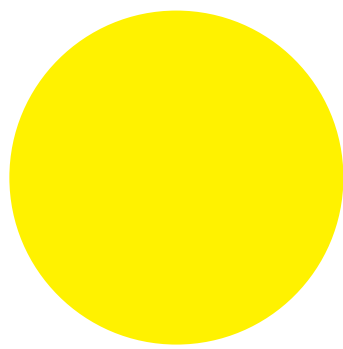




Pezeshkian prioritizes mental health amid unrest, seeks medical reassurance

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Iran Daily

Vol. 8034 • Thursday, January 22, 2026 • Bahman 02, 1404 • Sha'ban 02, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir

✕ IranDailyWeb

Tehran favors peace over war; ready for 'fair' US deal: *Araghchi*

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National Desk

The recent rioting in Iran that swept almost all 31 provinces claimed 3,117 lives, the state-run Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs (FMVA) said in a statement carried by national TV on Wednesday. "As per information received from the Iranian Legal Medicine Organization, in the recent terrorist incidents... 2,427 innocent Iranian citizens, including security forces and people from all walks of life, were martyred out of a total of 3,117 fatalities," the FMVA said.

The statement added that those martyred were targeted by "trained terrorists" with "cruelty and brutality" and in some cases, "bodies were burned, dismembered and beheaded."

According to the FMVA, many of the victims were "passersby" who were gunned down with the sole purpose of pushing up the number of casualties and some others were "protesters" who were shot dead in the crowds by "organized terrorist elements."

The foundation noted that the Iranian nation would bring to justice what it called "terrorists affiliated with the criminal Zionist regime" of Israel who had been "supported, equipped, and armed by the criminal leaders" of the United States.

Iran was hit by a wave of street protests on December 28 in several cities, including the capital Tehran, over economic woes driven by the depreciation of the national currency to a record low.

The protests, which the government on several occasions called "legitimate" and "rightful," turned extremely violent after armed terrorists infiltrated among the ranks of protesters in an effort to hijack their demonstrations.

Over 3,100 killed in riots incited by Israel, US in Iran

State foundation: 2,427 citizens martyred by 'trained terrorists'



Mourners attend a funeral for 100 people killed during recent violent riots, that swept through the Iranian capital, in Tehran on January 21, 2026.
 • IRNA



INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iran sees 80% export surge to Africa as trade hits \$2b: Chamber head

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Fresh initiatives needed to break impasse with IAEA

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE



Omid Khazani

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, said

on Wednesday at the Davos summit that the impasse with Iran regarding its high-grade uranium stockpile and inspections of nuclear facilities, targeted by US and Israeli strikes in June, could not continue indefinitely.

Following the US-Israeli aggression in June, Iran reduced its cooperation with the IAEA, and later revoked an agreement brokered by Egypt, after the UN sanctions snapback mechanism was triggered

in September 2025. Grossi said he was exercising "diplomatic caution" and would be compelled to declare Iran's non-compliance with the NPT if the situation persisted.

Omid Khazani, an international relations analyst, told Iran Daily that Tehran needed to shake off its inertia and propose new initiatives to break this deadlock.

IRAN DAILY: How do you see Grossi's latest stance? Does this position represent a shift in the agency's approach, or only a warning?

KHAZANI: The IAEA is part of the United Nations framework. Assessing its fairness and impartiality is one matter, but how Iranian diplomats and authorities view this matter is another. The system may not be entirely equitable; the IAEA chief might

hold biased views aligned with the US and Israel. However, this is part of the global order, and major world powers generally adhere to this framework.

Grossi, with an eye toward the UN secretary-general post, has demonstrated a lack of impartiality in his reports and engages in political maneuvering. Nevertheless, the fact is that he remains the reference point for Iran's nuclear dossier, and his reports guide the agency's decision-making power, allowing it to rally support against Iran and potentially refer the case back to the UN Security Council.

The IAEA's approach toward Iran will only become more stringent as Iran adopts a strategy of nuclear ambiguity, which the West finds difficult to accept. Especially with Israeli provocations, this strategy will not sit well with NATO, the US, and Western

Europe, and will likely radicalize the agency's stance. It appears the nuclear watchdog is moving in that direction.

What practical and diplomatic consequences would Iran face if the IAEA declares non-compliance with the agreements and how should Tehran handle it?

Grossi's upcoming reports on the status of Iran's 400 kilograms of enriched uranium and the condition of bombed nuclear sites could be seen as an attempt to build consensus against Tehran. Iran revoked the Cairo agreement in response to the instigation of the snapback mechanism, and its level of cooperation with the IAEA has reached a record low, although not entirely severed. Under these circumstances, the AGENCY has the ability to report Iran's lack of cooperation

and compliance and ultimately refer the case to the UN Security Council.

Western countries have largely lined up against Iran, and Grossi's report could be the final piece of the puzzle. After a decade, since 2015 when Iran was brought under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, it could be brought under this chapter again, paving the way for more serious military action against the country's nuclear program and infrastructure. This could be part of a larger project.

Iran could argue that this is part of a global strategy led by the US and Israel, and that Grossi is part of this scenario. But it would be better for the country to pursue its own creative strategy since compliance about the IAEA will not bring about significant change.

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Tehran favors peace over war; ready for 'fair' US deal: *Araghchi*

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that the Islamic Republic has consistently prioritized peace over conflict and is ready for a "fair" agreement with the United States if Washington changes its approach and treats Iran with respect.

In an article published by The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, Araghchi also warned that US hostile actions toward Iran, from sanctions to military threats, have failed to achieve their goals.

Iranian foreign minister also warned the US that Tehran will be "firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," following US president's threats of military aggression against Iran on the pretext of supporting Iranian demonstrators who took to the streets over the past weeks to protest the coun-

try's economic situation which later turned bloody.

"Our powerful armed forces have no qualms about firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," he wrote, referring to the 12-day war launched by Israel and the US on Iran in June last year.

The foreign minister argued this was not a "threat," "but a reality I feel I need to convey explicitly, because as a diplomat and a veteran, I abhor war."

He added that, "An all-out confrontation will certainly be ferocious and drag on far, far longer than the fantasy timelines that Israel and its proxies are trying to peddle to the White House. It will certainly engulf the wider region and have an impact on ordinary people around the globe."

Araghchi's comments came a day after Trump repeated a warning that Iran would be wiped "off the

face of this earth" if it ever succeeded in assassinating the US leader.

"I have very firm instructions. Anything happens, they're going to wipe them off the face of this earth," Trump said in a News Nation interview that aired on Tuesday.

Earlier on Tuesday, in response to any threats facing Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian General Abolfazl Shekarchi was quoted as saying that Trump already knew Tehran would not hold back if the tables were turned.

"Trump knows that if a hand of aggression is extended toward our leader, we will not only sever that hand, and this is not a mere slogan," Iranian state media reported, quoting Shekarchi. "But we will set their world on fire and leave them no safe haven in the region."



UN nuclear chief upbeat about diplomatic push for Iran-US de-escalation



International Desk

Head of the UN nuclear agency expressed hope that diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a broader agreement between Iran and the United States would lead to an understanding without the threat of new military operation.

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi made the remarks in an interview with Reuters at the

World Economic Forum in Davos on Tuesday.

One of the "real world" realities Grossi said he must face is the influence of diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a broader agreement between Iran and the United States that has been spearheaded by US special envoy Steve Witkoff.

