Leader visits Imam Khomeini's shrine ahead of Islamic Revolution's 47th anniv.

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EU's dangerous precedent for IRGC to fall flat

EDITORIAL

The European Union's move to designate Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization could carry legal, political and security consequences that go well beyond a one-off decision. The measure lacks legitimacy, is marked by normative contradictions and legal weaknesses, and risks creating destabilizing repercussions for the international order as well as for regional and global security.

The EU's action is not directed only at a military organization, but from the perspective of Iranian public opinion, it is widely perceived as an affront to national sovereignty and collective dignity, given that the IRGC, as one of the pillars of national defense and a protector of the country's interests, holds an established and deeply rooted position in Iran's lived social experience.

Labeling an official state institutions as "terrorist" represents a dangerous precedent in international relations and runs counter to the core principles of international law, including state sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention. The EU's selective and overtly political approach to defining and applying the concept of terrorism seriously undermines its moral and legal credibility to act as an impartial arbiter in this domain. According to reports and acknowledgements from Western sources, a significant number of individuals active in extremist terrorist groups such as ISIS (Daesh) have had European origins, a reality that raises serious questions about the security responsibilities of European governments themselves. At critical junctures, the IRGC have played an effective and transnational role in containing ISIS terrorism, a threat that was not confined to West Asia, but directly targeted the security of Europe and the United States as well. This provocative and irresponsible step, spearheaded by certain European states including Germany and the United Kingdom, falls politically in line with the demands of the Israeli regime and with hardline factions shaping US policy.

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Pezeshkian: Gov't bent on implementing key reforms to tackle injustice

National Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that the government is determined to carry out necessary reforms in the country to fight injustice and discrimination.

Speaking on Saturday at the shrine of the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, Pezeshkian said justice is among the major missing elements of modern society in Iran.

He described unity as the most essential necessity in establishing justice in the country, stressing that any action taken to establish justice have faced resistance from those who have benefited from the country's situation.

His remarks came amid tense situation in the country, which has been caused by recent protests over economic problems.

The peaceful protests began on December 28 in Tehran but foreign-backed armed rioters and terrorists hijacked the sporadic protests on January 8 and 9.

US President Donald Trump openly and publicly encouraged violence by calling on armed rioters to take over state institutions and threatening military action against Iran if they were confronted.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the shrine of Founder of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini, in Tehran, on January 31, 2026.
president.ir

The violence, encouraged openly by the US and the Israeli regime, resulted in extensive damage to public and private property, with widespread destruction of shops, government institutions, public service facilities, and the killing of thousands of civilians and security forces.

Pezeshkian stressed on Saturday that during the recent riots, Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and European actors all sought to incite unrest and create division in Iran.

Pezeshkian said such actors attempted to provoke tensions and equipped certain groups, adding that some innocent people were drawn into the situation and taken to the streets.

According to the president, the aim was to fragment the country, fuel conflict and hatred among the people, and create deep divisions within society.

The president noted that in ordinary social protests, people do not take up firearms, kill military personnel, or set ambulances and markets on fire.

He emphasized that the government has a duty to listen to protesters' voices and concerns and to address their issues, stressing that authorities are prepared to do so.

However, he added, it was clear the situation went beyond a simple social protest, as enemies exploited existing problems to provoke unrest and continue efforts to divide society.

'Our hands are on the trigger,' Iranian Army chief warns

Amir Hatami
MIZAN

Iran's top Army commander said the country's armed forces are fully prepared for any military confrontation, warning that any misstep by Israel or the US would endanger their own security and destabilize the region.

Speaking on Saturday at the "Young Soldier of the Armed Forces" ceremony, Major General Amir Hatami stressed Iran is operating at peak defensive readiness, with close coordination across all branches of the military, Press TV reported.

"The enemies are fully under our surveillance, and since we are aware of their malicious intentions, our finger remains on the trigger," General Hatami said.

He went on to warn that, "Should they make any mistake or miscalculation, without the slightest hesitation, they will certainly place their own security, their forces, the region, and the criminal Zionist regime in serious jeopardy."

Hatami noted Iran's military strength has advanced sharply since the 12-day war imposed on the country by Israel and the US, particularly in missile capability, air defense, and deterrence.

He emphasized that the experience reshaped Iran's understanding of modern warfare and exposed both enemy vulnerabilities and Iran's own strengths.

"Even Russia, which has now been engaged with NATO countries for more than three years, does not have our 12-day experience. We confronted all of the enemy's science and technology and hybrid warfare; we touched and identified its weaknesses and strengths, and we also recognized our own. Today we are prepared differently; our defensive power is not destructible," he said.

Israel's June 13 attacks on Iran, an unprovoked aggression that struck civilian, military, and nuclear sites, killed several senior commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians.

Iran responded with forceful, retaliatory drone and missile strikes against the occupied territories, hitting Israeli settlements and military targets.

On June 22, US air and naval forces escalated the conflict by striking three Iranian nuclear facilities in blatant violation of international law.

Iran retaliated the next day by targeting a US base in Qatar, damaging parts of the installation.

By June 24, after sustaining heavy losses, Israel and the US agreed to halt the fighting.

Hatami highlighted that neighboring states had blocked the use of their land and airspace against Iran, warning that any attack on Iran would spread insecurity across West Asia.

He added that sanctions and economic pressure would not weaken Iran's resolve.

Tensions remain high as US Central Command expands its regional presence, as it continues to deploy warships, fighter jets, and troops under the pretext of "regional security."

Iran has warned that any aggression will be met with a swift and forceful response.

Iranian officials emphasize that Washington's presence fuels conflict and undermines regional unity while Iran remains the true guarantor of security in West Asia.

Araghchi: US must relinquish threats for 'fruitful negotiations'

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated Iran's position for negotiations with the United States, saying that Washington must first abandon threats and pressures for the start of "genuine and fruitful negotiations.

The Iranian foreign minister said in an interview with CNN Türk television news channel on Friday that no progress could be achieved without an agreement on the framework, content, and rules of the negotiations.

Araghchi highlighted that Washington often tries to establish contact with Tehran through third parties, stressing that Iran is ready for fair and balanced diplomacy, yet talks cannot be conducted in an imposed manner.

A fair agreement cannot be worked out without mutual respect and equal footing, Araghchi pointed out.

