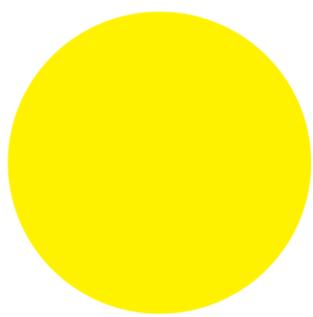


Iran blacklists EU naval, air forces in tit-for-tat move over IRGC

2 >



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Araghchi: Tehran working on draft agreement, ready for 'fast deal' on Thursday

2 >



Iran Daily sits down with German diplomat Volker Perthes on outlook of Iran-US talks

Tehran, Washington should beware of miscalculation fallout

REUTERS

By Asgar Ghahremanpour
Editor-in-chief

INTERVIEW

Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Volker Perthes, the German diplomat and Middle East researcher, to examine the outlook of the negotiations between Iran and the United States. Perthes is a well-known figure in European foreign policy and served for many years as the director of the prestigious think tank Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. He is recognized as an expert on political developments in the Arab world, particularly in Syria and the region's power transitions, and has published numerous scholarly works on

these topics. In 2021, Perthes was appointed as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan and headed the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan. His mission was to support the political transition following the fall of Omar al-Bashir and facilitate dialogue between civilian and military actors. However, escalating internal conflicts and the outbreak of war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces posed serious challenges to his mission, and he ultimately resigned from his post in 2023. Perthes is among the analysts who approach regional politics with a realistic perspective, carefully assessing the role of external powers in Middle

Eastern dynamics. What follows is the full transcript of this interview.

IRAN DAILY: How do you assess the structural prospects for success of the current phase of Iran-US negotiations from a European perspective?

PERTHES: It seems that both the United States and Iran want to reach a deal, and they would prefer to reach it through bilateral negotiations. They don't want the same deal, though, so chances for success are rather limited. Seen from outside, it appears that Iran wants a deal that is similar to the JCPOA of 2015. US President Donald Trump wants a deal that goes far beyond the JCPOA. He wants Iran to reduce enrichment to zero, and oblige Iran to give up

or strictly limit its ballistic missile programme. Also, while the Iranian side is prepared to engage in several rounds of negotiations, President Trump wants a quick deal. And if a quick deal is not in sight, he is prepared to use military force. The US has assembled an enormous amount of fire-power in the region, and it is prepared to strike once the president decides.

What fundamental strategic miscalculations should both sides avoid to prevent a renewed diplomatic deadlock?

Miscalculations are indeed a risk. Iran may underestimate President Trump's preparedness to use the military force, and see the show of force just as a negotiation tactic.

Page 2 >

NIDC drills 116 oil, gas wells in 11 months; posts 23% surge

3 >



US torn between sword and olive branch

OPINION

4 >



Bakhtiarzadeh named Esteghlal coach until end of season

6 >



Iran adopts new tourism charter, casting guides as guardians of its global image

8 >



Iran blacklists EU naval, air forces in tit-for-tat move over IRGC

International Desk

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday that Tehran has designated the naval and air forces of all European Union member states as "terrorist organizations" in a tit-for-tat move after the bloc's move to add the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to its terrorist list.

The statement said the "reciprocal" move comes following the EU member states' "unlawful and unjustified" decision to label a part of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces.

It added that the EU member states have designated the IRGC, which is recognized as one of the pillars of Iran's Armed Forces, as a "terrorist" organization, contrary to the fundamental principles and rules of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The statement emphasized that, based on the principle of reciprocal action and a parliamentary law, the Iranian government is compelled to respond with proportional legal measures.

The ministry was referring to Article VII of a law passed by the Iranian Parliament in April 2019 regarding reciprocal actions in response to the US designation of the IRGC.



France's Charles De Gaulle nuclear powered aircraft carrier is seen in a photo released on Jan. 27, 2026.

● FRENCH ARMED FORCES

According to the article, all countries that in any way follow or support the decision of the United States to designate the IRGC as a "terrorist organization" shall be subject to reciprocal action.

The European Union added the IRGC to its list in response to Iran's measures against foreign-backed rioters who wreaked havoc across the country during protests over economic problems in the country in late December and early January.

Iranian authorities have confirmed that US and Israeli spy agencies were directly involved, providing funding, training, and media support to rioters and armed terrorists acting on the streets. On Thursday, the EU Foreign Affairs Council formally added the IRGC to the bloc's "terrorist" list following a political agreement reached by the council on January 29.

The IRGC will also be subject to restrictive measures under the EU counterterrorism sanctions regime. This includes the freezing of its funds and other fi-



ancial assets or economic resources in EU member states, and the prohibition for EU operators to make funds

and economic resources available to the group. There are now 13 persons and 23

groups and entities subject to the restrictive measures under the so-called EU terrorist list.

Araghchi: Tehran working on draft agreement, ready for 'fast deal' on Thursday

International Desk

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that Iran is still working on a draft agreement with the United States on Iran's nuclear program, expressing hope for a swift deal.

"We are still working on it and are trying to set it up in a way that includes elements which can accommodate the concerns and interests of both sides," the Iranian foreign minister said in an interview with CBS.

Araghchi expressed hope that both sides would be able to work on the elements, prepare a good text, and reach a "fast deal" when he said they "will likely meet again this Thursday in Geneva."

Iran's foreign minister said that he thought there was still a "good chance" his country's standoff with the United States over its nuclear program could be resolved through diplomacy.



Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

"I believe that still there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution which is based on a win-win game," Araghchi told the US broadcaster. As for Iran's uranium enrichment, which the US opposes, Araghchi said, "As a sovereign country, we have every right to decide for ourselves, by ourselves."

Iran's foreign minister warned that his country would be forced to strike back at US interests in West Asia in response to any renewed aggression.

"If the US attacks us, then we have every right to defend ourselves. If the US attacks us, that is the act of

aggression. What we do in response is an act of self-defense," Araghchi said.

"It is justified, legitimate. So, our missiles cannot hit the American soil. So obviously we have to do something else. We have to hit, you know, the American base in the region."

His remarks came after Iranian and American officials held two rounds of Oman-mediated talks on February 6 and 17, following weeks of escalating tensions.

The ongoing talks are aimed at resolving a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

The US, which has deployed aircraft carriers and warships to the region, has threatened Iran with military action if no deal is made.

Iran has declared its conditions and vowed not bow to excessive demands including the US push for zero uranium enrichment. Iran has also said that it will hit back forcefully to any aggression.

Iran tests Sayyad-3G air defense missile in southern waters

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy on Saturday tested the Sayyad-3G naval air defense missile during the "Smart Control" military drills in the Strait of Hormuz amid growing tensions between Iran and the United States over Iran's nuclear program.