"I cannot ignore it, and I wish it well so that there can be an understanding without the looming threat of new military activity over

there or something of the sort," he said.

Grossi said that the standoff with Iran over accounting for its stock of highly enriched uranium and inspecting nuclear facilities bombed by the US and Israel cannot go on forever.

He said that the IAEA inspected all 13 declared nuclear facilities in Iran that were not bombed, but has been unable to inspect any of the three key sites that were bombed in June – Natanz, Fordow or Isfahan.

"This cannot go on forever because at some point, I will have to say, 'Well, I don't have any idea where this material is,'" Grossi said.

"I do not have that conviction or conclusion at the moment, but what we are saying to Iran is that they need to engage."

Grossi said he was ex-

ercising "diplomatic prudence," but that Iran had to meet its obligations as a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"This cannot go on like this for a long time without me, unfortunately, having to declare them in non-compliance," he said.

Following the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June, the Islamic Republic has called for clear procedures to be established for war-time situations.

Back in December, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said political and psychological pressure over inspection of damaged nuclear facilities will have no effect, adding that there is currently no codified instruction for inspecting nuclear facilities that have been damaged by military attacks.

Iraqi MP warns of US exploitation of Syria tensions to import Daesh

International Desk

An Iraqi politician and lawmaker warned about the US taking advantage of recent tensions in Syria to insecure Iraq.

In recent weeks, Syria has seen deadly clashes between forces of new rulers and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) over territories held by Kurdish forces since the defeat of Daesh in the Arab country.

Despite an earlier ceasefire agreement to end the clashes, Kurdish officials said that negotiations collapsed between the Syrian new government and the SDF.

The Syrian army said on Monday that it has taken control of the Shaddadi area and its prison holding thousands of Daesh members in northeastern Hasakah Province after the SDF reported a loss of control over the facility.

The Syrian army said it



has secured the prison complex and immediately launched search operations to recapture escaped inmates.

In an interview with Iraq's Al-Maloumah News Agency, the Iraqi lawmaker Mukhtar al-Musawi warned of consequences of a worsening security situation on the Iraq-Syria border and called for strengthening security at the common border to prevent any attempted infiltration by the Daesh terrorists from Syria.

He underlined that the current security developments near the border

pose a serious threat to Iraq's security.

The Iraqi politician also warned of the possibility of the US taking advantage of the situation to bring back the Daesh terrorists into the Iraqi territory, "similar to what happened during the previous American withdrawal."

Iraqi Defense Minister Thabet Mohammed al-Abbasi said on Tuesday that the country's armed forces are fully prepared to defend Iraq's borders, citing concerns about potential Daesh's penetration from neighboring Syria.

Tehran rebukes Daesh terrorist attack in Kabul



Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman condemned a terrorist attack at a Chinese restaurant in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul that left several Afghan citizens as well as Chinese nationals dead or injured. In a statement on Tuesday, Esmail Baqaei expressed condolences to the

families of the victims and expressed Iran's solidarity with the governments and peoples of Afghanistan and China.

Referring to the principled position of Iran in unequivocally condemning all forms and manifestations of terrorism and violent extremism,

Baqaei emphasized the necessity of strengthening regional and international cooperation to fight the heinous phenomenon.

The Daesh terrorist group later claimed responsibility for the explosion at the Chinese restaurant in the Afghan capital that claimed at least seven lives and left more than a dozen others wounded.

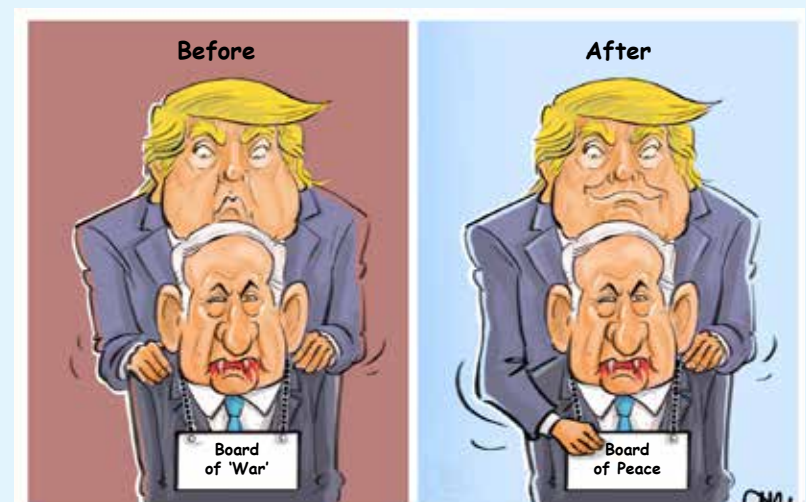
The terrorist group said in a statement that a suicide bomber entered the restaurant in Kabul used by Chinese nationals and detonated an explosive vest.

The spokesperson for the Afghanistan Interior Ministry Mufti Abdul Mateen Qani, however, said on Tuesday that the cause of the explosion in the commercial Shahr-e-Naw area was "unknown so far and is being investigated."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Crude output to surge by 135,000 bpd via rapid-deployment processing units: Deputy minister



Economy Desk

Iran is expected to raise its crude output by 135,000 barrels per day (bpd) through the installation rapid-deployment modular projects — known as “skid-mounted” units under newly signed service contracts, CEO of the National Iranian Oil Co. (NIOC) Hamid Bovard said on Wednesday.

“Given the signing of two contracts — one for crude oil processing services at oil fields and another for supplying on-shore drilling rigs — we have scheduled the installation of 11 skid-mounted units,” Bovard said, according to IRNA. “Their deployment time is very short, between six and twelve months, and their implementation will add 135,000 barrels per day to the country’s crude output,” he added.

Bovard, who also serves as deputy oil minister, appreciated the private sector’s investment in crude oil production and said the project would employ 7,000 people directly and indirectly.

He added that numerous small-scale private investors had enabled the launch of this large-scale initiative.

A senior NIOC official separately said on Sunday that 12% of the country’s crude oil processing capacity had been allocated to the private sector via skid-mounted units under a public-private partnership

(PPP) model.

Under a second contract, signed between the private sector and the NIOC with a five-year term, 20 new drilling rigs will join Iran’s onshore rig fleet, further boosting production capacity, Bovard said.

“Our goal is to deploy these rigs in four to six months,” he said. “Under this contract, the rigs are expected to drill 270 new wells.”

Iran does not release detailed crude output and export figures, citing US sanctions that it says require confidentiality. Data from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and the International Energy Agency (IEA) show Iran has significantly increased oil production in recent years despite continued sanctions.

Iran pumps around 3.5 million bpd, according to a rare comment by Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad in August about production rise in the first year of President Masoud Pezeshkian’s government in office.

Iran sees 80% export surge to Africa as trade hits \$2b: Chamber head



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW



Masoud Barahman

Iran’s trade with African countries, including unofficial exchanges, has reached \$2 billion, most of it Iranian exports, said Masoud Barahman, head of the Iran-Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce.

In an interview with Iran Daily, Barahman said that in the first eight months of the current Iranian year — started on March 21 — Iran’s exports to Africa rose by nearly 80% compared to the same period last year. Official annual exports to the continent now stand at around \$1 billion.

“The upward trend in economic and trade cooperation began during [former] president Ebrahim Raisi’s government and has continued under [his successor] President Masoud Pezeshkian, who took office in July 2024,” Barahman said. “We have witnessed a major leap in exports to Africa during this period.” He described Africa as a “vast and diverse market” with immense untapped potential for exporting goods.

