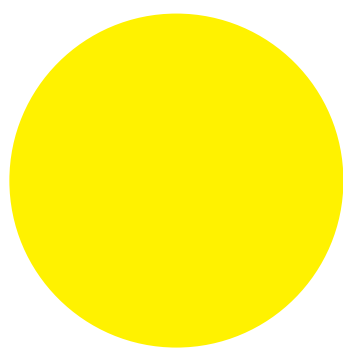




Fadji theater festival launches 'My Iran' patriotic competition with 21 productions

8 >



# Iran Daily

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> [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir)

| [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

| [IranDailyWeb](http://IranDailyWeb)

## Regional efforts underway to ease Tehran-Washington tensions

2 >

### Pezeshkian calls recent violent events in Iran part of 'failed' US-Israeli war

2 >

President prioritizes livelihood concerns, highlights performance-based pay

3 >



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a national conference on planning and budget in Tehran on January 20, 2026. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

### Politics outweigh law in WEF's disinvitation of Iran from Davos

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE



Abed Akbari

The World Economic Forum (WEF) canceled the invitation extended to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to attend the annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday, citing what it described as the killing of protestors in Iran. Araghchi has denounced the move as being driven by political pressure from Israel and its agents and supporters in the United States, accusing the forum of putting on a facade of ethicality. The WEF's move comes as Iranian officials maintain that the presence of foreign-linked forces and terrorist groups was the catalyst for violence during civilian protests, forcing the government to step up and defend its people. Araghchi, referencing the killings of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip by Israel, called out the forum for its double standard. Iran Daily spoke with Abed Akbari, an international affairs analyst, to discuss the dimensions and ramifications of such actions. He believes the measure is more a product of politicization than being grounded in legal principles and represents another sign of the decline of institutions born from the liberal order.

**IRAN DAILY:** To what extent does the disinvitation of Iran's foreign minister, on the pretext of what has been termed the killing of protestors in Iran, have a legal basis? Has the forum previously taken such action?

**AKBARI:** The World Economic Forum, bowing to political pressure from Israel and the United States, blocked the Iranian foreign minister's participation in the Davos summit. It was an unconventional move, with the politicization of the action far outweighing any potential legal considerations. While Iran was accused of a mass killing for defending its people against armed terrorists and massacres in the style of ISIS, openly supported by Israel and America, we've witnessed numerous instances over the years where even perpetrators of widespread genocide, those accused of mass killings of defenseless people in international courts, have been invited to participate in WEF events.

Page 8 >



### Global implications of US military operation in Venezuela

4 >



### Asian Men's Handball Championship: Iran misses out on main round after last-gasp heartbreak against Japan

6 >



### Saryazd Castle depicts stunning coexistence of humans with desert

7 >





# Regional efforts underway to ease Tehran-Washington tensions

## International Desk

Regional countries including Iraq and Qatar are pushing to mediate between Iran and the United States, aiming to ease rising tensions between Tehran and Washington, especially after recent protests and riots in Iran.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said on Tuesday that Baghdad was working to arrange a meeting between Iran and the US.

In a meeting with the ambassadors of EU countries, Sudani said Baghdad was "in contact with ... Iran and the US administration in order to establish a dialogue platform in Baghdad." However, he provided no details.

The efforts come as tensions between Iran and the United States have heightened in recent weeks following Washington's threat of military aggression against Iran on the pretext of supporting Iranian demonstrators who took to the streets over the past weeks to protest the country's economic situation

which later turned bloody.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, who visited Tehran on Sunday, also discussed Baghdad's diplomatic initiatives with Iranian officials "to prevent the region from sliding into a new conflict," an Iraqi government official told The National on the same day.

The unnamed official added that Baghdad "seeks to bring viewpoints closer through hosting direct negotiations between the US and Iran," according to The National news website.

On his two-day visit to Tehran, the Iraqi foreign minister met his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari also said on Tuesday that Doha supports a diplomatic solution to the tensions between Tehran and Washington and is continuously consulting at the interna-

tional level to prevent an escalation of tensions between the two sides.

Ansari warned that any escalation in the region will have widespread consequences and affect all countries in the region.

Peaceful protests over economic woes erupted across Iran on December 28 but turned violent after the US President Donald Trump and other American officials said that Washington would resort to military action against Iran in the event of what they called Tehran's "suppression" of the protesters.

In response, Iranian officials warned the United States against any adventurism.

During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces. Hundreds of people have been arrested for their involvement in the riots.

On Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (c) welcomes his visiting Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein (l) in Foreign Ministry's building in Tehran, Iran, on January 18, 2026.  
IRNA

said Iran considers the US president the main culprit for the killings and destruction carried out by foreign-linked elements in recent riots.

"The US president is responsible for casualties, damage, and false accusations directed against the Iranian nation," the Leader said, calling Trump a criminal.

## Pezeshkian calls recent violent events in Iran part of 'failed' US-Israeli war



Shahbaz Sharif

Masoud Pezeshkian

President Masoud Pezeshkian referred to the recent violent events in Iran as "the continuation of the failed and unsuccessful" campaign by the United States and the Israeli regime in the 12-day war against the Islamic Republic.

On Monday, Pezeshkian noted the "historic presence" of millions of Iranians who rallied to condemn the unrest, describing the unity of the Iranian people as a significant setback for adversaries of the nation. He emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue its path with renewed vigor, striving

to enhance cooperation with neighboring and Islamic countries.

These remarks were made during a phone conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, where they discussed ongoing regional developments and the recent foreign-backed riots in Iran.

Praising Pakistan's commitment to fostering peace in the region, Pezeshkian expressed confidence in the collective strength of Muslim nations to counter threats to regional security. He acknowledged Pakistan's steadfast sup-

port for Iran's legitimate positions.

The Iranian president explained that "since the beginning of accepting responsibility, all our efforts have been to create convergence, empathy, and unity among all groups, parties, ethnic groups, and religions within the country, and to strengthen cooperation, friendship, and brotherly ties, and to develop relations at the best level with neighboring and Islamic countries."

"In parallel with these efforts, we have also witnessed malice, hostility, and intensified pressure from the United States and the Zionist regime to disrupt this path," he noted.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sharif reiterated Pakistan's solidarity with Iran, emphasizing its significance as a neighbor and a pivotal nation in the region.

"We have been closely monitoring the recent developments in Iran because the Islamic Re-

public of Iran is of great importance to us not only as a neighbor but also as an important and influential country in the region and the world," he stated.