According to a footage released during the drills on Saturday, the missile was fired from the vessel Shahid Sayyad Shirazi, marking the system's operational debut at sea.

The Sayyad-3G is the naval variant of Iran's Sayyad-3 air defense missile and features a vertical launch system with a reported range of 150 kilometers (93 miles), Press TV reported.

Iranian officials said the missile offers medium-to-long-range air defense coverage and facilitates the establishment of a regional air defense umbrella for vessels of the Shahid Soleimani class.

Authorities stated that the system is capable of independently detecting and engaging aerial threats, while also being integrated into a broader command-and-control network. This dual capability, they said, enhances the survivability of naval units against a range of air threats.

With a declared 150-kilometer range, the Sayyad-3G is designed to intercept and de-



● MEHR

stroy various airborne targets, including fighter jets, high-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, support aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft, and cruise missiles. Iranian officials described the missile as adding long-range defensive capacity to the country's naval operations.

The Strait of Hormuz – one of the world's most critical energy transit chokepoints – was the location of the three-day "Smart Control" drills, which began on February 16. The IRGC naval forces started military drills off the country's southern coast on Monday, practicing smart control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The drills come amid heightened regional tensions and repeated US threats to attack Iran if it does not accept its nuclear demands, among others.

Iran Daily sits ...

It is not. Trump does not seem to be bluffing. The US side may also be miscalculating: The US military certainly has a list of targets which they are able to destroy, but it is not so clear whether they also have a strategy once major targets are destroyed. A military conflict between the US and Iran could lead to chaos in Iran itself, and in the region, and drag the United States into a much longer engagement than President Trump would want to see.

In your assessment, can confidence-building measures substantially reduce the significant trust deficit that has developed in recent years?

It is possible to see the ongoing negotiations themselves as attempts to build confidence. The lead negotiators – US envoy Wittkoff, and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi – have certainly made some progress here. The acceptance of direct negotiations by Iran could certainly help. But it is no guarantee for success without

speedy progress on substance.

What constructive role could European actors or multilateral frameworks play in promoting a stable and viable agreement?

Other powers are basically watching: Russia and China will not come to Iran's help. They would publicly denounce US military strikes, but not make any attempt to prevent it. Europe will not support US military strikes, and they will warn any rash action that could create more instability in the region. European powers still regret President Trump's decision, in his first term, to abrogate the JCPOA, but they have also become increasingly dissatisfied with Iranian non-compliance. They would be prepared to re-engage in serious negotiations about a new comprehensive agreement. But they also understand that at this time, both Washington and Tehran do not seek Europe's participation. The UN would be able to mediate, probably in cooperation with regional states like Oman. But there

doesn't seem to be any willingness in Washington or Tehran to allow the UN to do this.

To what extent do regional dynamics – in particular the role of the Persian Gulf states, Israel, and the increasing great-power rivalry – influence the respective negotiating positions of Tehran and Washington?

Regional states play a role. Israel is encouraging the United States to take a hard-line position and make sure that any deal would include an end to Iranian enrichment and at least a substantial reduction of Iran's ballistic missile capabilities. The Persian Gulf Arab states want stability. Although they seem to be happy that Iran's geopolitical project, the "Axis of Resistance", has been broken, and Iranian influence in the region has been decimated, they don't want a regional war, nor do they want chaos, revolution or civil war in Iran. They are therefore encouraging and facilitating US-Iran negotiations.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



NIDC drills 116 oil, gas wells in 11 months; posts 23% surge

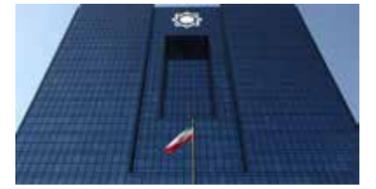
Economy Desk

The National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) drilled and completed 116 oil and gas wells in the first 11 months of the current Iranian year, starting March 21, using its fleet of rigs in onshore and offshore fields, Masoud Afshar, deputy managing director for drilling operations, told IRNA. The figure was up 23% from the same period last year, he said. Of the wells completed, 25 were development wells and 91 were workover wells, which he said play a significant role in maintaining and increasing

production. The completed wells included 95 in areas operated by National Iranian South Oil Company, eight for Central Iran Oil Company, three for Iranian Offshore Oil Company, four for Oil Engineering and Development Company, and six delivered under project frameworks, Afshar said. Total drilling length reached 117,483 meters in the 11-month period, up 12% year on year, he added, noting that 20 of the company's 64 active rigs are currently being relocated across operational areas.



CBI: \$6.7b supplied under new forex policy to ease shortages in early 2026



Economy Desk

Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati said \$6.7 billion in foreign currency was supplied between January 5 and February 21 under the new foreign exchange policy. Hemmati said that, under the latest policy, a total of \$6.7 billion had been provided through various methods to finance imports of companies' raw materials, essential goods, and medicines and medical equipment, IRNA reported. "With the removal of the obstacles in foreign exchange provision for the commercial market and the activities of exchange offices in transactions over the past few months, its impact will gradually be seen in the banknote market as well, and the market regulator will intervene effectively at the appropriate time," he added. Under a new policy approved by the current government's economic team, all foreign currency transactions are now centralized in a single trading hall with a negotiated rate closely aligned with market prices. The policy shifts foreign currency allocation from the beginning of the supply chain to direct subsidy transfers at the consumer end. The shortage of foreign currency in the early days of 2026 led to a colossal surge in the foreign exchange rate across the country, prompting protests by traders and merchants. The protests were hijacked by armed terrorist elements — mainly backed by the United States and Israel, leaving more than 3,000 people dead and many others injured.

Vietnam hails Iran's tech sector potential as bilateral trade hits \$109m



Ambassador Novin Luong Ngak

Economy Desk

Vietnam's new ambassador to Iran said Iran possesses one of the region's strongest scientific and technological sectors, identifying it as a key area for future bilateral cooperation. Ambassador Novin Luong Ngak was cited by the Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA) as stating that following visits to Iranian science and technology parks, he observed that Iran is a leading regional power in science, technology, nanotechnology, and

knowledge-based companies. He added that this sector represents a significant opportunity for collaboration, particularly within the Vietnamese market. According to the ambassador, trade between Iran and Vietnam has grown in recent years, reaching approximately \$109 million over the past eight months. While acknowledging that official precise statistics on the total trade volume are unavailable, he cited the figure as an indicator of positive momentum. Citing a report from ILNA, goods imported from Vietnam to Iran during the stated period included rubber, coffee, tea, and related industrial products. In exchange, Iran exported products from its petrochemical, information technology, and construction materials sectors to the Vietnamese market. Ngak said close ties currently exist between the business communities of the two nations, adding that a recent visit by a Vietnamese business delegation to Iran helped establish strong links between their respective chambers of commerce. "The economies of Iran and Vietnam are not necessarily competitors, but rather can complement each other in many areas," the ambassador said. He highlighted Vietnam's strength in ag-