“The continent’s population of 1.3 billion offers an exceptional market for Iranian products,” he added. Barahman projected that if Iran pursued a strategic and targeted export policy toward Africa, bilateral trade could reach \$4 billion within two years.

According to the businessman, Iran maintains commercial relations with most African nations, with Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Somalia, and Tanzania serving as key export destinations.

Amid rising population growth, urbanization, and increasing consumerism across Africa, demand for food products is surging, he said. However, given the continent’s lack of uniform cultural and economic characteristics — and the significant variation in local dietary preferences — Iranian traders and producers must tailor their export strategies accordingly, he suggested. “They should carefully account for regional tastes, culinary habits, and economic conditions when seeking to meet Africa’s import needs.”

Africa’s economic potential

Barahman highlighted Africa’s status as one of the world’s richest regions in natural resources, holding 30% of global mineral reserves, 65% of the world’s diamonds, and 60% of its gold — much of which remains undevel-

oped.

He pointed to strong opportunities for Iran to export engineering and technical services, noting the low level of industrial technology and machinery across many African countries. “African nations welcome Iranian expertise and technical know-how,” he said.

While 80% of Africans work in agriculture, the continent lacks advanced agro-processing capabilities. “Iranian experts and investors can play a major role in this sector,” Barahman added.

He also suggested repurposing Iran’s idle or underutilized industrial capacity — including second-hand machinery from domestic industrial towns — for export to Africa. “Many of our industrial zones are not operating at full capacity, and this surplus equipment can meet African demand.”

Despite such opportunities, Barahman acknowledged that many Iranian businesspeople remain unfamiliar with African markets, often limiting their perception of cooperation to agriculture alone. In reality, he said, Africa offers vast potential in construction, mining, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, energy, textiles, and small-scale industries.

“The continent needs about 100 million housing units,” he noted. “Iran possesses all the necessary elements—investors, contractors, and building materials — to participate



in residential construction projects across Africa.”

Role of joint chamber of commerce

To bridge the stated knowledge gap, the Iran-Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce has prioritized close collaboration with Iran’s Chamber of Cooperatives to expand joint exports and investments. The chamber is also active in Iran’s bilateral commissions with African countries and is working to create conditions conducive to industrial and commercial investment.

Additional initiatives include collecting and disseminating information on African trade regulations, customs procedures, and industrial laws to Iranian businesses; organizing trade fairs with targeted subsidies and facilitation through coordination with Iranian and African authorities; promoting reciprocal business delegations; and hosting seminars, conferences, and workshops to advance trade, economic ties, and technology transfer between Iran and Africa.

Gov’t approves Economy Ministry overhaul for optimized economic model

Economy Desk

The Supreme Administrative Council on Wednesday approved the general framework for a major structural reform of Iran’s Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, a move officials say could transform the country’s economic governance. Chaired by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, the council endorsed the mission statement and core requirements for the ministry’s macro-level restructuring under Article 105 of the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (2024-2028). The reform aims to convert the ministry from a traditional, sprawling bureaucracy into an agile, intelligent, and low-cost institution, IRNA reported.

Aref, summarizing the session, highlighted the government’s strategy to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the country’s administrative system.

“Restructuring the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance — as one of the government’s key ministries — can serve as a model for other executive agencies,” he said. Under Article 105 of the Seventh Development Plan, all executive bodies are required to redesign their organizational structures to improve productivity, implement smart governance, and rationalize the size of government. This redesign must result in the annual reduction of at least 5% of each agency’s organizational units by the end of the plan’s third year. During the meeting, the draft restructuring document for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance was discussed and received preliminary approval. Final recommendations from council members and detailed provisions of the document will undergo further review by the ministry and the Secretariat of the Supreme Administrative Council.



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Greenland, rare earths, and arctic security



By Gracelin Baskaran

Director of Critical Minerals Security Program at CSIS

By Meredith Schwartz

Associate Fellow for Critical Minerals Security Program at CSIS



ANALYSIS

Just one day after the US raid in Venezuela and capture of Nicolas Maduro, US President Trump turned his sights northward to the island of Greenland. On January 5, President Trump affirmed, "We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security." Senior Trump aides soon echoed the assertion that the United States could seize the Danish territory to support national interests. These recent comments mark a return to rhetoric that made headlines in the early days of 2025, as the newly re-elected President Trump declared the United States could purchase the autonomous Danish territory. The renewed focus on Greenland underscores the Trump administration's approach to resource security as national security. Greenland is rich in natural resources, including iron ore, graphite, tungsten, palladium, vanadium, zinc, gold, uranium, copper, and oil. But the resources attracting the most attention to the region are rare earth elements (REEs). Vulnerabilities in US REE supply chains for defense and commercial needs have recently been at the forefront of policy issues in Washington. Notably, 2025 was marked by multiple rounds of high-stakes negotiations following Chinese export controls on heavy REEs. Disruptions to these materials exposed Western automotive supply chains to shortages, delays, and pauses in production. President Trump has acted meaningfully to address these prescient supply chain concerns both through public-private partnerships, such as the equity deal with US rare earth company MP Materials, and bilateral agreements with partners including Saudi Arabia, Japan, and Australia to further the development of rare earth capabilities outside of China. Deepening cooperation and commercial ties with mineral-rich countries is expected to be a cornerstone of US foreign policy in 2026.

Greenland ranks eighth in the world for rare earth reserves, with 1.5 million



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump (1) navigating a ship toward Greenland, along with billionaires like Jeff Bezos (C) and Bill Gates, who are already planning to mine the Arctic self-governing, autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark.
● INDIA TODAY

tons, and is home to two rare earth deposits that are among the largest in the world: Kvanefjeld and Tanbreez. Still, no rare earth mining has taken place on the island to date. The harsh Arctic climate is prohibitive to mining activities on most of the island throughout much of the calendar year. Only 20 percent of Greenland is ice-free, and temperatures can reach below -40 degrees Fahrenheit. However, melting ice caps amid warming global temperatures are opening access to additional mineral resources as well as new shipping and transportation routes, potentially turning Greenland into a viable mining partner.

In 2019, under the first Trump administration, the United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Greenland to jointly survey the region and exchange scientific and technical knowledge to develop rare earth and critical mineral resources. However, the MOU is now nearing expiration, and efforts to renew the agreement under the Biden administration came up short. The Trump administration appears to be focused on new ways to access Greenland's rare earths. In June 2025, the US Export-Import Bank sent a letter of interest to Critical Metals Corp for a \$120 million loan to fund the company's Tanbreez rare earth mine in Greenland. If approved, the loan would be the Trump administration's first overseas investment in a mining project.

The United States is not the only global power interested in expanding its

influence in Greenland and the Arctic region. In 2018, China launched its Arctic policy, also known as the Polar Silk Road, in which it controversially referred to itself as a "Near-Arctic State". Over the past seven years, China has attempted to grow its footprint in the region through scientific research expeditions, infrastructure investments, and natural resource acquisitions. By most metrics, the strategy has failed to take off as major projects continue to be blocked due to security concerns. But China's continued interest in Greenland reflects the island's geostrategic importance — and China's global lead in rare earth mining and processing expertise keeps the US adversary on the table as a potential future mining partner in Greenland. Greenland's minister of business and mineral resources warned that while Western partnerships are preferred, without an influx of investment, Greenland will have to turn to other partners, including China. Already, Chinese rare earth company Shenghe Resources is the second largest shareholder in the Kvanefjeld mine. Shenghe signed an MOU in 2018 to lead the processing and marketing of materials extracted from the site.