Sharif expressed Pakistan's readiness to aid in reducing tensions and resolving conflicts, affirming that Iran, under the leadership of its prudent leaders, would triumph over its challenges with determination and pride.

Late last month, Iran witnessed street protests triggered by a sharp fall in the rial, the Iranian currency, and economic hardship in the capital, Tehran, and other cities.

The peaceful protests across Iran turned violent after US President Donald Trump and other American officials alleged that the United States would resort to fresh military aggression against Iran in the event of what they called Tehran's "suppression" of the foreign-backed terrorist riots.

## Araghchi: Davos invite revocation based on 'lies, political pressure'

### International Desk

Iran's foreign minister hit out at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos for cancelling his invitation over recent protests in Iran, saying the decision was based on "lies and political pressure."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was slated to speak on Tuesday at the annual gathering of global elites in Switzerland, but was disinvited after the WEF said it would not be "right" due to the "loss of lives of civilians in Iran over the past few weeks."

Araghchi said in an X post late Monday that his appearance was cancelled

"on the basis of lies and political pressure from Israel and its US-based proxies and apologists."

He called it a "blatant double standard" to disinvite him while inviting Israel after its war in Gaza, saying it "conveys moral depravity and intellectual bankruptcy."

Araghchi's post on X was



WEF

accompanied by a video saying the demonstrations were a "terror operation" spurred by Israel's Mossad spy agency.

Iran's Ambassador to Switzerland Mahmoud Narimani also reacted to WEF's move, saying that the decision "shows their fear of Iran's voice reaching international audiences."

He described the move as an "unjustified action" which runs contrary to the international custom and decency, and damages the credibility of the World Economic Forum.

Some shopkeepers last month staged peaceful protests in different Ira-

nian cities over economic grievances. The demonstrations, however, were steered toward violence after public statements by US and Israeli regime figures encouraged vandalism and disorder. During the unrest, foreign-backed armed rioters damaged public property and caused casualties among civilians and security forces.

Security and intelligence forces have captured more than 470 individuals in three provinces, identified as key figures behind the recent wave of violent unrest and terrorist activities linked to foreign-backed networks.

## Parliament approves bill recognizing right to assembly



ICANA

### National Desk

The Iranian Parliament on Tuesday passed a bill that recognized the right

of all individuals to hold and take part in gatherings and rallies days after recent protests over livelihood hardships caused a

serious security crisis for the country.

During an open session of the legislative chamber, lawmakers reviewed a report by the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs and Councils regarding a bill on regulating the staging gatherings and rallies, in implementation of Article 27 of the Constitution, IRNA reported.

After hearing the views of both supporters and opponents, the MPs voted in favor of Article 2 of the bill. The article was ratified with 223 votes in favor, three votes against, and

no abstentions.

According to the approved and amended text of Article 2, all individuals enjoy the right to organize and hold gatherings and marches, or to participate in them, within the framework of Article 27 of the Constitution and other relevant laws.

A note appended to the article specifies one of the key conditions for holding demonstrations, stating that applicants seeking to organize gatherings or marches must not have an effective criminal record relevant to the matter.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

CARTOON





# President prioritizes livelihood concerns, highlights performance-based pay



President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a national conference on "Planning, Budgeting, and Performance-Based Payment" in Tehran on January 20, 2026. [president.ir](#)

**Economy Desk**  
Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that resolving citizens' livelihood challenges is the top priority

of government and called for a gradual, consensus-driven rollout of a performance-based payment system across the public sector. "Solving people's living problems is at the forefront of the

government's decisions and actions," Pezeshkian told officials at a national conference on "Planning, Budgeting, and Performance-Based Payment." "You must work with us to im-

plement a properly structured, performance-based pay system through sound planning and principled budgeting," his website, [president.ir](#), reported. He acknowledged the reform

would not happen overnight. "I don't expect this to occur immediately — it's not feasible — but through training, dialogue, and cooperation, we can move toward this important goal," he added. Pezeshkian stressed that compensation must be rooted in fairness and merit. "Human dignity is equal for all, but salary and wage payments must be based on individual capability and performance," he said. "Organizational behavior and public service quality depend on fair wages and rewards." He described performance-based budgeting and pay as "one of the most fundamental reforms needed in Iran's administrative and managerial system," adding that "no logic accepts treating effort and output as identical across individuals." The president instructed agency heads and senior officials to develop structured frameworks to

ensure respectful, accountable interactions with the public. "To improve organizational conduct and optimize public service, the wage and bonus payment process must be just," he said. He also called on managers and employees to hold purpose-driven meetings and carry out targeted work. "In our accountability processes — whether in payment methods, performance evaluation, or goal-setting — we must be clear about what we aim to accomplish responsibly," he said. "A sense of irresponsibility gradually erodes both institutions and society." Citing religious teachings, he underscored the importance of compassionate and kind treatment of citizens. "Sincere and responsible service to all members of society is a key hallmark of the Islamic system," he said. "If we adopt this attitude toward one another, we can resolve all shortcomings and challenges in the country. It makes no difference to us what ethnicity, religion, belief, appearance, or background a petitioner has — our duty is to respond to the reason they approached us in the first place."

## South Pars Phase 11 output jumps over 100% with new well going online



**Economy Desk**  
Daily extraction of rich gas from Iran's South Pars Phase 11 has more than doubled to 24.3 million cubic meters (mcm) following the commissioning of its tenth well, the acting head of the Phase 11 development project said on Tuesday. Keyvan Tariqati said that with the addition of the new development well at the SPD11B platform, gas extraction from the border phase increased by over 2 mcm per day, ISNA reported. On August 21, 2024, daily output stood at 12 mcm, Tariqati added. He noted that intensified development efforts since President Masoud Pezeshkian took office in August, 2024 had gathered pace, particularly in drilling new wells. "The installation of the SPD11A platform jacket — the final offshore platform among the 24-phase South Pars development plan — was completed last week during in the Persian Gulf," Tariqati said. According to the official, the installation was key to paving the way for rig deployment and the drilling of new wells at Phase 11. "The installation of this offshore structure is one of the critical stages in the development plan. With the SPD11A jacket now in place in Ira-

nian waters adjacent to Qatar, the groundwork for new drilling activities is set," he added. To date, Phase 11 has pumped 13.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas, helping offset part of the country's gas shortage, Tariqati said. South Pars is the world's largest natural gas field which Iran shares it with Qatar where it is called North Dome. Phase 11 is the final stage of the 24-phase development plan, aimed at supplying gas for enhanced oil recovery, industrial and power plants, residential and commercial distribution, petrochemical feedstock, and exports of gas, condensates, LPG, and sulfur. Hamidreza Saqafi, CEO of Petropars Group, confirmed that close coordination with Pars Oil and Gas Co., precise planning, and joint oversight of equipment preparation enabled the safe installation of the jacket. "The SP11A jacket, standing nearly 77 meters tall and weighing over 4,000 tons including attachments, was set up in approximately 70 meters of water, about 6.5 kilometers from the SPD11B platform," Saqafi said. "We expect pile-driving operations for the jacket's foundation to be completed within about 45 days," he added.