"Third parties are relaying messages from US officials to us, demanding negotiations. Our position is clear: We are ready for fair and balanced diplomacy. If it is a fair and impartial agreement, as [President Donald] Trump asserts, we are prepared then; but negotiations are different from dictation," the top Iranian diplomat said.

Araghchi stated that no one can determine the outcome of negotiations before they start.

Abbas Araghchi
IRNA

"Naturally, the United States must abandon threats and intimidation, and be ready to negotiate on equal footing on the basis of mutual respect and common interests. Negotiations are a matter of give-and-take; no one can dictate to another. This is not negotiation," he emphasized.

"We have very bad experiences with negotiations with the Americans. When Israel attacked us in June and the United States joined in, we were right in the middle of negotiations. The move created an atmosphere of distrust. If the United States really wants to pursue serious diplomacy, it must overcome this mistrust," Araghchi said.

He underscored that Iran still places a high priority on diplomacy and hopes rationality and dialogue will prevail.

EU's dangerous precedent ...

Europe's repeated claims of defending human rights stand in sharp contrast to its record of broad and damaging sanctions against the Iranian people, measures that have directly affected the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

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The track record of NATO military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and parts of Africa is widely viewed by independent observers as involving clear instances of organized and destabilizing violence, an assessment that has also been acknowledged in Western media and think tanks.

The IRGC is an organization that emerged from within Iranian society itself and, alongside its defense mission, has played a role in promoting long term security, infrastructure development, public services and social cohesion.

Responsibility for the political, legal and security consequences of this decision rests squarely with European policymakers. The Islamic Republic of Iran, under its established rights, retains the option to fall back on legal, judicial and diplomatic mechanisms to safeguard its national interests.

The historical record of EU's relations with Iran is marked by interventionist behavior and decisions that have affected religious beliefs, livelihoods, political independence and the broader civilizational integrity of the Iranian nation. It is therefore unsurprising that this legacy has fostered deep public mistrust in Iran toward such unilateral actions.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON

Minister assures oil sales unaffected by market changes

Mohsen Paknejad
SHANA

Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad dismissed concerns about the impact of the US taking control of Venezuelan oil on Tehran's crude sales, asserting that authorities maintain full command over pricing strategies and market negotiations.

"We have full oversight of our area of work, and there is no need to worry about these matters," Paknejad said, ILNA reported.

Responding to speculation that global oil prices could fall following the United States' seizure of Venezuelan oil — raising concerns that Iran's oil might be sold below budgeted prices — Paknejad said the oil market was inherently dynamic.

"Oil is a dynamic market," he said.

He noted that base prices are set according to global benchmarks that are beyond Iran's control and are influenced by external variables.

"Setting base prices based on global indices that are outside our control is subject to exogenous variables," Paknejad said.

He added that Iran's ability to manage changes and coordinate with end buyers takes place through negotiations aligned with operational costs, while market supply conditions and demand volumes also fluctuate seasonally.

Paknejad explained that, "Iran's mastery and ability to make adjustments and coordination with end buyers proceed through negotiations commensurate with operational costs, and market supply conditions and demand volume also change seasonally."

Paknejad said multiple indicators affect price determination, adding that Iranian officials take all relevant benchmarks into account to secure the best possible sale price.

"Different indicators play a role in determining prices, and without doubt our colleagues consider such indicators and set the best possible price for sales," he said.

According to ILNA, Paknejad also responded to concerns that Washington, having control over Venezuelan oil, might seek to strike deals with Iran's long-standing customers such as China.

"We have full oversight of our area of work, and there is no need to worry about these matters," he said.

Iran does not release detailed crude export figures, citing US sanctions that it says require confidentiality.

China's crude oil imports from Iran soared to their highest level in four months in November, Reuters reported in December, citing data from analytics firm Kpler.

Kpler figures showed inflows of Iranian shipments increased by 233,000 barrels per day (bpd) from October to reach 1.35 million bpd in November, the highest since August.

Iran's pistachio exports surged 80% to $636m in 2024: *FAO data*

Economy Desk

Iran's pistachio exports jumped 80 percent in 2024 to reach $636 million, according to new data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported by Tasnim on Saturday. The figure stood at approximately $353 million in the previous year, with export volume rising from 61,000 tons in 2023 to 98,000 tons in 2024.

Iran ranked as the world's second-largest pistachio exporter in 2024 after the United States, which exported $2.5 billion worth of pistachios during the same period. US exports registered only a five percent increase, while Iran's 80 percent export surge narrowed the gap between the two countries in the market. Turkey placed third globally with $444 million in pistachio exports, reflecting a 40 percent year-on-year increase.

Experts identified several key factors behind Iran's export jump. First, relatively improved production following years of water shortages and supply fluctuations enabled higher export volumes. Second, rising exchange rates, while creating costs for the domestic economy, provided Iranian exporters with price competitiveness in global markets. Third, Iran's gradual return to traditional markets in Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Europe — markets partially lost in previous years due to trade and logistical constraints or intense U.S. competition — contributed to the growth. Additionally, shifting global consumption patterns and rising demand for naturally sourced dried fruits have benefited traditional producers such as Iran.

Output figures

Iran's pistachio production rose 4 percent in 2024 to 316,000 tons, up from 303,000 tons the previous year, according to Contemporary Economics. Despite the production increase, Iran ranked as the world's third-largest pistachio producer in 2024. Turkey, traditionally the third producer, increased its output by 117 percent to 383,000 tons, overtaking Iran to claim second place globally. The United States maintained its position as the top producer despite a 26 percent decline in output, with production totaling 498,000 tons in 2024.

Iran held the position of world's leading pistachio producer until around 2010, after which it gradually ceded the top spot to the United States. In 2018, Iran fell to third place for the first time, losing its second-place ranking to Turkey — a position it briefly regained before surrendering it again to Turkey in 2024 after a four-year interval. Syria and China ranked as the fourth and fifth largest producers in 2024 with outputs of 83,000 tons and 78,000 tons, respectively.

Pistachios represent one of Iran's most important non-oil export commodities, playing a significant role in employment generation and foreign currency earnings. Kerman, Yazd, Semnan, South Khorasan, and Qom provinces serve as the country's main pistachio production hubs. Despite challenges including drought, water limitations, and certain trade barriers, Iran maintains a considerable share of the global pistachio market through annual production of hundreds of thousands of tons. Strategies currently under implementation to preserve and enhance this position include productivity improvements, development of modern orchards, and greater focus on processing and packaging. With global demand for healthy dried fruits continuing to grow, Iran is expected to potentially increase its market share in coming years through appropriate planning and removal of production constraints.

