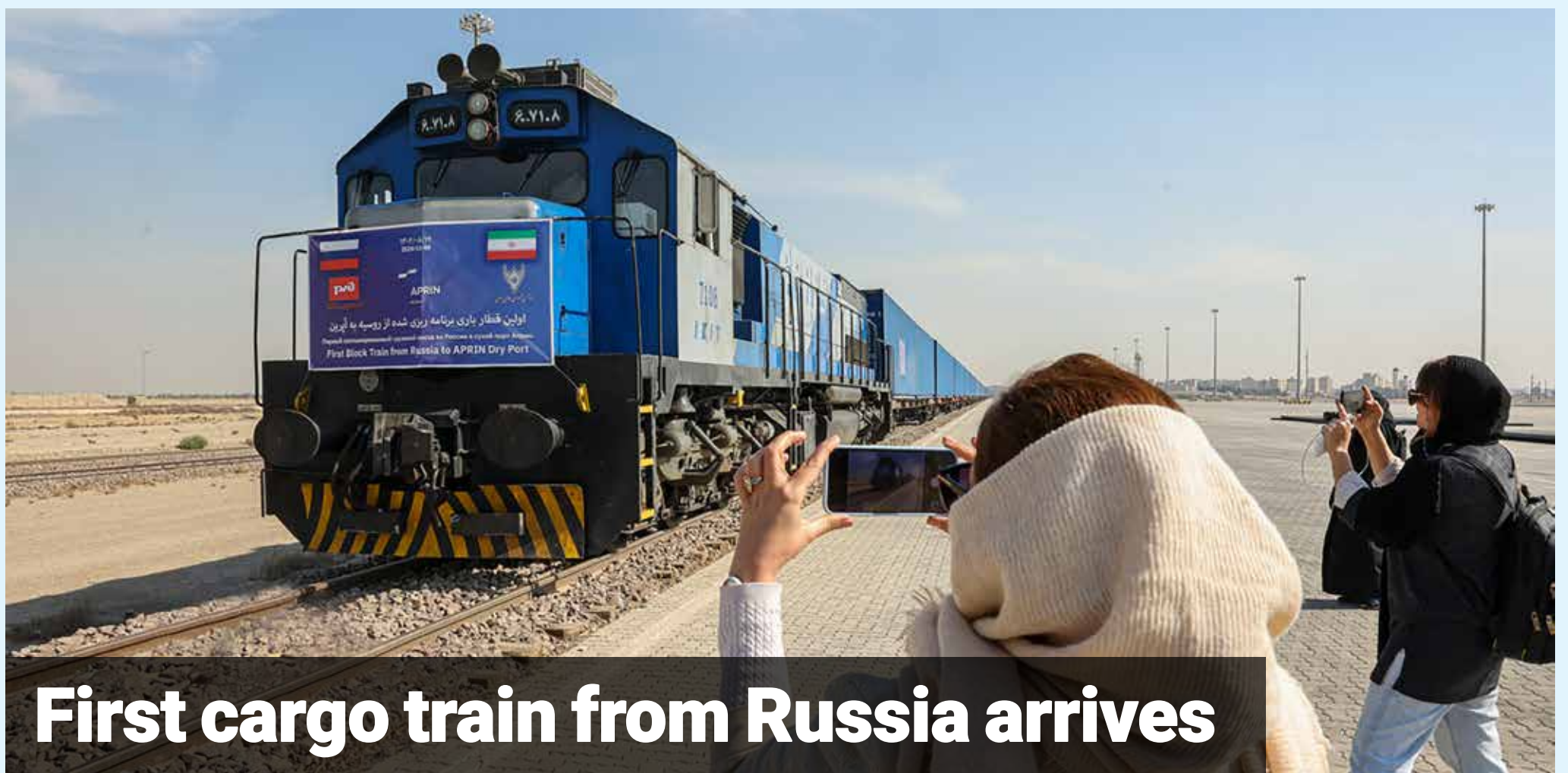
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### First cargo train from Russia arrives at Aprin in boost to INSTC corridor

Journalists take photos of an Iranian cargo train arriving from Russia at a station in southwestern Tehran, Iran on November 8, 2025.  
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## 'Crude' pretexts and the US drumbeats of war



By **Mostafa Shirmohammadi**  
Staff writer

### OPINION

A striking pattern links the countries that the administration of US President Donald Trump has recently struck militarily or threatened to attack. Venezuela, Iran, Iraq and Nigeria all sit on vast reserves of crude oil. Venezuela, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves, has for some time become a central focus of the Trump administration's confrontational posture. According to The Atlantic, upon returning to the White House, Trump tasked his envoy to Venezuela Richard Grenell with helping pave the way for US companies to gain access to Venezuela's huge oil and mineral wealth. Washington has ratcheted up its rhet-

oric against President Nicolas Maduro, seeking to oust the leftist leader under the pretext of his alleged role — and that of his country — in trafficking drugs to the US. Yet the justification for picking on Venezuela appears, at best, flimsy if not absurd. Compared with certain Latin American and Central American states — well-known for decades as major producers of cocaine and heroin — Venezuela's role in the drug trade is nothing. That Washington would overlook those centers of drug production and cartels, only to direct its rhetoric on combating illegal trafficking at Caracas and accuse Maduro of acting as "the head of a narcotics enterprise running drugs into the United States," is quite laughable. An old Persian parable captures the logic concisely. A wolf drinking upstream tells off a

lamb downstream for muddying the water. "The water's flowing from you to me," the lamb hits back. "There's no way I'm messing it up from down here." The moral of the story is clear; a bully does not need a real reason. If they want to put up a fight, they will just make up any excuse. Nigeria — tenth globally in crude oil reserves — has also come under pressure from Trump. In a video posted on Truth Social this week, he uttered an explicit threat of potential military strikes against a country considered one of Washington's key partners in Africa. His stated rationale was that Islamic militants were killing Christians in Nigeria. Trump warned that If the Nigerian government doesn't "move fast" to stop "terrorists" from killing Christians, "there's going to be hell to pay."

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# Araghchi ridicules Netanyahu on 'anchor of security' claim



## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi mocked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for portraying

the regime as the "anchor of security" in West Asia region, describing Israel as "the source of instability in our region."

"The so-called 'anchor of security in

the Middle East' is wanted for genocide and war crimes, has imposed apartheid on 7.5 million Palestinians, bombed seven countries over the past year, and has occupied Pal-



Displaced Palestinians walk with their belongings along the heavily damaged Al-Jalaa Street by the Israel's strikes in Gaza City on October 12, 2025.  
● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

estinian, Lebanese and Syrian territory," the Iranian foreign minister said in a post on X on Friday.

He emphasized that "Israel is the source of instability in our region." His remarks came as Israel has so far killed nearly 70,000 Palestinians since launching the genocidal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, before a ceasefire deal was reached in the strip last month.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants and charged Netanyahu and former Israeli minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant with war crimes in Gaza.

After the eruption of the genocidal war against Palestinians, Israel also carried out strikes in Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Israel also launched airstrikes on the headquarters of Hamas in Qatar, in what was described as an "assassination operation" that claimed

the lives of several members of the movement as well as a Qatari security officer.