ricultural products, stating that nearly all of its agricultural goods have the potential to be exported to Iran. Conversely, he pointed to Iran's high capacity in petrochemicals and construction industries, which could see significant growth in the Vietnamese market. "One of the important opportunities ahead for Iranian traders is the possibility of a direct presence in the Vietnamese market, as Vietnam is one of the largest destinations for attracting foreign investment in the region," Ngak said. He suggested that Iranian investment in Vietnam could serve as a platform for exporting goods to West Asia. The ambassador noted that Vietnam attracts about \$30 billion in foreign investment annually and has signed 17 free trade agreements with various countries, creating a high capacity for attracting foreign investors. Looking ahead, Ngak announced short- and medium-term plans to develop trade ties, confirming that the 10th session of the joint Iran-Vietnam Commercial Commission will be held in Hanoi in the first quarter of the upcoming Iranian year (March 21, 2026). An Iranian delegation is expected to attend. He stated that the commission could play a key role in resolving trade

problems between the two countries. "Topics to accelerate trade relations, including financial payment issues, will be raised at the commission so that payment problems can be resolved through direct trade and eliminating intermediaries," he said. The ambassador added that the commission's agenda would also include discussions on fruit exports from Vietnam to Iran. Given Vietnam's position as a major producer of tropical fruits and Iran's capacity to export its own fruit to Vietnam, resolving payment issues in this area could have a significant impact on facilitating trade. Ngak also highlighted the development of direct flights as another important topic. He announced that a third direct flight from Tehran to Hanoi has recently been operated and that such flights will continue. "Targeting one flight per week could play a very effective role in expanding trade relations between the two countries," he said. The ambassador identified a lack of information and sufficient mutual knowledge as the biggest challenge facing economic actors in both countries. To address this, he said programs including the exchange of journalists and developing information dissemination are on the agenda.

Maiden rail shipment of bitumen launched from Azarbaijan to Europe



Economy Desk

Iran has begun a trial rail shipment of 500 tons of bitumen destined for Europe from its Azarbaijan region, marking the first time the cargo has been dispatched via railway from the area, according to Alireza Soleimani, director-general of the Azarbaijan Region Railway. Loading of the cargo began at Shahid Salimi City Station, Soleimani said. If the trial proves successful and following cost assessments, the first phase will see 5,000 tons of bitumen exported to European countries from the station, with a second phase adding another 5,000 tons, he said, Mehr news agency reported. Soleimani also announced the export of 1,200 tons of polystyrene from Sahlan Station to Bulgaria. "According to the planning, the export of a total of 5,000 tons of polystyrene to Europe is targeted over the next three months," he said. The senior official cited the expansion of railway branch lines and the activation of station capacities in the region as key factors in facilitating exports and reducing transportation costs.

Minister in Baku for joint commission on rail links, INSTC corridor

Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd left Tehran for Baku on Sunday to co-chair the 17th meeting of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, with discussions set to focus on completing joint infrastructure projects and boosting transit along the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC). The two-day session, beginning today, will be co-chaired by Sadegh Malvajerd and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev, according to a report from the Iranian state news agen-

cy, IRNA. Officials will evaluate the implementation of a memorandum of understanding from the previous meeting and hold talks on several bilateral projects. These include the completion and opening of the Kalaleh-Aqband bridge, the Aras corridor, the expansion of the 107-kilometer Kalaleh-Jolfa road, the construction of the Kalaleh-Siyahrud railway line, and the Khodaafarin and Giz Qalasi dams and power plants. Discussions will also cover developing trade ties, including plans for a joint working group to finalize a preferential trade agreement. A key focus will be transit and

transport cooperation within the INSTC's framework. The sides are expected to discuss the target of handling 15 million tons of transit annually by 2030 on the corridor's western branch, which connects Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Enhancing cultural activities and expanding cooperation in tourism, particularly health tourism, are also on the agenda. On the final day of the session, the heads of the two commissions are scheduled to sign a memorandum of understanding for the 17th joint commission on economic and humanitarian cooperation. During her visit, Sadegh



Malvajerd is also scheduled to hold separate meetings with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Deputy Prime Minister Mustafayev, Digital

Development and Transport Minister Rashad Nabiyeu, and Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov to discuss the development of bilateral relations.

US torn between sword and olive branch

OPINION Although in recent weeks, the sphere of Iran's foreign policy and regional transformations has oscillated between the binary of "war" and "negotiation," following the Geneva dialogues, this condition has entered a more intricate and opaque phase. We are now confronted with an extensive surge of media narratives that, on the surface, present a contradictory picture. On the one hand, certain analyses talk of the accessibility of an accord and a diplomatic opening; on the other hand, emphatic narratives accentuate the probability of war, even within a short-term temporal horizon.

To this end, a number of Iranian experts have been interviewed so that the future of negotiations and relations between Iran and the United States may be examined.



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump and his expanding military buildup in the Middle East. **BILL KUCHMAN/POLITICO**

Iran and region must prepare for risk of war



By **Qassem Moheb-Ali**
Former ambassador of Iran to Greece

The peril of war is more serious than the continuation of negotiations and the attain-

ment of an agreement. What is presently articulated with salience pertains to a limited and short-duration war designed to exert pressure upon Tehran. Therefore, I remain hopeful that diplomacy and negotiation shall persist, yet present conditions indicate that reaching an agree-

ment is exceedingly difficult. In light of the obligations and constraints that the United States has delineated for Iran, including the emphasis upon Tehran's accession to the Abraham Accords, the diplomatic trajectory has become more convoluted and arduous, and it

does not appear that the parties can readily attain an agreement. Given the conflict of interests, the insistence upon rigid positions, and the United States' policy of maximum pressure, the probability of a short-term or even extensive military confrontation is considerable and

must be regarded with gravity. Hope in diplomacy remains significant. However, under present conditions, Iran and the region must prepare for the danger of war and must not entertain unfounded optimism regarding the possibility of an agreement.

Trump seeks agreement through display of war



By **Ahmad Bakhshayesh Ardestani**
Member of Foreign Policy Commission of Iran's Parliament

Donald Trump's 10-day ultimatum and the latest military movements of the United States in the region against Iran do not signify the occurrence of war. Notwithstanding the threats and the extensive deployment of American forces, I continue to maintain that Trump's principal objective in staging a martial display is the attainment of a nuclear agreement with Iran, not the actual initiation of war.

The arrival of F-22 and F-35 aircraft and heavy equipment to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman constitutes more a demonstration of power and psychological coercion than preparation for an assault. Trump endeavors to



Flight deck operations are underway aboard the USS Gerald R. Ford in the Mediterranean in February 2026. **US NAVY**

utilize these levers to extract nuclear concessions from Iran and intends, through military maneu-

vering, to assess Iran's flexibility. Despite these pressures and the threat of war, Iran has observed

its red lines and has declared that negotiation continues and that "guiding principles" have been

specified. Following his observation of Iran's cautious response, Trump has resolved to station a portion of combat forces in the region so that, throughout these 10 days, the requisite pressure for achieving an agreement may be exerted.