## Non-oil exports surge 108% to \$1.7b in week-long period

**Economy Desk**  
Iran's non-oil exports jumped 108% in value to \$1.7 billion in the week ending January 17 compared with a week earlier, data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) showed. The volume of exported goods during the seven-day timespan reached 3.449 million metric tons, posting a 60% rise from the prior week, IRNA reported on Tuesday. Imports also climbed, with 1.157 million tons of goods valued at \$1.152 billion entering the country — up 36% by weight and 1% in value compared to the previous week. Transit traffic through Iran also saw a 37% increase, hitting 438,000 tons over the week-long duration. Of the total imports, 928,000 tons were essential goods, indicating a 38% growth. In a separate development, clearance of essential commodities hit a daily record on Tuesday, the IRICA said. "Thanks to the round-the-clock efforts of IRICA personnel, a total



of 182,528 tons of essential goods were definitively cleared from customs checkpoints in the last 24 hours," the agency said. "The cleared goods were transported out of customs zones via 8,030 trucks," it added. In recent weeks, the supply of essential goods has faced disruptions. The breakdown of cleared com-

modities included 75,787 tons of wheat, 54,893 tons of corn, 15,022 tons of barley, 16,700 tons of soybean meal, 2,630 tons of rice, 3,111 tons of crude oil, and 11,981 tons of oilseeds. Pulses, sugar, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and other essential supplies were also cleared during the same period.

### Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1404/27

**Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company**

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 140.000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:68 ave) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: [www.geg.ir](#). All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 03. Feb.2026 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 03.Feb.2026 at the office of the Seller.

**GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.**

Analysis %	
%Fe Ave	68.00
%FeO	Min 24    Max 28
%P Max	0.035
%S Ave	0.5
%SiO2 Max	2.2
%Al2O3 Max	0.6
%CaO Max	0.7
%MgO Max	2.2
%Moisture Max	7.0
Blaine(cm2/gr) Ave	1100
Size ave	80%<0.15 mm



# Global implications of US military operation in Venezuela

## ANALYSIS

*The potential ripple effects of the United States' military operation in Venezuela on January 3, 2026, extend well beyond either country. Brookings scholars assess the global implications of the events that took place in Caracas.*

### Who controls Venezuela's overseas oil assets?



By **Scott R. Anderson**  
General counsel  
and senior editor at  
Lawfare

The Trump administration's plan to "run" Venezuela through interim President Delcy Rodríguez is in deep tension with a signature policy of the first Trump administration. As a result, it has the potential to cause confusion regarding who controls the oil industry that the Trump administration wishes to reform. In 2019, the first Trump administration — along with various allies — stopped recognizing the Maduro regime as Venezuela's government. Instead, it recognized the government of Juan

Guaidó, who claimed to be interim president under Venezuela's constitution by virtue of his role in the 2015 National Assembly and the allegedly fraudulent nature of the 2018 presidential election that Maduro claimed to have won. When Guaidó lost this role in 2023, the Biden administration (alongside many other countries) shifted US recognition to the 2015 National Assembly itself as "the only legitimate branch" of Venezuela's government. While the Maduro regime remained in effective control of Venezuela, such recognition allowed the 2015 National Assembly to control various extraterritorial Venezuelan assets and interests, including control of oil-related assets, interests, and institutions.

But the Trump administration's new strategy of working through Maduro's former deputy, Rodríguez — including to reform Venezuela's oil sector — casts this practice into doubt. Will the United States continue to recognize the 2015 National Assembly? Or will its new arrangement with the Rodríguez regime restore Caracas's control of Venezuela's overseas oil assets and interests? And if the latter, will other countries follow? The answers to these questions will shape how Venezuela's overseas oil resources are managed — and their absence underscores how little the Trump administration seems to have prepared for the aftermath of its actions.



Pro-government supporters attend a rally a day after the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro by US forces, in Caracas, Venezuela, on January 4, 2026.  
● CARLOS BECERRA/GETTY IMAGES

### Don't count on Congress

But don't count it out either



By **Sarah A. Binder**  
Political scientist

The Trump administration's go-it-alone strike on Venezuela and capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro raises the inevitable question: Where's Congress? Legal scholar Edward Corwin wrote decades ago that the US Constitution is "an invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign policy". True, presidents from both parties have aggressively accrued the

lion's share of such authority — typically with lawmakers' acquiescence or outright consent. But even a weakened Congress can crystallize public dissent to counterbalance presidential power. First, public opinion has not rallied to the president. The first survey out of the gate shows uneven public support for Trump's moves in Venezuela. Only a third of Americans support the military's move to oust Maduro; another third opposes Trump's move, and the rest do not seem to care or know enough to give an opinion. While two-thirds of Re-

publicans have rallied to Trump's side, most of the rest of the GOP respondents did not proffer an opinion. Still, majorities of both parties and independents expressed concern that the United States would get too involved in Venezuela. Such public ambivalence is unusual historically. Voters often "rally around the flag": After dramatic, focused, international events, public opinion often favors the president. This time, Democratic leaders have sharply criticized Trump's lack of a "day after" plan, and even some Senate Republicans have offered tepid support. Such reactions undermine a public rally to the president — weakening

Trump's standing in Congress and strengthening Democrats' resolve to stay on the attack. The Trump administration's saber-rattling against Greenland could generate similar pushback: Some Republicans have already questioned White House threats against this NATO ally. Second, senators will likely vote soon on Senator Tim Kaine's (D-Va.) resolution to block further use of force within or against Venezuela absent congressional authorization. Skeptics of the 1973 War Powers Resolution (WPR) rightly question whether the WPR affords any leverage to lawmakers seeking to legally challenge the executive's deployment of military force. But such fights are

more political than legal. WPR rules can propel resolutions to the House or Senate floor — even over party leaders' objections. Such votes force a president's partisans to take a stand. A similar Senate vote this past November attracted two Republicans, albeit failing 49-51. An analogous House vote last month secured three GOP votes before losing, 211-213. Of course, if both chambers passed such a resolution, they would surely fail to override an inevitable Trump veto. But forcing opponents to take a position can often be more electorally valuable to lawmakers than passing a bill. Given today's slim GOP majorities, limited public support

for the administration's actions in Venezuela, and skepticism from a few GOP senators, the Trump administration will need to make a concerted effort to keep its partisans in line. Third, keep eyes on how Democrats exploit the Venezuela issue for the 2026 midterms. Debating the legality and constitutionality of the president's military incursions abroad will not turn out the swing voters necessary for Democrats to regain control of the House. Expect Democrats to reframe the politics to turn Americans' attention back home. The affordability crisis in the United States will matter far more in November than the lives of Venezuelans or inhabitants of Greenland.