Given the security dynamics in the Arctic region, it is vital that the United States remains engaged in Greenland as a North American part-

ner and security ally. A critical minerals deal could be one way to deepen ties, but significant challenges inhibit commercial mining ventures on the island today, including infrastructure, energy, social license to operate, and regulatory barriers.

The United States should engage Greenland through close, collaborative coordination with European allies rather than a unilateral approach. As Greenland deepens its economic, regulatory, and infrastructure ties with Europe, working alongside the European Union and key partners can help align standards, de-risk investment, and present a unified, credible alternative to adversarial models. A transatlantic strategy would not only strengthen Greenland's capacity to responsibly develop its resources but also reinforce shared geopolitical, environmental, and supply chain objectives in the Arctic.

This paper explores the development of the Tanbreez and Kvanefjeld mines and evaluates Greenland's potential as a mining partner, given the complex climate and security environment.

The Arctic as a new security frontier

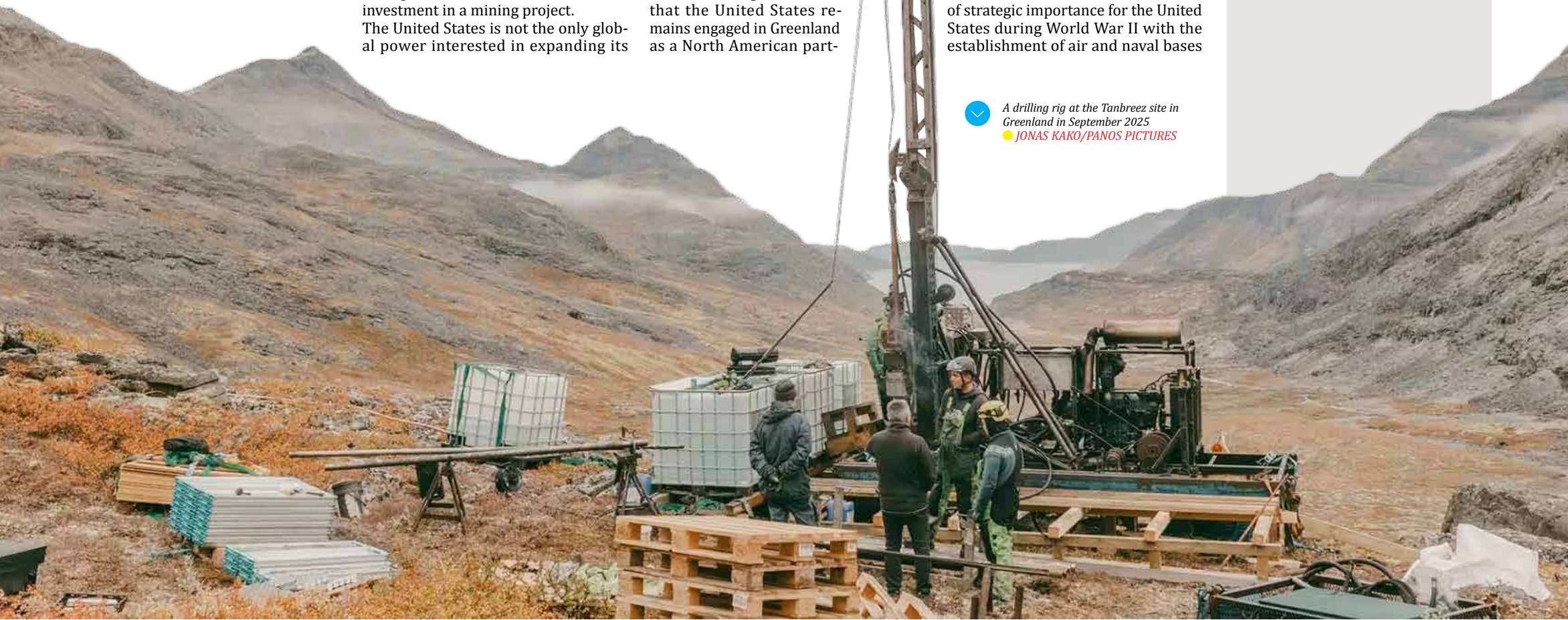
The Arctic region consists of territory across eight countries: the United States, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Greenland first became an area of strategic importance for the United States during World War II with the establishment of air and naval bases



Greenland ranks eighth in the world for rare earth reserves, with 1.5 million tons, and is home to two rare earth deposits that are among the largest in the world: Kvanefjeld and Tanbreez. Still, no rare earth mining has taken place on the island to date. The harsh Arctic climate is prohibitive to mining activities on most of the island throughout much of the calendar year. However, melting ice caps amid warming global temperatures are opening access to additional mineral resources as well as new shipping and transportation routes, potentially turning Greenland into a viable mining partner.



A drilling rig at the Tanbreez site in Greenland in September 2025
● JONAS KAKO/PANOS PICTURES



on the island. At the end of the war, these bases continued to serve as key Western posts to protect and defend against potential invasion by the Soviet Union. Today, the Pituffik Space Base (also known as Thule Air Base) is the northernmost US military installation with missile detection and defense as well as space surveillance capabilities. As Arctic ice caps melt, new emerging shipping routes through the region are creating new economic and geostrategic opportunities for global powers. The Northwest Passage is a series of maritime routes running through Canada's Arctic Archipelago, connecting the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. The passage is currently only navigable for short windows of time each year due to difficult conditions and shifting sea ice. But scientists project that with accelerated global warming and technological advancements, the passage may soon be open for transit every summer, connecting East Asia to Western Europe with a route 7,000 km shorter than the current route through the Panama Canal. Control of these Arctic waters will be key to unlocking the economic and security advantages of the emerging global passage, and Greenland's advantageous position along this route lends it strategic importance to the United States, China, and any other power looking to access the Northwest Pas-

ways to counter China's hold on global REE resources — US officials extensively lobbied the Tanbreez developer to prevent the sale of the deposit to a Chinese buyer. Tanbreez Mining sold the deposit to New York-based Critical Metals Corp for reportedly less than earlier offers from Chinese firms.

Deposits and ore grades

Greenland has two large deposits of rare earth minerals that are at the center of the surge in interest in Greenland's mineral wealth: the Kvanefjeld and Tanbreez mine sites. Both deposits are located on the southern tip of the island in close proximity to the town of Narsaq. Kvanefjeld is the third-largest known land deposit of REEs, with over 11 million metric tons of reserves and resources, including 370,000 metric tons of heavy rare earths. The project began exploration and prefeasibility under Energy Transition Minerals (formerly Greenland Minerals and Energy) in 2007, completing feasibility and entering the permitting stage in 2015. The feasibility studies revealed high rare earth ore grades of 1.43 percent, well above projects like Brazil's Serra Verde (0.15 percent) and Texas's Round Top (0.033 percent) but falling short of the superior grades of Australia's Mt Weld (6.40 percent), MP Materials' Mountain Pass (5.96 percent), and China's Bayan Obo (2.55 percent) (see the table).



