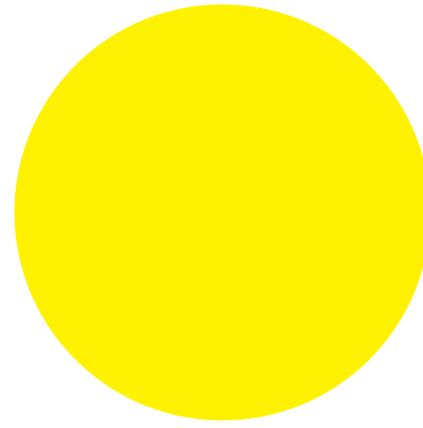




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Iran Daily



irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7362 • Monday, Aug. 14, 2023 • Mordad 23, 1402 • Muharram 27, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

Terrorist opens fire at Shiraz shrine, at least one killed 4 >



Medical workers rush an individual who was shot during an attack on Shah Cheragh Shia shrine in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz to hospital on Sunday, August 13, 2023. **FARS**

Iranian experts visit Hirmand River sources in Afghanistan

Iran has urged officials in Kabul to supply Iran with its share of water from the Hirmand River (Helmand in Afghanistan) after a group of Iranian experts visited the river and its sources in neighboring Afghanistan. Iranian Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs Mohammad Javanbakht said that both sides agreed to decide on the way of delivery of Iran's water share during the technical meetings which will be held in the near future, according to IRNA.

According to a treaty signed between Iran and Afghanistan in 1973, Iran has the right to visit the Deh Rawood water measuring station in Afghanistan in cases when the country does not supply Iran with its share of the river water, Javanbakht said.

Deh Rawood station, which is located upstream of Kajaki Dam on the Hirmand, measures the amount of water entering the river. Page 4 >

Oil exports surpass 1.4mbd target

Iran's oil exports have surpassed the government's 1.4 million barrels per day target, said the head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization.

"Based on Iran's current budget, the government aims at exporting 1.4 million oil barrels per day, an objective which has now been surpassed thanks to the Oil Ministry's efforts," Davoud Manzoor said on Sunday. Page 2 >

Also on Sunday, Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji said that Iran is producing about 3.2 million barrels of crude oil per day (bpd).



EXCLUSIVE

Message of Pakistani president on the occasion of the 76th Independence Day

I congratulate all my compatriots on Pakistan's 76th Independence Day anniversary. On this day, we pay tribute to the sacrifices rendered by our founding fathers and workers of the Pakistan Movement.

The stories of those people, who faced hardships, endured oppression and braved immense challenges to reach Pakistan, serve as a source of inspiration for our future generations. We should value the sacrifices of our forefathers for the creation of Pakistan and work for the prosperity of our people. Page 5 >



President Arif Alvi

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi Arabia's
Ma'aden profit
sinks 91%

AFP - Saudi Arabian Mining Company, known as Ma'aden, said on Sunday its second-quarter profit tumbled more than 90% on lower sales prices and higher expenses as it flagged a mixed outlook for its products. Ma'aden posted net profit of 350.9 million riyals (\$93.53 million) in the second quarter, down 91.3% from just over 4 billion riyals a year prior, the firm said in a stock exchange filing. That missed analysts' average estimate of 577.6 million riyals in net profit for the second quarter, according to Refinitiv data.

'BRICS bank'
looks to local
currencies

REUTERS - The New Development Bank (NDB) set up by the BRICS countries needs to increase its local currency fundraising and lending, South Africa's finance minister said. South Africa will host leaders of the other BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India and China - as the bloc aims to widen its influence at a Johannesburg summit later this month.

Oil exports
surpass ...

He said that Iran's production of crude oil will surpass 3.3 million bpd by the end of this month.

The comments by Iranian officials are the latest sign that Iran is pumping increased amounts of oil to the international markets despite continued pressure of US sanctions. Prior to the re-imposition of US sanctions in 2018 after Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, Iranian oil exports were about 2.8 million barrels per day. Reports earlier this year had indicated that Iran's nominal oil production capacity had been restored to levels above 3.8 million bpd for the first time since 2018.

However, reaching an actual output of 3.5 million bpd shows Iran is effectively nearing export levels seen before the sanctions.

Iran's three-month customs revenues
up over 260%: **IRICA**

Economy Desk

Iran registered a significant increase in customs revenues during the first three months of the current Iranian year (March 21 to June 22), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Revenues reached 366.81 trillion rials (\$754.6 million), which shows an increase of 261% compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported on Sunday. The import tax revenues hit 122.11 trillion rials during the three months to June 22, IRICA figures showed.

Also, figures provided by the Iranian government show activity in the country's ports rose in the calendar year to March 20. CEO of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Ali Akbar Safaei said on Saturday that loading and unloading at Iranian ports had increased by 2.2% in the year to March 20 compared to the same period last year, to reach 82 million tons. Safaei said the rise had taken place despite a fall reported in Iran's imports of basic goods over the past calendar year.



IRNA

He said container loading and unloading at Iranian ports had also increased by 5% last Iranian year, compared to year to late March 2022.

Exports from Iran had accounted for 70% of the total ports activity in the country in the year to late

March, said the PMO chief, adding that passenger traffic in the ports had also increased by 8% year-on-year over the same period. Transit via Iranian ports rose by 39% over the last Iranian year, said Safaei, adding that transit via ports on the Caspian Sea

in northern Iran had increased significantly over the period thanks to a surge in shipments arriving from Russia and Europe. The official said Iran is spending heavily to expand its ports infrastructure, adding that the government has some 530

trillion rials (\$1.1 billion) worth of ongoing projects in ports and coastal regions of the country. On shipbuilding, Safaei said the Iranian government has spent nearly \$1 billion on purchase or manufacturing of large ocean vessels.



IRNA

Iran's export of non-oil products to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states in the first

Exports of Iranian goods to EAEU top
\$514m

four months of the current Iranian year (March 21-July 22) hit \$514.9 million, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Based on the IRICA data, Iran exported 1.30 million tons of non-oil commodities to the EAEU member states in the mentioned four months, IRIB news reported.

The Islamic Republic ex-

ported 442,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at over \$133.1 million, to the Republic of Armenia in the mentioned four months. Also, the country exported 678,000 tons of goods, valued at more than \$302.7 million, to Russia in the first four months of the current year. Iran's exports to Kyrgyzstan amounted to 16,000 tons, valued at \$17.673

million, while exports to Kazakhstan were 159,000 tons, valued at \$56.722 million. In the said period, the Islamic Republic imported 31,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at over \$468 million from Belarus. Iran also imported 3,150 tons of goods, valued at over \$1 billion, from Russia in the first four months of the current Iranian year.