Venezuela Ambassador to the United Nations Samuel Reinaldo Moncada Acosta speaks as he holds up a news article, during a UN Security Council meeting on US strikes and the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the US, on January 5, 2026.  
● FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

### Unconstrained by norms or institutions

'Donroe Doctrine' in practice



By **Vanda Felbab-Brown**  
Scholar of crime, conflict,  
and nontraditional  
security threats

Immediately after capturing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Trump announced that the operation was only the beginning. The Trump administration assumes it can control the remaining pillars of the Maduro regime through an offshore military presence and oil embargo alone. Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio also believe that cutting off Venezuela's oil lifeline to Cuba will topple the Castro-ite government in Havana. At the same time, Trump renewed his

threats against Colombian President Gustavo Petro — an adversary for some months — whom he sanctioned on drug trafficking charges. Trump likewise reiterated his desire for US military strikes against drug targets in Mexico, despite the severe diplomatic consequences for that critical bilateral relationship and the fact that counter-narcotics cooperation with the United States has improved under the Sheinbaum administration. Most shockingly, Trump also restated his desire to take over Greenland for its rich mineral resources, through either a purchase or military force. The Trump administration has been justifying this naked aggression against a NATO partner with false claims of

Chinese and Russian ships surrounding the island. The purchase option is also egregious: people of any country should not be for sale in the 21st century. Moreover, 85% of Greenlanders oppose becoming part of the United States, and only 6% support the idea. The threats against Greenland and other countries in the Western hemisphere are the Trump administration's "Donroe Doctrine" in practice: in the Western hemisphere, the Trump administration says it can do what it wants, unconstrained by norms or institutions, and elsewhere constrained only by the military power of others. The Danish prime minister has said that US moves against Greenland would mean the end of NATO. The Trump administration's threats alone have already accelerated the unraveling of US credibility, authority, alliances, and the post-World War II order.

### Venezuela likely to embolden Russia



By **Daniel S. Hamilton**  
President of Transatlantic  
Leadership Network

The Trump administration's Venezuela intervention is likely to embolden Russia, and further challenge Ukraine and

Europe, in several ways. Trump called Maduro's extraction an "extraordinary military operation," echoing Vladimir Putin's description of his invasion of Ukraine as a "special military operation," and thus suggesting that on occasion, big powers may be warranted in intervening militarily against smaller countries. Trump has openly flouted international

law, much as Putin has, giving Moscow further openings to disregard any international legal constraints on its actions. Trump has announced he intends to "run" Venezuela, much as Putin wants to run Ukraine — another boost for Russia. And while Trump's actions have upended Russia's support for the Maduro regime, Ukraine is a much bigger prize for the Kremlin: during Trump's first term, allegedly, Russia had informally

offered to end its support for Venezuela in exchange for US acceptance of Russian dominance of Ukraine. Publicly, Moscow has protested US actions; privately, the Kremlin sees opportunity. While some European leaders have criticized the US action as a violation of international law, most have been cautious about crossing Trump at a time when they want to secure US security guarantees for Ukraine, and as they

have become acutely aware of their own dependence on the United States. Trump's subsequent statement that "We do need Greenland, absolutely," prompted Europe's largest allies and the Nordic countries to close ranks behind Denmark, which governs the autonomous region, and to suggest that Greenland's security is best handled through NATO. Nonetheless, Europe's options are limited.



What China’s Venezuela rhetoric reveals about Beijing’s priorities

By Patricia M. Kim  
Expert in Chinese foreign policy

The Trump administration’s actions in Venezuela have provided Beijing with another low-cost opportunity to criticize US behavior on the global stage. Chinese officials have sharply condemned what they describe as US hegemonism,

framing Washington’s actions as a violation of international law and Venezuela’s sovereignty and calling for Maduro’s release. Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned pointedly that no country should act as a “world policeman” or “claim itself to be an international judge”. The intensity of Beijing’s rhetoric, however, should not be mistaken for its strategic commitment to Venezuela itself.

Despite years of close political ties, significant oil investments, and billions of dollars in outstanding loans, Venezuela does not constitute a core strategic interest for China. Beijing has shown little appetite for taking concrete action or for positioning itself ahead of Latin American states in responding to the crisis. When asked whether the crisis would alter China’s broader approach to the region, a Chi-

nese Foreign Ministry spokesperson offered boilerplate language about long-standing cooperation and friendship with Latin American countries, without signaling any intent to actively counter US influence on the ground. Beijing’s recent reactions are less about defending Caracas than about allowing the United States to absorb the reputational fallout. Some have questioned whether

US actions in Venezuela could embolden China to act more aggressively in its own neighborhood, particularly toward Taiwan. The Venezuela case is unlikely to alter Beijing’s timelines or military calculations regarding the island. But it does explain why China has invested so heavily in persuading the international community that Taiwan is an “internal affair,” rather than a dispute between two sov-

ereign states. Chinese condemnations of US actions in Venezuela rest explicitly on the principle that it is illegal for one country to use force against another. Defining cross-Strait tensions as a domestic matter is therefore not just semantic; it is about laying the legal and normative groundwork to blunt the kinds of criticisms China already faces — and will continue to face — as it uses coercion against Taiwan.