World Bank reports gains in Iran's governance indicators in 2024

Economy Desk

The World Bank reported improvements in three governance indicators for Iran in 2024, according to its latest estimate of global governance metrics published for countries worldwide.

As reported by Tasnim, the World Bank released its newest assessment of governance indicators for various countries including Iran for 2024, noting advancement in three specific metrics during the year.

The indicators examined in the report include accountability and responsibility, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Each country receives a score between 0 and 100 for every indicator, with higher scores reflecting better performance in that category.

Based on the World Bank's estimate, Iran's scores for accountability and responsibility, control of corruption, and government effectiveness improved in 2024 compared to the previous year. Iran's government received a score of 29.75 in the accountability and responsibility indicator in 2024, reflecting an increase of 0.01 points from the prior year.

The country's score in the government effectiveness indicator rose to 37.61 in 2024 from 36.95 in 2023, indicating enhanced governmental performance during the year. In the control of corruption indicator, Iran's score increased to 24.63 in 2024 from 24.15 in 2023, suggesting progress in financial corruption prevention efforts throughout the year.

Iran's scores in three other indicators declined during 2024. The country's political stability score stood at 38.89 in 2024, down from 44.21 recorded in 2023. Iran's regulatory quality score decreased to 31.03 in 2024 from 31.7 in 2023. The government's rule of law score also fell to 35.71 in 2024 from 36.3 in the previous year.

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Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 10,000 tons **SPONGE IRON FINES**, on basis of FAS at the Buyer's warehouse in Bandar Abbas, IRAN according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjsco.ir, through the Sales and customer portal, Tender and Foreign Tender section.
All documentation will be provided electronically.
All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, February 09, 2026**.

For more information, please contact us at:
Tel: +2186084642

In defense of Iran:
A view from two Mideast peace activists

Iranian-American researcher Mozhgan Savabieasfahani and her husband Blaine Coleman visit Iran Daily's office in Tehran on January 26, 2026.
IRAN DAILY

PERSPECTIVE
EXCLUSIVE

Amid growing foreign military warnings and threats against Iran's national security, two prominent international peace activists, ** Blaine Marcel Coleman and Dr. Mozhgan Savabieasfahani **—who were recently featured guests of the Iran Daily newspaper—have now turned their attention to Iran after over 22 years of continuous advocacy for global peace and justice. These two activists, who have long campaigned across various platforms, including the Ann Arbor City Council in Michigan, against military aid to the Zionist regime, have compiled an analytical report examining the historical roots and warning of the grave consequences of foreign intervention, driven by growing alarm over the aggressive designs of Israel and the United States. The present article reflects their profound concern to expose hegemonic agendas and preserve Iran's independence.

We want to talk to two different groups of the Iranian people:

1- You who imagine that Israel and America are somehow your ally despite the oceans of blood they have spilled, and despite their history of cutting Arab nations into pieces.

2- You who understand that Iran has to defend its independence against the genocidal violence of Israel and America. You who know that even if an independent Iran had 100% free elections, Israel and America would still feel driven to bomb Iran's independence to smithereens.

Allying yourself with Israel and America is suicide

First, let us talk to you, the readers who imagine that Israel – the Genocide State – is somehow your ally against the high cost of living.

We want to say clearly that no peaceful demonstrator should ever be harmed. Not in Minneapolis and not in Iran. The police should very publicly limit their role to cooperating with demonstrators for purposes of traffic control and the quick isolation of anyone who uses violence.

We cannot forget how important peaceful demonstrations have been to halting foreign domination over Iran, ever since 1891, and to asserting the people's rights against governments. These demonstrations are not just something to be tolerated; they are a necessity for the nation's development.

These are your predecessors in the Iran of 1951. Look how they fought for democracy and people's rule before the US coup of 1953:

Let us also not ignore how Israel and America have bragged about Israeli intervention in Iran's anticorruption demonstrations, making something clean and honest into a training ground for Israel's paramilitary gunmen. They can never be your allies; they will massacre the people and drown the nation in civil wars if given the chance. They have proven this.

You just saw Israel murder over a thousand Iranians in the streets of Iran.

You are still watching Israel bomb and starve a whole population of Palestinians while you wolf down popcorn in front of your TV.

After seeing so much blood, if you are still welcoming Israel – today's Hitler – into the streets of Iran, as your machine-gun-toting ally, then you are really shooting yourself in the head. And yes, we know how bad it was in those streets during the past month. Just don't invite the Hitler twins (Israel and America) onto those streets with the illusion that they will treat you more nicely than they are treating Gaza. They won't.

We say that today, in the year 2026, but Dr. Hossein Fatemi already said it in 1950.

Follow Dr. Hossein Fatemi – not Netanyahu, Trump, and SAVAK

Dr. Fatemi was the intellectual powerhouse behind the nationalization of Iran's oil. He was also the editor of Bakhtar-e-Emruz and the future Foreign Minister under Prime Minister Mossadegh.

He wrote strongly against recognizing Israel in 1950. He was horrified that Israel mass-murdered the Palestinian people and turned the survivors into refugees. He saw those refugees in Lebanon and he wrote about them.

Dr. Fatemi shunned Israel for the same reason he drove the nationalization of Iran's oil – to protect the "hungry and shoeless". That was also why the Shah murdered Fatemi after taking power in a US-British coup d'état.

As soon as Dr. Mossadegh made Iran independent by nationalizing its oil, Britain started working to obliterate that independence, using murder and sanctions to starve the nation onto its knees. Soon the United States joined that effort. Later, after the 28th Mordad coup d'état, Israel joined America in overseeing SAVAK and its torture of Iran.

Do you see that neither America nor Israel want to nurture democracy in Iran? They want only to demolish Iran's independence, even if Iran had a perfect democracy. That has been clear every minute of every day since the 28th Mordad, and it is true today.

Dr. Hossein Fatemi, Iran's Foreign Minister. He fought for "the barefoot and hungry people of Iran", and against the imperialists who bled them.

