

## Israel 60 days after Al-Aqsa Storm operation: Still Groggy and Bloodthirsty



Smoke rises from buildings in Gaza after being hit by Israeli strikes as attacks resume between Israel and Hamas resistance fighters on December 1, 2023.

### Raisi submits national budget bill to Majlis

TEHRAN – President Ebrahim Raisi submitted the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (March 2024–March 2025) to the Majlis (parliament) on Tuesday.

The proposed budget for the next year amounts to about 54.18 quadrillion rials (about \$108.36 billion at the free market rate of 500,000 rials), with an 18 percent rise from the current year's budget.

The bill has estimated the government's budget at 24.29 quadrillion rials (about \$48.58 billion).

Public resources are estimated at 14.95 quadrillion rials (about \$29.9 billion).

The crude oil income is predicted to be 5.54 quadrillion rials (about \$11.08 billion), and oil sales are estimated at 1.35 million barrels per day at an average price of €65.

Like the current year's budget, the next year's proposed budget requires the government to pay 40 percent of its oil, gas, and gas condensate revenues to the National Development Fund (NDF).

Tax revenues are predicted to be 11.22 quadrillion rials (about \$22.44 billion) which is 49.8 percent more than the figure for the current year's budget bill. ▶ Page 4

### Iran rejects involvement in Yemeni attacks on Israeli ships

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman has rejected British accusations that Iran was involved in a spate of attacks targeting Israeli vessels in the Red Sea, calling the claims baseless and politically motivated.

"These claims are raised with specific political motives and indicate the efforts of the British authorities to distort the realities of the region and their susceptibility to the preferences of third parties, including the child-killing Zionist regime," Nasser Kanaani said on Tuesday.

He added that such provocative statements by London pose a threat to regional and international stability.

"As we have stated clearly before, the resistance groups in the region do not take orders from the Islamic Republic of Iran to confront and respond to the war crimes and genocide of the Zionist regime. These groups make their own decisions based on their principles, priorities, and interests of their country and people."

Kanaani also advised the British authorities to focus their energy on bringing an end to the Israeli war crimes in Gaza, instead of coming up with "baseless" accusations.

London has shown steadfast support for Israel since the beginning of the regime's deadly bombing campaign on the ▶ Page 3

### UN: "Spare civilians from more suffering"

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- Multiple UN agencies have issued warnings about the harrowing plight and suffering of Palestinians stuck in the Israeli war on Gaza.

The United Nations has made an urgent appeal to the Israeli regime not to worsen the "catastrophic humanitarian situation" in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement the UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, "The UN continues to appeal to Israeli Forces to avoid further action that would exacerbate the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and to spare civilians from more suffering."

"The Secretary-General reiterates the need for unimpeded and sustained humanitarian aid flow to meet the needs of the people throughout the Strip. For people ordered to evacuate, there is nowhere safe to go and very little to survive on," Dujarric added.

His words echoed those of the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who said, "The level of human suffering is intolerable. It is unacceptable that civilians have no safe place to go in Gaza." ▶ Page 5

### Iran's thinking focused on peaceful solution to Palestine issue

By Ardalan Mohammadzadeh

TEHRAN- The Foreign Policy, in an article on December 4, shed light on "The 7 reasons why Iran won't fight for Hamas". Truly, Tehran has been insisting and promoting the idea of a referendum as a peaceful solution to the Palestinian wound that self-proclaimed defenders of democracy have no justification to reject it.

Since Hamas's Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, Iranian officials have been emphasizing that the operation was planned and carried out by the resistance groups, calling it a "purely Palestinian initiative."

The Israeli and Western officials, faced with the unforgettable defeat, have clung to every straw to link the operation to Tehran.

By portraying Tehran as the main backer of the Hamas operation, the Zionists have been seeking to downgrade the scope of their failure and find an excuse to distort the ongoing realities in Palestine.

The Tel Aviv officials have been launching relentless efforts, especially by launching political and media campaigns, to attribute their intelligence and military failure to Iran, saying such an operation could not have been carried out merely by Hamas fighters. ▶ Page 3

### It is wishful thinking to eradicate Hamas: Kharrazi

TEHRAN- Kamal Kharrazi, chief of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations (SCFR), says it is a "wishful thinking" that Israel can eliminate the Hamas resistance group, noting that "Hamas is an ideology".

"It is basically wishful thinking by Israelis to eradicate Hamas," Kharrazi tells Al Jazeera in an interview aired on Monday.

Kharrazi who was foreign minister from 1997-2005 also said Israel made a "strategic mistake" by resuming the war on the Gaza Strip after a one-week truce.

Following is an excerpt of the interview:

**The Qatari-mediated ceasefire lasted for seven days between Hamas and Israel, and now the fighting continues yet again in Gaza. What is Iran's position on the current situation on the ground in Gaza?**

Basically, Iran has been supporting the ceasefire from the beginning. Now that Israel has come back to fighting, I believe that it's a strategic mistake because not only do they have to fight Hamas and Palestinians in Gaza, as well as in the West Bank, but also, they have to fight politically with different countries who are supporting ceasefire, even Americans. And more than that, ▶ Page 2

### Over 130 Iranian women among world's top 1% most-cited researchers

TEHRAN – Some 135 out of 938 Iranian researchers who have been recognized among the world's top one percent most-cited researchers in 2023 are female scholars.