Concern but silver linings in Moscow

By Steven Pifer  
Former US ambassador to Ukraine

The Russian Foreign Ministry quickly condemned the US attack and seizure of Nicolás Maduro and his spouse. It termed the assault an “act of armed aggression” and called for the Maduros’ release. That should surprise no one. Russia cultivated warm relations with the Hugo Chávez and Maduro regimes. Among other things, Russia served as a major arms supplier, providing S-300 air defense missiles and Su-30 fighter aircraft. The Kremlin cannot be happy with the situation. First, while Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed “solidarity with the Venezuelan people,” Moscow likely will offer no more than rhetorical

support. That replicates Russian inaction following last June’s US strike on Iranian nuclear facilities. The Russians cannot be happy with that image of weakness. Second, as in Iran, Russian military equipment did nothing to impede the US assault. Of some 150 aircraft involved in the operation, only one helicopter sustained minor damage from ground fire. These failures hardly serve as an advertisement for future Russian arms sales. Third, while the two cases hugely differ, pundits already are contrasting the overnight success of the US action with Russia’s “special military operation” against Ukraine, now in its fourth year with no end in sight. The Kremlin, however, will see silver linings. The dubious legality of the US attack under international law weakens

the basis for condemning Russia’s war on Ukraine. Trump’s invocation of the Monroe or “Donroe” doctrine will bolster Russian claims for a regional sphere of influence. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told NBC, “This is the Western Hemisphere. This is where we live. And we’re not going to allow the Western Hemisphere to be a base of operation for adversaries, competitors, and rivals of the United States.” Substitute “Eurasia” for “the Western Hemisphere” and “Russia” for “the United States,” and see how it sounds. Finally, the Kremlin almost certainly hopes that Trump will stumble into a larger conflict, perhaps even with US boots on the ground, that would further undermine US international legitimacy and distract Washington from Russia’s continuing war against Ukraine.



Nicolas Maduro (2nd-R) and his wife, Cilia Flores (2nd-L), are seen in handcuffs after landing at a Manhattan helipad, escorted by heavily armed Federal agents as they make their way into an armored car en route to a Federal courthouse in Manhattan, New York City, on January 5, 2026.

Venezuela sanctions a lever of choice without much leverage

By Dafna A. Rand and Kari Heerman  
Senior fellows at Brookings

The stunning military ouster of Nicolás Maduro underscores a hard truth about modern economic statecraft. For over 20 years, the Venezuelan regime has been subject to an increasingly expansive US sanctions regime as the

main alternative to the use of force, targeting individuals, oil revenues, financial channels, and other public and private sector entities. Those sanctions imposed real economic damage and narrowed the regime’s economic options. But they never generated decisive leverage sufficient to force a change in the regime’s core objectives or to improve US security interests; efforts to escalate or ease sanctions over

time instead underscored how difficult they are to calibrate in practice. In part, this is because Maduro’s regime adapted, using technology and third-country networks to shift activity into alternative channels and push the burden of sanctions onto intermediaries and foreign firms, while insulating the leadership itself. This kind of sanctions avoidance does not erase pressure but shifts it — allowing regimes to reroute activity through

costlier and less transparent channels rather than change course. The geopolitical lesson is sobering. Sanctions remain a valuable tool for imposing some costs and signaling US (and international) opprobrium. And we are only beginning to learn about the impacts over time of relatively new individualized sanctions, which targeted nearly 1,000 Venezuelans since

the 2010s. In Venezuela, Russia, Iran, and elsewhere, however, sanctions are blunted when regimes can externalize pressure and wait out economic pain; they work best when embedded in diplomatic strategies that can translate cost imposition into political outcomes. Venezuela reminds us that economic leverage depends not just on scale, but on strategy — and on realism about what sanctions can and cannot achieve.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (R) gestures after decorating China’s President Xi Jinping with a Venezuelan sash during an official visit in Miraflores Presidential Palace, Caracas, on July 20, 2014.

Potential friction with China

By Douglas A. Rediker  
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After the American raid on Venezuela, there was immediate excitement around the economic opportunities Venezuela now offers, and not just in the oil sector. Venezuela and PDVSA defaulted bonds surged, with investors effectively pricing in a sanctions unwind and a path to restructuring. But the “day after” problem in Venezuela is not only political. It is also contractual, litigious, and creditor-driven. Analysts estimate roughly \$60 billion in defaulted bonds and total external obligations around \$150 billion–\$170 billion once PDVSA liabilities, bilateral claims, and legal judgments are included. The International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) October 2025 World Economic Outlook puts Venezuela’s 2025 nominal GDP at about \$82.77 billion, implying a debt-to-GDP ratio in the 180%–200% range, even before one argues about data quality.

And then there is China, which may be the most underpriced friction point in this entire story. China will not be a passive stakeholder. Beijing has long-standing oil-for-loans arrangements with Venezuela, remains a major customer for Venezuelan crude, and still receives barrels linked to debt repayment. While opaque, analysts estimate Venezuela’s remaining debt to China exceeds \$10 billion, with estimates of cumulative historical Chinese financing in the range of \$60 billion since 2005, though broader official-sector credit tallies are higher. Regardless of the actual amounts, China has meaningful residual claims, an ability to litigate and obstruct, and a strategic incentive to prevent the United States from establishing a new political, economic, and/or energy regime and creditor hierarchy in Caracas. Unlike in other recent sovereign debt restructurings, China is likely to argue that any prospective impairment of its Venezuelan claims and interests was not primarily caused by Venezue-

lan policy choices. They were caused by a US military intervention that aims to reorganize control of the oil sector and, implicitly, future export revenues. This provides Beijing with reasons to be confrontational, not cooperative. In Zambia, China’s role as the key official creditor slowed the process and created long delays in resolving restructuring issues and finalizing IMF support. Venezuela should be assumed to be much harder: larger political stakes, murkier claims, more assets exposed to court action, and a creditor (China) that may see reputational and strategic costs in “accepting” losses caused by US action. Post-sanctions Venezuela could eventually generate large returns. But the nearer-term reality is a high-friction debt and claims environment, with China positioned to insist on repayment and to contest any US-led attempt to reorder the country’s balance sheet on Washington’s terms.