The regime also launched an unprovoked war against Iran on June 13, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

Gaza health officials said on Saturday that 69,169 Palestinians have been killed in the Israel's war on Gaza so far. At least 170,685 others have also been injured.

Despite some progress in delivering food to Gazans, the territory, ravaged by war and wracked by hunger, remains in urgent need of humanitarian assistance due to the Israel's restriction on entering aid to the besieged territory, a UN spokesperson said Friday.

The Gaza Strip is also littered with 60 million tons of rubble, mixed in with dangerous unexploded bombs and dead bodies.

Israel's war has not only razed entire neighborhoods to the ground, displaced families multiple times and decimated medical facilities, but also poisoned the very ground and water on which Palestinians depend.

## Iran to UNSC: Trump's confession evinces US direct role in 12-day war



Amir Saeid Iravani  
● AFP

## International Desk

Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, said on Friday US president's admission that he was "very much in charge" of Israel's war against Iran in June, confirms Washington's direct involvement in Israel's aggression against Iran.

Donald Trump on Thursday claimed responsibility for Israel's attacks on Iran, contradicting previous statements that the regime acted unilaterally.

"Israel attacked first. That attack was very, very powerful. I was very much in charge of that," Trump told reporters.

But in the early hours of the aggression, Washington stressed that Israel acted on its own and warned Tehran against retaliating against US troops and interests in the region.

"Tonight, Israel took unilateral action against Iran. We are not involved in strikes against Iran, and our top priority is protecting American forces in the region," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said at that time.

In a letter to the UN Security Council on Friday, Iravani said Trump's statement provides "clear and irrefutable evidence" of US leadership, orchestration, and command responsibility in the attacks which killed many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

Iravani condemned the aggression as a "grave and flagrant violation" of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, noting that it resulted in civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and damage to Iran's safeguarded nuclear facilities. He further stressed that the statement "clearly and unequivocally exposes the falsity of the earlier statement made by the United States Secretary of State

[Marco Rubio] on 13 June 2025, in which he deceitfully claimed that 'we are not involved in strikes against Iran, and our top priority is protecting American forces in the region.'"

The Iranian envoy declared that both the US and Israel "bear full and joint responsibility for their aggression and for the resulting loss of innocent lives, the extensive destruction of civilian property and infrastructure, and the deliberate targeting of safeguarded and peaceful nuclear facilities."

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against the Islamic Republic, assassinating many of the country's top military brass, scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesperson also on Friday reacted to US president's remarks, calling them "undeniable evidence" of Washington's direct intervention.

"From the very beginning, it was clear that the United States had fully participated in the crime of Israeli aggression against the Iranian nation," Ismaeil Baqaei said in a post on X on Friday.

## 'Big lie': Iran debunks US-Israel assassination claims in Mexico

## International Desk

Iran categorically rejected claims by the United States and Israel that the Islamic Republic had plans to assassinate Israel's ambassador to Mexico, calling it a "great big lie."

"It is a media invention, a great big lie, whose objective is to damage the friendly and historic relations between both countries (Mexico and Iran), which we categorically reject," Iran's Embassy in Mexico posted on X.

Israeli and US officials claimed on Friday that Mexican authorities with assistance from the US and Israeli intelligence agencies thwarted an alleged plot by Iran to assassinate the Israeli ambassador to Mexico.

The plot to kill Ambassador Einat Kranz Neiger is alleged to have been hatched at the end of last year and remained ac-



Iran's Embassy in Mexico City

tive through the middle of this year, when it was disrupted, the US officials claimed.

However, Mexico's foreign relations and security ministries issued a brief joint statement late Friday saying that "they have no report with respect to a supposed attempt against the ambassador of Israel in Mexico."

The foreign ministry "reiterates its willingness to maintain fluid communication with all accredited diplomatic representations in our country," the statement said. The security ministry "reaffirms its

respectful and coordinated collaboration, always within the framework of national sovereignty, with all security agencies that request it."

"Iran and Mexico share identical interests. Mexico's security and reputation are also Iran's security and reputation. We will never betray the trust the Mexican government has placed in us," the Iranian Embassy said.

"This is not the first time they have tried to damage Iran's relations with other countries through fake news," the embassy added.

## Deputy FM calls on int'l community to stop Israeli aggression in West Asia

## International Desk

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeid Khatibzadeh said regional countries and the international community should stop Israeli aggression against countries in the West Asia region.

He made the remarks in an address on November 6 to a seminar at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in Japan's capital, Tokyo.

"Israel, driven by geopolitical delusions and a desire for expansionism, strategic depth, the extension of its borders, and the establishment of strategic superiority over the entire West Asia region, has carried out a series of aggression and attacks in the region — actions that must be stopped by the regional countries and the international community," Khatibzadeh said.

In his remarks, he referred to the re-

cent Israeli onslaught on Iran, describing it as a blatant violation of the principles of international law.

"Despite the absence of any evidence indicating the existence of nuclear weapons or deviation in Iran's nuclear program — and while negotiations and diplomacy were ongoing — one must ask why Israel, in close cooperation with the United States, carried out this attack. The answer to this question clearly determines how countries should respond to such an act of aggression," the Iranian official said.

On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked war against the Islamic Republic, assassinating many of the country's top military brass, scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also jumped on the bandwagon by bombing three Iranian nuclear



Saeid Khatibzadeh  
● IRNA

sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the illegal assault.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON





# First cargo train from Russia arrives at Aprin in boost to INSTC corridor

Economy Desk

Iran received the first block train from Russia at the Aprin dry port near Tehran on Saturday, a development officials said could strengthen trade ties with Moscow and expand regular rail traffic linking Iran, Russia and Central Asian neighbors. The train, carrying 62 forty-foot containers of paper, pulp and related products destined for customers in Iran and Iraq, began its journey about 900 km north of Moscow. It crossed Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan before entering Iran through the Incheh-Burun border crossing, reaching Aprin in 12 days, IRNA reported. Oleg Polyev, CEO of the Russian Railway Logistics told the inauguration ceremony that the arrival marked the start of a new freight route, saying, "We will make every effort to expand it."

He said Aprin terminal sits at a key junction of transport corridors and could play "a promising role" in future trade flows. Polyev recalled that in 2002, the first Moscow-Bandar Abbas train required far more time and higher costs. "Today, thanks to efforts by companies and authorities in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Iran, the route has been reduced to 15 days and costs have been cut in half," he said. Iranian officials said the new service supports growth of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), designed to connect Russia to the Persian Gulf and South Asia.

Emerging logistics hub

Morteza Jafari, deputy head for commerce and operations at Iran's state railway, said Aprin could become a major regional logistics hub.

"Aprin is a very important point and can turn into a regional transport center. We hope to achieve this with private sector capacity," he said. Jafari said development of the north-south corridor has accelerated since 2022, noting that early trains on the route faced long delays and high tariffs that discouraged shippers. "Now, on average, one train runs every 10 days," he said. He added that the train reaching Aprin on Saturday covered the 6,500-km distance in about 10 days, compared to roughly 15 days to reach Bandar Abbas via southern Iran, while alternative maritime routes can take 45 days.