Iran and EAEU reached a preferential trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items are currently subject to preferential tariffs. The agreement came into effect on October 27, 2019.

The two sides are now working on a free trade agreement to further boost their economic exchanges.

Auto parts exhibition kicks off in
Tehran

The 18th edition of Iran's International Auto Parts Exhibition dubbed "IAPEX 2023" was inaugurated at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Sunday. Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade for Industries Affairs Mohammad Mehdi Baradaran attended the opening ceremony, IRNA reported. The exhibition is being held with the participation of over 580 domestic

companies, as well as 469 foreign companies, from countries such as Italy, Germany, India, China, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), South Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia.

The exhibitors showcase their latest achievements at the exhibition.

The number of participating companies in this edition shows a 75 percent growth compared to the previous edition. Among them are 15 new technology-based firms (NTBFs) attending the expo to display their latest products.

Iran allocates over \$3.2b
on desalination projects in southeast

The project to desalinate water from the Sea of Oman and transfer it to Sistan and Baluchestan Province is 12% complete, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Abbas Aliabadi announced.

The government allocated over \$3.2 billion for the project, which will provide fresh water to people in the eastern provinces, said Aliabadi, according to IRNA.

Transfer of water to the cities and villages of these provinces will generate more employment opportunities and can benefit the economic situation of the region significantly, the minister added.

The project is very important, he said, adding that efforts will complete the project by the end of the next Iranian year (March 20, 2025).



Bahr Ghan village of Sepidan fascinates nature lovers



visitiran.ir

Iranica Desk

High peaks, beautiful waterfalls, numerous rivers and springs have distinguished Sepidan from other cities of the southwestern province of Fars.

Bahr Ghan village, located on the road linking Sepidan to the provincial capital city of Shiraz, is a popular attraction. Its flowing river, green trees and cool air absorb visitors from across the country, especially in the summer.

The river flowing in the village, originating from the mountains of Sepidan, is surrounded by walnuts, plantain and white poplar trees. With sweet and clear water, the river caused the village's agriculture and livestock breeding sectors to prosper.

The average annual temperature of Sepidan, which receives more than 700mm of rainfall in wet years, is about 15° Celsius.

The pleasure of resting on the banks of the river under the shade of green

trees and breathing fresh air has made Bahr Ghan village a destination for nature lovers of Fars and its neighboring provinces, especially during the spring and summer.

The mausoleum of Imamzadeh Malek, located in the village, also hosts many visitors from various parts of the country every year.

The roaring river and pleasant climate of the village can help boost its economy and generate jobs for the villagers.

In order to realize the objective, efforts should be made to enhance the tourism infrastructures of the village, situated near the center of Sepidan, and create a comfortable environment for tourists.

Ali Qasseminejad, a rural manager living in the village, which has 1,090 households, told IRNA that presently the villagers host tourists from across the country.

Referring to the large number of people traveling to the village, especially in

the spring and summer, he said that the establishment of some eco lodges is a necessity.

He added that according to an ancient document, the history of the village dates back 580 years.

"A number of ancient adobe houses remain in the village, which, if refurbished, can host tourists and nature lovers traveling to the village," he said.

Fars is among Iranian provinces that enjoy various tourist and historical attractions. The develop-

ment of tourism has been proposed as one of the practical solutions to help the province diversify its sources of income. Planners and policymakers in Fars Province have attached great significance to efforts aimed at promoting the tourism industry.

The city of Sepidan is located in northwestern Fars Province and has considerable potentials in tourism. It is situated in the heart of the Zagros Mountains, which has cold winters and cool summers. Sepi-

dan's ski resort is one of the largest ski resorts in Iran, which covers an area of 500 hectares. The city also has many tourist attractions including waterfalls and museums.

With regard to Sepidan's great potentials, provincial officials have placed plans on the agenda to introduce it as a special tourism zone. The officials of Fars Province have repeatedly stressed that the potentials of the province should be exploited to create revenues and jobs.

Tehran's oldest tower in awful condition

Iranica Desk

The 900-year-old Toghrol Tower in Shahr-e Rey, which is the oldest tower in Tehran, is being renovated for the third time.

Based on what experts have said, the shape of this historical site has been massively changed, given the fact that the southern gate of the monument has been wrongly repaired, as a result of which flaws are obvious in its appearance.

An official from the Cultural Heritage Department of Shahr-e Rey gave assurance that the renovation would be undertaken by professional artisans.

However, field researchers reported that manual workers are on this project while under no supervision. Apparently, the job has been handed to the same contractor who had already received severe criticism for its poor handling of the 2,300-year-old Rashkan Castle in Shahr-e Rey. The restoration is taking place while dampness had seeped through the interior of the monument, causing the tower to lean.

However, the construction workers are only concerned with the materi-

als necessary to renovate the exterior design, while being oblivious to the interior of the building.

Since the refurbishment is not being done properly, it has raised several questions.

Chairman of the National Committee of Iranian Museums (ICOM) Ahmad Mohit Tabatabaei said that this renovation must be done under the control of the committee.

He suggested that if the Cultural Heritage Organization finds any problems, it should solve it through legal means.

He highlighted that this tomb belongs to Tughril, the Seljuk ruler who died in Shahr-e Rey in 1653 CE. This is the first time that restoration of a historical work is recorded.

Moreover, there are photos available from pre- and post-renovation of this monument.

"It is better to shift this responsibility to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, because of their fixed budget" he continued.

He noted, "This tower is the only discovered artwork that dates back to 900 years ago, being the oldest one found in Tehran so far".



visitiran.ir



NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian
experts visit ...

GETTY IMAGES

Iran and Afghanistan are locked in a dispute over the Hirmand and water supply, which rises in the Hindu Kush Mountains west of Kabul and flows in an arc southwest until it empties out into the Hamoun wetlands, located in Iran's arid Sistan and Baluchestan Province. Following more than a century of rifts, the two countries signed a treaty in 1973 to establish a means of regulating their use of the river.

Iran must receive an annual share of 820 million cubic meters from the Hirmand under the accord, which Afghanistan has grossly violated in letter and spirit, endangering the lives of many Iranians who rely on Hamoun wetlands for drinking water, agriculture, and fishing. Iran recently rejected the Afghan claim of water shortage by publishing satellite images of water behind the dams built on the Hirmand.