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## Asian Men's Handball Championship:

## Iran misses out on main round after last-gasp heartbreak against Japan



● IRIHF

## Sports Desk

Iran squandered a commanding second-half lead to suffer a last-gasp 30-29 defeat against Japan in Group D on Monday, failing to book a place in the main-round group phase at the Asian Men's Handball Championship in Sabah Al-Salem, Kuwait. Needing only a draw to advance as the group runner-up behind Saudi Arabia, Iran led 15-13 at halftime and stretched its advantage to five goals with 10 minutes remaining. Japan, however, mounted a stunning late comeback, with Daisuke Tanaka scoring a winner at the death to seal victory for the two-time champion. Pouya Norouzzinejad believed he had equalized for Iran with a last-ditch effort from the halfway line, but his goal

was disallowed after officials ruled the ball had crossed the goal line after the final buzzer. The result sent Japan through to the next round alongside Saudi Arabia, where eight teams will be split into two groups. Mohammadreza Oraei scored a game-high 10 goals for Iran but found little consolation in being named Man of the Match. Norouzzinejad and Mehran Rahnema added eight and four goals, respectively, while Yuga Enomoto led Japan with eight. Iran will now contest the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Cup for 9th-15th places, beginning against India in Group IV on Thursday. Iran opened the tournament with a 24-22 loss to four-time bronze medalist Saudi Arabia, but rebounded to hammer Australia 39-13 and enter

Monday's match ahead of Japan on goal difference. The defeat marks another recent setback for Iran, coming just two months after Spanish head coach Rafael Guijosa's side was eliminated in the group stage of November's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh. In other Group D action, Saudi Arabia maintained its perfect record with a 42-24 win over Australia in a dead rubber for both sides. Elsewhere, host nation Kuwait defeated the United Arab Emirates 27-22 to finish atop Group C with three wins from three, while Hong Kong beat India 36-30 to finish third. The 22nd edition of the flagship continental event also serves as a qualifier for the 2027 World Championship in Germany, with the four semi-finalists securing berths.

## Sepahan closing in on former winger Mohebbi

## Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan is closing in on a deal to re-sign winger Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi from Emirati top-flight side Ittihad Kalba FC. Sepahan is reportedly willing to pay \$1 million to bring back its former player, who scored nine goals and provided 10 assists in 37 appearances across all competitions for the Isfahan-based outfit last season before departing for the UAE's ADNOC Pro League in August.

That successful campaign earned the 25-year-old Iranian his international debut in a dead rubber against Qatar at the World Cup qualifiers in June. He later netted his first goal and assist for Team Melli in a 3-0 victory over North Korea. Mohebbi, however, has struggled to make an impact in the UAE, failing to register a goal or assist in nine appearances while also missing seven games due to injury and suspension. The left-footed winger last featured in Kalba's 3-1 away defeat to Sharjah FC on Sunday,

where he was substituted at halftime. Should the deal be finalized in the coming days, it would provide a major boost for Sepahan head coach Moharram Navidkia, who must cope without top scorer Mohammad Askari for the rest of the season after the young striker suffered a torn ligament while on duty with Iran at the U23 Asian Cup earlier this month. The future of French striker Enzo Crivelli also remains in doubt after he left Iran this week amid regional tensions

and recent domestic unrest. With the World Cup finals less than five months away, a return to the Iranian league could enhance Mohebbi's chances of securing a place in the national team squad for the showpiece event in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Sepahan currently leads the Iranian top flight with 31 points from 16 games – three points clear of Tehran archrivals Esteghlal and Persepolis – ahead of Friday's crucial visit to the Capital Reds in the 'Iranian Clasic'.



● kalbafc.ae

## Iran remains 20th in FIFA Men's World Ranking, second in Asia



● FFIRI

## Sports Desk

Iran has retained 20th place in the first FIFA Men's World Ranking of the year, released by world football's governing body on Monday. Team Melli collected 1617.02 points to stay second among AFC member states, behind Japan, which fell one spot to 19th with 1650.12 points. Iran last played in November's Al Ain International Cup, where Amir Qalenoee's side defeated Cape Verde on penalties after a goalless draw, but lost the final to familiar rival Uzbekistan in a similar fashion. Following Japan and Iran in the AFC standings are South Korea (22nd), Australia (27th), Uzbekistan (52nd), and Qatar (56th).

Iran will make its seventh appearance – and fourth in succession – at the World Cup finals in less than five months. The tournament will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, starting on June 11. The Asian powerhouse has been drawn in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt, and New Zealand. Iran will begin its campaign against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, on June 15, before facing European heavyweight Belgium at the same venue six days later. Team Melli will then hope to be in contention for a first-ever knockout stage berth when it takes on Egypt at Lumen Field in Seattle, Washington, on June 26. The top seven in the global ranking

remained unchanged, with European powerhouse Spain followed by reigning world champion Argentina, France, England, Brazil, Portugal, and the Netherlands. Morocco rose to eighth despite a final defeat to Senegal in Sunday's Africa Cup of Nations on home soil. Belgium and Germany round out the top 10. Meanwhile, the Iranian women's national team climbed two places to 68th in the FIFA Women's Ranking with 1382.102 points. Marziyeh Jafari's side, which suffered two friendly defeats against Uzbekistan in the previous international break, ranks 13th in Asia. Japan, North Korea, Australia, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Myanmar, and India all stand above Iran. Iran is preparing for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup, which begins on March 1 in Australia. Making only its second appearance at the finals, Iran will open its Group A campaign against South Korea – runner-up to China in the 2022 edition – on March 2. It will then face the formidable host nation Australia, a semifinalist at the 2023 Women's World Cup, in Gold Coast three days later. Iran will conclude the group stage against the Philippines, a semifinalist in the previous edition, on March 8.

## Iranian Basketball Super League: Shahrddari beats Naft 94-87 to move atop the table

## Sports Desk

Defending champion Shahrddari Gorgan secured a 94-87 away victory over Naft Abadan in the Iranian Basketball Super League on Monday. A 12th win in 15 games moved Shahrddari to the

top of the tight regular-season standings, tying them on 27 points with second-placed Esteghlal and Kaleh Mazandaran. The latest round of fixtures saw Esteghlal beat bottom-club host Petro Novin Mahshahr 79-74,

while Kaleh prevailed 90-80 in a visit to Mahgol Alborz. Elsewhere, Naft Zagros Jonoubi emerged victorious 84-79 at Pas Kurdestan, and Golnour defeated Ra'ad Padafand Havaii 74-70 in the battle of the two Isfahan-based clubs.



● IRIBF



# Saryazd Castle depicts stunning coexistence of humans with desert



Iranica Desk

As one drives along the ancient road from Yazd to Kerman and gaze upon the serene, golden desert surrounding us, it might seem less obvious that within this silence and simplicity, treasures of history lie hidden. One such treasure is the Saryazd Castle; a mud-brick structure built centuries ago not only as a shelter for people but also, ingeniously, as a large, secure safe. This castle is a unique example of the fusion of economic and security needs in ancient Iran, and today it is recognized as one of the beautiful manifestations of this land’s cultural heritage, according to IRNA.