New investment agreements ahead

Jafari said several new investment agreements at Aprin dry port will be signed within the



The photo shows an Iranian cargo train arriving from Russia at a station in southwestern Tehran, Iran on November 8, 2025.

● IRNA

next month, with a goal of reaching the capacity to receive one train per day by year-end. He told IRNA on the sidelines of the ceremony that since the first train from China arrived at

Aprin in June, 30 trains have entered the facility. "We are coordinating to expand these services, and where rail access is not available, cargo will be moved by truck," he said,

adding that Iran is working with neighboring Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and regional states to position itself as a hub for exports, imports and transit.

## Design of light passenger planes initiated to amplify domestic air links: CAO

Economy Desk

Iran is moving into the design phase for two new light passenger aircraft, a senior aviation official said, as the country seeks to expand short-haul connectivity between its many small airports following the rollout and initial test authorization of its domestically built cargo plane, Simorgh. Hossein Pourfarzaneh, head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), said Iranian technical teams have begun designing regional passenger aircraft intended for short-distance routes, IRNA reported. The deputy roads and urban development minister said the country's geographic size and large number of small airports require 20-seat aircraft to link smaller cities to the national network while maintaining the option for international flights. Pourfarzaneh said the initiative is part of the government's Seventh Development Plan, which identifies aerospace as one of its strategic "driver industries." The plan



A view of the Iranian Simorgh cargo aircraft

● IRNA

centers on two parallel efforts: expanding air transport capabilities and developing a fully domestic aircraft manufacturing base. He said improving the air transport sector requires simultaneous development of fleet capacity, airport infrastructure, support and maintenance industries, and skilled human resources. Moreover, domestic aircraft production is being advanced to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers. In recent years, Iranian institutions including the Defense Ministry have carried out

programs to produce civilian aircraft. One earlier effort was the Iran-140, launched in cooperation with Ukraine's Antonov. After the partnership ended, Iranian engineers continued the project using domestic expertise. Pourfarzaneh said Iran now ranks among advanced countries in aerospace technologies across both civilian and military domains. The Simorgh cargo aircraft, designed for transport missions, is one outcome of these efforts. Simorgh has completed factory-level testing and recently received a permit for flight testing. During its flight test campaign, engineers will compare actual performance with earlier simulation data and make any necessary design adjustments. After that phase, the aircraft will enter type certification procedures before moving to commercial production. Iran entered the aviation sector in 1937, at a time when aviation was still in early development in many countries, he added.

## IMIDRO targets \$30b mining investment to raise output, exports under SDP

Economy Desk

The Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development & Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the country aims to achieve a 13% growth in its mining sector under the Seventh Development Plan (SDP), outlining a \$30-billion-investment program to complete mining projects, expand infrastructure, and secure energy supplies. IMIDRO officials said that if the targets are met, the sector could generate an additional \$15 billion in foreign exchange revenue, IRNA reported. In the steel industry, Iran plans to expand capacity to 9.5 million tons of concentrate, 15.5 million tons of pellets, 15.1 million tons of sponge

iron, 1.8 million tons of billets, 10.5 million tons of steel sheets, and 750,000 tons of rebar and coils. For copper, the program aims to produce up to 2.8 million tons of concentrate and 280,000 tons of cathode copper. In aluminum, plans include establishing a one-million-ton alumina powder capacity, developing petroleum coke capacity, and activating Guinea's bauxite mines. IMIDRO also set a target to produce 3,290 kilograms of gold bullion under the new plan. Officials have emphasized that the investments are part of Iran's broader strategy to strengthen domestic mining production, develop value chains, and increase export revenue, high-



lighting the sector as a key driver of economic growth.

## Fars, Uzbekistan sign farming deal to enhance livestock food security



● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iran's Fars Province has signed a cross-border farming agreement with Uzbekistan, aiming to cultivate 35,000 hectares of Uzbek farmland to support domestic livestock feed production and ease pressure on local water resources, a provincial official said. Ahad Behjat Haqiqi, head of Fars Agricultural Organization, said, "In the recent visit of the governor general of Fars and his accompanying economic delegation to Surkhandarya region in Uzbekistan, a memorandum of understanding on cross-border cultivation of agricultural products was signed," IRIB reported. The visit, led by Fars Governor General Hossein Ali Amiri, was part of Iran's active economic and cultural diplomacy with neighboring countries, and the delegation remained in Uzbekistan until today. The official added, "As part of the agreement, sections of Surkhandarya's agri-

cultural land will be used to produce fodder crops, particularly forage corn, to supply a portion of the southern Fars Province's livestock feed needs, reduce pressure on the province's water resources, and take an effective step toward ensuring national food security." Haqiqi emphasized the strategic importance of the initiative, saying, "Cross-border agriculture is no longer an option; it is a strategic necessity to achieve food security and reduce pressure on domestic natural resources." He noted that the project is expected to provide stable access to animal feed while fostering opportunities for exports and creating new economic cooperation chains between Fars and Uzbekistan. "In the next phase, planning for the development of agricultural exports and scientific and technological cooperation in the agricultural sector between Fars and Surkhandarya is on the agenda," Haqiqi said.

## Crude pretexts and ...

He has since shared several posts saying that he has ordered the Department of Defense — rebranded by his administration as the Department of War — to "prepare for possible action." What goes unmentioned here is that terror groups such as Boko Haram and a local ISIS affiliate have killed far more Muslims than Christians in Nigeria over the past decade. Iraq, home to resistance groups including the Popular Mobilization Forces, has likewise faced fresh warnings. US Defense Sec-

retary Pete Hegseth recently threatened that if these groups respond to upcoming US operations in areas near Iraq, they would be targeted. Among the states threatened by Washington, Iraq stands fourth in the world for proven oil reserves. Iran, which holds the world's third-largest oil reserves, has faced even harsher treatment. In June, the US and its regional proxy, Israel, carried out strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, military sites and a number of civilian targets.

One of the civilian targets was a session of Iran's Supreme National Security Council attended by the heads of the three branches of power, though none of the officials present were harmed. It is evident that the Israeli strike in Tehran was aimed at toppling the Islamic Republic; had it succeeded, Iran could have been plunged into a chaotic disintegration. What precisely is driving senior figures in the Trump administration and the president himself remains unclear. But in recent weeks, Trump has exerted heavy pressure on buyers

of Iranian and Russian oil — China and India — to force them into halting purchases. Removing both countries' barrels from the global market would certainly push up prices and unsettle financial systems and economies around the world — a scenario Washington ostensibly wishes to avoid. From this perspective, US leverage over states with major petroleum reserves may appear to offer a swift, if unstable, remedy. Throughout both his first and second presidential campaigns, Trump pledged to end America's "endless wars." Yet he now ap-

pears increasingly inclined toward military methods, almost with a sense of obsession. A president with Trump's disposition, going through a second term free from the pressure of re-election, could prove particularly dangerous. Just on Thursday, his Republican allies in the Senate blocked a resolution that would have barred the administration from attacking Venezuela without congressional approval. This raises the question of whether the next flight path of US warplanes will lie somewhere further south.