"According to the [1973 Helmand River] Treaty, we can verify the other side's claim of water shortage," Iran's special envoy on Afghanistan affairs Hassan Kazemi-Qomi said in an interview on Sunday.

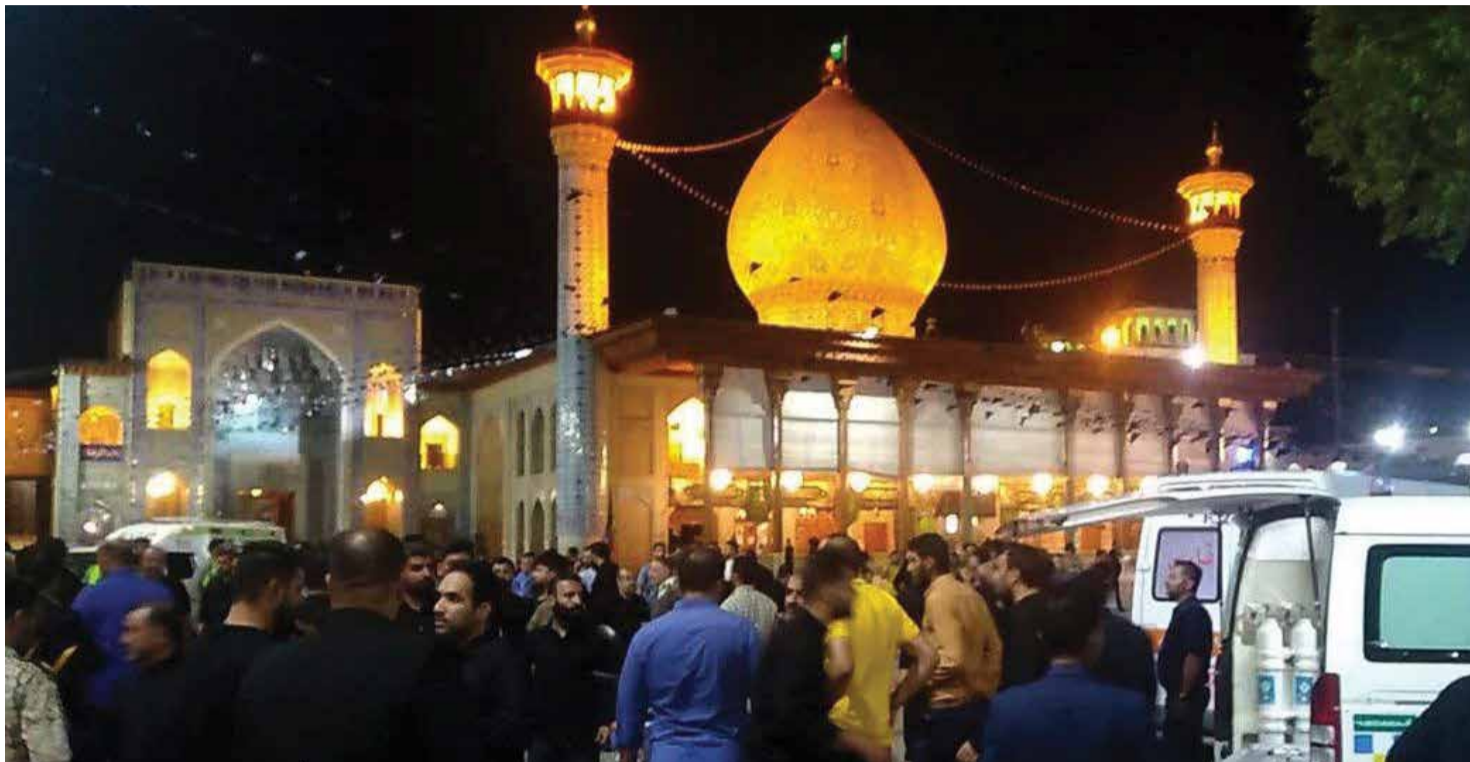
During a visit to Sistan and Baluchestan back in May, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned Afghanistan rulers that Tehran will in no way tolerate a violation of the rights of the people of the province.

Israel furious
Iran won
release of
funds

IRNA – Israel's former and current officials have expressed fury over a recent prisoner swap deal between Iran and the United States that also included the release of Iranian frozen funds in South Korea worth several billions of dollars.

On Saturday, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a statement, criticizing Washington for reaching an agreement with Tehran. Israel's position is known: Arrangements that do not dismantle Iran's nuclear infrastructure will not stop its nuclear program and will only provide it with funds, the statement said.

Terrorist opens fire at Shiraz shrine, at least one killed



National Desk

At least one person was killed and eight others injured in a brazen terrorist attack at a Shia shrine in Iran's southern city of Shiraz on Sunday.

Media reports suggested that the assailant opened fire on Shah Cheragh Shrine's guards after he failed to force his way into the holy place.

A deputy provincial governor said the gunman was arrested.

The death toll could rise as local officials said two of those injured were in critical condition.

On October 26, 2022, a Daesh-affiliated gunman barged into the shrine, killing 15 pilgrims before he was shot and injured by security forces. The terrorist later died of his wounds in hospital.

Promising start for upcoming vote

Over 48k register to run for Iran's parliamentary elections



IRNA

Political Desk

More than 48,000 people have registered to run for Iran's parliamentary elections, a spokesman of the electoral headquarters said Sunday.

According to Mohsen Eslami, a total of 48,847 individuals, nearly 13% of whom women, entered their details into an online election registration system to officially register for the upcoming vote scheduled for March 1, 2024.

Also among the hopefuls were around 230 current lawmakers.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has emphasized the significance of elections as a pivotal avenue to bolstering Iran's power. He has outlined four specific strategic aspects – namely, "voter turnout, security, cleanness, and competition" – for the authorities responsible for overseeing the elections.

Mohammadreza Gholamreza, the political deputy minister of the interior, confirmed that these four strategic pillars have been communicated to the relevant bodies.

Under the provisions of a newly enacted law by the Iranian Parliament, the process of candidates pre-registering their personal information commenced eight months ahead of the elections. The one-week window for pre-registration concluded

Sunday. As per the law, candidates need to input their information into the designation system during this phase, failing which they would be ineligible to proceed with their candidacy.