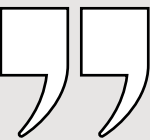
Social license to operate

While both Kvanefjeld and Tanbreez are globally significant deposits of rare earths, Tanbreez is one of only two mine sites, out of 147 active mineral licenses in all of Greenland, to receive an exploitation license. Intense political opposition to certain kinds of mining due to environmental and safety concerns has obstructed further licensing. REE deposits are commonly co-located with uranium. Mining deposits with uranium yield radioactive waste, creating additional environmental management challenges. Unlike the Tanbreez project, which is co-located with tantalum, niobium, and zirconium, there are an estimated 270,000 tons of uranium co-located in the Kvanefjeld deposit, making it the eighth-largest uranium deposit in the world. The Kvanefjeld project has sought an exploitation license since 2019, but the project's application has been repeatedly denied due to concerns with the deposit's uranium content. In 2021, the Inuit Ataqatigiit party won parliamentary elections, and Greenland's parliament promptly passed legislation banning exploration and mining of mineral deposits with a uranium concentration over 100 parts per million, effectively blocking the development of the Kvanefjeld rare earth mine, which has a uranium concentration of approximately 300 parts per million. The future of Greenland's mining industry was a pivotal issue in the 2021 election, which became widely known as the "mining election". The Inuit Ataqatigiit campaigned heavily for a ban on uranium mining in Greenland to protect the environment, public health, and Greenland's tourism and fishing industries. The grassroots movement "Uranium? No" gained momentum in the years leading up to the election, organizing protests at the Kvanefjeld mine site with an alliance of sheep farmers, fishermen, and the predominantly indigenous residents of Narsaq. The group's founding



A rock containing "red" rare earth elements, "black" arfvedsonite, and "white" feldspar minerals is held up at the Tanbreez site, Greenland.

● JAMES BROOKS/BBC



Viable large-scale rare earth mining in Greenland will require major investments in the enabling infrastructure. China has shown its willingness to invest in Greenland's infrastructure to support its mining operations as well as its Arctic ambitions, but so far, no major projects have come to fruition. In 2018, the state-owned Chinese Communication Construction company was shortlisted to construct and expand a network of airports in Nuuk, Ilulissat, and Qaqortoq. The proposed project raised flags with both the United States and Denmark, which interfered in the end.



Members of the Danish armed forces during a military drill in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, in September 2025.

● GUGLIELMO MANGIAPANE/REUTERS

activist, Mariane Paviassen, was elected to the Greenlandic Parliament in 2021 as a member of the Inuit Ataqatigiit party. As a result of the uranium mining ban, the Kvanefjeld project has been tied up in litigation since 2022. Energy Transition Minerals argues the legislation constitutes expropriation and demands compensation of \$11.5 billion, equivalent to nearly four times Greenland's GDP as of 2023. The uranium mining ban may not be permanent — the ban was originally adopted in the 1950s before being repealed in 2013 and reinstated in 2021 — but the intense local opposition to the Kvanefjeld project will continue to be a long-term barrier to operating.

Infrastructure

Despite Greenland's promising mineral wealth, there have only been nine active mine sites since World War II. Today, there are only two mining projects operating on the island: the White Mountain anorthosite mine and the small but high-grade Nalunaq gold mine. No rare earth mining has taken place to date. Further development of the mining sector is impeded by inadequate transport and energy infrastructure. The entire island, three times the size of Texas, has only 93 miles of road. Furthermore, Greenland has only 16 ports, each with only limited capacity. The Nuuk port, the island's largest, carried 2 million tons of cargo in 2021. The closest large port near the Kvanefjeld and Tanbreez mines is the Narsaq port, which handles only 50,000 tons of cargo annually — just 2.5 percent of the Nuuk port. Electricity generation is inconsistent and limited. The largest installed electricity generation capacity is currently 54 MW in the capital city of Nuuk, 290 miles away from Narsaq. Significant investment in energy transmission and capacity will be a necessity for any mining operation. Viable large-scale rare earth mining in Greenland will require major investments in the enabling infrastructure. China has shown its willingness to invest in Greenland's infrastructure to support its mining operations as well as its Arctic ambitions, but so far, no major projects have come to fruition. In 2018, the state-owned Chinese Communication Construction company was shortlisted to construct and expand a network of airports in Nuuk, Ilulissat, and Qaqortoq. The project would require a nearly \$550 million investment, equivalent to 17 percent of Greenland's GDP, which was just \$3.3 billion as of 2023. The proposed project raised flags with both the United States and Denmark. US Secretary of Defense James Mattis urged the Danish government to interfere in the transaction to prevent China from establishing a foothold in the region. Denmark pulled the bid and financed a large portion of the airport updates itself to block Chinese involvement. While Denmark interfered in the project for national security reasons, growing calls from the Greenlandic people for economic independence may make the island nation more eager to accept foreign investment from China in the future.

The full article was first published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Top Rare Earth Mines by Ore Grade

Rare Earth Mine	Country Location	Ore Grade of Reserves (%)
Tomtorskoye	Russia	14.500
Steenkampskraal	South Africa	8.680
Mt Weld	Australia	6.400
Mountain Pass	United States	5.960
Ngualla	Tanzania	4.800
Ozango	Angola	3.040
Kangankunde	Malawi	2.900
Nolans Bore	Australia	2.900
Bayan Obo	China	2.555
Wicheeda	Canada	2.430
Nechalacho	Canada	1.700
Kvanefjeld	Greenland	1.430
Songwe Hill	Malawi	1.160

sage and project power globally. For years, China has attempted to establish a foothold in Greenland through infrastructure investments, but no Chinese investment has come to fruition due to geopolitical concerns. In the last 10 years, China has ventured to invest in Greenland's airports, an abandoned naval station, and a satellite ground station, but its ambitions have been largely stalled and curtailed by US and Danish stakeholders. While China has yet to build a Polar Silk Road of geopolitical significance, China's dominant position in rare earth separating and processing offers it an advantage in accessing Greenland's rare earth resources via processing offtake agreements. The United States is actively looking for

The Tanbreez deposit is not as far along in development — only completing its preliminary economic assessment in 2025 — but is also estimated to contain a globally significant deposit of REEs, potentially the world's largest, at 28.2 million metric tons. Over 27 percent of the project is estimated to consist of heavy rare earths. However, ore grades are estimated to be much lower, at 0.38 percent. Ore grades are especially important to the economic feasibility of a rare earth mine — higher-grade deposits require less material to be mined and are easier to separate and process, equating to lower costs. Nevertheless, the high concentration of valuable heavy rare earths makes Tanbreez an attractive deposit despite lower ore grades.