In 2023, 938 top researchers affiliated with Iranian organizations have been identified, which shows a 12 percent increase compared to the previous year. Over the past decade, the number of highly-cited researchers in the country has been growing.

Women are an important part of society, playing an important role in the development of human societies, IRNA quoted Ahmad Fazelzadeh, the head of the Islamic World Science and Technology Monitoring and Citation (ISC) Institute, as saying. ▶ Page 7



### Iran FM pushes Caspian states toward collaborative action

TEHRAN – In an assembly of top diplomats from the Caspian littoral states convened in Moscow, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has delved into a spectrum of crucial issues, underscoring the imperative of enhanced regional collaboration.

Addressing a distinguished audience at the annual meeting of foreign ministers from the five Caspian littoral countries, which was chaired by the Russian foreign minister, Amir-Abdollahian portrayed the Caspian Sea as not merely a geographical entity but a shared heritage and a fount of prosperity for the approximately 270 million people inhabiting the surrounding countries. ▶ Page 3

### Tehran Times CEO Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati asks for active collaboration in face of "truth crisis"

TEHRAN – The managing director of the Tehran Times has warned media outlets that the world is entering a new technological era that could be rife with different challenges including a "truth crisis".

A truth crisis occurs when misinformation and fake news is so widely spread that an average individual would have a difficult time discerning the reality at hand, Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati explained on Monday during a gathering by international media representatives in Guangzhou, China.

"Different media outlets must steer clear of destructive competition and instead strive to build an ideal future." ▶ Page 8



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## From moves to deny Iran the right to civilian nuclear program to proposing Europe's nuclear arms!

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in the yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

In an analysis, Kayhan analyzed Europe's ambition to be equipped with nuclear weapons and wrote: In the Khatami government, they (Iranian government) pledged to voluntarily stop enrichment for six months to prove their goodwill; but after six months, the European side claimed that the best objective guarantee is to stop the enrichment permanently. After two and a half years of delay, Iran decided to resume enrichment. The reform claimants, despite the European side's history of disloyalty, trusted Europeans and America again, and this time the "JCPOA fraud" happened, in which 95% of the nuclear went out of service, some nuclear plants were shut down or scrapped or enrichment uranium sent abroad. Now, while about 20 years have passed since Iran's first agreement with the European troika, the foreign minister of one of those three countries says that, apart from England and France, Europe must also have nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence! These rude statements are at a time when Western governments with nuclear weapons have tried to deprive our country of peaceful nuclear activities.

## Shargh: New turbulence in Iran-U.S. relations

Shargh dedicated its editorial to the upcoming negotiations between Iran and the United States and said: The relations between Iran and the United States, which had entered a period of stability and free from extreme fluctuations following a kind of «unwritten understanding» in the months leading up to the Gaza war, have again turned turbulent. It seems that the Biden administration wants and needs to keep this understanding alive, considering the continuation of the war in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as the fateful presidential elections in November 2024 in the United States. Although the latest quarterly report of the IAEA director general and his recent statements were sharper than before, four Western countries refused to submit a resolution against Iran in last week's meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors. Also, despite the pressure of the radicals, the Biden government continues to refuse to apply strict oil sanctions against Iran, and the conflict between the groups close to Iran and the United States at the regional level has not exceeded the controlled limits. However, if the Gaza war and the tensions related to it continue, there is always the risk of accidental encounters and miscalculations. To pass this turbulent period, caution and sensitivity are needed more than ever.

## Prosecution of U.S., Israel "minimum price" for Gaza massacre: army chief

TEHRAN - The Iranian Army's chief commander on Monday praised Palestinian resistance to Israel's cruel onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip, saying the conviction of individuals guilty of atrocities against Palestinians is the "minimal price" that Israelis and Americans must pay.

Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi also commended the al-Aqsa Storm, the greatest military assault by the Palestinian Hamas resistance group against the occupied territories in decades.

In the operation on October 7, Hamas took about 240 Israelis, including military personnel, as captives.

"Operation al-Aqsa Storm and the resistance of the people of Gaza against the unheard-of oppression and crimes of the illegitimate and usurping Zionist regime as well as their disgraceful and dishonorable master unmasked the so-called human rights advocates," Mousavi said in an event in Tehran.

"Gaza is a city of resistance and a symbol of steadfastness," he added. "Operation al-Aqsa Storm, as Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said, is an 'irreparable defeat' since the heroic Palestinian fighters carried out an offensive against Israel after nearly 75 years."

Israel resumed its genocidal campaign against Gazans on Friday after a one-week truce brokered by Qatar and Egypt in which the two sides exchanged civilian prisoners.

