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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's exports of polymer products hit 3.6m tons



TASNIM – Iran's exports of polymer products during the last year were about 3.6 million tons, which accounts for about three percent of the world's exports, and 15 percent of the Middle East's exports.

Announcing the above at a meeting on developing, production and exports of polymer products at Amirkabir University on Saturday, Production Manager of Arya Sasol Polymer Company Saeid Esmaeili added that Iran's nominal capacity of polymer production stands at 8.8 million tons.

Iran to hold third specialized exhibition in Baghdad

IRNA – The third specialized exhibition showcasing Iranian economic and commercial capabilities is set to open in Baghdad on Tuesday. The two-day event will be held at the Baghdad International Exhibition Center and will feature 100 Iranian commercial and trading companies.

These participating companies are engaged in various sectors including packaging and printing industries, detergents, foodstuffs, agricultural equipment, technical and engineering services, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical equipment, and disposable containers.

OPEC warns of 'dangerous' lack of investment in oil



CNN – The head of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said that a lack of investment in the oil industry posed a danger to global energy security and could send crude prices to \$100 a barrel. Worldwide, a total investment of at least \$12 trillion is needed in the oil industry between now and 2045 to prevent a spike in energy prices, Haitham Al Ghais, OPEC's secretary-general said at the ADIPEC energy conference in Abu Dhabi. Underinvestment in the oil sector is "dangerous," he warned.



Luxembourg releases \$1.7b of Iran's assets

A sum of \$1.7 billion of Iranian assets were released in Luxembourg following a ruling issued by the European country's Supreme Court. After the ruling of the Supreme

Court of Luxembourg, judicial obstacles to Iran accessing \$1.7 billion of the foreign currency assets of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) were removed, according to IRNA. The foreign currency assets of the

Central Bank of Iran, kept in the Clearstream Banking Institute of Luxembourg, had been seized in 2020. They were released on September 28 as per the ruling issued by the

Supreme Court of Luxembourg. In the wake of the protest and legal pursuits of Iran, the Supreme Court of Luxembourg admitted the logical reasons of the Central Bank of Iran and overturned the

previous ruling of the court in this regard and, finally, the Iranian foreign exchange resources were released on September 28. These resources are now available to the Central Bank of Iran.

Tehran, Baku discuss joint projects

Economy Desk

Senior officials from Iran and Azerbaijan held negotiations to fill the joint Khoda Afarin Dam with water, and to elevate the oil and gas swap deal in cooperation with Turkmenistan.

In a meeting with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in Baku on Saturday, Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash pointed to the new conditions in the region, and added that the idea of peace in the Caucasus promises the development of transit cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan, based on the "Iran Road" initiative and planning for accelerating transit in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), IRNA reported.

Bazrpash emphasized the importance of strengthening and developing transport-transit cooperation within the comprehensive, purposeful and forward-looking framework, given the "Iran Road" initiative, and reiterated that the

transit initiative of "Iran Road" is consistent with the mega projects of the Republic of Azerbaijan and can open a new chapter of transit and logistics cooperation for both sides.

The comprehensive program of promoting transit of up to 15 million tons of goods per year has been targeted in the 2023 Vision, the roads minister noted.

The Aras Corridor, from Aghband to Jolfa, will be put into operation as the East-West Corridor in Iran, in line with the initiative of "Iran Road," he emphasized.

Bazrpash pointed to the tripartite statement between Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia in September 2022, entitled the "Baku Statement," with regard to the development of the INSTC, and added that this statement entails considerable key backgrounds for constructive and progressive measures, in line with the development of all-out cooperation. The chairman of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Commission further stated that the growth of transit and development in logis-

tics and its functional indices are of paramount importance in the next five-year plan, and a golden opportunity for the development of bilateral ties.

Bazrpash also stressed the promotion of oil and gas swap deal in cooperation with Turkmenistan. Iran's roads minister further discussed the issue of transport in the Astara-Astara project, constructing the Aghband Bridge, facilitating the transit of Iranian fleet in Azerbaijan, and expanding cooperation in the field of Ro-Ro vessels in the Caspian Sea.

Strengthening of friendly ties

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, for his part, stressed the importance of the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a bridge and border and customs infrastructure, as well as coastal fortification projects in the area near Aghband settlement of the Zangilan district, saying that this would contribute to the further strengthening of friendly relations between the



two countries.

Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan was continuing its activities on the creation of transport corridors in both bilateral and multilateral formats.

Aliyev underlined that the construction of roads and railways connecting the two countries was of great importance for the region and would serve stability and cooperation for the entire region.

He also noted the significance of the work carried out towards the

development of the North-South transport corridor and further expansion of its capacity.

Saying that the agenda of bilateral relations covered not only the transport sector but also a broad range of other areas, the president hailed the activity of the Intergovernmental Commission, noting that good results had been achieved in all areas.

Aliyev pointed out that the Azerbaijani-Iranian friendship and cooperation were an important factor for the entire region.

Iran, Burkina Faso sign MoUs to broaden ties

Economy Desk

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) and eight cooperation documents were signed between Iran and Burkina Faso in the fields of economy, construction and exports.