UEFA Champions League: Taremi strikes as Olympiacos finds playoff hopes



Olympiacos striker Mahdi Taremi celebrates his goal during a 2-0 win against Leverkusen in the UEFA Champions League at the Karaiskakis Stadium, Piraeus, Greece, on January 20, 2026.
● olympiacos.org

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Mahdi Taremi was on target as Olympiacos was given fresh hopes of securing a playoff spot at the UEFA Champions League with a 2-0 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in Piraeus, Greece. Backed by the roaring home supporters, the Greek champion got off to a dream start at the Karaiskakis Stadium, when Rodinei whipped a corner into the box and Costinha powered his header in for a second-minute lead. Leverkusen, missing several key players including keeper Mark Flekken, Edmond Tapsoba and Nathan Tella, gradually dominated, with Olympiacos keeper Kostas Tzolakis producing a string of heroic saves. However, it was the home side that scored again, hitting the Bundesliga club with a two-pass counter-attack and Taremi drilling in from another Rodinei assist in first-

half stoppage time. The goal took the Iranian's tally to an impressive 14 goals and three assists in 23 appearances across all competitions since he joined The Legend from Internazionale in the summer. Leverkusen tried to bounce back after the break but despite having possession was unable to beat Tzolakis, who made another fine save in the 80th minute in a one-on-one with substitute Patrik Schick. The second straight win in the competition lifted Olympiacos to 22nd in the 36-team table on eight points, one behind Leverkusen, which is 19th. The top eight teams win automatic qualification for the round of 16 while the next 16 teams go into a playoff. The final round of the league-phase fixtures will see Olympiacos visit Ajax Amsterdam next Wednesday, while Bayer Leverkusen will host Villarreal. Elsewhere in the penultimate

round in the league stage, Arsenal maintained its perfect record with a 3-1 victory over Inter in Milan, while Manchester City was stunned by the same scoreline at Norwegian minnow club Bodø/Glimt. In Lisbon, Luis Suárez scored twice, including a 90th-minute winner as Sporting CP beat defending champion PSG 2-1 to move into the top eight. French striker Kylian Mbappé netted two early strikes to inspire Real Madrid to a 6-1 rout of Monaco at home, with Club Brugge hammering bottom-club Kairat 4-1 in Astana. FC Copenhagen shared the spoils with Serie A champion Napoli in a 1-1 draw at home, and Tottenham Hotspurs defeated 10-man Dortmund 2-0 in London to jump to fourth and find a bit of relief after a run of poor results in domestic action. Ajax came from behind to walk away with a 2-1 win at Villarreal.

Iranian wrestlers doubtful for Zagreb Open over visa issue

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers may be ruled out of the upcoming Zagreb Open due to visa issues, Abdolmahdi Nasirzadeh, the vice president of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, has said. The opening Ranking Series event of the international season kicks off in the Croatian capital on February 4. However,

the visa process for members of the Iranian freestyle and Greco-Roman squads has been hampered by an ongoing internet shutdown in the country, casting doubt on their participation. The Iranian government cut off internet services on 8 January for security reasons amid recent domestic unrest. "The Wrestling Federation has made all neces-

sary arrangements for sending the wrestlers and submitted the documents for 22 wrestlers to the Croatian embassy earlier this month," Nasirzadeh told Mehr News Agency. "The federation was informed that due to the internet shutdown, the Iranian teams may not be able to be dispatched to the Ranking Series event," added Nasirzadeh, though he remained optimistic that ongoing follow-ups with the Iranian Foreign Ministry would resolve the problem in the coming days. Absence from the tournament would be a massive blow for Iranian head coaches Hassan Rangraz and Pejman Dorostkar, as the event serves as a significant part of the Iranian trials for April's Asian Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, as well as for the World Championships in Manama and the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in September. "We are making every effort to make sure the wrestlers go to Zagreb. Wrestling has always spearheaded Iranian sport on the global stage, and we will try to utilize the country's sports diplomacy apparatus to resolve the issue," Nasirzadeh said.

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Iranian freestyle wrestlers are seen in action during a training session in Tehran, Iran, on January 19, 2026.
● FARSHAD BANDANI/
IAWFIR



WTT Youth Contender Doha 2026: Faraji triumphs in U17 boys' singles



● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis prodigy Benyamin Faraji rounded out the latest WTT Youth Contender event in style, claiming the U17 boys' singles title in Doha. A winner of a historic under-15 bronze medal for the country at the 2024 World Youth Championships, Faraji defeated Vietnam's Man Lung Sai in straight games (11-8, 11-6, 11-7) in Tuesday's final at the

Lusail Sports Arena. Given a bye in the first round, the Iranian began his campaign with a 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-8) win against Lam Sheung Man – also from Vietnam – in the round of 32, and then came from behind to beat India's Rishaan Chattopadhyay 3-1 (5-11, 11-4, 11-7, 11-5) for a place in the quarterfinals. A straight-game win (11-7, 11-9, 11-6) against Malaysian Lai Yong Ren sent Faraji into the

semifinals, where he defeated South Korea's Ma Yeongmin 3-1 (13-11, 16-18, 11-5, 11-5). Arshia Lorestani was the other Iranian boy in the under-17 action in Doha. Lorestani beat both Lebanon's Michel Abi Nader and Lin Chin-Ting of Chinese Taipei in straight games, but relinquished a first-game lead to suffer a 3-1 setback (10-12, 11-7, 11-8, 11-4) against the Vietnamese finalist in the round of 16.

Iranian Women's Volleyball Premier League: Six teams guaranteed playoff spots

Sports Desk

Four more teams booked a place in the playoffs, joining already-qualified Saipa and Shahar Arka, after the latest round of the Iranian Women's Volleyball Premier League regular season on Tuesday. Sepahan held off a late surge by Shahar Arka to prevail 3-1 (25-23, 25-23, 25-27, 29-27) in Karaj, avenging its setback

in the reverse fixture earlier in the season. The win puts Sepahan second in Group B, level on six wins and 18 points with its host, and secures its playoff qualification. Shahin Bandar Ameri also guaranteed a playoff berth with a 3-1 victory (25-21, 20-25, 25-16, 25-14) at Mehregan Shiraz. Shahin is now third in the group with five wins from seven games. Malavan Tehran claimed its

third win of the campaign with a four-set victory over Padideh San'at (25-19, 25-8, 22-25, 25-21) to sit fourth in the group, remaining in playoff contention with two games left in the regular season. In Group A, defending champion Saipa saw its perfect record end after a straight-set loss (25-21, 25-15, 25-19) away to Moqavemat Shahrdari in Tabriz. The home side progressed after securing its

fifth win of the season, moving into third in the table. Majan Mazandaran eased to a straight-sets victory (25-12, 25-22, 25-14) over Naft Omidyeh at home, sitting second in Group A with six wins and 17 points – just one point behind Saipa. San'at Mes Rafsanjan boosted its playoff hopes with a 3-0 win (26-24, 25-17, 25-18) over Dr. Farhad Clinic at home.



● MNA

Sistan and Baluchestan boasts unique potential in marine tourism



● chtn.ir

Iranica Desk

Sistan and Baluchestan Province, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, is located in southeastern Iran. Due to its strategic geographic position and extensive coasts, it has become one of the most important tourist destinations in the country. With its Makoran coasts, serving as a gateway to the Gulf of Oman, the province boasts unique potential in the field of marine tourism and can play a significant role in economic prosperity and coastal economic development.

Sistan and Baluchestan Province is not only notable for its beautiful coasts, but also for its rich cultural heritage. Spring travelers visiting this province will encounter a blend of rich heritage, handicrafts, tourist attractions, and ancient historical sites, creating a memorable experience, according to chtn.ir. The handicrafts of Sistan and Baluchestan, with their unique diversity and beauty, are one of

the most important elements of tourism in the province. These handicrafts, stemming from the traditional arts of the region's people, can serve as valuable souvenirs for tourists and a source of income for local artists.

Chabahar, as a gem of maritime tourism, with countless attractions, has become one of the most important tourist destinations in Sistan and Baluchestan and is considered one of the region's maritime tourism poles. Maritime tourism in the province provides unique opportunities for the economic development of this province including the establishment of beach hotels and accommodations, the development of restaurants and cafes, the creation of recreational and tourist centers, and the support of local handicrafts. Given the unique capabilities of maritime tourism in Sistan and Baluchestan, the government and the private sector must collaborate and coordinate to develop comprehensive tourism

plans for this province. These plans should include investment in infrastructure, support for local artists and artisans, marketing and advertising, and human resource training.