## When creativity pushes past limits

# Iran's student robotics team tops Asia



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

### INTERVIEW

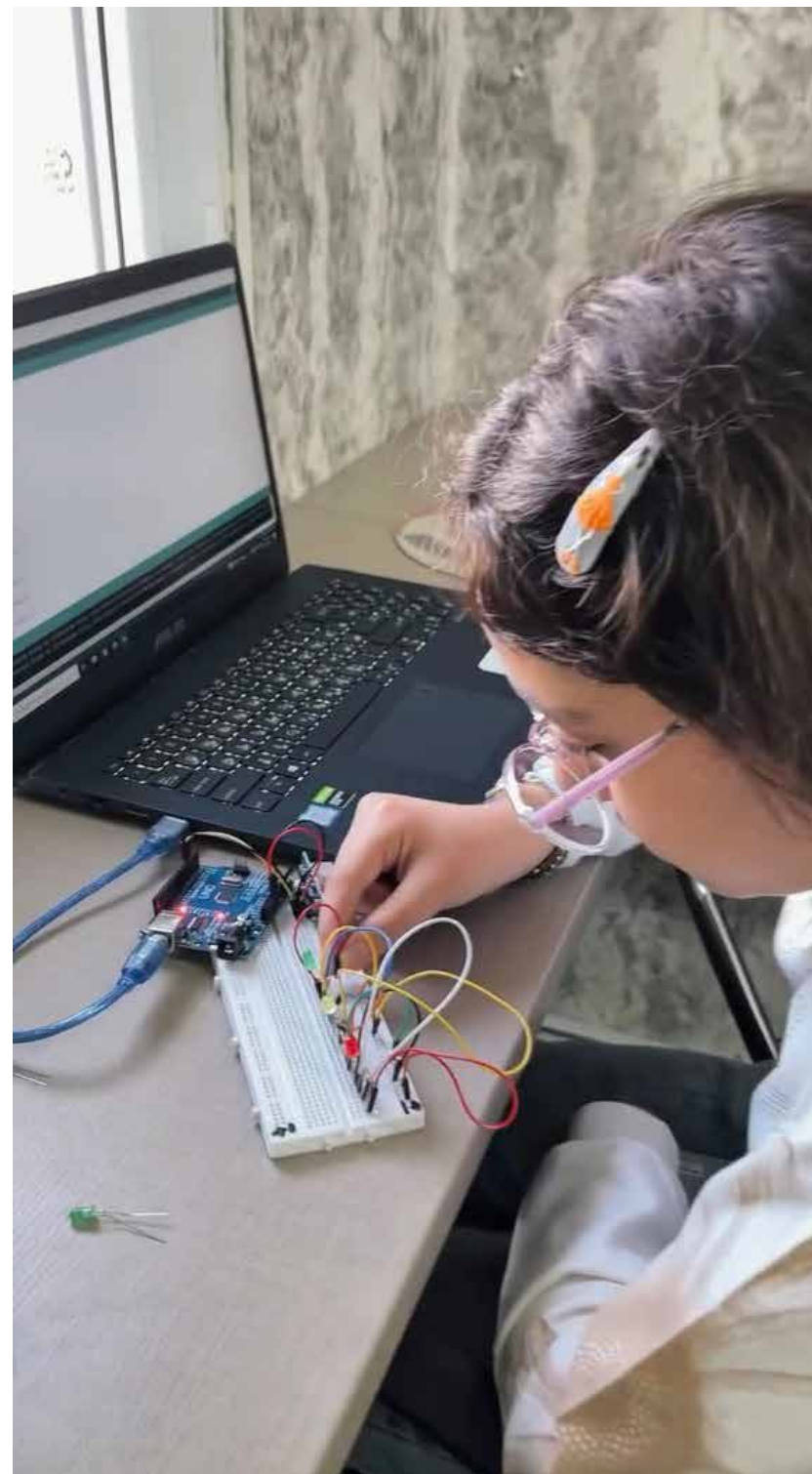
The nine-member Iranian student robotics team, made up of the country's brightest talents under 17, managed to pull off an impressive victory at the Asian Robotics Championships in Thailand on November 2, 2025, leaving behind teams from China and South Korea to clinch the top spot in Asia.

Competing in leagues such as Line Tracing, Creativity, Sumo, Soccer Robot, Technical Report, and Engineering Design, the team faced off against their Asian peers and came away with two bronzes in Line Tracing and a total of one gold, four silvers, and one bronze in the Creativity league — enough to secure the overall Asian title.

The Iranian team had previously taken home the Asian trophy at the 2023 Malaysia contest. It had also landed the second spot at the 2024 World Robotics Championships in China in August last year.



Iran's under-17 student robotics team salutes for a group photo, after clinching the top spot at the Asian Robotics Championships in Thailand on November 2, 2025.



The screengrab shows a member of Iran's under-17 student robotics team working on her robot during a training camp before the Asian Robotics Championships in Thailand.

## Next goal 2026 world title in Beijing: Team head

Nader Nobakht



Nader Nobakht, supervisor of the Iranian student robotics team, told Iran Daily in an exclusive interview that their under-17 squad of nine elite students took part in the Asian Robotics Championships in Thailand for the third time from October 31 to November 2. Facing teams from South Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand, India, and other Asian powerhouses, the Iranian side came out on top with a commanding performance.

"This was our best team result so far in international contests," he said, "since we pulled ahead of other rivals by a wide margin."

Explaining the team's preparation, Nobakht noted that besides years of hands-on experience in robotics, the students had spent nearly two months in intensive training camps. The team included four gifted girls and five gifted boys under 17, divided into "Junior" and "Senior" sections for those below and above 12 years of age.

Calling the competition level "exceptionally high," Nobakht said all teams were well-prepared and eager to win. "We had especially close races with China and South Korea," he added. "Thailand also put up a strong fight, particularly in the Sumo League, making things tough for our team."

He pointed out that Iran's team won its first-ever medal in the Line Tracing League, calling it a milestone achievement. "That league is one of the most prestigious in the global championship circuit, and winning there really counts. The team stepped onto the podium twice in that category, taking two bronzes."

"In the Creativity League," Nobakht

continued, "every single member of our nine-person team made it to the podium, which is simply unprecedented."

He reminded us that Asian teams are on par with world-class ones. "As you know, we recently finished as world runners-up in China, coming just behind the host nation. But here in Asia, we managed to edge out the Chinese. Naturally, they were in better shape back home, but even so, China remains a major name in global robotics. This time, they had to settle for second place, with Iran on top."

Nobakht said one main aim of competing in Asia was to gear up for the 2026 World Championships in Beijing, helping students get a feel for the international stage. "Our next goal," he stressed, "is to climb onto the world's top podium in 2026 and bring even more glory to our country."

He added that in recent years, the team had received solid institutional support that greatly smoothed out their logistics. However, the technological know-how in robotics is still growing in Iran. "We're still catching up with leading nations," he said, though many students who took part in the 2019 World Championships in Malaysia are now studying electrical and computer engineering at major universities like Tehran, Amirkabir, and Science and Research. Nobakht believes this rising generation will bridge the gap in Iran's robotics expertise.