In a meeting of the Iran-Burkina Faso Joint Economic Commission, the documents were exchanged between the two sides on labor and social support, technical and vocational training, employment and development of entrepreneurship, upbringing and skill training, scientific and technical in the fields of pharmaceutical, energy and mine, environment and natural resources, science, research and technology, urban development and construction, according to mcls.gov.ir.

During the meeting, Iranian Minister of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare Solat Morta-

zavi expressed hope that the exchange of the documents would lead to further development of collaboration in various economic, political and social fields. Regarding the results of the First Iran-Burkina Faso Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, he said, "We will witness



a considerable increase in the export of pharmaceuticals and techno-engineering services to the African country."

Mortazavi visited Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, at the head of a high-ranking political and economic delegation in order to participate in the

Iran-Burkina Faso Joint Economic Cooperation Commission and meeting with the senior officials of this African state.

Iran has a strategic view on the development of economic cooperation with African states, said the minister, adding that the expansion of economic cooperation with Burkina Faso is likely. Mortazavi made the remarks at a meeting with Serge Gnanidem Poda, the Burkina Faso minister of industrial development and trade in Ouagadougou. Pointing to the serious determination of the government of Iran to develop economic and political relations with the African Continent, Mortazavi said the ground for the implementation of previous agreements will be paved during his visit to Burkina Faso.

Describing his country's scientific capacities and capabilities of Iranian new technolo-

gy-based firms, he noted that these experiences in the fields of industry, trade and aerospace can be a positive potential for cooperation.

"There is a readiness to cooperate in the fields of mining, cement, steel, petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries," the minister added.

Poda, for his part, said the activation of Iran-Burkina Faso Joint Economic Commission helps facilitate and accelerate the exchange of capacities.

"Iran's valuable experiences, especially in the areas of skill training, children and the elderly, can help our country," he added.

The minister noted that the fields of defense, transportation, construction, steel, tourism, agriculture and petrochemical industries can help to increase the level of ties between the two countries.

Culinary delights of Khorasan Razavi Province



Shishlik

Iranica Desk

The food industry is the third largest income-generating industry in the world, with an annual income of over \$200 billion in Iran before the spread of COVID-19. While Iran may not be among the top 10 countries in the world in terms of halal food ranking, it still has significant potential in this area. Based on the report by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on food tourism, travelers spend over one-third of their travel budget on food and drinks. This highlights the significance of food tourism worldwide. Whether it's a leisure trip or a business venture, food and drinks are an integral part of travel. In fact, discovering and experiencing new cuisines has always been a motivating factor for travelers.

Food industry in Khorasan Razavi Province

Khorasan Razavi Province has a long-standing history in the food industry and is among the most experienced sectors in the country. This province is among the top three provinces in Iran in terms of the extent, volume, and diversity of its food production. The food industry in Khorasan Razavi Province is a vital source of income and a popular attraction that plays a significant role in attracting tourists, creating employment opportunities, and promoting the province's development.

Therefore, it is crucial to pay more attention to this sector and explore ways to increase its revenue. The provincial capital city of Mashhad and its surrounding areas are known for their traditional cuisine, which is considered one of the top 10 attractions of Khorasan Razavi Province. The dining halls around the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH) and the historical and tourist areas of the city are highly regarded in the east of the country. The food industry is a significant contribu-

tor to the province's economy, with over 600 active industrial units, accounting for 13% of all industries of the province. Furthermore, it is the third-largest employment-generating sector in the province. Most of the companies involved in food production in Khorasan Razavi Province are privately owned. One of the province's most important features is easy access to a diverse range of raw materials, including agricultural, livestock, and horticultural products.

Food, a symbol of social culture

"Foods are symbols of society's culture and can be used to transfer a culture through their expansion and promotion. For example, *chelo kabab* is one of the historical and ancient foods and is well-known in this province alongside *shishlik* of Shandiz and *Sholeh Mashhadi*. He mentioned that the abundant

capacity in the culinary culture and cooking of Khorasan Razavi Province can play an effective role in developing tourism and increasing the length of stay of tourists in this region. He added that many of the traditional dishes of the province are widely recognized nationally and internationally.

A complementary form of tourism

The director general of Khorasan Razavi Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization said that food tourism has a high potential for attracting tourists, and it is crucial to take advantage of this capacity. Seyyed Javad Musavi added that the diversity of climates and ethnicities in Iran has resulted in a wide range of cuisines, with each region known for its distinctive traditional dishes and unique flavors. "Food tourism is a type of tourism that

complements other forms of travel. Iran is known for its delicious cuisine, which includes popular dishes such as *chelo kebab* (a dish that consists of grilled meat served with steamed saffron rice), *qormeh sabzi* (a traditional stew that is made with a variety of herbs, vegetables, and meat), *fesenjan* (a stew that is made with chicken or meat cooked in a rich, flavorful sauce made from ground walnuts and pomegranate molasses), *dizi sangi* (a traditional dish that is typically made with lamb, chickpeas, white beans, tomatoes, onions, and various spices), *lubia polo* (a dish that is made with rice, green

ground beef or lamb, and a blend of aromatic spices such as cinnamon and turmeric), *qeymeh* (a stew made with yellow split peas, diced beef or lamb, tomatoes, and a blend of spices such as turmeric, cinnamon, and saffron), *aash reshteh* (a soup made with a variety of herbs, legumes, and noodles, including spinach, parsley, cilantro, green onions, lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, and *reshteh* which is a type of Persian noodles), and *shishlik* (a dish that consists of marinated and grilled lamb or beef that is skewered and cooked over an open flame). *Shishlik* of Shandiz and *Sholeh Mashhadi* are two dishes, the cooking techniques of which have been officially registered on Iran's Intangible Heritage List. The recognition highlights the cultural significance and value of these traditional Iranian foods.