If Iran does not grant the concessions desired by the United States, Trump may contemplate the option of attack, although a direct assault would yield no benefit for him. Instead, by preserving military pressure at Iran's gates, Trump employs instruments of psychological operations so that domestic public opinion within Iran may exert pressure upon the government and thus advance negotiations to his advantage. In sum, these movements resemble coercive diplomacy more than full-scale war; therefore, a window for agreement and negotiation remains open, although risk and tension remain elevated.

Short-term war and diplomacy both remain plausible



By **Kourosh Ahmadi**
Former Iranian diplomat at United Nations

Apparently, as time elapses, the sensitivity and complexity of the matter intensify. Iran's recent letter to the Security Council and the secretary-general of the United Nations, together with the 10 to 15-day ultimatum established by Trump, has introduced the probability of short-term war; yet simultaneously, the path of diplomacy remains open, and the probability of an agreement, although diminished to some degree, is not nullified. Iran is preparing a written text for presentation to the United States, which will apparently be completed within the forthcoming days, and its principal axis must, logically, be the en-

richment program. The talk of "zero enrichment," advanced over the past year by the Trump administration, contains a measure of ambiguity. This general position may signify either "suspension" or "complete cessation" of enrichment, and precisely this ambiguity opens a window for a short-term or medium-term agreement. A suspension analogous to the suspension of enrichment in the Saadabad Agreement of 2003 may be under discussion. If Tehran suspends enrichment for a specified duration, it preserves its right to enrichment, and in such a circumstance, the United States has not explicitly impugned that right.

With respect to other American demands in the missile and regional spheres, the introduction of these subjects may function as a tactic or negoti-

ating stratagem designed for bargaining. Trump's essential concern is enrichment, and if an agreement materializes in this domain, he may present it as a victory within the United States and, in comparison with the JCPOA, portray it as a monumental achievement to his electoral base domestically. In such a case, he may relinquish other matters upon which he has not placed pronounced emphasis.

The path of diplomacy remains open, and the final decision depends upon the degree of flexibility of both parties concerning the suspension of enrichment. Of course, the salient question is what concession the United States will provide in exchange for Iran's flexibility regarding enrichment. The concession must assuredly reside within the sanctions domain. The pivot-

al question is whether, in exchange for a potential suspension of enrichment, the Trump administration would adjust sanctions to the same extent as the JCPOA or not. Perhaps the principal nexus of debate

now resides precisely here. Naturally, alongside this matter, the issue of verification and Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency possesses exceedingly high significance.



A missile is displayed at a celebration in Tehran in February 2026. **ARASH KHAMOOSHI/THE NEW YORK TIMES**



"With respect to other American demands in the missile and regional spheres, the introduction of these subjects may function as a tactic or negotiating stratagem designed for bargaining. Trump's essential concern is enrichment, and if an agreement materializes in this domain, he may present it as a victory within the United States and, in comparison with the JCPOA, portray it as a monumental achievement to his electoral base domestically. In such a case, he may relinquish other matters upon which he has not placed pronounced emphasis."
— Kourosh Ahmadi, former Iranian diplomat

Predicting 'war' or 'negotiation' outcome difficult



By Nozar Shafiei
International relations professor

A categorical response to the question of whether we are progressing toward war or negotiation is genuinely difficult; numerous factors determine the ultimate trajectory of the

two countries, and each possesses its own weight and influence. For the United States, entry into a protracted and costly war with an indeterminate future constitutes a negative prospect. Even a short-term and intense war does not guarantee the realization of their

objectives; therefore, in principle, Americans refrain from movement toward full-scale war. On the Iranian side as well, war would be detrimental to the country and would generate unpredictable consequences. From this perspective, Tehran likewise exhibits no substan-

tial inclination toward initiating war. Consequently, under balanced conditions, both parties prefer negotiation. That which may redirect the trajectory toward war is failure to attain mutually acceptable solutions in negotiations. The Americans possess specific expectations, and it

remains unclear to what extent Iran can respond to these expectations. Iran's response thus far has been negative, and it has endeavored to utilize alternative methods to diminish pressure and avert confrontation. A precise prognostication of war's occurrence is tough.

However, in light of recent movements and Trump's 10-day ultimatum, present conditions are such that both the possibility of agreement and short-term war exist.

The full articles first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Shargh.

Force, power, and falsehood not America's salvation

By Mehdi Qadiri Bidakhvidi
Expert on criminal law and criminology

OPINION

The media portrays him as the guarantor of democracy. However, reality proclaims an altogether different verity. The policy of maximum pressure and the historical animus of America toward Iran constitute a clear example of the lies and interventions of great powers. In a world wherein powers fabricate narratives, consciousness and autonomous analysis possess greater salience than ever before.

In the contemporary world, many conjecture that America epitomizes liberty, democracy, and human rights. The media, cinema, universities, and even international institutions promote this portrayal. Nevertheless, empirical realities articulate a divergent account.

The United States considers itself the leader of the world and, pursuant to this supposition, intervenes not solely within its domestic polity but likewise within foreign policy, adopting decisions that exert influence upon the lives of millions. One conspicuous instance of the dissonance between the proclamation of democracy and America's actual performance is this country's comportment toward journalists and media. The president of the United States, when confronted with a critical interrogative, at times responds with discourtesy and even precludes the journalist from articulating his statement. This minor instance demonstrates that American democracy, in practice, is encumbered by severe constraints and, contrary to its official portrayal, does not invariably engender a free and



The illustration shows former UK prime minister Tony Blair (R), former US president George W. Bush (L), and several former American top-ranking officials who advanced the fake narrative that Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was building weapons of mass destruction. GETTY IMAGES

egalitarian forum for inquiry. From the perspective of international law, no state possesses the prerogative to designate itself the leader of the world or to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. The Charter of the United Nations emphasizes that states are equally sovereign, and the principle of non-intervention constitutes one of the cardinal pillars of international law. Yet the United States, through hard power (military and economic) and soft power (media, culture, and influence within international institutions), circumvents these principles in practice. The United Nations Security Council, the International Court of Justice, and other institutions frequently lack independent executive authority to confront America, and these constraints have induced many states, in practice, to acquiesce to America's self-proclaimed leadership. The historical example of Lib-

ya following the 2011 revolution and the overthrow of Gaddafi likewise demonstrates how great powers, including the US and certain European countries, through direct and indirect intervention, precipitate disorder within a state. Western officials, subsequent to Gaddafi's overthrow, declared to the people of Libya with sarcasm that "You got your wish... freedom and democracy," while the country entered a cycle of civil war and economic collapse. This example demonstrates that great powers employ the slogans of democracy and human rights to legitimize their actions but, in practice, frequently operate pursuant to their own interests rather than the exigencies of the populace. Another instance that great powers have utilized to justify interventions is the episode of "Nayirah's testimony" during the First Persian Gulf

War. A 15-year-old girl named Nayirah testified in a Human Rights Committee session that she witnessed Iraqi soldiers extracting infants from incubators and leaving them to perish. This narrative was immediately disseminated in the media and speeches and became a pretext for legitimizing America's military assault upon Iraq. It was later revealed that she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to America, had never been a nurse, and that her testimony had been fabricated pursuant to a propaganda campaign of the Kuwaiti government and the design of public relations firms. This lucid example demonstrates how fake narratives may become pretexts for war and for the legitimization of the objectives of powers, even if their falsity is subsequently established.