Israel and America; endless civil wars for Iran

We are talking to you, if you long to install the same Shah's son into power, and if you look to Israel – the racist assassin state – as your ally.

By now, you should know that Israel and America would cut Iran into pieces and arm those pieces against each other if you allowed that to happen. You already know how happy Israel would be to turn those pieces into some version of Gaza, and how happy America would be to finance that bloodbath.

You must know all of that because you are watching Israel and America turn formerly independent nations of the Middle East and Africa into a series of bloodbaths, civil wars, and mass starvation experiments -- not only Gaza, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, and Sudan. They want your blood too.

When Israel and America pretended to weep about human rights in Libya, Syria, and Sudan, they engulfed those nations in civil wars, and in civil wars within civil wars. You see the results today.

Earlier, during the Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations, you can find similarly bloody examples from Angola, Mozambique, and Afghanistan. Their civil wars were fueled by America and Israel, causing millions to die over several generations.

There is another reason you should never identify yourself with Israel: because the world now views Israel with revulsion for its genocide on Gaza. Israel is even more hated today than Apartheid South Africa was before it swirled down the toilet bowl of history. Israel is going the same way, so don't follow Israel down that way.

In these circumstances, wouldn't it be suicidal for Iran to surrender its defense of Iranian land, to abandon Palestine, to abandon Lebanon, to welcome Israeli and American executioners onto Iranian soil, and to welcome back the torturers of SAVAK? If you want to vote for that surrender, then consider this:

Israel and America oversaw and trained SAVAK while it was torturing your family under the Shah, while it was breaking the back of Iranian democracy and lobotomizing the nation.

After the Iranian people finally overthrew the Shah's dictatorship in 1979, America and Israel unleashed war, economic sanctions, trade sanctions, and technology sanctions on Iran. That war and those sanctions never really ended.

As a result, maybe you don't believe a word the government says. You may be sick and tired of permanent emergency rule. You may throw this article in the trash because you are so profoundly alienated from even talking about it. If the government says the sun is shining, you might say no, it's midnight.

The photo shows a column in the Persian-language daily newspaper Bakhtar-e Emruz, founded by former foreign minister Hossein Fatemi, which was published in 1949–1953.

US 'freedom of the press' doesn't stop it from committing massacres

So, we are talking to you, the ones who already threw this article away.

Let us not go overboard and idealize the US news media. That media uncritically quotes US government officials making statements of murderous racism against whole populations in the Middle East, West Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We remember Senators John McCain and Hillary Clinton threatening to bomb Iran, with no serious opposition by the US news media. When Trump bombs Iran and then sends an armada of war ships to Iran, he is only following in their footsteps, and the US news media is still not seriously opposing him.

We see that the US news media has collaborated with every US and Israeli massacre. That

People rally in support of Iran's democratically-elected government in Tehran, Iran in 1951.

American activist Blaine Coleman speaks at a meeting of the Ann Arbor City Council in the US State of Michigan on January 5, 2026 to push for an end to miliary aid to Israel.

helped the US government to get Lumumba killed in the Congo and to bomb the Congolese people under Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. That also helped the United States to kill millions of Vietnamese, to kill millions more in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to devastate Latin America and Indonesia with military coups. The US news media accepted all those bloodbaths as normal and reduced them to minor background noise in the life of the nation.

Also, let's not go overboard and idealize US elections either. Candidates face serious obstacles before they can appear on any US election ballot. They rely on mountains of cash from rich donors to promote their campaigns for office.

US Presidents are elected, but don't idealize the result, because every one of them, from George Washington to Donald Trump, was guilty of things like genocide, slavery, brutal wars, coups, and just plain murder. No election and no newspaper could stop those atrocities because the United States was built on those atrocities and it still is. When the US government approved laws to protect minorities or provide social services, that only happened after large public mobilizations and protests, most famously the Black freedom movement.

We, the authors, are both very big on freedom of speech. We want more of it. However, we can see that the US government has laughingly disregarded "free speech" to kidnap and jail student advocates for Palestinian rights and has placed them into deportation proceedings. This has devastated a formerly loud, in-your-face campus protest movement against Israel's genocide on Gaza.

We ourselves take full advantage of what free speech still exists at our City Council meetings in Michigan, but when we demand resolutions against Israel, we are usually – not always – ignored by the local news media. This is because objecting to genocide is regarded as weird by the US media, or as bad manners.

Trump not dropping "freedom of speech" on your head rather dropping bombs

Although we are both big on free speech, America's "free speech" is no reason to invite Trump in to bomb your cities. He is not dropping free speech onto Iran. He is dropping bombs.

Read some history and you will see that the US government launched violent coups against democratically elected governments in Syria and Iran, during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, and against the Iraqi government during the Kennedy administration. Those coups were not launched for any kind of "human rights" purpose.

If you are unhappy with Syria and Iran today, then remember how grievously the US crippled their development with those coups.

In short, don't look to America and its cosmetic level of "free speech" to save you. Look to yourself, to 92 million educated Iranians.

Israel and the US are not coming to save you but to kill you. They are bragging about the Israeli spies sent into Iranian demonstrations over the past month and they are still threatening to bomb Iran, using any excuse that pops into their head. We hope you recognize that you will have no control over such bloodthirsty "allies" once you open your doors to them.

You who understand that Iran must be defended, and that crooks don't help with that

The corruption which outrages the people of Iran is mere kid's stuff compared to the stupendous corruption which is celebrated daily as "business success" in the United States.

In contrast to Iran, in the United States grabbing a nation's wealth for yourself is not called corruption. It is called "making a killing" and is widely admired in the realm of US politics and business. In the United States, spending many trillions of dollars to destroy Vietnam and Iraq and Afghanistan, and to enrich arms manufacturers, is regarded as an absolutely normal use of the nation's wealth, whereas providing food subsidies to the poor is called "wasteful government spending".

So, our discussion of corruption should be understood in that context.

First, we don't need to remind you that Israeli gunmen just shot their way into peaceful demonstrations, torching hundreds of Iranian buses, ambulances, and buildings with extreme military efficiency, turning peaceful protests into mass death emergencies.

Secondly, in such emergencies, people expect the government to be nicer to its people.

After all, the people enabled Iran to win the twelve-day war last year.

In today's Wild West conditions, with Trump and Netanyahu throwing bombs like deranged gorillas, you want your government officials focused on your defense and welfare.