Sholeh Mashhadi

Sholeh is one of the traditional foods of Mashhad, which has a lot of nutritional value due to the use of various legumes in its cooking. It dates back to the Qajar era. Since *sholeh* is considered a heavy meal, it can be enjoyed as a complete meal. This food, a type of *aash*, is one of the most common offerings that are cooked and distributed in Mashhad. *Aash* is a type of thick soup that is commonly consumed in Iranian cui-

sine. It usually contains a variety of vegetables, legumes, and sometimes meat, and is usually served with bread. The more meat used in *sholeh*, the more delicious it becomes. Also, due to the high amount of legumes, cooking this type of *sholeh* requires a long time. In its authentic form, *sholeh* is served by pouring *qeymeh* on it and accompanied by some *sangak* bread, cheese, and vegetables.

Shishlik

Deputy Head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization for Tourism Affairs Yousef Bidkhori said that tourists and pilgrims travelling to Mashhad also pay special attention to Shandiz and are aware of its culinary attractions. Besides *shishlik*, in the town of Torqabeh, *dizi sangi*, *joojeh kebab* (chicken kebab), and *chelo gusht* (a dish that consists of steamed, fluffy white rice served with a flavorful meat stew) are popular main dishes among tourists. Additionally, ice cream, *samanu* (a sweet and creamy

Persian dessert that is made from sprouted wheat, flour, and sugar), and dried fruits are also in high demand among tourists. He noted that the culinary importance is to such an extent for tourists that Shandiz is known more by domestic and foreign tourists as the 'city of *shishlik*'. This food has a rich history of over 50 years and has gained popularity both within the country and internationally. It is highly sought after by tourists and its cooking skill has been officially registered on Iran's Intangible Heritage List in 2016.

Benefits of culinary tourism

The official stated that development of social and cultural awareness, improved communication between tourists and their destination, and creation of additional income for the locals are among the benefits of culinary tourism. Bidkhori mentioned that food tourism development offers a range of

benefits, including the enhancement of biodiversity and preservation of cultural heritage, job creation and entrepreneurship development, reduction of rural migration, preservation of customs and traditions of local communities, and increased presence of tourists in various parts of the country.



Sholeh Mashhadi

Dizi sangi

Joojeh kebab

Samanu

Storm Hits Israel



INTERVIEW

'Al-Aqsa Storm' overshadows normalization

What are the distinct differences between Operation 'Al-Aqsa Storm' against Israel and the previous Palestinian operations? What special message does it contain? Will it have a special effect on the Arab normalization with Israel? Iran Daily has raised these questions with Mehdi Fazaeli, the deputy chief of the Office for the Preservation and Publication of the Works of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. He believes that the operation overshadows the process of normalizing relations with Israel.

IRAN DAILY: It seems that 'Operation Al-Aqsa' against Israel has striking features compared to past operations by Palestinian fighters. What are these differences?

FAZAELI: Perhaps the most significant difference, which also carries a specific message, was the element of surprise that caught the Israelis off guard. Israelis have always claimed to have complete intelligence dominance over Palestinian activities, but in this operation, they were notably taken by surprise.

Another major aspect of the operation was its all-out nature. For the first time, the Palestinian Resistance Movement simultaneously launched attacks on Israeli targets within the occupied territories from land, sea, and air. The fact that resistance fighters openly infiltrated the occupied territories is of great importance.

Another noticeable difference in this operation, compared to similar ones in past years, is the unprecedented number of Israeli fatalities and the successful outcomes. The number of dead and captured Israeli soldiers has been at a record high.

Does this operation, with the qualities you mentioned, which reflects the power balance between Israelis and Palestinians, carry a particular message?

Certainly, it carries a specific message. It is a clear message illustrating the changing conditions and the power balance in the region and between Israel and Palestinians. It affirms the Israeli regime is collapsing, a prediction long foretold by the Leader

of the Islamic Revolution. Now it has become evident that the trajectory of Israel's decline may be happening even faster than anticipated.

Moreover, on a global scale, it signifies the increasing strength of the Resistance Movement against global arrogant powers, who are currently on the decline. This operation will undoubtedly receive extensive analyses in leading strategic centers and international think tanks.

Considering the statements declared by Hamas and other Palestinian resistance groups, 'Al-Aqsa Storm' marks a turning point in the quest for Palestinian rights. As long as these rights are not realized and the occupiers do not vacate Palestinian territories, the resistance will continue.

In recent days, various claims and reports have been circulating in the media regarding the seriousness of some regional Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel. Will the latest Palestinian operation have any impact on the normalization process?

Certainly, it will have an impact. Alongside the inclination of certain states to normalize relations with Israel, various polls suggest that the majority of people in Arab Muslim countries do not support political ties with the Israeli regime. Israel is seen as a problematic entity, and any country's association with it reflects negatively on that nation.

Some states may have made the wrong assessment in their pursuit of normalization, but Muslim peoples do not approve of such acts. Iran's Leader Ayatollah Khamenei recently referred to these efforts as "betting on a losing horse."