With respect to Iran, the situation is more intricate. Since the 1979 revolution, the United States has consistently adopted hostile policies toward Iran and has endeavored to regard Iran in the same manner it regards certain regional countries, namely, "a milking cow" and "under pressure". Accordingly, the objective of the US in its maximum pressure policy is the isolation of Iran and the exploitation of the country's resources and strategic position. Some domestic opposition groups within Iran, in order to augment their efficacy, have sought recourse to the US as well since it possesses both hard power and soft power and is capable of intensifying internal and external pressure simultaneously. This matter demonstrates that

the conduct of great powers is frequently self-interested, political, and deceptive, and that the rights of peoples never constitute the crux of decision-making for them.

Another historical experience is America's role in the Iraq War and the allegations concerning weapons of mass destruction. Prior to the 2003 invasion, the US and its allies asserted that Iraq possessed these weapons, whereas it was later established that sufficient evidence had not existed and that these assertions had functioned as instruments of belligerence and media manipulation. The example of "Nayirah's testimony" and the narrative of weapons of mass destruction reveal a common pattern: the fabrication of false narratives for the legitimization of military and political actions. This demonstrates that great powers, even those that designate themselves as guarantors of democracy and human rights, frequently exhibit conduct that is unlawful, interventionist, and self-driven.

International law possesses mechanisms of counteraction. However, the actual power of states is determinative, and countries such as the United States interpret and implement legal constraints pursuant to their own interests. Ultimately, the principal message for the reader is manifest: the US is not a paradise, and its media portrayal diverges from empirical reality. States and peoples must remain cognizant that the decisions of great powers are frequently aligned with their own interests rather than with the interests of the peoples of other countries. As the experiences of Libya, Iraq, and Iran have demonstrated, narratives, falsehoods, and political pressures constitute instruments for the legitimization of self-interested actions. In such a world, consciousness, autonomous analysis, and legal understanding possess vital importance in order to distinguish realities from false narratives and political ulterior motives.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Etemad.



15-year-old Nayirah al-Sabah gives her testimony to the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus on October 10, 1990, two months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was later revealed that she was the daughter of Kuwaiti ambassador Saud Nasser al-Saud al-Sabah and that her testimony was false. C-SPAN



A British soldier patrols the Rumaila oil field in southern Iraq on February 1, 2005. British Petroleum (BP) company was awarded the contract to be the lead operator of the field four years later. ANDREW PARSONS/AFP

Bakhtiarizadeh named Esteghlal coach until end of season

Sports Desk

Former Esteghlal defender and Iran international Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh has been appointed the club's interim head coach until the end of the season, the Persian Gulf Pro League side announced on Sunday.

Bakhtiarizadeh, 48, succeeds Portuguese coach Ricardo Sá Pinto, who was dismissed following Esteghlal's last-16 exit from the AFC Champions League Two on Tuesday.

The Tehran Blues conceded two late goals in a 3-2 defeat to Jordan's Al Hussein in Amman, bowing out 4-2 on aggregate from Asia's second-tier club competition.

"The club's board of directors

has always believed that utilizing loyal human assets emerging from the Esteghlal family constitutes a sustainable, identity-driven strategy for the future," the club said in a statement. "Accordingly, after considering the current circumstances and the technical committee's recommendations, the board has decided to appoint Mr. Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh as head coach of Esteghlal Football Team."

The appointment marks Bakhtiarizadeh's third spell on the Blues' bench since October 2024.

He oversaw eight matches across two brief stints last season, recording four wins and two defeats.

The highlight of his previous

tenure came on the final day of the league stage of the AFC Champions League Elite in February last year, when Esteghlal secured a 2-0 away victory over Qatar's Al Rayyan in a must-win encounter to advance to the round of 16 ahead of domestic rival Persepolis.

Under Sá Pinto this season, Esteghlal registered 13 wins and eight defeats in 31 matches in all competitions. The club sits third in the Persian Gulf Pro League standings with 35 points from 20 matches, one point behind leaders Golgozar Sirjan and level with second-placed Tractor. Esteghlal also remains in contention to defend its Hazfi Cup title and will face Khaybar Khorramabad in the quarterfinals.



● khabarvarzeshi.com



● Foolad Sirjan middle-blocker Mohammad Valizadeh (27) hits a spike during a 3-0 victory over Shahrdari Urmia in the Iranian Volleyball Premier League in Tehran, Iran, on February 23, 2026.
● VOLLEYBALL.IR

Iranian Volleyball Premier League:

Foolad tightens grip on top; Shahdab stunned by San'atgaran

Sports Desk

The latest round of fixtures in the Iranian Volleyball Premier League saw Foolad Sirjan strengthen its hold on top spot in the regular-season standings with a straight-sets victory over Shahrdari Urmia.

Coached by former national team boss Behrouz Ataei, Foolad claimed a 28-26, 25-13, 25-22 win to register its 15th victory in 17 matches.

The result moved Foolad to 43 points, four clear of sec-

ond-placed Shahdab Yazd.

Last season's runner-up Shahdab, beaten by Foolad in the championship series, suffered a surprise 3-1 defeat (29-27, 23-25, 29-27, 25-23) to San'atgaran Omid earlier in the day and remained on 13 wins.

The victory marked San'atgaran's ninth of the campaign, consolidating seventh place with 27 points and keeping the side in contention for a playoff berth.

Elsewhere, third-placed Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan also stum-

bled, falling 3-1 (29-27, 25-23, 15-25, 25-22) to Tabiat Eslamshahr to stay on 32 points from 11 wins.

Paykan closed to within one point of third place after mounting a dramatic comeback to defeat Esteghlal Gonbad in a five-set thriller (23-25, 23-25, 25-23, 25-18, 15-11).

In other matches, Pas Gorgan beat fifth-placed Chadormalou 3-1 (25-19, 22-25, 25-19, 25-23), while Mehregan Noor rallied to edge Razin Polymer in five sets (23-25, 25-14, 25-22, 22-25, 15-13).