Iranians are smart enough to be trusted with the vote, and not to ally themselves with proven genocidal killers like Israel and America. They are a highly literate population loaded with engineers, physicians, educators, and architects. They can build anything.

If the Iranian people don't view their government as legitimate, then the invaders will easily break into the nation, and this time they will burn a lot more than ambulances, buses and buildings. The invaders have already perfected the business of civil war and they will introduce it into Iran if the population stops caring about what happens to the nation.

The purpose of really free elections is not to please the US government. Don't expect that. Remember that the United States and its puppets overthrew Dr. Mossadegh and killed Dr. Fatemi, whose government was democratically elected and was loved by the people.

No, the only purpose of government should be to empower the people – especially the hungry and downtrodden – so they can protect themselves from external invaders and so they can pour their nation's resources into everything that the people need. The people will love and respect any Majlis which pushes ahead with a massive public housing program that offers everyone the choice of good cheap homes. Unfortunately, the public treasury will also have to spend a fortune to keep Iran well-defended until the genocidal state of Israel is abolished like Apartheid South Africa was abolished. Surely any honestly elected Majlis will vote for all that, and the people will approve.

It's a shame that protest marches – a great and necessary Iranian tradition – have been poisoned by Israeli paramilitaries shooting their way into those marches.

If we were voting now in Iran, we would vote for those who have learned from Dr. Fatemi. We would vote to protect the hungry and the downtrodden and building public housing on a much larger scale.

The authors are Blaine Coleman and Dr. Mozhgan Savabieasfahani.

They both have argued for resolutions against US military aid to Israel for over 22 years in meetings of the Ann Arbor, Michigan City Council. Dr. Savabieasfahani is also a widely published scientist, focusing largely on birth defects caused by US wars and weapons of war in the Middle East. Her work has been featured prominently across the Iranian and global news media.

Iranian-American researcher Mozhgan Savabieasfahani addresses the Ann Arbor City Council in the US State of Michigan on December 1, 2025 to push for an end to miliary aid to Israel.

Iranian junior, youth squash players reach semifinals in Sri Lanka

ISNA

Sports Desk

The International Junior and Youth Squash Championships are currently underway in Sri Lanka, where eight Iranian athletes have advanced to the semifinal stage, highlighting the country's rising talent in the sport.

According to ISNA, the Iranian semifinalists include Parmin Nekoupayan and Baran Mohammadpour in the under-19 girls category, Parnian Najafi and Baran Rouhani in the under-17 girls category, Tiana Tourani in the under-15 girls category, Saleh Akhani in the under-19 boys category, Youssef Ghorashi in the under-17 boys category, and Amir Alvansaz in the under-15 boys category.

In the quarterfinals, the Iranian players achieved notable victories. Nekoupayan and Mohammadpour defeated Malaysian opponents, Najafi overcame an Indian competitor, and Rouhani beat a Sri Lankan player

Tourani secured a win against a Sri Lankan opponent, while Akhani defeated an Indian representative. Ghorashi overcame a Sri Lankan player, and Alvansaz claimed victory over a Sri Lankan competitor.

Earlier in the tournament, Ali Rahimi, Ali Azizi, Amir Mehdi Kharashadizadeh, Mostafa Ahrari, Amir Ata Mahjel Farid, Shaina Amiri, and Arina Shirkhaneqah were eliminated before reaching the semifinals.

The strong performance of these young Iranian athletes across multiple age groups reflects the strength of Iran's junior and youth squash programs and demonstrates their ability to compete successfully on the international stage.

Shahdab reclaims top spot as Iranian Volleyball Super League resumes

Sports Desk

The Iranian Volleyball Super League resumed after a three-week hiatus with a series of concentrated matches held in Tehran, bringing notable changes to the top of the standings.

According to Varzesh3, the matches were played in a centralized format at the Yazdani-Khorram Hall of the Volleyball Federation and the Tehran Volleyball House. On the first day of the resumed competition on Friday, several key matches took place, significantly impacting the positions of the league's top teams.

The most important match featured Shahdab of Yazd and Chadormalu of Ardakan, the first and third-placed teams in the standings. In a closely contested game, Shahdab maintained their impressive form and defeated Chadormalu 3-1. In this match, Seyed Mohammad Mousavi once again demonstrated his exceptional abilities. The experienced star, at 38 years old, delivered a brilliant performance, leading his team on the court and contributing significantly to Shahdab's victory with an attack success rate of around 80 percent. Mousavi, who separated from Foolad of Sirjan during the summer transfer window, quickly became a key player in Shahdab's lineup.

varzesh3.com

This victory came shortly after Foolad temporarily took the top spot with a win over Pas of Gorgan, but Shahdab quickly reclaimed first place.

During the twelfth week of matches, there were few changes in the league table, with the most notable being the swap between the third and fourth positions. Sepahan secured a win against Sanatgaran Omid of Tehran, moving up to third place and pushing Chadormalu down to fourth.

However, these changes are likely just the beginning of fluctuations in the standings. As the season progresses, the tight competition among teams promises further surprises, shifts, and intense battles in the Iranian Volleyball Super League.

Iran's women's taekwondo team departs for Fujairah Championships

IRNA

Sports Desk

Members of Iran's women's national taekwondo team have departed Tehran for the United Arab Emirates to participate in the 13th Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championships.

The event, part of the World Taekwondo Federation's G2 series, will be held over four days and will feature 1,668 athletes across four age categories. The women's competitions are scheduled to begin on February 1, with 206 athletes competing.

The Iranian delegation left Tehran on Friday morning, January 31, with a squad including Saina Karimi, Saina Alipour, Masoumeh Ranjbar, Parnian Nouri, Maryam Malekouti-Khah, Mobina Nematzadeh, Hasti Mohammadi, Kowsar Asaseh, Poneh Jafar Salehi, Yalda Valinejad, Baran Nemati, Melika Mirhosseini, and Fatemeh Ahmadi.

The team is led by head coach Mehrouz Saei, with Azadeh Yasayi and Shima Khalil Arjamandi serving as assistant coaches, and Mehrdad Yousefi as team manager.

This mission follows a highly successful showing by Iran's women's taekwondo team at the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, where they won five medals — 1 gold, 1 silver, and 3 bronze — surpassing the men's team in total medals.