The development of maritime tourism in Sistan and Baluchestan can contribute to job creation, increased income, and economic development in the province, as well as help preserve the environment and the culture of this region.

The tourism industry, as a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and improvement in people's health and quality of life, has significant potential in Sistan and Baluchistan, with its rich history and culture. The region should take steps to better utilize this potential through increased promotion and introduction of its attractions.

However, one of the most significant challenges in developing marine tourism in this vast province was the provision of fuel for vessels. In this regard, the governor of Sistan and Bal-



● IRNA

uchestan Province made considerable efforts to resolve this issue.

The provision of subsidized fuel for domestic and international tourist vessels was approved by the Cabinet. This important decision followed an initial proposal by Mansour Bijar, the Governor of Sistan and Baluchestan, and his continuous and serious follow-ups at a meeting of coastal governors of the country. Subsequently, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, by raising the issue in the Cabinet, created the conditions for the approval and implementation of this strategic resolution.

After approval by the Cabinet on the proposal of the Ministry of Oil, this plan has been notified to the ministries of Cultural Heritage, Oil, Road and Urban Development, and Agricultural Jihad for implementation.

Bijar stated, "The implementation of this decision creates a unique and ideal opportunity

for private sector's investors, marine tourism activists, and related economic sectors, and can play a significant role in boosting tourism, developing a marine-based economy, and increasing investment attractions on the country's coasts, particularly in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

He added that according to this plan, all recreational and tourism vessels, both domestic and foreign, regardless of the country's flag, will be able to use subsidized fuel after entering the coastal strip and meeting the necessary standards.

In this framework, vessels are initially required to obtain a certificate for passenger transport based on the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and national standards, and later, with a license for activity from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, they are introduced to the Ministry of Oil for receiving subsidized fuel.

This plan, which has been re-

alized for the first time in the country and is being implemented with the emphasis of the governor in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, can play an effective role in the development of marine tourism, attracting investments, and strengthening the position of this province on the country's tourism map.

The deputy head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization for tourism affairs, referring to the importance of fuel prices in determining the cost of tourism tours in this province, announced the positive effects of the subsidized fuel plan for domestic and international tourist vessels.

Alireza Shahbakhsh said, "Considering the vastness of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, the cost of fuel has a significant impact on the final price of tourism tours. Therefore, the approval of the subsidized fuel plan is an important step towards reducing costs and increasing the competitiveness of this sector.

He continued that the most significant impact of this plan will be an increase in the number of tourists, the development of tourism infrastructure, and the creation of new job opportunities.

He emphasized that the revival of marine-based economy will lead to the development of related sea industries and the creation of diverse business opportunities.

He also referred to the licensing of homestays and hotels centered on cultural heritage and said, This plan provides a suitable opportunity for investment and the development of tourism accommodations with a focus on the cultural and historical attractions of Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Four natural wonders of Kermanshah gain national heritage status



● chtn.ir

The national registration of natural landmarks — encompassing ancient trees, lagoons, springs, and rare botanical species — is playing a vital role in preserving the environment and natural resources of Kermanshah Province.

Moslem Karami, an expert at the Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, announced that 53 natural heritage sites from the province have been officially added to the national list to date, according to chtn.ir.

Highlighting a recent session of the Registration Council at

the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Karami confirmed the national registration of four additional natural sites. Among these are the ancient Ash trees of Sarab-e Shineh in Sar Firuzabad village, which are estimated to be approximately 450 years old.

Furthermore, an ancient Pistacia atlantica (Mt. Atlas mastic tree) located in the northern reaches of the scenic Satyari tourism village has been officially recognized. This 650-year-old tree remains in remarkably healthy condition. Following a proposal by environmental advocates

and subsequent evaluations by heritage experts, it was deemed qualified for inclusion in the National Natural Heritage List.

The list now also includes a massive ancient Plane tree in the Darband village of Sahneh. Estimated to be 400 years old, this robust and valuable tree was registered following a formal proposal by the Sahneh Municipality.

In addition to these botanical landmarks, the picturesque Qareh Daneh spring and lagoon in Qeysevand village have gained national status. Selected for its significant water discharge,

stunning landscapes, and high potential for tourism, this permanent spring flows year-round — maintaining its volume even during periods of drought. Its registration was a primary request from local residents and natural heritage enthusiasts.

Karami concluded by emphasizing that the identification and protection of these ancient trees and sites represent a shared priority for both the local community and provincial authorities. He noted that the Kermanshah Cultural Heritage Organization remains steadfast in its mission to identify and document such invaluable assets to ensure their long-term survival.

Kermanshah Province, often referred to as the "Gateway to the Zagros," is a land of dramatic landscapes and ecological diversity. Its nature is characterized by a breathtaking contrast between rugged limestone peaks, lush oak forests, and fertile valleys. The province's unique geography creates a sanctuary for a wide array of flora and fauna, making it one of Iran's most significant biodiversity hotspots.

The province is particularly famous for its abundant water resources. Numerous springs



emerge from the heart of the mountains, giving life to dense orchards and ancient woodlands. The oak and wild pistachio forests that carpet the slopes of the Zagros serve as the lungs of the region, providing a habitat for rare species like the Persian Squirrel and the endangered Caucasian Leopard. This vibrant natural tapestry not

only attracts eco-tourists from across the globe but also forms the cultural backbone of the local nomadic and rural communities. The ongoing national registration efforts are a testament to the undeniable value of this heritage, ensuring that Kermanshah's pristine wilderness remains untouched for generations to come.



Pezeshkian prioritizes mental health amid unrest, seeks medical reassurance

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored the critical need for comprehensive mental health support across Iranian society during a review of a health plan implementation on Wednesday, president.ir reported. The meeting, held in Tehran, assessed the program's progress, particularly in pilot regions, and highlighted the escalating mental health crisis stemming from recent unrest. Addressing the psychological, social, and mental health dimensions of our society is now the most crucial priority for the healthcare system, Pezeshkian stated. He emphasized the government's commitment to supporting this effort and urged the medical community to actively participate. "We are obligated to en-

sure the health of our people, not only physically but also psychologically and socially." The president acknowledged the significant impact of social determinants of health (SDH) on the recent incidents, citing statistics indicating a substantial portion of casualties and hospitalizations were linked to social factors. "Physicians can play a vital role here, as many of these individuals faced psychological trauma, mental health disorders, or issues related to employment and social deprivation," he explained. Pezeshkian stressed the importance of preventative interventions, stating, "If the healthcare system and medical community adopt this proactive approach, we shouldn't witness such events. Timely mental health interventions can play a decisive role in reducing tensions and controlling social consequences."

He further cautioned the system against falling prey to analyses that serve the interests of adversaries. Addressing the medical community directly, Pezeshkian urged reassurance regarding the events. "It is essential to reassure the medical community about the realities of recent events," he said. "Until you are convinced, you cannot properly fulfill your professional and ethical responsibilities towards those affected and society as a whole." The president also called for a nationwide expansion of mental health interventions, moving beyond pilot programs. "Preventing incidents is far more important to me than dealing with the aftermath of unrest," he asserted. He suggested that healthcare centers conduct thorough analyses of the recent events from a professional perspective. Pezeshkian concluded by emphasizing



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a session on mental health held in Tehran on January 21, 2026. president.ir

the potential of the medical community to be a powerful force for social stability. "I believe they can be more impactful

than many cultural institutions," he said, referencing his previous experience in medical leadership.