In the Palestinians' operation against the Israelis, the failure of the Israeli horse was clearly visible. Therefore, it will undoubtedly impact the regional power balance and overshadow the normalization process. Unless some Arab states refuse to see or hear this clear message, they will also have to bear substantial costs. We must await the evident impact of this operation on the normalization of relations with Israel.



Assessment of the Situation



By Yasser
al-Khawaja
Palestinian
journalist

OPINION

Perhaps the enemy will present, after this painful blow, a detailed analysis of its entity, especially the security establishment that collapsed at the doorstep of that operation, which the Zionist enemy might not have expected, even in its wildest dreams. However, the resistance has turned this dream into a harsh reality, bewildering and humiliating the occupying state in front of the world that supports it, and breaking the security system that always claims superiority in the entire region, in addition to the Israeli political leadership. The Israeli political leadership has failed to comprehend the details of this shock, as the element of surprise has become a clear collapse for every Gaza military unit and its special forces. Therefore, we expect three possible scenarios for the response:

Scenario

1

There is an expectation that the Zionist enemy may carry out a displacement operation, as previously happened in the Shujaiya neighborhood, but this time it may be wider, including the entire area along the border between the Gaza Strip and the buffer zone, through continuous artillery and aerial bombardment, and an urgent evacuation of the area by its residents. This includes targeting the infrastructure and shelling the homes of resistance leaders without prior warning, aiming to make civilians pay the price.

Scenario

2

The enemy might resort to striking where it left off in the Battle of Sword of Jerusalem in 2021, targeting key towers and government and private institutions affiliated with Hamas, such as universities, associations, and other institutions, as a means to erode the institutional existence of Hamas. This also includes targeting political leaders through assassination operations, as previously occurred with the top political echelon of Hamas.

Scenario

3

The enemy may opt for a widespread displacement operation of the population through artillery and aerial bombardment along the borderline to establish a larger buffer zone for protecting and fortifying the borders against penetration and infiltration. This also includes targeting the political and military leaders of the resistance, continuous shelling of towers and institutions affiliated with Hamas as a means of pressure to release the captives and make the resistance bear the price of this operation. The third scenario is perhaps the most likely among the other scenarios, as it allows the occupying state to respond to the event's magnitude while preserving the non-expansion of the operation to multiple fronts, especially the northern front, which the Zionist enemy fears.



PERSPECTIVE

Al-Aqsa Storm a prelude to something bigger

By Mehdi Shakibaei
Middle East
affairs expert

The breakout of the Palestinian "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm" against Israeli targets has become the top story of credible news sources of the world, debunking Israel's claim, or should I say, shattering Israel's dream of being unshakable. This operation is unlike any other, whether it be in terms of how the Palestinian fighters infiltrated the Israeli settlements, or how much they damaged the regime. To describe the operation, I would borrow the term that Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah used two years ago: "Fath al-Jalil." The term literally translates into "the glorious victory," but can also be translated into "conquering Al-Jalil," as Al-Jalil is the name of a region in northern Palestine.

Reacting to the threats and claims made by Israelis at the time, he stressed that when Hezbollah would start the war with Israel, it would enter the occupied territories and conquer the Al-Jalil region. Many who had a certain impression of Israel's intelligence system and military capabilities took Nasrallah's statement as just an instance of psychological warfare against the Israelis and ruled out its possibility.

The operation that broke out in Palestine in the early hours of Saturday was the fulfillment of Nasrallah's promise by Palestinian fighters in another area of the battlefield. In fact, it was established that the promise of the Palestinian resistance group to infiltrate the occupied territories was not an exercise in psychological warfare; it is rather very much a reality now.

I believe the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was a prologue to something bigger. Henceforth, the history of clashes between Palestinians and Israelis will be divided into 'before' and 'after' Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. The intelligence bodies of a regime whose sphere of influence purportedly encompasses a large slice of the world — from Azerbaijan to Georgia to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman to Europe — did not realize that Palestinian fighters have been planning such a massive operation for at least a week, thereby catching Israel by surprise.

The number of Israelis that were either killed or taken captive during the operation is significant. What is more, this show of strength by the Palestinian fighters who infiltrated deep into the occupied territories will also surely leave psychological marks on Israeli settlers who will see the claim of Israel's security for what it is: empty. A few years ago, during the prisoner swap between the resistance groups and Israel, 500 Palestinians were exchanged to free a single Israeli captive. Now, it has been said that 36 ranked Israeli military officials have been taken captive, which is a great achievement for the resistance.

It is also worth asking whether the fighters who entered the occupied territories during the operation embarked from the Gaza Strip. It is highly probable that some of these fighters moved not from the Gaza Strip but from the 1948-occupied lands to clash with the Israeli forces. If it is proven correct, it would be a significant development to see the armed fight with Israelis no longer being limited to the residents of the Gaza Strip. It would be cause for serious alarm for the Israeli regime.

Hamas surprise attack out of Gaza Strip stuns Israel

'Greatest battle to end the last occupation on Earth'

The Palestinian resistance group Hamas launched the largest attack on Israel in years, named "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm," infiltrating areas occupied by Israel, following a barrage of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip.

More than 270 people have been killed in the fighting between Palestinian fighters and the Israeli Army.