He admitted that technical and supply limitations, especially import restrictions, still pose hurdles for the team. "But our students always rise to the occasion through determination and hard work," he said. "Despite every obstacle, they came through and brought home the title. Our entire focus now is to go all the way at the next World Championships. That's what we're after, and we're confident we'll get there soon."



In recent years, the team had received solid institutional support that greatly smoothed out their logistics. However, the technological know-how in robotics is still growing in Iran. We're still catching up with leading nations, though many students who took part in the 2019 World Championships in Malaysia are now studying electrical and computer engineering at major universities like Tehran, Amirkabir, and Science and Research. This rising generation will bridge the gap in Iran's robotics expertise.





The screenshot shows a member of Iran's under-17 student robotics team working on her robot during a training camp before the Asian Robotics Championships in Thailand. ● SOCIAL MEDIA

Parts shortage remains key hurdle: *Team coach*

Ahmad Samiei



Ahmad Samiei, head coach of the Iranian student robotics team, told Iran Daily about the selection process: "These students were picked from those who had previously taken part in national and international contests and also attended specialized robotics training programs. After interviews, the top students and ideas were singled out for the Thailand competition." He added: "Over two months of intensive camp, the team focused on practicing and reviewing tactics for various

leagues, zeroing in on building their projects and robots to show up at the competition fully prepared and bring home the best possible results." Samiei said the team competed in several leagues, including Line Tracing, Intelligent Warrior Robot (Sumo), Creativity, and Technical Report, and ended up with strong results. "In the Creativity (Creative Project) League, our students bagged first, second, and third in different age groups — meaning they cleaned up all three medal colors. Furthermore, in the Line Tracing League, our students took home two bronze medals." "Our team has picked up valu-

able experience in this and previous competitions. Fortunately, our members always strive to keep up with the latest global standards, and I can confidently say that, in terms of scientific ability and technical understanding, our team measures up to any other team of the same age group from other countries." Samiei claimed that the only real issue they face is sourcing the parts needed to build our students' projects and robots. Due to existing restrictions, access to a wide range of components in Iran is extremely limited. "This holds back our students, making it hard for them to carry out their ideal designs. Still,

we do our best to work around this by establishing connections with other countries and finding ways to get the necessary parts. Even so, this shortage and lack of variety remain a major obstacle for us." To make up for these shortages, he continued, they always put the spotlight on creativity and innovation in their students' robot and project designs, adding that "our efforts have paid off" so far. "We're still pushing ahead by getting our students involved in a variety of international competitions, building up their experience so they can bring home even more impressive results in the future," he concluded.



Iran's under-17 student robotics team poses for a group photo at the country's embassy in Thailand after pulling off an impressive victory at the Asian Robotics Championships in the Southeast Asian country on November 2, 2025. ● SOCIAL MEDIA

Our rivals in Thailand stronger than before: *U-17 team coach*

Parisa Afshar



Parisa Afshar, coach of Iran's under-17 student robotics team, told Iran Daily that this year's competition, with teams from South Korea, China, the

Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand, was held at a very high level. "We had previously faced off against some of these teams at the World Championships in China, and this time we ran into them again," she said, adding that in her view, these teams showed up better prepared and stronger than before. "Our boys and girls performed

well in both Junior and Senior age groups, and pulled off some excellent results," she stated. On the selection process, she explained: "For this competition, students first took part in national contests, and the top performers were invited to join the team. After interviews, some were picked for the Asian competition. Among them, sev-

eral had previously competed in the World Championships in China and earned medals there." She pointed out that before heading to the competition, the team members put in continuous, intensive training to show up fully ready, and in the end, they managed to bag some outstanding results.



Two members of the "Senior" section of Iran's under-17 student robotics team pick up line tracing robots. ● SOCIAL MEDIA

Our lead in Thailand bigger than before: *Team media manager*

Reza Gholami, media manager of Iran's student robotics team, told Iran Daily that at the 2023 Asian Championships in Malaysia, our team took home the title with one gold, one silver, and one bronze. But compared to our previous Asian win and even our runner-up finish at the World Championships in Beijing, our performance this year was better "since we ended up with a bigger points lead over our rivals." He noted that each year, the

selection competition for Iran's robotics team is held at Tehran University. The top finishers go on to the World Championships, with the most prestigious being the China event, organized by Beijing Institute of Technology — one of the world's leading robotics universities. The next tier usually moves on to the Asian Championships. He noted that for the Thailand competition, the best students were called up to

a selection camp, where Iran's previous team members from Asian contests, as well as those who had made it through internal selection, showed up and presented their ideas and designs. Ultimately, the top students and projects were picked out and sent to the World Championships. "For Thailand, 48 students were invited to the selection camp, and from them, nine were narrowed down and chosen," he added.



The screenshot shows Iran's under-17 student robotics team preparing for line tracing competitions. ● SOCIAL MEDIA



## Persian Gulf Pro League:

# Osmar vows further improvement after winning start on Persepolis return

Persepolis head coach Osmar Loss Viera reacts on the touchline during his team's 3-0 victory over Esteghlal Khuzestan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at Shahr-e Qods Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on November 7, 2025.  
● [jc-perspolis.com](#)



### Sports Desk

Persepolis head coach Osmar Loss Viera said his team still has room for improvement after the Brazilian made a fitting start to his second stint in charge of the Persian Gulf Pro

League heavyweight. A comfortable 3-0 home victory over Esteghlal Khuzestan marked the Tehran Reds' third win in 10 outings this Iranian top-flight season, lifting the club to third place in the table on 15 points – two behind sur-

prise leader Chadormalou. Soroush Rafeie's volley from Thievy Bifouma's cross went in off visiting goalkeeper Mohammad-Javad Kia's hands to put the home side ahead 16 minutes into the game at Shahr-e Qods Stadium.

The Reds dominated the game but had to wait until the 78th minute to double their lead, as Hossein Kan'ani converted from the spot after Rafeie was brought down in the box by Abolfazl Kouhi. Summer signing Amin Kazemi-

his account for Persepolis in the second minute of added time, slotting the ball past Kia in a one-on-one situation.

"We put in a solid performance and got a decent result," said Osmar, who took over from Vahid Hashemian on the bench last week, having led the Reds to their seventh league title in eight seasons after taking the job midway through the 2023/2024 campaign.

"I think we controlled the game for the most part, though we were not aggressive enough in the first half and a bit hesitant in the opposition's box.

"We came out with a more attacking approach in the second half and didn't give them many chances, which in the end paid off with a great result," added the 50-year-old after the Capital Reds recorded their most emphatic win of the campaign.

Responding to his players' lack of precision in front of goal, Osmar said: "That question reminds me of my previous spell here, and I give you the same answer I did back then. Having possession is meaningless if your team doesn't score. The important thing right now is that my team is fighting, and we are consistently creating chances and getting into the opposition's box."

"All players improve together at Persepolis and at every stage, our team has the potential to get better. We made some mistakes

today, but I have faith that the problems will be fixed," Osmar added.

When asked about the revitalized performance of some players compared to their time under the previous manager, Osmar said: "The process of building trust between a player and a coach happens through our daily work on the training ground. I'm not going to comment on the previous nine games or how the team was performing then. Just like in my last spell here, I know what Persepolis is capable of. I am only looking forward to the future.