The gold medal was secured by Saina Karimi in the under-46kg category, while Yalda Valinejad (under-70kg) and Melika Mirhosseini (over-70kg) earned silver and bronze, respectively, after competing against strong international opponents. These achievements highlighted the team's ability to compete closely with the world's top athletes and marked a significant milestone in the development of Iranian women's taekwondo.

Officials hope that participating in the Fujairah International Championships will provide valuable experience for upcoming global competitions and further reinforce Iran's growing reputation in elite women's taekwondo.

Injury-hit Azmoun targets return for key match against Al Hilal

Sports Desk

Iran's national football team had been preparing in October 2025 for two friendly matches against Russia in Volgograd and Tanzania in Dubai. Coach Amir Qalenoei had submitted his squad list, which included Sardar Azmoun in attack. At the time, the striker was training with Shabab Al Ahli in Dubai.

During Shabab Al Ahli's final training session before the FIFA international break, Azmoun was present. However, on October 4, 2025, a serious incident occurred: in a collision during training, Azmoun suffered a severe injury. Writhing in pain, his injury disrupted the session, prompting the head coach to halt training and monitor his condition closely, according to IRNA.

Azmoun was immediately transferred to the hospital, where it was confirmed he had sustained a bone fracture, forcing him to miss the national team's camp. Doctors later stated that he would require several months of recovery, which also caused him to miss Iran's next matches in the Al Ain Tournament against Cape Verde and Uzbekistan.

In the following months, Azmoun focused entirely on regaining fitness. Although he now participates in Shabab Al Ahli's training sessions, he has not yet reached full match readiness. He continues his rehabilitation under the supervision of the club's medical and coaching staff and hopes to return to competitive action in the coming weeks.

IRNA

Abdulmajid Hussein, Vice President of Shabab Al Ahli, told Hadath TV: "Azmoun is still following his rehabilitation program, and, God willing, with the guidance of our medical and coaching staff, he will return to the field at the right time."

Despite Azmoun's absence, Shabab Al Ahli finished the first half of the UAE League in first place, earning 35 points from 14 matches, ahead of Al Ain. The second half of the season began January 28, 2026 with a win over Ajman, again without Azmoun.

Club management and the coaching staff are concentrating on preparing Azmoun fully for the high-stakes clash against Al Hilal on February 9, part of Week 7 of the AFC Champions League, at Sheikh Rashid Stadium in Dubai, where he will host the Saudi side.

Al Hilal currently leads the group with 18 points from six matches, while Shabab Al Ahli sits fifth with 10 points. To secure qualification, Shabab Al Ahli must earn points against Al Hilal, making Azmoun's return a critical factor.

While there is no doubt that his comeback would strengthen Shabab Al Ahli both mentally and technically, it remains to be seen whether the striker and the club's medical team can ensure his readiness in time for this decisive encounter.

Iran emerges as regional hub for ice climbing

Ganjnameh Waterfall
● IRNA

Alam Kuh Wall
● eligasht.com

Takht-e Soleyman glacier
● anyja.ir

Iranica Desk

Ice climbing is an exhilarating and highly demanding discipline in which mountaineers ascend vertical ice walls using specialized equipment. Success in this sport depends on physical strength, strong mental endurance, and precise technical knowledge. With its high mountains and cold winters, Iran possesses enormous potential for ice climbing, and Iranian athletes have consistently shone on the global stage.

In 2021, Iranian ice climbers demonstrated their high technical level by winning two world gold medals — an achievement that provided a major boost to the country's mountaineering community. Iran's natural infrastructure — including the vast glaciers of the Alborz and Zagros mountain ranges — offers an ideal foundation for becoming a regional hub for ice climbing. Damavand, Sabalan, and Alam Kuh mountains are not only iconic peaks, but also host a wide variety of ice routes with different difficulty levels, catering to climbers of all abilities, according to IRNA.

Despite its excitement, ice climbing is inherently risky. Proper training, full awareness of environmental conditions, and the use of standard equipment are therefore vital. This comprehensive report aims to introduce Iran's best and most technical ice-climbing destinations, while providing essential information to help climbers — from beginners to professionals — plan safe ascents.

The development of ice climbing in Iran has gone hand in hand with global mountaineering trends and the introduction of modern equipment. Initially considered a subset of classical mountaineering, ice climbing gradually evolved into a specialized discipline as technical knowledge expanded. Reputable clubs such as the Tabriz Mountaineering House, along with specialized groups in Tehran and Isfahan, have played a key role in organizing training courses and identifying new ice-climbing potentials across the country.

Damavand glaciers

The glaciers of Mount Damavand — particularly on the southern and northern faces — are among Iran's largest and most renowned ice-climbing areas. Due to the mountain's high altitude, ice conditions remain stable throughout most of the winter, offering excellent opportunities for long routes with significant elevation changes. Access is relatively easy; however, Damavand's alpine nature demands high physical fitness and experience in dealing with sudden weather changes. The area is frequently used by national teams for intensive training and is considered a symbolic destination for professional Iranian ice climbers.

Alam Kuh Wall

Located in the heart of the Takht-e Soleyman Massif, the Alam Kuh Wall is one of Iran's most technical and pristine areas for classical and alpine ice climbing. In winter, its massive faces form extremely challenging ice routes that require advanced techniques and the ability to manage multi-day ascents. Access requires careful planning and strong technical support, making it suitable only for highly experienced climbers.

Sabalan glaciers

Mount Sabalan's frozen volcanic features create a unique ice-climbing environment distinct from Damavand. Certain sections offer high-quality ice ideal for vertical climbs. The area is well suited to intermediate and advanced climbers, with relatively good access and the added attraction of winter camping near Sabalan's volcanic crater lake.

Khur Waterfall

One of the closest and most popular ice-climbing sites for residents of Tehran and Karaj, Khur Waterfall is ideal for day trips and technical training. It regularly freezes during cold winters and offers multiple routes of varying difficulty, making it suitable for beginners and intermediate climbers. Easy access has made it a common venue for introductory training courses, though it can become crowded on holidays.

Ganjnameh Waterfall

Located near the historic tourist site of Ganjnameh in Hamedan, this frozen waterfall combines cultural appeal with sporting excitement. In winter, flowing water turns into tall, well-formed ice columns. Proximity to the city provides better facilities; however, ice stability requires constant monitoring and strict adherence to safety guidelines due to the presence of tourists.