The significant number of hopefuls, yet to be vetted by the Constitutional Council, vying for the 290 seats in Iran is being perceived by the organizers as a positive sign indicative of a captivating and highly competitive vote. I

"The remarkably enthusiastic participation of applicants signifies that we are poised for highly competitive election with huge turnout," Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said.

Traditionally, elections in Iran are contested by two main factions – the conservative and reformist blocs – each with its own internal diversity. While the various factions within the conservative camp have already signaled their readiness to engage in the

forthcoming race and have their candidates registered, the reformists have yet to take a clear stance. Although certain reformist figures and parties have extended their support to the registration of reformist and independent candidates, the question of whether the reformists will present a unified electoral list remains unresolved. The Reformist Front has yet to take a clear position. Conversely, based on expert opinions and media analysis, it is evident that different segments within the conservative factions will lock horns to get the upper hand in the legislative body. Some experts suggest that lists could coalesce around prominent political figures.

Political analyst Nasser Imani, in an interview with Iran Daily, emphasizes the need for patience in determining the affiliations of registrants to particular parties or political heavyweights, as this insight

would help assess the elections' political composition.

According to Imani, reformist candidates will indeed show up, but the decision to either present a combined list or allow individual competition among their candidates remains uncertain.

Imani, however, contends that the nature of electoral competition is not exclusively contingent on the existence of a reformist electoral list. He suggests that, in the upcoming elections, the focal point of competition will likely be prominent political personalities rather than strictly adhering to factional lines.

In his view, lists revolving around figures like President Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, conservative figure Saeed Jalili, or former parliament speaker Ali Larjani, a moderate heavyweight, might vie against one another for prominence.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran FM to visit Riyadh; Saudi Consulate opens in Mashhad

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will be traveling to Riyadh on Thursday, August 17, while the Saudi Consulate-General in Mashhad has officially resumed its activities.

The trip is set to have a bilateral agenda and is in response to the recent visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to Tehran, reported Iran Nuances, citing a source.

Bin Farhan traveled to Tehran on June 17, 2023, and met with both the Iranian foreign minister and president.

Mohammad Beheshti Monfared, the head of the Foreign Ministry's representative office in Khorasan Razavi Province, announced on Sunday the official launch of the Saudi Con-

sulate-General in a hotel in Mashhad, Iran's major northeastern city, as its temporary site.

Alireza Enayati, the new Iranian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Abdullah Saud al-Anzi, the new Saudi Arabian ambassador to Iran, have both received the agreement from target countries, but have not yet been stationed in their new postings. These two ambassadors are expected to be deployed soon.

The report added that Saudi diplomats in Tehran have been operating in Espinas Palace Hotel for several months while the Saudi Embassy undergoes repairs. Similarly, the Saudi Consulate-General in Mashhad has been active for several months and continues to operate in a hotel in the city.

Nasrallah, leader of Islamic Jihad discuss developments in Palestine



Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah (r) meets with Ziad al-Nakhleh (l), leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement, in Beirut, Lebanon, on August 13, 2023. **AL-MANAR**

Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has met with the visiting leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement. Hezbollah's public relations office announced on Sunday that Nasrallah received Ziad al-Nakhleh in the capital Beirut, with the two leaders exchanging views on the latest developments in Palestine, Lebanon and the wider region, Press TV reported. Mohammed al-Hindi, head of the Islamic Jihad's political bureau, also accompanied Nakhleh in the

meeting with the Hezbollah chief. "An assessment of events was held during the meeting, during which both challenges and chances the Axis of Resistance has been facing were also discussed," the office said in a statement. Earlier in the month, Nasrallah met with Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas. The two sides also exchanged views on the region and the challenges facing the resistance front. Over the past months, Is-

rael has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested. More than 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israel since the beginning of this year, including 36 children. The United Nations has warned that 2023 is on track to be the deadliest year for Palestinians since it started recording fatalities. At least 26 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis this year.

Fighting flares in South Darfur amid fears of new civil war

Violence flared in the western Sudanese city of Nyala and elsewhere in the state of South Darfur on Sunday, witnesses said, threatening to engulf the region in Sudan's protracted war. The conflict has brought daily battles to the streets of the capital of Khartoum, a revival of ethnically targeted attacks in West Darfur, and the displacement of more than 4 million people within Sudan and across its borders into Chad, Egypt, South Sudan and other countries, Reuters reported. Clashes between the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have flared periodically in Nyala, the country's second biggest city and a strategic hub for the fragile Darfur region. The latest flare-up has lasted three days, with both the army and RSF firing artillery into residential neighbourhoods, witnesses told Reuters. Fighting has damaged electricity, water, and telecoms networks. At least eight people were killed on Saturday alone, according to the Darfur Bar Association, a national human rights monitor. In recent days, fighting has extended 100 km (60 miles) to the west of Nyala, in the Kubum area, killing



The Kakma camp, one of the largest in Darfur for people displaced during a nearly two-decade conflict in western Sudan, which began in 2003 and killed an estimated 300,000 people. **ARNOLD TEMPLE/REUTERS**

dozens, according to witnesses. The bar association said Arab tribesmen equipped with RSF vehicles attacked the area, burning the market and raiding the police station in an attack on a rival Arab tribe. The fighting killed 24 people, it said. Several Arab tribes have pledged their allegiance to the RSF. Extensive fighting in the area risks returning Darfur to the bloody attacks of the early 2000s when "Janjaweed" militias - from which the RSF formed - helped the army

crush a rebellion by mainly non-Arab groups. Some 300,000 people were killed, the UN estimates, and Sudanese leaders are wanted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and crimes against humanity. The UN's special representative to Sudan, Volker Perthes, warned in July that the conflict showed no signs of a quick resolution and "risked morphing into an ethnicised civil war". Diplomatic mediation efforts has so far failed and ceasefires have been used by both sides to regroup.

NEWS IN BRIEF

China condemns Taiwanese official's US visit



China on Sunday condemned a brief US visit by Taiwan Vice President William Lai, saying he was a separatist and "troublemaker through and through" and Beijing would take strong steps to protect its sovereignty, drawing a rebuke from Taipei. Lai, front-runner to be Taiwan's next president at elections in January, arrived in New York late on Saturday for what is officially a transit on his way to Paraguay for the inauguration of its president. China considers Taiwan as its own territory.