"Unleashing the players' full potential, which is fueled by the trust between them and the coach, strengthens the entire team's structure. In my opinion, this trust is built day by day, brick by brick, as we work together.

"Even though we were missing one or two players today, the entire squad worked hard and performed well. Soroush had an excellent game; Hossein Kan'ani and [Hossein] Abarquaei were solid in the center of defense. Even [Mohammad] Omri had a good game despite playing out of position, while [Ali] Alipour delivered a strong technical and tactical performance."

"When a team is fundamentally good and the entire unit plays well, it restores the players' confidence back to the individual." Persepolis will be back in action after the upcoming international break, visiting Tabriz to face Tractor in a highly-anticipated Hazfi Cup fixture on November 21.

## Islamic Solidarity Games:

# Full-strength Iran aiming to dominate wrestling in Riyadh

### Sports Desk

Iran will be looking to take the wrestling events by storm at the Islamic Solidarity Games after naming full-strength squads for the freestyle and Greco-Roman competitions in Riyadh. The Games officially kick off with the opening ceremony on Friday night, but Iranian fans will have to wait until November 18 to see their world and Olympic champions in action at the multi-sport event. Reigning Olympic champions Saeid Esmaili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) will spearhead the Iranian Greco-Roman squad, having also claimed the ultimate prize in their respective weight classes at September's World Championships in Zagreb. Gholamreza Farrokhi will be the wrestler to beat in the 87kg division, as the young Iranian will be eager to add ISG glory to the back-to-back gold medals he won in Zagreb and at the U23 Worlds in late October. Ali Ahmadi Vafa – a world ju-

nior and under-23 gold medalist last year – will vie for gold in the 60kg category, with the 20-year-old looking to make up for a first-round setback in his senior breakthrough in Zagreb. Former world U23 bronze medalist Amir Abdi will represent the country in the 77kg event, determined to seize this international opportunity after a prolonged period down the national team's pecking order. Fardin Hedayati, meanwhile, will be the superheavyweight wrestler to watch in Greco-Roman, heading to Riyadh fresh off an emphatic 130kg gold at last month's U23 World Championships – the Iranian's third age-group triumph in as many years. In freestyle, all eyes will be on the 97kg event as wrestling fans may be treated to another chapter in the rivalry between Iran's Amirali Azarpira and Bahrain's Akhmed Tazhudinov. A potential showdown in the Saudi capital would mark the third meeting between the two since last year's Paris Olympics.

Russian-born Tazhudinov – the 2023 world champion – rallied from behind to edge Azarpira 4-3 in the first round before going all the way to grab the gold in Paris, while the Iranian bounced back to secure a consolation bronze. Two-time world U23 champion Azarpira, however, avenged his Paris setback in Zagreb, defeating Tazhudinov 5-2 in the semi-finals, though he ultimately had to settle for world silver after a 4-2 loss to American Kyle Snyder. Joining Azarpira in the squad are Olympic silver medalists Rahman Amouzad (65kg) and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg), both of whom captured world golds in Zagreb. Two-time world champion Kamran Qassempour will headline the 86kg event, while Younes Emami – winner of two world bronzes – and Ali Mo'meni – a bronze winner in last year's U23 Worlds – will be among the favorites in the 57kg and 74kg divisions, respectively.



Reigning world champion Rahman Amouzad (blue) is pictured in a training session in Tehran, Iran, on October 30, 2025.  
● [IAWF](#)

## Italian Gagliardi joins Iran's coaching staff

### Sports Desk

Italian coach Antonio Gagliardi has joined the coaching staff of the Iranian national team, the country's Football Federation announced on Saturday. Gagliardi, 42, served as a chief analyst at the Italian national team across different spells under several former head coaches, including Cesare Prandelli, Antonio Conte, and Roberto Mancini, and was part of the coaching staff when the latter led the Azzurri to glory at the Euro 2020. The Italian also worked as a technical coach with Andrea Pirlo during his reign at Juventus in the 2021/22 season – the same role he held when Mancini was in charge of Saudi Arabia during below-par campaigns at the 2023 AFC Asian Cup and the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

Gagliardi's most recent role was as assistant manager to Romanian Cristian Chivu at Parma in Serie A last season. The Italian will join Iran head coach Amir Qalenei ahead of the upcoming international break, when Team Melli will take part in a four-team friendly tournament in Al Ain, UAE – also featuring Uzbekistan, Egypt, and Cape Verde. Iran will face Cape Verde on Thursday, with the winner taking on Egypt or Uzbekistan the following Tuesday. The tournament will be part of Iran's preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup – starting June 11 in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Iran secured a seventh appearance at the finals – fourth in a row – thanks to a top-spot finish in Group A of the Asian qualifiers last June.



Antonio Gagliardi poses with the European Championship trophy after serving as a chief analyst at the Italian national team during their title-winning campaign in Euro 2020.  
● [UEFA](#)

Cape Verde, meanwhile, capped off a fairytale run in the African qualifiers by defeating Es-

watini 3-0 in October to clinch its maiden World Cup berth, becoming the second smallest country in the tournament's history.

## Asia Oceania Wheelchair Basketball Championships:

# Iran routs China 89-30 in opener

### Sports Desk

Iranian men's wheelchair basketball team got off to a flying start at the IWBF Asia Oceania Championships, demolishing China 89-30 Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday. Mahdi Abbasi contributed with a game-high 24 points, plus five rebounds, for Iran during 20:43 minutes on the court. Iranian captain Morteza Abedi and Amirreza Ahmadi chipped in 15 and 14 points, respec-

tively, while Tang Mengfan and Nian Qiacheng topped the scoring chart for China with 12 points apiece. The two sides are joined by Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and defending champion Australia – which defeated Iran in last year's final – in the men's Division A event, which will be held in a round-robin format. All six teams will be joined by the two highest-ranked Division B teams in the quarterfinal. Afghanistan, Chinese Taipei, In-

dia, Iraq, Kuwait, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia complete the lineup in the second-tier division. Chasing a first men's title in 20 years, Iran will face Japan today, before playing on Australia, South Korea, and Thailand, respectively, until Wednesday. The tournament serves as a qualifier for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games, with both finalists also securing spots at next year's World Championship in Ottawa, Canada.



# Weaving identity into every Baluchi carpet

Iranica Desk

Baluchi carpet weaving is an art born from the depths of history and culture in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province. With its geometric patterns and warm, natural colors, this craft stands as a living symbol of the ethnic identity and artistic spirit of the Baluch people. Renowned for both its durability and beauty, the Baluchi carpet holds a special place among enthusiasts and collectors of traditional Persian rugs.

As one of the most distinctive examples of Iranian handwoven art, the Baluchi carpet is known for its precision and finesse in small to medium knots and weaves, resulting in exceptional strength and longevity. Typically woven from the wool of sheep and goats — and occasionally camel hair — these carpets reflect the daily life, nature, and beliefs of the Baluch people through their intricate motifs and designs, according to IRNA.

Owing to the use of natural dyes, Baluchi carpets are easy to maintain, and their durability ensures that their beauty and authenticity remain intact for generations.