Saei poised for second term at Iranian Taekwondo Federation

Sports Desk

With former president Mohammad Pouladgar sidelined from contention, Iranian taekwondo legend Hadi Saei appears the clear frontrunner to retain the helm of the Iranian Taekwondo Federation when elections for the sport's national governing body are held on April 8.

Saei, who assumed the presidency in January 2022 at the age of 44 with a decisive mandate, has overseen a four-year tenure marked by sustained international success. His term culminated in Iran's most successful Olympic taekwondo campaign at the Paris 2024 Summer Games.

Under Saei's leadership, Iranian athletes claimed four medals in Paris, including a historic silver in the women's division through Nahid Kiani.

The gold medal, secured by Arian Salimi in the +80kg category, carried particular significance as it ended a 16-year wait for an Olympic taekwondo gold for Iran — the first since Saei himself triumphed at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Salimi rallied after dropping the opening round against Britain's Caden Cunningham to take the final two rounds, showcasing the resilience that has defined Iranian taekwondo in recent years. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of Saei, who remains Iran's most decorated Olympian of the modern

era with two gold medals and one bronze.

The federation's achievements have extended beyond the Olympic stage. At the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, Iranian taekwondo athletes secured four medals, including one gold. The 2023 World Championships produced five medals, two of them gold. Across the Asian Games campaign, Iran ultimately collected eight medals in total across various weight categories, despite several early exits by medal hopefuls.

This consistent presence on major international podiums suggests Saei's tenure has provided relative stability and competitiveness at the highest level.

The upcoming election features 15 registered candidates but notably

excludes Pouladgar, who is ineligible after serving three previous terms. Among the most prominent challengers to Saei are Asghar Rahimi and two-time world champion and former Olympic bronze medalist Yousef Karami, both well-known figures within Iranian taekwondo.

Given Saei's administrative record, the federation's international results over the past four years, and the composition of the candidate field, the April vote is widely seen as a referendum on the federation's current direction. Whether members opt for continuity or a change in leadership will shape Iran's preparation for future Olympic and World Championship cycles.



● IRNA

Persian Gulf Pro League:

Last-gasp winner extends Foolad's unbeaten run

Sports Desk

Arash Akbarzadeh came off the bench to score a 97th-minute winner and help Foolad Khuzestan defeat Zob Ahan 2-1 at home in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Saturday.

A Nader Mohammadi own goal gave Foolad a 45th-minute lead against the struggling visitors, who had been reduced to 10 men following a straight red card for Pouya Mokhtari midway through the first half at Foolad Arena.

Zob Ahan still managed to restore parity two minutes later, when Pedram Qazipour's effort from outside the box found the bottom corner, leaving the score 1-1 at halftime.

Akbarzadeh's superb strike from the edge of the area, however, extended Foolad's impressive run to three wins and two draws in five games since Hamid Motahari was appointed as head coach in mid-January, replacing Yahya Golmohammadi.

The victory lifted Foolad to ninth in the table with 28 points from 21 games, while Zob Ahan remained second from bottom with 19 points. On Friday, Persepolis suf-



● Foolad Khuzestan players are pictured after the late winner during a 2-1 victory over Zob Ahan in the Persian Gulf Pro League in Ahvaz, Iran, on February 21, 2026.
● VARZESH3

ferred a third successive defeat in the Iranian top flight, falling 2-1 to Khaybar at home to remain fifth in the table with 35 points, while the visiting side moved up to eighth on 29 points.

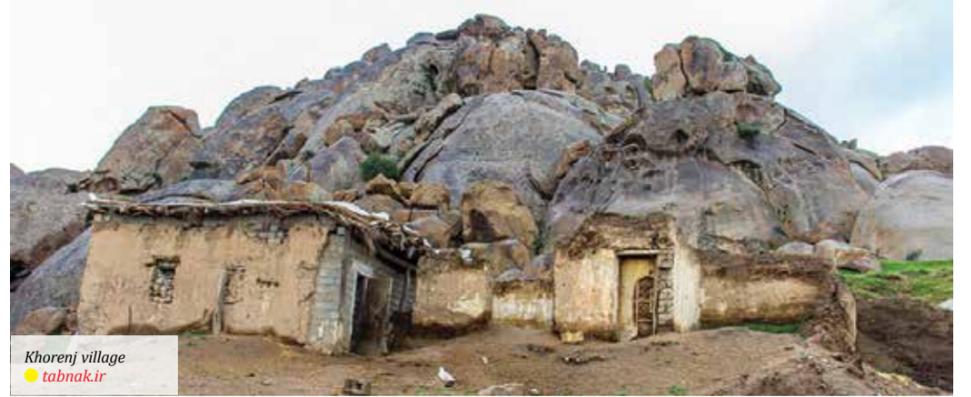
Sixth-placed Chadormalou came from behind to stun leaders Golgozar 5-1 at home, with Fajr Sepasi edging out Shams Azar 1-0 in Shiraz.

Iralco and Paykan played to a 1-1 draw in Arak.

Discover history, nature of West Azarbaijan Province



Baqcheh Jooq Palace
● IRNA



Khorenj village
● tabnak.ir

Iranica Desk

West Azarbaijan, a gem in north-western Iran, with its remarkable natural, historical and cultural diversity, has long attracted explorers and admirers of pristine landscapes and ancient heritage. Amid soaring peaks, vast plains and turquoise lakes, the province's villages stand like hidden jewels, safeguarding age-old secrets and opening a window onto authentic Iranian life and the region's rich cultural legacy.

Preserving traditional customs, vernacular architecture and unspoiled natural settings, these villages offer visitors a distinctive and immersive tourism experience. This report takes readers on a journey to several standout villages, each telling a compelling story of the history, culture and nature of West Azarbaijan Province, according to chtn.ir.

Hasanlu Hill

The first stop is the historic village of Hasanlu in Naqadeh. More than merely a village, Hasanlu is a familiar name to archaeologists and history enthusiasts alike. The ancient Hasanlu Hill, one of

Iran's most significant archaeological sites, bears witness to the region's millennia-old past. Dating back to the eras of the Uartian civilization and the Medes, the site gained global recognition following the discovery of the Golden Bowl of Hasanlu. A visit offers a journey deep into history, where the remains of ancient settlements evoke the grandeur of long-lost civilizations. The surrounding natural scenery, including the Hasanlu Wetland, further enhances the site's appeal, while the village's rural identity reflects the simple, traditional lifestyle of its residents. Hasanlu was also among eight villages shortlisted for global registration last year.

Baqcheh Jooq

At Iran's northwesternmost edge, in Maku, the Baqcheh Jooq village captivates visitors with its magnificent historic mansion. Built during the Qajar era by a local ruler, the Baqcheh Jooq Palace stands as a masterpiece of Iranian architecture.