Bangladesh floods kills 55 in August



At least 55 people have been killed and more than a million affected by two weeks of torrential rains causing floods and landslides in southeast Bangladesh, officials said Sunday. Administrators of four of the worst-hit districts said floods and landslides since August 1 killed 21 people in Cox's Bazar, 19 in Chittagong, 10 in Bandarban and five in Rangamati.

Maui fire deadliest in US in 105 years, with 93 killed

The death toll from fast-moving wildfires in Maui rose to 93 on Saturday, making them the deadliest in the US in more than 100 years. The number of fatalities is expected to climb further as authorities continue search and rescue efforts, Hawaii Governor Josh Green said at a press briefing Saturday. Just 3% of the area has been searched, officials said, adding they are bringing in 12 more cadaver dogs

to help with the effort, Bloomberg reported. "This is the largest natural disaster we've ever experienced," Green said. "It's also going to be a natural disaster that takes an incredible amount of time to recover from." The death toll now means the wildfire is the deadliest since 1918, when 453 people were killed in Minnesota and Wisconsin by the Cloquet & Moose Lake Fires,

according to the National Fire Protection Association. Losses are estimated to be approaching \$6 billion, after roughly 2,200 structures were destroyed in West Maui across the 2,170 acres burned by the blaze. Only two of the 89 people killed have been identified so far, Police Chief John Pelletier said. Efforts to identify the dead were complicated by the ferocity of the blaze, which melted metal and



Destroyed buildings and homes are pictured in the aftermath of a wildfire in western Maui, US, on Aug. 11, 2023. **PAULARAMON/AFP**

raged Lahaina, once the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Roughly 1,000

people were unaccounted for, they earlier estimated.

Message of Pakistani...

76 years ago, on this day, Pakistan gained independence after the historic struggle of the Muslims of the sub-continent under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The Muslims of India wanted a homeland for themselves where they could freely order their individual and collective lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This day marks the culmination of a democratic

and political struggle in our quest for freedom from colonial rule. This day also gives us the opportunity for introspection. We should reflect on the nation's progress so far, prevailing challenges, and opportunities for growth. It is a time to renew our commitment to building a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan as envisioned by the Father of the Nation. I urge my fellow countrymen to work for the welfare and uplift of deprived sections

of our society. Let's pledge to uphold the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, forgiveness, socio-economic justice, and moral and ethical values, as enunciated by Islam. On this important day, let's also remember our oppressed brothers and sisters in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), facing Indian atrocities for decades. India's illegal actions, including ending Jammu and Kashmir's

special legal status in 2019, have further deteriorated the human rights situation in the valley in the form of extra-judicial killings, torture, and illegal detentions. We stand with our Kashmiri brethren and assure them of unwavering and continued political, diplomatic and moral support for their legitimate right to self-determination. On this occasion, I urge the entire Pakistani nation to remain steadfast and work wholeheartedly for the de-

velopment of the country. There is a need to unite to cope with the social, political, economic and security challenges facing the Nation today. So, let's resolve that we will not hesitate to offer any sacrifice for the security, prosperity, and development of the country.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the country's ambassador in Tehran, H.E Rahim Hayat Qureshi, in separate messages, extended their congratulations on Pakistan's Independence Day to the entire nation including overseas Pakistanis.

Two militants killed attacking Chinese convoy in Pakistan

Two separatist militants were killed Sunday when they attacked a convoy carrying Chinese workers to a Beijing-financed port project in Pakistan's Balochistan Province, officials said. A spokesman for China's consulate in Karachi said none of its nationals were killed or wounded in the attack, and urged Chinese citizens to heighten their vigilance. Balochistan Liberation Army militants claimed responsibility for the attack

Joshua beats Helenius with seventh round knockout



● REUTERS

Former heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua beat Finnish stand-in Robert Helenius with a seventh round single-punch knockout to keep himself on track for a lucrative payday against American Deontay Wilder next year.

Helenius, stepping in after Britain's Dillian Whyte was ruled out of the non-title fight by a dope test a week ago, lasted longer than expected but crashed to the canvas one minute and 27 seconds into the round, according to BBC.

Some of the crowd at London's O2, who had grown restless with some booing already in the third round, were heading for the exit by then as Joshua failed to deliver immediate fireworks.

The big Briton looked nervous and stiff at the start and strangely tentative when Helenius, who fought in Finland only a week ago, appeared to be out on his legs and ready for the taking.

Joshua climbed straight out of the ring without saying a word after referee Victor Loughlin stopped the contest. Helenius meanwhile received medical attention and some oxygen before getting back on his feet.

"I knew this would happen, everyone's talking about the new AJ and the old AJ and after two or three rounds the crowd starts to get a little bit impatient," Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn told the BBC.

"He finds the measure of his right hand and he delivers one of the knockouts of the year on Robert Helenius... this is just the AJ you're going to see now. He's still got to be more aggressive than we saw tonight but there's a lot on the line."

The knockout was the 23rd of Joshua's career, taking his record to 26 wins and three defeats, but his first since December 2020 when he beat Bulgarian Kubrat Pulev in a WBA, IBO, IBF and WBO title defence in London.

Joshua lost those belts to Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk in September 2021.

There has been talk of Joshua fighting Wilder, the former WBC champion, next year but the Briton needs to keep winning to be talked about in the same breath as the American and reigning champion Tyson Fury.

"It's hard for him to get up for fights like this," said Hearn. "The Wilder fights, the Fury fights, that's what he wants."

Two bronzes for Iranian women in 2023 IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing C'ships



Sports Desk

The Iranian U-24 women's dragon boat received bronze medals in 500- and 200-meter rowing at the 16th edition of IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing Championships underway in Pattaya, Thailand. Iran's team comprising 10 paddlers faced Thailand, Hong Kong, and China in the 500- and 200-meter distance finals and stood at third place with a time of 2:22.271 for 500-meter and 57.088 for 200-meter competitions, according to iri.crsf. Thailand and China stood in first and second place respectively in the sporting event. The 16th IDBF World Dragon Boat Racing Championships was held in Pattaya, Thailand during August 8 to 13, 2023. Dragon boat racing is a watersport wherein a number of watercraft called dragon boats race over a clearly defined unobstructed course in the shortest time possible. Paddlers sit in twos side-by-side and use a single-bladed paddle. Two categories compete in this discipline, 10-seater (small boat) and 20-seater (standard) referring to the number of paddlers in the boat. A team also has a drummer and a steerer, with everybody in the boat paddling to the rhythm of the drum.