"This storm, which started from Gaza, will spread to the West Bank and outside the country and all the places where our people and nation are present," Hamas politburo chief, Ismail Haniyeh said.

Haniyeh called the operation historic and epic, saying the main reason for its start was "the criminal aggression of the Zionists in Al-Aqsa Mosque, which had reached its peak in recent days."

"We've decided to say enough is enough," said Mohammed Deif, a senior Hamas military commander, as he urged all Palestinians to confront Israel. "This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on Earth," he said in an audio message.

Airstrikes on Gaza

In response to the attacks, Israeli warplanes pounded locations in Gaza – in what the Israeli military called "Operation Iron Swords" – and Israeli soldiers were engaged in ground fighting in several locations around the besieged Palestinian region.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said that at least 198 people were killed and more than 1,600 others were wounded on Saturday.

The Israeli Emergency Services estimated about 70 people were killed in Israel, with hundreds seriously injured.

Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned Hamas that it had made a "grave mistake" in launching the attack, which began at 6:30 a.m. local time on Saturday and involved barrages of rockets fired from multiple locations in Gaza as well as fighters crossing the fence separating Gaza from the occupied territories by land, sea and air. "Citizens of Israel, we are at war," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a video message from military headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Several Israelis arrested

Hamas released a video showing its fighters had captured three Israelis.

A spokesperson for the Israeli military confirmed that "soldiers and civilians" have been arrested by Palestinian fighters.

Videos posted on social media also appeared to show a heavy presence of Palestinian fighters in Sderot, which lies just 1km (0.6 miles) from Gaza.

The outbreak of major fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian fighters comes after weeks of growing tensions along the fence separating Gaza from the occupied territories, and months of deadly clashes in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

At least 247 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces so far this year, while 32 Israelis and two foreign nationals have been killed in previous Palestinian attacks.



Burnt out vehicles in Ashkelon are pictured following a rocket attack from the Gaza Strip into Israel on October 7, 2023.

AHMAD GHARABLI/AFP

Reactions to attacks

The fighting has drawn conflicting reactions from many countries.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani hailed the Palestinian operation as "a turning point and a new chapter" in the continuing resistance against the Zionists.

Kanaani said that Operation Al-Aqsa Storm "shows the Palestinian resistance is confidently capable of conducting hybrid and multilateral operations against the occupiers."

Yahya Rahim Safavi, an adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei, also congratulated Palestinian fighters for launching the biggest attack on Israel in years, saying, "We will stand by the Palestinian fighters until the liberation of Palestine and Al-Quds."

Israel blamed for violence

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "The Kingdom recalls its repeated warnings of the dangers of the explosion of the situation as a result of the continued occupation, and deprivation of the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights, and the repetition of systematic provocations against its sanctities".

The Qatari Foreign Ministry also reacted to the developments, blaming Israel for the violence.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds Israel alone responsible for the current escalation due to the ongoing violations of the rights of the Palestinian people, the latest of which is the repeated raids on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, under the protection of Israeli police," the ministry said in a statement.

Lebanon's Hezbollah also praised

Hamas for its "heroic operation".

"Hezbollah congratulates the resisting Palestinian people," the Lebanese movement said in a statement, hailing Hamas and its armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qasam Brigades, for the "large-scale, heroic operation".

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who strongly supports the Palestinian cause, urged Israel and Palestinians "to act reasonably" and avoid a further escalation.

Egypt, a key mediator in conflicts between the two sides, urged the Palestinians and Israel to "exercise restraint" and warned of the "dire danger of ongoing escalation".

Egypt also called on the international community to "urge Israel to stop the attacks and provocative actions against the Palestinian people and to adhere to the principles of international humanitarian law with regard to the responsibilities of an occupying state".

US condemns Hamas

The US National Security Council spokeswoman Adrienne Watson said in a statement that Washington "unequivocally" condemns attacks by Palestinian fighters and promised to ensure that the key US ally has the means to defend itself. Russia's Foreign Ministry called for Israeli and Palestinian forces to stop armed hostilities.

Many European countries also condemned the attacks on the occupied territories.

Tor Wennesland, United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, condemned "the multi-front assault against" Israeli towns and cities near Gaza.

Top general: Iraq's anti-terror actions near Iran border 'insufficient'

National Desk

Iranian top general considered Iraq's actions to tackle the terrorist groups on the Iran-Iraq border as an important step, but not sufficient.

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said on Saturday that the efforts of the Iraqi government and armed forces in clearing terrorist groups near Iran's western border as a significant step, yet "insufficient", ISNA reported.

September 19 was the deadline,

set by Iran, for the Iraqi-Kurdish authorities to implement a security agreement to take action against secessionist anti-Iran groups stationed in northern Iraq along the common border. The agreement was made in late March for the disarmament and expulsion of terrorists from the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq.

As part of the security agreement, the armed Kurdish groups in northern Iraq started pulling out from areas near the Iran border on September 19, as Baghdad faced the deadline.

Baqeri said that the issue of Iran's borders with its neighbors and the insecurity the country faces at its borders are highly significant.

General Baqeri criticized the presence of separatist groups opposed to Iran along the borders of Sistan and Baluchestan, as well as in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These groups have been carrying out acts of terrorism inside Iran, which has required a strong border presence to respond effectively.