Historic Rasht bazaar suffers devastating losses, restoration unlikely



Arts & Culture Desk

Three Qajar-era caravanserais within Rasht historic bazaar were completely destroyed by fire during recent unrest, officials confirmed Wednesday, effectively ruling out the possibility of restoration for the irreplaceable structures. The blaze, which engulfed the 24-hectare market, has been described as a "catastrophe" by cultural heritage officials. According to Alireza Izadi, Di-

rector-General of the Office of Registration of Historical Monuments and Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the damage is extensive. "The situation in Rasht historic bazaar is an absolute catastrophe," Izadi told the ILNA after a recent assessment of the damage. "Three historic caravanserais, the Small Taq (arch), the Large Taq, and the Malek Caravanserai, have been completely con-

sumed by the fire."

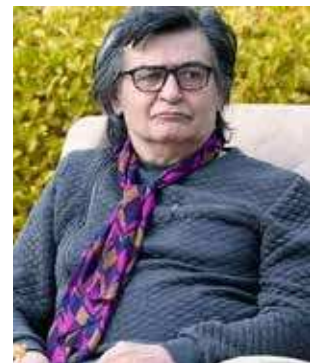
The historic bazaar, a sprawling complex of interconnected courtyards, squares, and caravanserais dating back to the Qajar and early Pahlavi periods, is a significant tourist attraction. The Taq structures, the Moshtasham Caravanserai, the Chinese Bazaar, the Malek Caravanserai, the Golshan Caravanserai, and the Qeysariyeh Caravanserai were among the bazaar's most treasured landmarks. The Malek Caravanserai, in particular, played a vital role in the export of rice to Russia and silk to Kashan and Yazd during the Qajar era. Izadi stated that the intensity of the fire in certain sections of the bazaar rendered restoration impossible. "Unfortunately, in some parts of the historic bazaar and within the aforementioned caravanserais, the intensity of the fire was such that restoration of these complexes is not possible. These structures will need to be entirely rebuilt."

The bazaar has a history of destruction, having previously been ravaged by fire during the reigns of Karim Khan Zand and Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, as well as by earthquakes and negligence. "The bazaar has seen many incidents throughout history," Izadi noted. "It has been set ablaze by the soldiers of Karim Khan Zand and looted by the soldiers of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar. Earthquakes and carelessness have also repeatedly led to the destruction and burning of Rasht bazaar, to the point where shops, mosques, and even historic churches have been completely destroyed." The ministry is currently compiling a comprehensive report on the damage to historical sites across the country resulting from the recent unrest. "Last week, we requested all provinces to report the extent of damage to historical monuments and structures during the recent events," Izadi added.

Veteran actor Reza Rooygari dies at 79

Arts & Culture Desk

Reza Rooygari, a celebrated veteran actor of Iranian cinema, theater, and television, died at 79 early Wednesday in Tehran following a heart attack, according to the House of Cinema. Rooygari's extensive filmography includes iconic roles in films such as 'The Tenants' (1987), 'The Eagles' (1985), 'Boutique' (2004), and 'The Good, the Bad, the Corny' (2017). He also appeared in numerous television series, including the popular 'Mahalle Behdasht' (1984) and 'Mokhtarnam' (2010-2011). Rooygari's career began in theater in 1969, and he quickly gained recognition for his versatility and captivating performances. A pivotal moment arrived in 1979 when he was approached by composer Fereydoon Khoshnood to record a revolution-



ary anthem for the burgeoning movement, a moment he later described as "a call to action." "It was a time of great change, and I felt compelled to contribute," Rooygari once remarked. Beyond acting, Rooygari was also a talented singer, releasing albums of revolutionary songs, and a painter. In recent years, his health had been a concern, with reports of strokes and related complications surfacing since 2014.

Iranian mountaineer lost on Makalu after winter ascent

Social Desk

Iranian alpinist Abolfazl Gozali is missing after a successful winter ascent of Mount Makalu, the world's fifth-highest peak, officials confirmed Wednesday. Gozali, 43, disappeared during his descent somewhere between Camp IV and Camp III, following a triumphant summit bid on January 15 alongside a Nepali Sherpa team, marking the first Iranian winter ascent of the 8,485-meter (27,838-foot) peak in 17 years, IRNA reported. The body of Sherpa climber Phurba Ongel has been found at 7,500 meters. He had previously summited Manaslu and Lhotse, and held the record for the fastest acquisition of the Snow Leopard award, a prestigious recognition for climbing seven peaks over 6,000 meters. Gozali embarked on his Makalu expe-



dition with the "Sano Sherpa" team from Nepal on December 17, aiming to conquer the notoriously difficult peak during the winter season. The mountain, known locally as the "Black Devil" due to its frigid temperatures - often plummeting below -30°C (-22°F) - presents formidable conditions, including steep rock and ice faces and unpredictable weather patterns. Only one previous winter ascent of Makalu has been recorded, achieved by Polish and Italian climbers decades ago.

"The situation is incredibly complex," stated Hamid Mosaedian, head of the Iranian Mountaineering Federation's rescue committee. "One of the Sherpas fell, and several others went to assist him. Gozali descended alone, and we haven't seen him since. Rescue teams were deployed, but unfortunately, they haven't located him." Search and rescue operations, hampered by severe weather conditions, are ongoing. Teams are currently assessing the possibility of renewed efforts once wind speeds subside in the coming days. According to 8K Expeditions, four experienced Sherpa rescuers-Ashok Lama, Pasdawa Sherpa, Ang Chhiring Sherpa, and Pasang Tenji Sherpa-were deployed to Base Camp on Saturday morning in a voluntary mission to recover the deceased climber and search for the missing Iranian alpinist.

Fresh initiatives needed ...

What scenarios are conceivable for the future of Iran-IAEA relations? Is it possible to reach a new agreement? What prerequisites are necessary for such a deal?

Iran's foreign policy needs new initiatives. Apart from consultations with regional players like Egypt, Qatar, and Oman, which have limited influence, Iran has not proposed any specific initiatives. Simply asserting its rights under the NPT, which grants it the right to peaceful nuclear energy and enrichment, is not enough and will not achieve anything in the current complex global situation. Relying solely on regional mediation will not solve the problem either: Iran's foreign policy toward the nuclear appears to have lacked creativity. This inertia in foreign policy, distancing from the IAEA, Washington's unilateralism, the lack of serious solutions, and the absence of regional treaties have created a deadlock that promises nothing good. Iran must tie its interests to those of regional countries and create regional security pacts and estab-

lish regional nuclear consortiums.

If the case is referred to the UN Security Council, what possibilities and challenges lie ahead? In this scenario, Iran might be able to count on China and Russia's veto power. However, these countries voted against Iran in the UN prior to 2015, which led to the country being brought under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. They might do so again in a larger game with the US. As the old saying goes, countries have no permanent friends or enemies, only permanent interests, and the support of these two countries could diminish. Iran's alliance with Russia and China, despite having a strategic title, will not provide major assistance if the country is placed under Chapter VII due to the lack of military treaties and a joint defense clause. We are now facing a new US that is different from one under Obama and Biden. Today's America prioritizes unilateralism in its policies and does not even rely on the UN Security Council's final vote, making a mere consensus sufficient for it to take measures against Iran's nuclear program.