● MEHR

Iranian table tennis players bag two golds in Tunisia

Iranian table tennis players Benyamin Faraji and Amir-Mehdi Keshavarzi each claimed gold medals at the 2023 WTT (World Table Tennis) Youth Contender Tunis late on Saturday. Faraji defeated Wassim Essid from Tunisia 3-0 in the

final match of the U-15 Boys Singles, reported Mehr News Agency. He had defeated Algeria player 3-1 and English rival 3-2 en route to the final match. Also, Keshavarzi grabbed the gold medal by defeating his

Slovakian opponent 3-1 in the final match of the U-19 Boys Single. He beat his rivals from Germany and Egypt to reach the final match. The competition is being held in Tunis, Tunisia.

Sinner beats Paul to set up Canadian Open final clash with De Minaur

Italian seventh seed Jannik Sinner beat Tommy Paul 6-4 6-4 to set up a Canadian Open final clash with Australia's Alex De Minaur, who was a 6-1 6-3 winner over Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina. Sinner outlasted Paul in a slugfest that was a showcase of power from both sides and at one point saw the duo engage in a 46-shot rally that marked the longest of the week in Toronto, Reuters reported. "It was a fight obviously," said Sinner, who saved eight of 11 break points in the win. "He was playing great as I do and at the end, you know match point, when I got there I was praying please. But thank God I won in two (sets)." Sinner and Paul twice exchanged breaks in the opening set but it was the Italian who held serve when it mattered most as he took a 5-4 lead before clinching the set with another break. Sinner led 2-1 in the second

set when Paul called for the tour physio who worked on his right hip while he lay sprawled on his left side in discomfort. Paul was unable to hold serve in the next game, handing over the break with a double fault, before a determined Sinner went on to consolidate for a commanding 4-1 lead. From there, the Italian continued to display great length and pace on his ground strokes and turned aside three break points, including one during a 46-shot rally, for a 5-2 lead that sent him on his way. "I tried so hard to win that point," Sinner said. "Just tried to play one more ball in the court than him and that was I guess the solution." De Minaur overcame blustery conditions to secure a breakthrough victory over Davidovich Fokina and reach the first Masters 1000 final of his career. De Minaur, who was fresh off an upset over second

seed Daniil Medvedev, delivered a simple gameplan in rather tricky conditions, while Davidovich Fokina struggled to find any sort of rhythm throughout the 78-minute match. "First thing I knew once I stepped out on court it wasn't going to be pretty, so I didn't expect perfect tennis from my side of the court today," said De Minaur, who wrote "so windy" on an on-court camera lens after the match. "I just told myself to stay positive, keep competing no matter what and you never know what's going to happen. "So I thought I had a great mindset today... Didn't play the best of tennis, but I did

what needed to be done today in these conditions." De Minaur wasted no time setting the tone against Davidovich Fokina as he broke the Spaniard twice en route to a 5-1 lead before serving out the opening set on his first opportunity. The 24-year-old Australian maintained the pressure as he broke Davidovich Fokina four times to build a 5-2 lead in the second before sealing the match with his seventh break. "I've had a hell of a week. It's been the breakthrough that I always knew I had inside of me so it's great to show it and play for a final," De Minaur said.



● REUTERS

Triumph of Life

Iran's decades of child vaccination pay off



Social Desk

Vaccination, recognized as the most effective health intervention for improving children's well-being, has been implemented on a large scale in Iran starting from 1984. The initiative involved training healthcare managers at various levels and strengthening the cold chain system. A comprehensive immunization plan was also developed for the country, accompanied by special training courses to equip health workers with the necessary skills. These efforts resulted in the rapid expansion of safe and reliable cold chain infrastructure.

In 1984, following the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution and alongside the establishment of healthcare networks and essential structures within the country, an immunization expansion program was launched. Its aim was to provide active immunity against vaccine-preventable diseases for children under one year old. Targeted diseases included diphtheria, tetanus (lock-jaw), pertussis (whooping cough), measles, polio, and tuberculosis.

In 1993, the hepatitis B vaccination program was integrated into this expansive immunization effort. Since 2013, standalone measles vaccines have been replaced by triple measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccines. Addition-

ally, the pentavalent vaccine has been introduced to include Haemophilus influenzae type B protection in child immunizations across Iran.

To further strengthen children's immune defenses against polio in high-risk provinces bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, injection-based polio vaccines were introduced alongside oral polio drops during routine visits at four months of age. This measure aligned with global eradication goals set forth by ongoing efforts against polio.

Health officials anticipate that pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccinations will soon be incorporated into Iran's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI). This addition is expected to represent a significant step forward in updating the national EPI program. The successful implementation of childhood vaccination programs has significantly reduced disease-related mortality rates among Iranian children over the past four decades. For instance, cases of diphtheria have become extremely rare, with minimal encounters reported by medical students or professionals during their training or careers. In the past, diphtheria epidemics were prevalent. However, according to estimates from the Ministry of Health, the under-five mortality rate in Iran decreased dramatically from

154 per thousand live births in 1978 to around 16 per thousand live births by 2016.

During the early stages of immunization development in Iran, neonatal tetanus accounted for a quarter of all infant deaths. The infant death rate stood at 21 per thousand live births, with five specific deaths attributed to neonatal tetanus. However, widespread vaccination coverage exceeding 95 percent among Iranian children and pregnant women led to a rapid decline in instances of infant tetanus. Thus, Iran eliminated it before the year 2000 – an achievement worth noting considering that without nationwide vaccination programs implemented, an estimated annual total of 7,500 infants would have succumbed to this preventable disease based on birth rates in 2016, which exceeded one and a half million individuals.

So far, the country has achieved an impressive immunization coverage rate of 95 percent. After the Islamic Revolution, significant efforts were made to develop the primary health service network. Despite some progress before the revolution with institutions like the Razi Vaccine and Serum Institute and Pasteur Institute of Iran providing vaccines, public acceptance, especially among educated families, was limited. Studies conducted after the revolution

revealed that immunization coverage for children was only at a maximum of 30 percent, with a meager 3.7 percent coverage for pregnant women against tetanus.

Since 1984, there has been a dedicated focus on strengthening childhood immunization through domestic vaccine production. The Development Program for Immunization (EPI) was launched in 1985 as a crucial component of primary health services activities. This program involved developing healthcare centers and homes in rural areas and training necessary healthcare personnel, particularly individuals from local communities who served as health workers. Additionally, collaboration between the Ministry of Health and medical faculties facilitated training opportunities for doctors and specialized healthcare professionals.