Takht-e Soleyman glaciers

The alpine glaciers surrounding Takht-e Soleyman Massif, Mazandaran Province, offer long, high-altitude routes that combine ice, snow, and rock, making them ideal for major exploratory ascents. Due to their remoteness and harsh environmental conditions, expeditions are usually undertaken by well-equipped teams with a strong technical focus.

Lar waterfalls

Scattered waterfalls around the Lar Plain form quality ice columns during snowy winters. While access is relatively good, winter road closures may require longer approaches on foot. These sites are particularly suitable for practicing basic ice-climbing techniques in a pristine natural environment.

Yakhmorad Cave

Near the Chalous Road, Yakhmorad Cave is one of Iran's oldest and most famous ice-climbing training areas. Its clear, cold, and relatively stable ice makes it ideal for learning crampon and ice-axe techniques. Due to heavy traffic — especially on weekends — maintaining safe distances between teams is essential.

Lalan glaciers

Located north of Tehran, these glaciers offer attractive ice routes with more technical access compared to Khor. They are well suited for climbers looking to increase training volume ahead of larger expeditions, with routes that challenge team skills in anchor building and protection placement.

Zagros glaciers

High-altitude areas of the Zagros mountain range, particularly Dena and Oshtorankuh, possess significant but less-explored ice-climbing potential. These regions offer unique ice formations shaped by cold winds and provide a quieter alternative for climbers seeking different experiences in southern Iran. Successful ascents require strong knowledge of local conditions and adaptability to varying weather patterns.

Pol-e Dokhtar set to host archaeology, anthropology museum

● wikipedia.org

Iranica Desk

The Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province announced the start of studies for the construction of an archaeology and anthropology museum in Pol-e Dokhtar, Lorestan Province, in the current year, stating that construction operations for the museum will begin in the coming months.

Ata Hassanpour said that during the visit of the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to Pol-e Dokhtar, and in view of the presence of historical artifacts from Kalmakareh Cave as well as the city's ethnographic capacities, it was decided that, in cooperation with the municipality and the city council, studies for the construction of the museum would commence this year, ISNA wrote.

He noted that the land required for the project has been acquired by the municipality and the city council.

Referring to the region's tourism and geotourism potentials, Hassanpour said that given attractions such as gorges and wetlands, the necessary funding will be allocated to the province to develop tourism infrastructure, thereby creating the conditions for the participation of private sector investors.

Hassanpour added that, due to the concentration of the province's historical bridges in Pol-e Dokhtar, special funding has also been allocated for the restoration, rehabilitation, and organization of these historical structures.

Emphasizing the importance of the minister's visit to the province, he stated that the trip will bring about positive achievements for the cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts sectors of Lorestan Province.

He explained that Khazineh Valley is the result of one of the largest geological events and the world's largest block landslide in the Kabirkuh region, which led to the formation of unique fissures and gorges in the area — features that are rare on a global scale.

Hassanpour noted that Khazineh Valley is recognized as one of the most prominent and distinctive attractions of the region and possesses significant potential for tourism development.

He further stated that there are currently 11 wetlands in the region. These wetlands are remnants of a massive landslide that occurred approximately 11,000 years ago and altered the course of the Kashkan and Seymareh rivers. Today, these wetlands are considered among the region's most important natural attractions and welcome domestic and international tourists throughout the year.

Pol-e Dokhtar, located in southern Lorestan Province, is characterized by a relatively warm and temperate climate compared to many mountainous areas of western Iran. Its mild winters, warm summers, and extended spring and autumn seasons have contributed to the city's appeal as a year-round tourism destination.

Combined with its natural landscapes, historical bridges, valleys, and wetlands, the favorable climate has strengthened Pol-e Dokhtar's position as an emerging hub for cultural, eco-tourism, and geotourism in the region.

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‘Desert Man’, narrative of courage, identity, and patriotism among Iran’s ethnic communities

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

From the evocative pages of Abdolrahman Onagh’s ‘Mati Khan’ comes a powerful new theatrical experience: ‘Desert Man’. Co-written by Shahrouz Iri and Asghar Garousi and brilliantly directed by Shahrouz Iri, this production goes beyond the confines of a play. It draws on the heart of Turkmen culture and stands as a powerful expression of an enduring spirit of resistance.

Shahrouz Iri

Prepare to be transported to the windswept plains of Torkaman Sahra, a region etched with the struggles of a people caught between tradition and the iron grip of a changing nation. ‘Desert Man’ unveils a poignant, often-overlooked chapter of Iranian history: The story of the Turkmen people, forcibly uprooted from their nomadic heritage and thrust into a world of imposed order under the reign of Reza Shah. Witness the clash of cultures, the agonizing tension between ancient ways and the relentless advance of state power.

This is a meticulously crafted sensory journey. Experience the richness of Turkmen language, the vibrant hues of their traditional attire, the soulful melodies of their music, all brought to life on stage. ‘Desert Man’ doesn’t just tell a story; it immerses you in a world, revealing the profound peace-loving nature and fierce courage that define this remarkable ethnic group.

At the center of this epic stands Mati Khan, the revered village elder, a beacon of pacifism, tolerance, and unwavering reason. But when the very soul of his people is threatened, when their land, their honor, and their dignity are trampled upon, even a man of peace must rise. Through Mati Khan, ‘Desert Man’ reclaims timeless themes of patriotism, honor, bravery, and the ultimate sacrifice, resonances that echo deeply within the Iranian cultural memory.

It is with immense pride that ‘Desert Man’ has been selected for ‘My Iran’ section of the Fadjr International Theater Festival, a testament to its profound exploration of national identity and patriotic spirit.

Read on for a conversation with playwright and director Shahrouz Iri, as he shares the vision behind ‘Desert Man’.

IRAN DAILY; Please explain the story of ‘Desert Man’.

IRI: ‘Desert Man’ is about people who live in northeastern Iran, primarily in a region known as Torkaman Sahra. The story begins when nomadic Turkmen tribes, who traditionally lived in tents and migrated seasonally, are forced into permanent settlement near the Atrak River. Subsequently, the government of the time, seeking to control the Turkmen, who were regarded as somewhat rebellious and resistant to state authority, decides first to settle them and then to establish military outposts in the very villages where they are relocated.