Iraqi officials also confirm that this issue must be definitively

resolved, the commander said.

In the agreement between the secretaries of the Supreme National Security Councils of Iran and Iraq, it was agreed that these groups would disarm completely within six months, he said.

"In recent weeks, these groups have been somewhat relocated from positions and strongholds near our border. However, the main agreement was not just a tactical relocation of separatist groups, or moving them further away from the border; our main focus has been their complete disarmament," Baqeri concluded.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Economic security in region will offset normalization push

By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

During a meeting with the UAE's President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that the countries can form a major economic hub in the near future due to their unique geographical positions. To achieve this goal, he added, Iran and the UAE need to cooperate closely. As such, the two sides also discussed the need to speed up their joint cooperation in various fields.

As the follow-up to another significant recent development in the region, after a Saudi football club withdrew from

facing the Iranian football club Sepahan in Isfahan, Iran, the foreign ministers of the two countries held a phone conversation to address the issue before the withdrawal caused too much bitterness on both sides.

Around the same time, it was also revealed that a recent survey conducted by the Economist has found that only two percent of young Saudi Arabians are in favor of normalizing ties with the Israeli regime. The finding came as a blow to Tel Aviv's ambitions.

The establishment of relations with the largest Arab kingdom in the world may bring Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is facing a corruption investigation, a relief from domestic opposition.

Iran is unhappy with the possible establishment of diplomatic relations

between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but it has not been long since its relations with Saudis have turned bitter. Iran is currently just mostly observing how the push for the normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia will unfold from the sidelines. Of course, through diplomatic efforts, Iran is trying to convince the Saudi monarchy that Riyadh should not recognize Israel until the liberation of occupied Palestine.

The thread that makes sense of these seemingly disparate events is the policy of the incumbent Iranian government, which is to create an atmosphere of security for Muslim governments, especially the Arab states of the Persian Gulf as strong economic hubs, so that Arab governments do not have to establish relations with Israel.

'The Child is the Foundation'

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

IRAN DAILY: What inspired you to create TV programs for children?

VATANPOUR: After working and performing for children for over two decades, I felt a sense of duty and responsibility to make programs specifically for them. My experience and understanding of children led me naturally towards this path.

How has working with children personally impacted you?

It has certainly had an impact on me. I have gained empathy for my colleagues and witnessed the challenges they face. Today's chil-

dren are more complex than previous generations due to their exposure to new technologies. This has made the task of creating programs for them even more challenging than it was before.

What influence do the media have on children?

V: After the family, the media have the most significant impact on children. This, in turn, elevates the level of responsibility for those involved in creating programs for children. In today's world, competing with international TV channels is not an easy task.

How crucial is it to create TV programs specifically aimed at

children?

It is incredibly important because the child is the foundation. The essence and identity of individuals is rooted in their early years. It is a sensitive age, and we must approach it with great care, understanding that we walk a fine line. We should not only present them with positive aspects of life, but also address the darker and negative aspects, using concrete examples that children can comprehend.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all children on their special day. I wish them endless motivation throughout their lives and remind them that happiness and smiles are their inherent rights.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Maryam Vatanpour, a renowned Iranian actress and TV personality, discusses the significance of children on Children's Day. For over two decades, she has dedicated herself to enriching the lives of children. Vatanpour gained widespread recognition through her breakthrough role in the mid-2000s TV series 'Dandelion,' captivating audiences and becoming a household name among children. Currently, she directs the beloved Khale Qasedak in the



Sanctions endanger well-being of Iranian kids



By Yeganeh Kiani
Staff writer

Western sanctions against Iran have had negative humanitarian impacts on the Iranian society as a whole, especially its children. Above all, Iranian children's right to health has been adversely impacted by the cruel sanctions. Unfortunately, the lives of hundreds of Iranian children might be cut short as a result of a lack of access to medications. Contrary to US claims that sanctions are "smart" and do not hinder the trade of humanitarian goods, such

as medication and food, the global corporations refrain from selling medication or medical equipment to Iran as a result of those sanctions.

In fact, Iranian children have long been victims of the economic war waged mainly by the US. Washington's sanctions, especially, have made it impossible for Iranian importers, even from the private sector, to supply medication and medical equipment to citizens.

Hundreds of Iranian children with mucopolysaccharidosis, whose medications cannot be supplied domestically, are exposed to severe health risks, even

death. Mucopolysaccharidoses are a group of inherited metabolic diseases caused by the absence or malfunctioning of certain enzymes the body needs to break down molecules called glycosaminoglycans. Children with epidermolysis bullosa (EB), also known as butterfly kids, hemophiliacs, and children born with HIV are among the most affected vulnerable groups. The only relief EB patients receive on a daily basis is through specialized foam dressings that reduce and protect blisters. The most effective dressings are produced by the Swedish pharmaceutical company Mölnlycke, and are used by

EB patients worldwide.

But for the butterfly children of Iran, where an estimated 800 to 1,200 patients live with EB at any given time, access to Mölnlycke supplies over the last two years has been next to

impossible.

Therefore, under the inhumane sanctions regime, Iranians, especially Iranian children, are excluded from medications that are readily accessible to other people in the world.