The defining feature of Baluchi carpets lies in their diversity of patterns and colors. From warm reds to deep earthy tones, every shade carries its own meaning and identity. The geometric and symmetrical designs — ranging from hexagons and lozenges to human, floral, and animal motifs — reflect the creativity of Baluchi weavers and their deep connection to the vast, arid landscape of Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

With industrialization and rising costs of raw materials, the traditional handweaving of Baluchi carpets has faced significant challenges. Nevertheless, education in the arts, specialized exhibitions, and renewed attention to indigenous cultural heritage can play a vital role in reviving this ancient craft. Moreover, incorporating Baluchi geometric motifs into modern design — from fashion and textiles to packaging — offers a creative path to introduce this art to new generations.

Each motif and color in a Baluchi carpet tells a story — one of creativity, life, and local tradition. Preserving and promoting this art form not only supports the economy but also honors Iran's rich cultural heritage. Hojjat Noorzai, visual arts expert and carpet designer, discussed with IRNA the significance of Baluchi carpets, their unique characteristics, and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for this valuable artistic and cultural heritage of Sistan and Baluchestan.



● IRNA



● tarotamizshoo.com

**IRNA: What is the status of Baluchi carpets among Iranian rugs, and what are their most distinctive features?**

**NOORZAI:** The uniqueness of the Baluchi carpet lies in the precision and delicacy of its weave. These carpets are mostly produced in small to medium sizes, with knots tied in a special and firm manner that gives them remarkable durability and longevity. One of the most prominent characteristics of Baluchi carpets is the diversity of their designs and motifs, each representing an aspect of local life and the rich culture of the Baluch people.

**In terms of color and design, which elements stand out most in Baluchi carpets?**

The classic red and dark brown hues, along with tribal motifs, are among the most distinctive features of Baluchi carpets. This combination of color and pattern gives the Baluchi rug a unique warmth and authenticity that enriches any space. When placed in a living room, it creates a cozy and intimate atmosphere, and even at a home's entrance, it can serve as a striking focal point. Baluchi carpets are primarily woven by people living in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which is why they beautifully blend the artistic influences of three distinct cultures. These carpets are often made in smaller sizes with bold geometric designs and deep color palettes. The fibers are typically soft sheep's wool, sometimes mixed with natural silk to enhance smoothness and add a subtle sheen.



● chishir.ir

**What colors are typically found in the palette of Baluchi carpets?**

Among the common colors are black, reddish-brown, dark brown with purplish tones, deep blue, brownish-purple, and pearly shades. One of the reasons these carpets attract the attention of collectors and experts is the use of black outlines and dark hues, which lend the carpets a poetic and distinctive charm.

**What materials are used in weaving Baluchi carpets?**

In traditional Baluchi weaving, sheep's wool and goat hair are the primary materials. However, in more modern examples, the warp threads are made of cotton, which provides greater strength and durability. Occasionally, Baluchi carpets are woven with camel hair, a material especially favored for making prayer rugs. These weaves typically feature dark or light brown shades, and contrary to common belief, camel wool or hair is not dyed. In fact, many of these hues come directly from the animals' natural colors. The use of such organic fibers enhances the carpet's resistance to washing and cleaning agents, ensuring both

longevity and authenticity.

**What role does dyeing play in Baluchi carpets?**

In the past, the dyeing of yarns was entirely natural, derived from local plants native to the region. This traditional process gave Baluchi carpets colors that endured for many years without losing their authenticity. Handwoven Baluchi rugs do not bleed color, although prolonged exposure to direct sunlight may slightly fade them. With industrialization and the introduction of synthetic dyes, these traditional dyeing methods have gradually declined. However, Baluchi designers have always aimed to use naturally colored wool to maintain the quality of the carpet and reduce the risk of color damage.

**From a cultural perspective, what features are reflected in these carpets?**

The first Baluchi carpets were woven by Baluch nomads, and the culture, traditions, and beliefs of this community are evident in every thread and knot. Even today, weavers in Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan contribute to the cultural richness of this art by incorporating the colors and motifs specific to their own regions.



● IRNA

guage of the Baluch culture. **Can these designs be incorporated into contemporary art?**

The geometric and symmetrical patterns of Baluchi carpets have great potential for use in modern design. These motifs can be adapted into fashion, interior decoration, packaging, and even graphic design. Their visual appeal stems from the untouched desert landscape of Sistan and Baluchestan, which has long inspired local artists. By simplifying natural forms, Baluchi weavers created motifs that were easy to execute in weaving yet visually striking. Many of these designs draw inspiration from animals, plants, and the surrounding environment, all of which play an essential role in the daily life of the region's people.

**What challenges does this traditional art face today?**

With the industrialization of carpet production and the rising cost of raw materials such as high-quality yarn, artisans and weavers in Sistan and Baluchestan Province are facing increasing difficulties, and there is a real risk that this ancient craft could be forgotten. To revive and preserve this cultural heritage, it is essential to promote training programs, organize exhibitions, and introduce this art more widely to younger generations. Emphasizing the ethnic and local values embedded in Baluchi weaving can provide strong motivation for preserving and developing this authentic art form. Protecting the cultural heritage of Sistan and Baluchestan Province — not only through carpets but across all artistic fields — is vital for sustaining the cultural identity of Iran.

## Discover authentic taste of Chegdermeh in Golestan

Iranica Desk

Chekdirmeh, also known as Chegdermeh, is one of the most delicious and popular dishes among the Turkmen people. It is widely prepared in the cities of Golestan Province, such as Gorgan, Bandar Torkaman, Aqqala, and Gonbad-e Kavus. The main ingredients of this dish are lamb meat and rice, cooked together with tomatoes, onions, tomato paste, spices, and oil. The type of meat may vary, and different versions of Chegdermeh can be found depending on the chosen

meat. Some people use white meat such as chicken or fish, while others use camel meat. It is also common to replace lamb with veal. However, none of these variations can equal the authentic version made with lamb meat in terms of flavor. Some prepare Chegdermeh with poultry or fish, called "Shekam Por," which is also very delicious and well-liked, visitiran.ir wrote. Chegdermeh is the most famous traditional and local dish among the Turkmen people and tribes. This dish also holds a long history

in Iran. Besides being prepared as an everyday meal at home, Turkmen people often cook and distribute Chegdermeh during ceremonies and gatherings. It is regarded as the most iconic traditional dish of Golestan Province. Therefore, if you attend a wedding, Muharram event, religious gathering, or mourning ceremony in this region, you will likely encounter the authentic preparation of this dish firsthand. One of the places where Chegdermeh is distributed as a votive offering is the Khalid Nabi Cemetery, a notable

attraction in Golestan Province. Interestingly, Turkmen people cook the authentic Chegdermeh in a special pot. Chegdermeh is a rich and high-calorie dish and can be harmful to those who are overweight or have high cholesterol levels. Typically, it is served with local yogurt, pickles, and herbs, accompanied by yogurt drink (Doogh). If you travel to any city in Golestan Province, you will easily find excellent restaurants where you can enjoy the taste of this famous local dish.