Ensuring access to remote rural areas required equipping the health system with cold chain equipment and vehicles capable of effectively transporting vaccines. As a result of these combined efforts, immunization coverage for children under one year surpassed 90 percent by 1990 and an impressive 95 percent by 1993.

Currently, all children across the country receive vaccinations against diseases such as diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, polio, measles, rubella, mumps, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type B. Health officials emphasize that preventive measures have led to the elimination or control of diseases like measles, congenital rubella, and infantile tetanus. Polio cases have been eradicated within Iran's borders for over two decades. Diphtheria, pertussis, and mumps are also under control. The Ministry currently focuses on controlling hepatitis B, primarily through vaccination, and supplies enough vaccines to meet the demand; qualified individuals can receive this vaccine. With regard to polio, the situation has significantly improved through vac-

ination efforts. Prior to widespread immunization, Iran experienced over a thousand cases of polio annually. Health officials attribute the country's current polio-free status to maintaining a vaccination coverage rate above 95 percent and conducting periodic supplementary vaccination campaigns. However, certain regions near Afghanistan and Pakistan still carry a higher risk of reintroducing the disease. That is why supplementary vaccinations are ongoing in these areas. To ensure the worldwide eradication of polio, the World Health Organization (WHO) has implemented a specialized care system with specific indicators that are monitored in all countries. The Ministry of Health has announced that Iran consistently meets these indicators, resulting in an annual update on and the approval of Iran's polio eradication document by WHO technical committees.

Before the introduction of vaccination, Iran experienced between 150,000 and 500,000 cases of measles annually. Measles vaccination began in Iran in 1967. The goal of the Eastern Mediterranean region is to eliminate measles by 2020 and halt its circulation within the regional countries.

In pursuit of eliminating measles and rubella, Iran has executed the world's largest supplementary immunization operation for these diseases since 2004. As part of current immunization efforts, administering the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine replaced solely administering the measles vaccine.

Continuous improvements in healthcare systems have facilitated swift identification and response to suspected measles cases. Additional vaccinations for both measles and rubella are administered depending on circumstances, especially in high-risk areas, to effectively combat these illnesses. Iran's Ministry of Health defines elimination as zero endemic cases with no circulating endemic virus for at least 12 months while

maintaining a standard care system. Confirmation is granted after this status continues uninterrupted for at least 36 months or more.

Currently, Iran is among the first regional countries to submit a national document outlining its progress toward eliminating measles, which is to be reviewed and approved by WHO – a remarkable achievement resulting from over three decades of dedicated work from health workers, ranging from those working throughout rural areas to headquarters levels within the healthcare system. Continuous efforts remain crucial due to disease transmission risk from neighboring countries.

These achievements would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment and support from senior policymakers alongside an extensive network of healthcare services covering over 95 percent of rural areas nationwide. Additionally, establishing suitable cold chains ensuring vaccine quality – from central storage facilities to inoculation sites in urban and rural centers – and making refrigerated vehicles available for transportation have been instrumental. Iran's strong scientific capabilities including vaccine production and active participation from families in vaccinating their children have significantly contributed to these accomplishments and improved overall health indicators.

Childhood immunization is an investment that saves millions of lives worldwide each year. Despite Iran's successes in controlling and eliminating numerous vaccine-preventable diseases, international reports indicate that a significant number of children still die annually due to preventable illnesses such as whooping cough, measles, infant tetanus, Haemophilus influenzae, viral diarrhea, hepatitis B, and pneumonia. Health experts emphasize that these deaths could easily be prevented through vaccination efforts.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Low income groups to be treated for free: Minister

All inpatient and outpatient services will be provided free of charge in government health centers and hospitals for the three lowest income groups in society, announced the Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education.

Bahram Einollahi also stated that previously, the five lowest income groups were covered by free insurance, according to IRNA.

Moving forward, the first three income groups will have access to both free insurance and complimentary inpatient and outpatient services at medical centers and government hospitals.

He further mentioned that the government will cover 100 percent of the insurance premium for individuals within these income groups.

Einollahi emphasized that population rejuvenation is a top priority for the Ministry of Health. As Iran faces potential challenges related to an aging population in the future, measures are being taken to promote rejuvenation of the population. Special facilities for childbearing have been designated specifically for married students studying medical sciences.

Caspian seal found dead on Caspian Sea coast



A deceased Caspian seal was discovered on the beach of Juybar city in Mazandaran Province.

The local department of the environment unit dispatched officials to investigate the cause of death for this marine animal, IRNA reported.

The Caspian seal is a rare species of marine mammal that exclusively inhabits the Caspian Sea, as well as rivers such as Volga and Ural in Russia. This particular species requires international support due to factors like overfishing, unfavorable living conditions, and a significant decline in population.

Typically found in the southern waters of the Caspian Sea, including Iran during summer, spring, and autumn seasons, these seals migrate towards icy regions in the northern parts of the sea to give birth.



Over 500 antiques seized in Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

IRNA - Iranian border guards intercepted and confiscated a collection of more than 500 ancient artifacts from an Afghan woman at the Milak border crossing in the south-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. The operation was conducted as she attempted to enter the country illegally.

The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts for the province, Alireza Jalalzai, disclosed that the Afghan woman was apprehended during a border security operation.

A total of 547 antique items were discovered in her possession. Subsequently, the seized artifacts were turned over to judicial authorities for further investigation.

Jalalzai indicated that the recovered antiquities hail from significant historical eras, including the Qajar and Ottoman Empire periods. The array of confiscated pieces encompass a diverse range of artifacts, with 208 ring-like items, two watch-like pieces, 82 jewelry-like articles, 12 bracelet-like items, 133 coins, and 110 pieces of unknown, distinct colors.

This remarkable interception underscores the ongoing efforts to preserve and protect Iran's rich cultural heritage. The intricate artifacts, tracing back to various chapters of history, carry immense historical and cultural value. Authorities remain steadfast in their commitment to combat illegal trafficking of antiquities and safeguard the country's historical legacy.

The collaboration between border guards and cultural heritage officials in this endeavor further highlights the significance of maintaining vigilance at border crossings to prevent the illicit trade of valuable artifacts. Investigations are underway to determine the origins and potential trafficking network associated with the seized antiquities.