Children's Week through legal lens



By Hamed Sedaqi
Lawyer & legal advisor

EXCLUSIVE

Our country celebrates its national Children's Week from October 7 to October 13, with the official slogan for this year being "Better Childhood, Better Life." Each day of this special week holds its own significance and aims to

promote specific issues regarding children. Let's explore each day from a legal standpoint.

October 7 is designated as 'Child, Peace, Security, Environment.' Peace and security are intertwined with the political and civil rights of children. On this day, we should all reflect on actions that bring peace and security for children in society. It is crucial to reduce violence, conflicts, and tensions for children

to experience a peaceful environment.

The environment is also linked to the third generation of human rights. In order for today's children to enjoy a thriving environment as they grow into adulthood, society must invest economically and raise awareness regarding environmental issues.

October 8 is allocated to 'Child, Life, Health, Growth.' This day addresses matters concerning a child's right

to health, including physical and mental well-being. Any society should prioritize investing in the physical and mental health of its children through measures such as vaccinations and comprehensive healthcare both within and outside of schools.

October 9 focuses on 'Child, Participation, Awareness, Prosperity.' These issues revolve around the political and civil rights of children. Participation and awareness are linked to a child's right to education and free access to information across various subjects. It is essential to provide children with inclusive educational opportunities that encourage their active participation, enabling them to grow wiser and more knowledgeable.

October 10 is dedicated to 'Child, Family, Identity, Non-discrimination.' This day emphasizes the rights of children within their families, including their right to privacy. Children should not face discrimination, even during family hardships. For instance, a

physically disabled child should not be treated differently within their own family.

October 11 highlights 'Child, Morality, Upbringing, Expediency.' Children should be provided with suitable environments for moral and spiritual education.

October 12 reflects on 'Child, Past, Present, Future.' On this day, we contemplate past challenges faced by children while prioritizing strategic planning for their present and future.

Lastly, October 13 is devoted to 'Child, Welfare, Well-being, Equal Access.' This day focuses on the economic rights of children. It is essential to consider the economic well-being and equal access to resources for all children, ensuring that no child is left behind.

Throughout Children's Week, it is crucial to address these issues from a legal perspective and work towards creating a society that safeguards the rights of its children.



Tehran has to be transformed to become child-friendly

By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

OPINION

Just a brief glance at Tehran, the thronged capital of Iran, presents us with a harsh reality: it is a city that falls short of being child-friendly. Some may argue that, as it is today, it's not even an adult-friendly city.

The fact of the matter is that Tehran has turned into a car-centric metropolis, displaying a distressing lack of consideration for its pedestrians, including the most vulnerable among them – children. The city's disregard for creating safe spaces for its youngest residents is a crystal clear indicator of an urgent need for change. In order to become a truly inclusive and livable city for all ages, especially children, Tehran should undoubtedly change in terms of urban planning.

Today, Tehran grapples with many challenges that render it unfavorable to live in, particularly for the youth. The city's notorious air pollution, coupled with its maddening noise pollution, underlines the long road that lies ahead in transforming it into a suitable city.

This uphill battle is specifically important for its children, whose delicate immune systems and formative mental and cognitive capabilities demand an environment that nurtures their growth and well-being.

Beyond the aforementioned problems, Tehran struggles with a multitude of pressing issues that exacerbate its unsuitability for children – and other residents alike. The prevalence of uneven sidewalks poses a constant threat to pedestrian safety, especially parents with strollers, who might give up on walking their children to the parks altogether, and turn to personal vehicles which would in turn add to the heavy traffic of the city. Such heavy traffic, paired with reckless driving habits, is another danger to many children, especially during their formative school years. Hours upon hours of their lives are wasted in heavy traffic, and they're constantly endangered due to drivers' disregard for safety.

Also, the scarcity of well-designed spaces specifically catered to children's needs further restricts their opportunities for play and socialization. On top of that, certain neighborhoods within Tehran are plagued by safety concerns, leaving parents and guardians deeply apprehensive about allowing children to explore their surroundings freely. Sadly, this is the Tehran we have today. We must urgently prioritize the well-being of its youngest inhabitants and take comprehensive steps toward creating a safer, more accessible, and child-friendly urban landscape.

Tehran Symphony Orchestra concerts extended again



Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra extended its concerts for the fourth time and is scheduled to continue its concert with two new performances at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on October 19 and 20.

According to ILNA, for the first time, the orchestra will host six performances in a single month, treating audiences to fresh musical compositions.

The first autumn concerts, led by Maestro Manouchehr Sahbaei, concluded on October 6, having an exceptional response from the audience. The concert series has been extended, with all tickets for the four series of performances sold out. The upcoming performances will include Mozart's Overture to 'The Marriage of Figaro,' Haydn's 'Symphony No. 44,' Beethoven's 'Romance No. 2 in F Major,' and Schubert's 'Symphony No. 5.' In one of the concerts' highlights, Mohammadreza Karimi will be the violin soloist in Beethoven's 'Romance.'

Rio de Janeiro named UNESCO's World Book Capital for 2025

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided to designate Rio de Janeiro as 2025 World Book Capital due to its literary project. In a press release, UNESCO and the World Book Capital Advisory Committee commended Rio de Janeiro's demonstration for the importance of its literary heritage, "backed by a clearly defined vision and an action plan to promote literature, sustainable publishing, and reading among young people." The text also highlighted the use of digital technologies and described the designation as a historic milestone. This is the first time a Portuguese-speaking city has been designated World Book Capital, which dates back to 1996, although it was first awarded five years later. Before Rio de Janeiro, the only Latin American cities that received the World Book Capital title were Bogota (2007), Buenos Aires (2011), and Guadalajara (2022). UNESCO designates a World Book Capital every year," Director-General Audrey Azoulay said.