Featuring intricate stucco work, elegant wall paintings and finely crafted wooden sash windows,



Golmarz village
● delgarm.com

the historic structure leaves a lasting impression on visitors. The surrounding gardens, designed in the style of traditional Persian gardens and adorned with fruit trees and flowing streams, create a tranquil and inviting setting for leisure and reflection. In short, Baqcheh Jooq offers an unforgettable blend of art, history and nature.

Band

Near the city of Urmia, Band village has emerged as a popular

destination thanks to its pleasant natural environment and distinctive geographical setting. Nestled beside a river and surrounded by green hillsides, the village presents picturesque and soothing landscapes. Band is a haven for those seeking tranquility, fresh air and an escape from urban bustle. Nature trails, family picnic areas and traditional restaurants serving local cuisine are among its attractions. In spring and summer, the village's lush greenery becomes

especially vibrant, making it an ideal retreat for relaxation and outdoor enjoyment.

Khorenj

In the heart of the mountainous Piranshahr region, Khorenj village stands out for its pristine nature and breathtaking scenery. Set in a scenic valley, it boasts majestic mountain views, fast-flowing rivers and verdant pastures, making it an ideal destination for mountaineers, nature lovers and those seeking an authentic taste of rural life in highland areas.

Village homes, built from stone and wood in harmony with the land's natural slope, blend seamlessly with their surroundings. Khorenj also lies near an area marked by massive, unusually stacked boulders, along with several pre-Islamic archaeological mounds, an ancient inscription and the remains of a mountain fortress—evidence of the region's long and eventful history.

Qinarjeh

Near the historic city of Takab and close to the UNESCO-listed Takht-e Soleyman, lies the village of Qinarjeh. Known for its scenic waterfall, natural hot springs and

untouched environment, Qinarjeh attracts travelers from neighboring cities and beyond.

Nearby attractions include the Qinarjeh Waterfall, the Takht-e Soleyman complex, the Azargoshasb Fire Temple, Ahmadabad hot springs, Sardar Afshar Castle, Kahriz Cave and the Takab Grand Mosque. Set amid serene mountain slopes, the village offers a peaceful rural lifestyle and an opportunity to experience local culture firsthand, particularly appealing to hiking and nature enthusiasts during favorable seasons.

Golmarz

Close to Urmia, the Golmarz village is well known among regional tourist destinations for its unique natural beauty. Located beside a wetland, it offers striking landscapes, fresh air and a calm atmosphere, making it ideal for day trips and family picnics.

Local agricultural produce and fresh dairy products further enrich the visitor experience. Golmarz stands as a symbol of the harmonious blend between authentic rural life and the stunning natural scenery of West Azarbaijan Province.

Hirmandi women weave hope, preserve culture

Iranica Desk

In a remote part of Iran, where scorching heat and harsh natural conditions make life especially challenging, the skilled hands and creative minds of women in Hirmand, a city in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, have emerged as a beacon of hope and a source of extraordinary craftsmanship. These artisans are not only the guardians of ancient cultural heritage but, through their traditional arts, play a vital role in supporting their families' livelihoods and promoting sustainable regional development.

Baluchi embroidery, regarded as the cultural hallmark of the region, is the most prominent art form practiced by Hirmandi women. Intricate geometric patterns, vivid and radiant colors—particularly red, orange, green, and black—and delicate stitching captivate every observer. This art comes alive on women's and men's clothing, bedspreads, tablecloths, and bags, with designs deeply rooted in the myths, stories, and beliefs of the Baluch people, according to chtn.ir.

Another refined craft, Khameh-Duzi (thread embroidery), employs colored threads to adorn fabric. The women, with astonishing skill, stitch traditional patterns onto local textiles or velvet, producing works suitable for both



● fararu.com

home decoration and unique clothing. Although leatherwork has traditionally been dominated by men, the female artists have also excelled in this craft. Using natural leather, they produce functional and aesthetically pleasing items such as bags, shoes, belts, and accessories. By combining leatherwork with intricate embroidery, they create truly distinctive and original products.

Siah-Duzi, the art of stitching bright designs onto dark fabrics, is another specialty. The striking color contrasts serve as a symbol of resilience in the face of hardship and reflect the delicate yet determined spirit of the female artists. These works are often used to adorn ceremonial clothing and wedding cloths.

Despite their immense talent, Hirmandi women face challenges



● kojara.com

such as limited access to broader markets, fluctuating prices for raw materials, and a lack of modern packaging and marketing facilities. Nevertheless, the establishment of women's cooperatives, workshops organized by NGOs and government bodies, and the rise of online sales and social media have opened new



● kojara.com

opportunities for these artisans. The handicrafts of the artisans are far more than mere products; they tell stories of life, resilience, and hope. Supporting these artists means preserving a national treasure while empowering a community that creates beauty and sustains its livelihoods. Every purchase of their work is an

investment in the culture, identity, and sustainable future of the hardworking people of Sistan and Baluchestan.

Fatemeh Shahbakhsh, 42, a needlework and thread embroidery artist, said, "I have been practicing Baluchi embroidery and Khameh-Duzi for nearly 25 years. I learned this art from my mother, and now I teach local girls and women. I used to create only for dowries and personal use, but through the Hirmand Women's Cooperative, my works now reach major cities and even abroad."

She added, "This work is the main pillar of our family economy. Its income is sometimes higher than that of some government jobs, especially when we take special orders for ceremonies. With this income, I support the education of my three children. This craft not only provides a living but also

gives us dignity."

Shahbakhsh continued, "I tell all the girls and women in the region: don't underestimate your handicrafts. Even the Baluchi embroidery you think is old-fashioned can transform your life. I started a small workshop at home with just a needle and thread. There is no need to migrate; wealth lies in the patterns our ancestors left us."

Zahra Mir, 35, a leatherworker, said, "I use natural leather combined with Siah-Duzi designs. I make bags, shoes, and belts, stitching traditional Baluchi patterns with white and silver threads onto the leather. This combination attracts customers even from northern cities."

She added, "I used to work in a simple workshop, but now I have my own Instagram page and sell directly from Hirmand. My income has tripled compared to five years ago. More importantly, I have financial independence. I make my own decisions, work, and earn."

Mir continued, "Don't be afraid to innovate. We must adapt our art to modern tastes. I combined a traditionally male craft, leatherwork, with women's Siah-Duzi embroidery—and succeeded. If we work together to produce diverse, high-quality products, we can establish the Hirmand brand nationwide."

Iran adopts new tourism charter, casting guides as guardians of its global image



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, marked International Tourist Guide Day on February 21 by hailing tour guides as "architects of Iran's image abroad" and announcing a new tourism statute shifting the state's role from direct control to strategic stewardship. In his message, issued to coincide with the annual observance on February 21, Salehi-Amiri said guides bear responsibility for presenting Iran's culture and

civilization to foreign visitors, framing their work as central to the country's international standing, ILNA reported.