Troops are stationed at these outposts ostensibly to guard the borders, but in reality, their mission is not border security; it is surveillance and control of the Turkmen population.

The story reaches its climax when an officer named Sarvan, the commander of one such outpost, begins to act arbitrarily and without direct orders. He imposes multiple and excessive taxes on the Turkmen people. Despite all this, Mati Khan, as the village elder, continues to exercise restraint. He does not wish to ignite conflict or bloodshed and seeks, above all, to protect the lives of his people.

However, a series of immoral actions by the officer, such as drunkenness and harassment of Turkmen women and girls, pushes Mati Khan beyond the limits of endurance. At this point, he rises in rebellion and confronts the officer’s conduct head-on.

The photo shows a scene of the play ‘Desert Man’, directed by Shahrouz Iri, on stage at ‘My Iran’ section of the Fadjr International Theater Festival.
hozehonari.ir

Were these characteristics the reason the play was included in the ‘My Iran’ section?

One of the key features that led to the play’s inclusion in the ‘My Iran’ section is its deep sense of patriotism. Mati Khan tolerates many injustices for the sake of preserving the security of his homeland and his land, Kheyr Khujeh, but ultimately stands up against the aggressor. Another decisive factor in his revolt is his sense of honor. Mati Khan endures excessive taxation and even the confiscation of villagers’ sheep, but when the officer violates the honor of the people, he can no longer remain silent and chooses to rise up.

These two concepts, patriotism and honor, are fundamental elements of the Iranian moral lexicon. Iranians have historically been willing to sacrifice their lives for them. The presence of these themes made ‘Desert Man’ eligible for the ‘My Iran’ section, which was added to this year’s festival with an explicitly national and patriotic approach.

What aspects of Turkmen life did you aim to portray in ‘Desert Man’?

In producing ‘Desert Man,’ I wanted the audience to truly know, understand, and feel the Turkmen people in all their dimensions: Their colorful clothing, their beautiful and melodic language, and their dreamlike musical instruments.

But the Turkmen possess a defining trait that sets them apart: Their inherent calmness and peace-loving nature. They are, as much as possible, people of compromise and coexistence; they avoid conflict and prefer to resolve everything through peace, unless their blood is stirred. Then they become remarkably brave and fearless.

Through the character of Mati Khan, I first depicted this spirit of pacifism, and ultimately, when his land and honor are threatened, I portrayed the courage, valor, and combative resolve of the Turkmen people as well.

Was ‘Desert Man’ originally produced in this form specifically for the festival?

No, ‘Desert Man’ was not produced solely for the festival. In the early months of last Iranian year, I launched this project with performers from Bandar-e Torkaman, Gonbad, and Kalaleh, but it did not make it to the provincial festival. Later, due to changes in the cast and the addition of actors from Gorgan, the play was staged for three nights during Art of the Revolution Week.

After that, further changes were made, to the cast, the text, the directorial approach, and the stage design. In September, from September 12 to 21, the play ran for nine nights.

Once again, there were cast changes. Some actors left, and I revised the story, redesigned the set, and added more movement and physical form to the performance. The play then ran for five nights in Tehran, at Mehr Hall of the Art Bureau.

After that, ‘Desert Man’ was accepted into the festival and the ‘My Iran’ section. When I was informed, we had only four or five days. During that short time, one or two more members left the group, including the main actor playing Captain Nassiri. I had to step in and play that role myself, and once again made last-minute changes to the form and stage design. Ultimately, the play appeared at the festival in this final shape.

How will the play continue after the festival?

We are trying to take the play to different provinces, because Desert Man is a historical and factual work, these events truly happened. We want people everywhere to see this history and reality and to better understand the Turkmen people.

The Turkmen live on the margins of the desert, but they are as calm as the desert itself and, at the same time, as bold and fierce as a sandstorm. There were talks of performing the play in Mashhad and Ardabil. I hope these plans materialize and that we can stage the play in other cities as well.

Thank you for considering ‘Desert Man’ worthy of attention and for choosing to speak with its creator. The play was not mentioned on television or in the news, I don’t know why. What I do know is that I overcame many hardships, passed through countless obstacles and walls, and in the end, I managed to bring to the stage what I truly believed in and loved.

Fajr Film Festival opens in Tehran with nationwide rollout, emphasis on nat’l identity

fajrfilmfestival.com

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s 44th Fajr Film Festival opened on Saturday at the Mellat Cineplex in Tehran, with festival director Manouchehr Shahsavari underscoring its status as a national cultural event as screenings begin in the capital and expand nationwide in the coming days.

Speaking shortly before the festival’s opening screening of the animated feature ‘Guardians of the Sun,’ Shahsavari said he had attended “out of respect” to mark the first official screening of the 44th edition, adding that he firmly regarded the Fajr festival as a national event and believed in its mission, IRNA reported.

He expressed hope that the festival could help foster public calm and solidarity at a time when “hearts may be unsettled for various reasons”.

Shahsavari said cinema remained a vital social capacity for the country, a responsibility he said currently rested with filmmakers and the media to strengthen and expand with conviction, helping to connect people and prevent social and emotional fracture.

He also apologized to the makers of ‘Guardians of the Sun’ for facing no competitors in the animation category, noting that the burden of representing Iranian feature animation fell on their shoulders, while praising the film as a “beautiful work”.

Alongside established directors such as Rasoul Sadrameli, Soroush Sehat, Amirshahab Razavian, Manouchehr Hadi, Alireza Motamedi and Mostafa Razzaq-Karimi, the competition includes a cohort of young and first-time filmmakers.

Nationwide screenings of accepted films will begin in provincial cities on February 4, coinciding with the Mid-Sha’ban holiday.

Screenings will take place in all provincial capitals, while nine cities will open their programs with locally produced films shown outside the main competition.

Earlier this month, organizers unveiled the festival’s official poster, designed by Mehdi Davaei and inspired by an iconic image of veteran actor Ali Nassirian from Masoud Jafari Jozani’s film ‘The Stone Lion’. The image, depicting an Iranian man’s bond with the land, was presented as evoking national sentiment in the aftermath of this year’s 12-day conflict with the Zionist regime and as reaffirming links between contemporary cinema and Iran’s cultural and historical heritage.

The 44th Fajr National Film Festival runs until February 11 under Shahsavari’s direction.