Saryazd Castle is located in a village of the same name, near the city of Mehriz in Yazd Province. This area was once a hub for caravan routes and important trade roads, and its strategic location gave the castle a significant position. It is said that the castle’s initial core dates back to the Sassanian era, a period when the Iranian Empire was at its peak and road security and the transportation of goods were of utmost importance. Over different historical periods, additions were made to the structure, gradually shaping its final form.

Many of Iran’s historical castles were built for military defense, but Saryazd Castle has a different story. This structure was primarily constructed for the protection of property, grains, money, precious objects, and commercial goods. When the threat of attack, insecurity, or banditry loomed, people and caravans would entrust their belongings to this castle, where they would be stored in secure chambers.

Architecture

The castle is built with traditional desert materials, mud bricks and clay, covering an area of approximately 7,000 to 8,000 square meters. The castle building has three floors, featuring hundreds of rooms and compartments. It is said that there were around 450 to 470 of these rooms, each with its independent door and lock. This locking system played a role in accounting and ownership, and no one other than the owner could enter the compartment. Although the castle primarily served an economic role, its defensive features are highly notable. A deep and wide moat surrounds the castle, serving as one of the most significant obstacles against enemy infiltration.



● IRNA

tion. The walls are constructed in a double layer, with a path for guards between the walls. Four corner towers also exist, offering comprehensive surveillance of the surrounding plains. The castle’s entrance is designed in such a way that passage without permission is nearly impossible, with heavy locks and doors providing security for its assets.

Internal space

Upon entering the structure, a network of corridors, narrow passages, and nested rooms

becomes apparent, showcasing a deliberate complexity. This design would have confused intruders, making it difficult for them to find their way out. Some chambers feature niches, clay heaters, and small rest areas, indicating that some individuals may have stayed for brief periods. However, the castle primarily served as a large and secure depository rather than a permanent residence.

Linking with economy and trade

The existence of such a build-

ing indicates that Saryazd was once part of Iran’s extensive internal and external trade network. Caravans passing through the desert roads would store their goods in this castle for a period, until the danger passed or their journey was organized, then retrieve them. This practice was considered a primitive but efficient banking system. Public trust in the fortress management and the existence of unwritten social laws ensured that this place maintained its credibility over centuries. The Saryazd Castle is not just a mud brick building; it is a part of the collective identity of the people of the region. This structure represents the rational coexistence of humans with the dry desert environment. Native materials, climate-compatible design, thick walls, and shaded spaces all reflect the deep understanding of the builders of their surrounding environment. Additionally, the castle symbolizes social trust, the trust among people, merchants, and local administration, which allowed people’s property and capital to be stored in a public space.”

National registration

Over centuries, the Saryazd

Castle has stood firm and preserved an important part of its structure. This building was registered on National Heritage List of Iran years ago and has since been protected as one of the valuable historical attractions. In recent years, restoration and renovation efforts have been made to repair damaged areas, ensuring the castle can maintain its authentic appearance for future generations.

Today, the castle has become one of the cultural and historical tourism destinations in the province of Yazd. Domestic and foreign tourists, by walking through its mud brick alleys and old cells, can touch a part of Iran’s history and become familiar with the economic mechanisms of the old society. One of the most captivating aspects of the Saryazd Castle is its serene and mysterious atmosphere. As you walk within the castle, the clay walls and tall towers still whisper stories from a time when people, fearful of insecurity, sought hope in the strongly locked doors that sealed the cells. Perhaps it is this historical and human sentiment that makes visiting the castle more than just a tourist experience; it is seen as a journey into the past.

## Kilim weavers; guardians of tradition in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari

Iranica Desk

Nestled in the heart of Iran, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, is home to over 90 distinct fields of handicrafts and traditional arts. This impressive portfolio solidifies its status as one of the nation’s foremost regions in producing a diverse and vibrant array of artisanal industries.

Among this wealth of craftsmanship, kilim weaving from Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari stands out as a cornerstone of its textile heritage. Recognized as one of the most significant crafts within the category of woven textiles, this venerable art form has been honored with the prestigious UNESCO Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts, a testament to its exceptional quality and

cultural value, chtn.ir wrote. The global acclaim and presence of these kilims in both domestic and international markets are a direct result of the extraordinary mastery of local weavers. Their command of specialized techniques breathes life into each piece. A defining feature of the production process is the weavers’ reliance on mental patterns (imagery), a traditional practice where intricate designs are conceived and executed from memory. This knowledge is a cherished legacy, with the majority of patterns having been passed down orally through countless generations, preserving an authentic artistic lineage.

Jahanbakhsh Torki, an official from the Provincial Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, underscored the paramount im-

portance of kilim within the local artisanal landscape. He emphasized that kilim weaving is firmly established as the province’s second major handicraft, trailing only behind the

famed carpet weaving tradition. “Currently, approximately 3,000 artisans are actively engaged in kilim weaving across Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, dedicated to producing a wide vari-



● IRNA

ety of kilim types,” Torki stated. He elaborated that the convergence of abundant raw materials, the remarkable skill and dexterity of the weavers, and a deeply rooted cultural heritage empowers these artists to create captivating and valuable works. Utilizing a range of specialized kilim techniques, their artistry has propelled these textiles to national and international fame, culminating in the esteemed UNESCO recognition. Detailing the common types, Torki listed several distinctive styles, he highlighted a key aspect of their commercial reach, noting, “A significant portion of the kilims produced here are exported to various countries through what is commonly known as ‘suitcase exports’ — hand-carried by travelers.” The epicenters of this thriving craft are primarily located in

Borujen and Ardal, among other cities within the province. The kilims are celebrated for their distinctive features, which encompass the execution of authentic motifs, intricate arabesque and geometric patterns, and designs vividly inspired by the surrounding natural landscape. Further enhancing their uniqueness is the application of unique traditional plant-based dyeing, which provides a rich and distinctive color palette.

The official presented a broader picture of the province’s artisanal strength, revealing that Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari boasts a community of over 12,000 handicraft artists. Of these, between 5,500 and 6,000 are actively practicing their trades across different seasons, working within more than 90 identified urban, rural, and nomadic handicraft fields.