● iranwonders.com





# Iran stays course on climate goals despite sanctions, cuts 10b m<sup>3</sup> emissions

## Social Desk

Iran's Vice-President and head of the Department of Environment (DoE) Shina Ansari, told the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, on November 8, that Tehran has cut over 10 billion m<sup>3</sup> of greenhouse-gas emissions despite what she called "crippling unilateral sanctions" that have restricted the country's access to finance, investment and technology. Ansari said Iran's commitment to its climate obligations remains intact even under sanctions pressure, IRNA reported. "We remain faithful to our climate pledges," she declared, urging collective and equitable action to tackle what she described as the "existential challenge" of global warming. She added that the international community must "act fairly and realistically" to ensure that developing nations can pursue sustainable development without being held back by restrictions.

Iran's environment chief detailed a series of domestic clean-energy gains, saying the country's solar-energy capacity expanded by 75% last year, while wind-power generation grew and its peaceful nuclear-energy program was strengthened. Through stricter management of gas flaring at oil and gas fields, she said, Iran has already achieved a reduction of over 10 billion m<sup>3</sup> of greenhouse gases and is on track to cut a further 12 billion m<sup>3</sup> within four years. Pointing to the climate strains facing Iran, Ansari cited decades of chronic drought, a 1.8 °C rise in average temperature, and a 50 mm fall in annual rainfall over the past fifty years. "Despite these harsh realities, we continue on a path of sustainability," she said. Ansari also condemned what she described as the environmental fallout of recent US and Israeli military actions, saying the attacks not only violated international law but also inflicted



Head of Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) Shina Ansari speaks during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, on November 8, 2025.

● IRNA

ed severe ecological damage, including the emission of over 50,000 tons of greenhouse gases in Tehran. She warned that assaults on peaceful nuclear facilities "could have caused one of the world's greatest environmental catastrophes." Highlighting the devastation in Gaza, she accused Israel of committing "environmental and humanitarian crimes" by destroying civilian infrastructure and vital resources, saying the consequences will "haunt the region for decades." The Iranian delegation, she said, views COP30 as a strategic platform for cooperation on technology transfer, capacity-building and fair access to global climate-finance mechanisms. "We



are heirs to one Earth and one destiny," Ansari told delegates,

adding that Iran stands ready to share its local expertise and ex-

perience with other nations to meet shared climate goals.

## Iran inspires peace, solidarity, Pezeshkian says on UNESCO recognition of Cyrus Cylinder



## Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that the approval of the Cyrus Cylinder by UNESCO was "a symbol of our civilization" and re-

affirmed Iran's enduring presence in humanity's moral conscience. In his message, Pezeshkian said that the inscription of the 6th-century BC clay archive as a foundational human-rights document by UNESCO through its 43rd General Conference "underscores that today's Islamic Iran can still be a source of peace and solidarity for the region and the world." Meanwhile, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri described the recognition as "a reaffirmation of the place of Iranian civilization in the founding of universal concepts of justice, human dignity and cultural dialogue".

He said the document goes beyond time and place, acting as "a bridge between past and future, between peoples and the global conscience." Deputy Minister and senior cultural-official Ali Darabi added that the cylinder is "not merely a relic but a timeless covenant among humans" in which the Persian legacy of freedom, religious diversity and community welfare "was written on clay far ahead of its era." The UNESCO decision, adopted by consensus in Samarkand on November 6, recognized the Cyrus Cylinder as "a foundational document in the history of human civilization" and tasked UNESCO with integrating its teachings into education and

rights program. The initiative was led by Iran, supported by Tajikistan and Iraq, and backed by more than a dozen member states including Egypt, India and Nigeria. Iranian officials emphasize that the move demonstrates that the birthplace of ancient Persia still holds moral authority in contemporary global culture and presents the country's heritage as a vibrant asset, not merely an archaeological curiosity. The culture ministry also thanked scientific, diplomatic and academic institutions for their roles in the effort and highlighted the trilateral cultural synergy with Tajikistan and Iraq as a tangible sign of civilizational partnership.

## 'Kneel Before the Iranians' statue unveiled in Tehran after war with Israel

## Arts & Culture Desk

Thousands of Tehran residents packed Enqelab Square on Friday evening to watch the unveiling of a seven-meter-high statue called 'Kneel Before the Iranians,' a striking fiberglass sculpture depicting the Roman emperor Valerian bowing before the Sasanian king Shapur I, a symbol of defiance and national pride after Iran's recent 12-day war with Israel.

The statue, unveiled by Tehran mayoral officials, city artists and families, portrays Shapur I mounted on horseback towering above Valerian in submission, a re-creation of the ancient rock relief at Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran, IRNA reported.

The third-century carving marks one of Persia's greatest victories, when Shapur captured the Roman emperor and thousands of his troops after the Battle of Edessa in 260 CE. Tehran's deputy mayor for urban services, Davoud Goodarzi, said the idea for the monument took shape soon after the Israeli military campaign in June. "Today, we're adding a new symbol to the city's landmarks," he told reporters at the scene. "Anyone who has ever sought to violate Iran or its people has ultimately been forced to kneel before Iran."

The head of Tehran Beautification Organization, Mehdi Mazhabi, described the work as an "artistic expression" of the Iranian nation's endurance and unity.



Unveiling ceremony of the 'Kneel Before Iran' statue in Tehran's Enqelab Square on November 7, 2025.

● AVASH NEWS

Families waved flags as martial music played and banners showed both ancient Persian warriors and modern Iranian soldiers sharing a single spear. Five pop singers performed at the open-air ceremony, turning the square into what local media called a "festival of solidarity."

Goodarzi said the statue would remain in Enqelab Square for about 20 days before being transferred to Tehran's iconic Azadi Square, one of the main gateways to the capital visible to foreign visitors and diplomats. Cultural historian Ali Akbar Mesgar of Mazandaran University said the artwork's meaning stretched beyond a historical episode. "This relief isn't only about victory," he said. "It's a reminder that internal unity has always been Iran's strongest defense against foreign pressure."

## 'Oliver Twist' musical draws nearly 80,000 spectators in Tehran

## Arts & Culture Desk

The musical production 'Oliver Twist', directed by Hossein Parsaei and staged in Tehran, has drawn nearly 80,000 spectators since opening, the producers said.

The show, based on the 1838 novel by Charles Dickens and adapted into musical form in 1960, currently entertains approximately 6,000 patrons daily, the organizers added. It has been extended to three additional nights on November 12, 13 and 14, following strong demand. In the spotlight, actor Hootan Shakiba plays the role of Fagin and receives standing ovations for his spontaneous interactions with the audience while reminding them that photography is prohibited. Clips of his improvisations have sparked a viral wave on social media. The cast comprises more than



150 performers and technical crew members, including Shakiba alongside Behnoush Tabatabaei and Banipal Shamoon. With musical direction by the original composer Lionel Bart and dramaturgy by Mohammad Reza Koohestani, the updated production remains faithful to the earlier 2017 staging while incorporating new songs and stage design to reflect modern social-inequality

themes. The producers emphasize that the staging at the large-scale venue is among the biggest musical theater events in Iran this autumn. Audience enthusiasm has been further amplified by the backstage appearance of acclaimed singer Alireza Ghorbani, whose visit has been widely shared and commented on in online forums.