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Vol. 7362 ● Monday, Aug. 14, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

Armenian tourism delegation visits Iran, 10 fam tours organized

Arts & Culture Desk

As part of an ongoing effort to promote cross-cultural engagement and international tourism, a delegation of Armenian tourism professionals embarked on a journey to Iran. The visit is accompanied by the organization of 10 familiarization tours aimed at introducing foreign delegates to Iran's tourism attractions.

Leila Ajdari, Director General for Marketing and Development of Foreign Tourism at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Iran, highlighted the collaborative initiatives between the two countries. Since the beginning of the Iranian year, these endeavors have aimed to acquaint targeted nations with Iran's diverse tourism destinations and offerings, IRNA wrote.

Ajdari confirmed that eight representatives from Armenian tour operators and travel agency managers have undertaken the familiarization tour to Iran. She emphasized that these

tours, known as "familiarization tours", are currently in progress within Iran. In the current year, a total of 10 tours have been executed for diverse countries, including China, Qatar, Thailand, among others. These tours are orchestrated to provide foreign reference groups with an authentic and appealing depiction of Iran's attractions.

Recognizing the efficacy of familiarization tours in attracting foreign tourists and countering misperceptions about Iran, Ajdari emphasized their pivotal role in the agendas of the Foreign Tourism Marketing and Development Office. The tours, which span across several days, have proven to be a potent strategy for showcasing Iran's rich cultural, historical, sporting, and commercial potential to foreign delegates.

Ajdari noted that the presence of Armenian tourism representatives is especially significant, as Armenia has become a priority target market for Iranian tourism. This emphasis is under-



IRNA

scored by recent negotiations between Fly Arna, an Armenian airline, and Iranian authorities to establish direct flights between the two countries. With these developments in mind, the familiarization tours for Armenian tourism professionals were planned by the Tourism Planning Department and are currently underway.

The five-day itinerary of the Armenian tourism

delegation includes visits to various sites in Tehran Province. These sites encompass historical and cultural landmarks such as the Golestan Palace, Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex, and Sa'dabad Complex, as well as recreational and sports facilities like Tochal Complex. The familiarity gained from these tours is anticipated to facilitate enhanced interactions between Armenian tourism

professionals and their Iranian counterparts.

Ajdari concluded by affirming that the continuation of familiarization tours remains a crucial and impactful strategy to attract foreign tourists. The efforts of the Tourism Ministry signal Iran's commitment to fostering mutual understanding and bolstering the tourism sector through constructive collaborations with neighboring nations.

Iran, Iraq collaborate to produce animation

Arts & Culture Desk

In a joint effort to promote cultural exchange and creative collaboration, Iran and Iraq are working together to produce an animation film. The project, spearheaded by Mehdi Ja'fari-Jozani, a seasoned producer and director in the fields of gaming and animation, marks a significant step towards

enhancing digital entertainment industries in the region.

Born in 1981, Ja'fari-Jozani is an alumnus of the communications and media discipline. He currently serves as the CEO of Monadian, a cultural, artistic, and media company. Established in 2020, Monadian has been dedicated to the serious development of digital en-

tertainment sectors, particularly game and animation production.

The overarching mission of Monadian revolves around revitalizing the animation economy, revitalizing the ecosystem of video games, and investing in animation and video game projects. The company has already achieved success with titles such as 'Ambassador

of Love,' 'Mokhtar: Uprising Season,' and 'Commander of Resistance: Amerli Battle.' Notably, they are currently working on two upcoming games, 'Sniper 2' and 'Epic of Nader,' which are poised to hit the market in the near future.

This collaborative venture between Iran and Iraq not only showcases the potential for creative partner-

ships between neighboring nations but also highlights the growing importance of the digital entertainment industry in the region. As the global animation and gaming market continues to expand, this joint effort aims to capitalize on the talents of both countries, fostering cultural exchange and economic growth.

The animation film project

is anticipated to resonate with audiences across borders, embodying themes of unity, creativity, and shared cultural heritage. Through their collaboration, Iran and Iraq are not only producing an animation film but also weaving a tapestry of cooperation that underscores the power of art to transcend boundaries and bring people together.

30% bookstores in Afghanistan shut due to lack of good market: Report

The commission to assess the problems of booksellers has revealed that 30 percent of booksellers in Afghanistan have stopped their business due to a lack of a good market, Afghanistan-based Tolo News reported.

Speaking to Tolo News, Abdul Wodod Mukhtarzada, a member of the commission, said that the booksellers have also complained about high taxes which are difficult to pay as their business has witnessed a decline.

Mukhtarzada said, "We used to sell more than 500 books and we had 200 librarians here but I can say now that their number has dropped significantly." Sev-

eral booksellers expressed concern that book reading culture has faded in Afghanistan. Sharifullah, a bookseller said, "There are issues because of the lack of female students' presence in the universities. This issue also affects the book business."

Mansour Qazizada, a bookseller, stressed that the market is down and people lack the capacity to buy. He also spoke about various taxes that the booksellers need to pay. Qazizada said, "You know that the market is down and the people lack the capacity to purchase books. Also, there are many types of taxes and the Kabul mu-

nicipality sends their representatives." Meanwhile, the Taliban-led Ministry of Information and Culture said that efforts were being made to pardon the taxes of the libraries to support the book markets in Afghanistan, according to the report.

Mahajar Farahi, deputy minister of Taliban-led Information and Culture for publications, said, "We are trying to waive taxes on books and thus we can implement a tradition of book reading. We have held various exhibitions." Earlier this week, a group of young people in Kabul organized the "Smart Way" book display to strength-

en the reading culture in Afghanistan according to Tolo News report.

By implementing such initiatives, young people claimed they want to inspire residents, particularly other young people, to read literature, as the Taliban has already put strict restrictions on the education of young girls and women in Afghanistan.

"We held it to create a culture for the youth of our society to read books, books are entertainment for them," an organizer, Sharifa Hesar said, according to Tolo News.

"The purpose of holding this exhibition is to strengthen the culture



TASNIM

of reading among young people," said Farhad Malik Zada, an organizer.

Speaking to Tolo News, several expo attendees said that the reasons why people don't study enough are related to the econo-

my, a lack of employment opportunities, and a high usage of social media. Visitors, however, claimed that organizing such displays was successful in promoting reading culture.

The stagnation of the

book-selling business over the past two years has alarmed booksellers in Kabul and the surrounding regions of Afghanistan, who have regularly expressed their concern, according to Tolo News.