# Fadjr theater festival launches 'My Iran' patriotic competition with 21 productions

## Arts & Culture Desk

The 44th Fadjr International Theatre Festival will feature a new patriotic competitive section titled "My Iran," focused on themes of sacred defense and resistance, the event's secretary announced on Tuesday. The section, after securing sponsorship from a cultural foundation, will now feature 21 productions, IRNA reported. The festival's restructuring and financial model highlight the increasing role of institutional backers in Iran's cultural landscape, while organizational challenges and geopolitical tensions continue to impact its international profile. The pivot towards competitive domestic themes and decentralized hosting aligns with the cultural ministry's stated

policy directives. Speaking at a press conference in Tehran's Theater City Hall, Secretary Vahid Fakhr Mousavi outlined the festival's revised format. The festival launched in the south-eastern city of Kerman on January 17, hosting five sections as part of a cultural decentralization drive championed by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi. The main program runs in Tehran across venues including City Theater, Iranshahr Hall, and Sangelaj Theater. Fakhr Mousavi disclosed the approved festival budget stands at 280 billion rials (nearly \$200,000), a decrease from the previous year. He acknowledged logistical and publicity hurdles, alongside the non-attendance of invited companies from Italy, Germany, Georgia, Armenia,

Iraq, and Russia. Submissions for the festival's main stage competition reached 274 works, with 62% originating from Iranian provinces outside Tehran. A total of 16 works were selected for the final program. In the international section, only seven productions were chosen from 223 submissions, with no foreign groups currently confirmed to perform. The secretary noted commemorations for four veteran artists are scheduled, while dedicated sections for radio plays, street theatre, and research seminars will proceed. Executive Secretary Abbas Ghaffari, also present, paid tribute to theatrical figures who died in recent months and emphasized the rigorous selection process across provinces.



## Iran's landmark cinematic event draws 122 films, spotlights first-time directors



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's annual Fajr Film Festival announced on Tuesday that 122 feature films have applied for competition in its 44th national edition, highlighting a significant contingent of emerging film-

makers. The applicant pool signals a notable generational shift within the country's cinema industry. More than 45 percent of submissions, a total of 55 films, are from first-time directors, while 67 entries are from established

Iranian filmmakers, IRNA reported. The prominent festival, a key event in the regional cultural calendar, also received two films created using artificial intelligence tools for competition consideration. The advertising section of the festival has attracted roughly 300 entries, including 145 teasers and trailers, 109 posters, and 44 distinct photo collections. All promotional materials correspond to films released by January 4, 2026. Veteran Iranian photographer Mohammad Foghani oversees the advertising segment. The 44th Fajr Film Festival will run in Tehran from February 1 to 11.

## Three Iranian works compete at India's Third Eye event

## Arts & Culture Desk

Three acclaimed Iranian films screened in the Asian competition segment of the 22nd Third Eye Asian Film Festival in Mumbai, India. The festival concluded with an award ceremony at the P.L. Deshpande Academy Theatre. The curated Iranian slate featured Mehran Modiri's '6 in the Morning' Mehdi Jafari's 'Tear of the Reedbed (2025),' and Mohammad Mehdi Katirchi's 'In Other Words', IRNA reported. The festival was held in Mumbai and Thane from January 9 to 15. These works, spanning contemporary social drama to historical narrative, showcased the diversity of Iranian cinema and drew strong audience and critical reception. The event, orchestrated by the



Asian Film Foundation in collaboration with Prabhat Chitra Mandal and the Enlighten Film Society, hosted 56 Asian and Indian features and shorts from nations including China, Nepal, and Thailand. Iran's Cultural Attaché in Mumbai, Mohammadreza Fadel, presented awards during the closing program and a special memorial tribute for founding

figure Sudhir Nandgaonkar was bestowed upon distinguished critic and curator Minakshi Shed. The Mumbai-based Third Eye Asian Film Festival, launched in 2002, has established itself as a prominent platform for independent Asian art cinema and has consistently featured Iranian films as leading regional works.

## Bosnian publisher releases Persian market study, echoing historical ties

## Arts & Culture Desk

A study of Iranian marketplaces, 'Iranian Bazaars,' was published in Bosnian, reflecting a shared cultural heritage and architectural legacy between the two regions, the Iranian Cultural Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bookline Publishing House announced Tuesday. The project was supported by the Center for Coordination of Translation and Publication of Islamic Concepts and Humanities, affiliated with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Ana News Agency reported. Translated by Hadis Terzić from the original Persian work by Hossein Soltanzadeh, the book was edited by Munir Drkic, a professor of Persian Language and Literature at the University of Sarajevo. The publication holds particular



significance for Bosnian readers, as many Balkan cities, including Sarajevo, retain the term "Čaršija", derived from the Persian "Charsou", to denote the historic city center and marketplace. The word, originating in Persian and entering Balkan languages via Turkish, signifies a market or central trading hub. Notably, the architecture of traditional covered markets, such as Sarajevo's Bezistan, bears a striking

resemblance to Iranian market designs, indicating a familiarity among Bosnians with the structure and function of Eastern markets. Bookline Publishing House, a prominent Bosnian house, will distribute the book widely throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The preface to "Iranian Bazaars" highlights the historical importance of markets as central communication and urban spaces in Iran, often developing along major routes and extending from city gates to the core. The study examines the history, social characteristics, functions, and architecture of Iranian bazaars, including their administration, security, and regulations. Chapters explore historical and social aspects, functions, urban features, and architectural elements like storefronts, caravanserais, and central squares.

## Politics outweigh law ...

What ramifications does this action have for Iran, and what tools does the Iranian government have to counteract those impacts?

Davos, as one of the world's largest economic gatherings, provides Iran with an opportunity to showcase its role in global economic developments. This event is not only a venue for discussing economic issues but also a chance for Iran to actively participate in major economic debates and decision-making. Iran can use its presence at Davos as a symbol of its foreign policy aimed at constructive engagement and cooperation with the world. This is particularly important for countries that do not recognize Iran as a credible trading partner. The message of Iran's presence at Davos is that Iran, as an independent and insightful nation, is ready to participate in the global arena. Perhaps laying the groundwork for participation in similar events and taking a more serious approach to attending other such forums by the Iranian diplomat-

ic and scientific/research communities could offset some of the negative narratives surrounding the country.

How will this decision impact the functioning of the World Economic Forum's mechanisms in the future? Can it be said that this double standard will undermine the forum's standing?

Institutions born from the liberal order, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and others, no longer possess their former power—though it's premature to declare the end of these organizations. However, they have not played a significant role in moderating the aggressive actions and policies of major powers. Various governments are preparing and adapting to the new international order in different ways, with some countries adapting quickly and others slowly. Given that there's no escaping this new situation, countries have realized the need to have sound policymaking in this area before opportunities turn into threats.