He said power in contemporary international relations is no longer confined to hard assets, but rests increasingly on symbolic capital, credibility and the ability to produce authoritative narratives.

Within that framework, he described tour guides as key actors in cultural and public diplomacy, shaping visitors' perceptions through documented, informed storytelling.

Addressing what he termed distorted portrayals of Iran, the minister said the answer lies in rigorous, evidence-based narratives grounded in legal and historical fact, delivered by guides

equipped with interdisciplinary knowledge and modern communication skills.

Salehi-Amiri said sustainable tourism hinges on skilled human capital and placed guides at the core of that strategy.

He added that a newly adopted statute redefines the government's role as policymaker, regulator, supporter and supervisor, moving it away from direct operational control.

The ministry is drafting measures to enhance targeted security provisions, establish stable insurance mechanisms and upgrade specialized training, he said, adding that tourism expansion without professional dignity and economic stability for guides would lack cohesion and durability.

A tour guide addresses a group of visitors during a guided walk at a historic site.
 ● ILNA

Iran to channel Nowruz travel beyond six provinces as 46% of trips cluster in key hubs

Arts & Culture Desk

More than 46 percent of Iran's domestic trips are concentrated in six provinces, Mostafa Fatemi, Director General for Domestic Tourism Development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said, announcing the designation of 114 "complementary cities" to ease congestion during the Nowruz holidays.

Fatemi said the bulk of travel during previous Nowruz (March-April 2025) flowed to established hubs including Mashhad, Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan and coastal centers in Hormozgan and Mazandaran provinces, placing acute pressure on transport networks, accommodation and urban services, IRNA reported.

To rebalance demand for the upcoming Nowruz break, which runs from late March

to April 4, 2026, authorities have mapped 114 alternative destinations nationwide and begun promoting them through provincial tourism offices and digital booking platforms.

In the east, the plan highlights Rafsanjan, Jiroft, Bam and Sirjan in Kerman PROVINCE; Konarak, Zarabad, Nikshahr, Hamun, Zabol and Zahak in Sistan and Baluchistan; Ardakan, Mehriz, Bafq and Abarkuh in Yazd; Ferdows, Birjand and Tabas in South Khorasan; Ardestan, Nain and Varzaneh in eastern Isfahan; Shahrud and Mahdishahr in Semnan; Samalqan and Shirvan in North Khorasan; and Quchan, Sabzevar, Neyshabur, Torbat-e Heydarieh, Gonabad, Khaf and Torbat-e Jam in Razavi Khorasan.

Thirteen further cities have been earmarked in Fars and Hormozgan provinces to divert traffic from Shiraz and

the Persian Gulf islands. In Fars, Lar, Darab, Estahban, Neyriz, Fasa, Jahrom, Kazeroon and Eqlid are being marketed as substitutes. In Hormozgan, Minab, Sirik, Bastak, Parsian and Bandar Khamir have been added to official travel guides.

Fatemi said a national travel facilitation headquarters has convened six coordination meetings with transport, police and local authorities to manage flows, curb road accidents and standardize services during the peak period. Search data show a recent surge in online queries for tours, accommodation and tickets ahead of the holiday, he added.

Discounted packages are generally reserved for off-peak periods and coordinated with public-sector bodies for teachers and retirees, as Nowruz capacity in major destinations is typically fully booked well in advance.

Three Iranian children honored at Japan's 2025 Kanagawa painting contest

Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian children, including 11-year-old Hana Mohammadi from Mahabad, won awards at the 2025 Kanagawa International Children's Painting Competition in Japan, a local cultural official said on Sunday.

Afsaneh Baziyar, head of the Mahabad branch of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, told IRNA that Mohammadi secured a trophy and prize in competition with more than 10,000 entries from 73 countries.

Avin Ghahremanzadeh from Maku and Mahya Khanmohammadi from Urmia were also among this year's award recipients.

Founded in 1979 in Kanagawa Prefecture, the annual contest promotes intercultural exchange among children worldwide. Specialist art juries evaluate the submissions, and selected works go on public display in Japan during the accompanying exhibition.



The latest success follows further international recognition for Mahabad's young artists. At the fourth 'Sun's Birthday' International Children's Painting Festival last month, Anita Balnour from Mahabad's Center No. 2 won gold, while Baran Abdollahzadeh from Center No. 1 claimed silver.

Tehran book fair dates approved for 2026 edition

Arts & Culture Desk

The 37th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) will run from May 13 to 23, its president Mohsen Javadi announced on Sunday after the event's second policy council meeting approved the dates, according to the Cultural Affairs Deputy of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The decision was finalized at a session held on February 22, 2026, in Tehran. Javadi, who also serves as deputy culture minister, said organizers aim to secure a strong turnout of foreign private publishers despite logistical constraints, IRNA reported.

Preparations for the Tehran Publishing Fellowship are under way and will expand on last year's edition, he added. Ebrahim Heidari, the fair's deputy head and chief executive of the Iran Book and Literature House, said correspondence had begun with the Islamic Culture and relations Organization (ICRO) to facilitate invitations for overseas guests. Consultations have also taken place with the Foreign Ministry to broaden international participation.

Heidari said arrangements were in progress to procure foreign titles required by Iranian universities, while negotiations had advanced to ap-

point a sponsoring bank and commercial partners. A public call has been issued to select the fair's official slogan, with organizers seeking to finalize it shortly.

Several candidates for guest of honor were proposed at the meeting, with a decision deferred to the next session. Plans for the virtual section and new program formats were also reviewed.

The Tehran International Book Fair is the country's largest publishing event, drawing hundreds of domestic and international publishers each year and serving as a key marketplace for rights deals and academic sourcing.

Date: 1404/12/04 - No.:55/04/26922

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY
Second Announcement

The Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jihad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below pesticide technical material, through renewal of one step international tender.

No	Name	PACKING	Quantity/kg
1	Glyphosate Isopropylamine Salt Technical 62% w/w	200 or 250 kg drum	80,000

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Sunday** dated **22/02/2026** until **Monday** dated **02/03/2026** (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30-character identification code of 33903978226350065000000000000008.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Saturday** dated **04/04/2026** (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on **Sunday** dated **05/04/2026** at 14:00 with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the value of the bid bond amount must be only submitted by the bidders in bank guarantee as follows:

- **€ 19712 for Glyphosate Isopropylamine Salt Technical 62% w/w equivalent to Iranian Rials 31,919,861,056**
- The bid bond value should be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the exchange rate of Telegraphic Transfer on CBI's ETS website, www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir, on 16/2/2026 in bank guarantee.
- The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial.
- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://lets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982189776325.

Public Relations and International Affairs of Agricultural Support Services Company