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35th International Film Festival for Children Youth gets underway

Minister urges arts development for kids

Arts & Culture Desk

The 35th International Film Festival for Children and Youth began with an opening ceremony on October 6, at the Isfahan International Conferences Center.

The event saw the presence of Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, along with officials, festival organizers, artists, and an audience of children and youths. During his address, Esmaeili expressed gratitude for the opportunity to gather in the unique city of Isfahan, known as the cradle of culture, arts, and civilization, IRNA reported. He emphasized that the festival provides a platform for the talented youth of Iran who aspire to progress. Minister Esmaeili acknowledged Isfahan's significant role in nurturing cultural and artistic achievements throughout history. He praised the achievements of the residents of Isfahan and their contributions to the nation's pride and honor, stating that



mere words cannot fully describe the significance of Isfahan as a cultural hub. Esmaeili highlighted the government's commitment to placing culture and the arts in their rightful place, making them a priority. The minister recognized existing shortcomings and the need for improvements,

particularly in investing in the children and youth sector as a foundation for progress. He announced plans for cooperation between various ministries and organizations, including the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, to enrich the cultural

experiences of children and youth. Esmaeili revealed the government's intentions to introduce cinema into schools' curricula soon. Furthermore, he stressed that promoting children's and young adults' cinema and animation is a top priority, citing the increased popularity of animated films in the country this year. Esmaeili concluded by stating that planning is underway to nurture a new generation of artists based on the high principles of the Islamic system and that the Isfahan festival marks an essential step on this path. In addition, Majid Zeinolabedin, the secretary of the 35th edition of the event,

acknowledged the opportunity to host the festival once again in Isfahan.

He praised Isfahan as a city of life, a symbol of our cultural and intellectual heritage, and a place of faith and morality for all Iranians.

Zeinolabedin highlighted that more than 559 applicants participated in this year's festival, with the best films selected to compete in four categories, including feature and short films, both nationally and internationally.

He noted that 200 filmmakers, from 40 countries, had applied, showcasing the cultural and artistic significance of Iran worldwide.



Iranian conductor Rahbari joins Hangzhou Asian Games

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian composer and internationally acclaimed orchestra conductor Ali Rahbari performed a concert at the Opera House in Hangzhou, China on October 6, coinciding with the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, where Iranian athletes were competing.

He was joined by the famous German pianist Gerhard Oppitz as they performed in the Hangzhou Opera House on the closing days of the Asian Games, according to IRNA. This performance coincided with the 15th anniversary celebration of the Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring significant works by the renowned German composer Ludwig van Beethoven, accompanied by the Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra. The program included the 'Overture to Egmont,' 'Concerto No. 5,' and 'Symphony No. 3' from Beethoven's renowned compositions, which received a warm welcome from the Chinese audience.

Rahbari has been invited to lead the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, China, at the International Festival in Shenzhen.

Hangzhou, China, has been hosting the Asian Games from September 23 to October 8. These games feature the participa-



tion of 45 Asian countries, encompassing 40 sports fields, with over 12,500 athletes, including Iran's representation in 34 different sports. Currently, Rahbari is serving as a guest conductor at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, alongside the renowned Valery Gergiev. He has been invited to conduct these orchestras in late September, collaborating with several international soloists.

In 2015, Ali Rahbari was invited to conduct the China Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing, which led to a reciprocal invitation for the orchestra to perform in Tehran.

Under Rahbari's guidance, they held a concert at the prestigious Vahdat Hall in Tehran, marking another milestone in his illustrious career.

Jahangirian's 'The Monster's Shadow' released in Armenia

Arts & Culture Desk

'The Monster's Shadow,' a novel by Abbas Jahangirian, translated by Gevorg Asaturyan, was published in Armenia. Jahangirian said, "This is the fourth of my works, translated in Armenia. Previously, 'Hamoan and Darya' was translated by Andranik Khachubian; 'Farabi' by Emma Begyan; and 'Goodnight, Li-ana' by Gevorg Asaturyan." "During my two visits to Armenia, upon the invitation of the Writers Union of Armenia, I witnessed the Armenians' deep interest in Iranian literature. In both classical and contemporary literature, many of them were familiar with figures such as Ferdowsi,

Hafez, Sadegh Hedayat, and Ahmad Shamlou, among others. In the field of children's and young adult literature, efforts by Iran-friendly translators have made significant progress." He mentioned his works being translated into English, Kazakh, Arabic, and Turkish in recent years. Recently, 'The Monster's Shadow' has been translated by Mitra Khatoonabadi, a linguist residing in Finland, opening new horizons for readers beyond borders." Jahangirian emphasized, "Translating the works of Iranian storytellers is a

positive step toward expanding the boundaries of our literary world."

The Association of Writers for Children and Youth in Iran has nominated Jahangirian for the Astrid Lindgren Prize (ALMA) in 2024, in the author category, and Farmehr Monjezi, in the book promotion category, as decided by the nomination committee.