Just in 24 hours between Sunday and Monday

## Siasat-e-Rooz: Win-win Interactions

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the visit of Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel along with a political and economic delegation to Iran and said: The Cuban president entered Tehran for an official visit to deepen the friendly relations between Cuba and the Islamic Republic of Iran and consolidate beneficial bilateral relations. A look at the capacities of Iran and Cuba shows many projects can be implemented in the framework of win-win interactions. One of the main features of Iran and Cuba is their opposition to unilateralism, warmongering, and bullying, as the two countries have been among the campaigners against Western sanctions for several decades. Today, Iran and Cuba have been able to play the role of a model in the field of global multilateralism by standing against the sanctions, and the development of relations can be implemented based on this axis. These capacities should be used to form an alliance and coalition between countries that have the same position against American and Western bullying. Considering the influential positions of both countries, the convergence between the two countries can provide the interests of the parties.

## Farhikhtegan: «Pahlavi» was a disposable napkin

In a note, Farhikhtegan discussed the recent words of Pompeo against Pahlavi and said: When Trump became the president of the United States, the royalists asked Trump to revise the nuclear agreement, impose new sanctions against Iran and form a coalition to put pressure on Iran with the aim of ending its missile program to pursue the idea of overthrowing the Islamic Republic with centrality of Reza Pahlavi. But on Sunday, Mike Pompeo squandered all those dreams and, while acknowledging that the royalists had no influence on the last year's unrest, called the Islamic Republic the only alternative to the MKO organization. In simple terms, according to the Trump administration's foreign minister, royalists and other Iranian opposition groups should work under the leadership of the MKO terrorist group. This approach of the defenders of the idealistic government of the royalists and those who followed the project «I will delegate you» is nothing but the endpoint. The disgraceful remarks of Pompeo about Pahlavi are a full-scale scandal for the opposition.

(Dec.3-4) Israel killed 700 Palestinians in Gaza.

The Army chief said the U.S. has been actively in charge of directing and managing the Israeli genocide in the besieged territory.

According to Mousavi, regardless of how the current conflict plays out, the Palestinian people will ultimately triumph, even while the U.S. and Israel continue to perpetrate atrocities and add to their "black record" despite international vitriol and opprobrium.

"The supporters of Zionists must... return the occupied territories to their main owners. Of course, in doing so, putting criminals on trial is the minimum price that the criminal Americans and Zionists have to pay," the commander stated, underscoring the Israeli regime's decline and imminent doom.

Israel began the war in Gaza on October 7, after the Hamas resistance group launched the surprise Operation al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying regime in reaction to the decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians.

On November 27, Major General Mousavi said the Israeli regime has failed to make any strategic achievement during its war on the besieged Gaza Strip. "This operation had very important results and proved the accuracy of the Leader's prediction that the Zionist regime will not see the next 25 years."

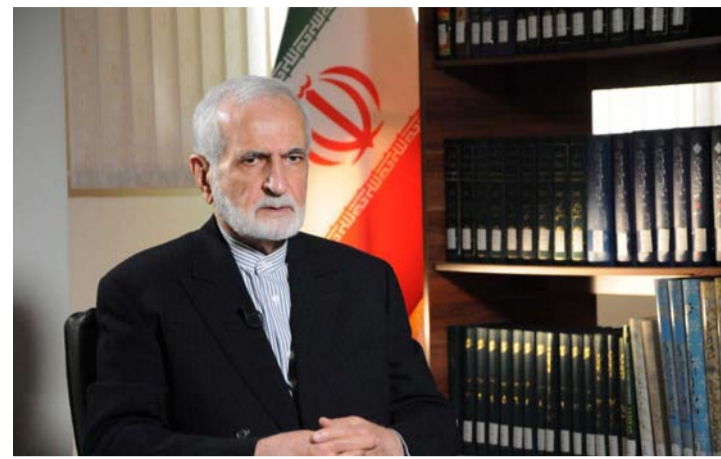
The Army chief continued, "The signs for the decline of the Zionist regime have become clear."

## It is wishful thinking to eradicate Hamas: Kharrazi

From page 1 ► they have to fight with public opinion worldwide. So, it is a strategic mistake. We believe as soon as possible, they have to come back to the ceasefire and stop these brutalities and crimes.

The supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on November 29 explicitly shattered the notion that Iran wants the expulsion of Jews in the future state of Palestine. He said, "Some are lying when they claim that Iran says all Jews or Zionists should be thrown into the sea. These are things stated by some Arabs in the past; we never said this. We don't throw anyone into the sea." Does this mean that Iran will support a two-state solution if the Palestinian people agree to it?

We certainly have our own views. Iran is not a neighbor to Israel. And therefore, I am glad that the leader of the Islamic Republic has clarified this issue. In terms of the two-state solution, naturally, we do not believe in that plan because, first of all, Israel itself does not accept that and does not support this plan. Second, it is not possible; it's not feasible at all. Because only 20% of the Palestinian land is in the hands of Palestinians right now, and even in that 20%, there are a lot of settlers who have been occupying the Palestinian land. So, it's not practical to talk about the two-state solution. We believe that the final solution would be establishing a one-state composed of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, decided by the original people who have been living in this land. And this, I believe, eventually would be the reasonable plan to come up with as a solution. We have seen in the case of South Africa, for exam-



ple, that finally, they removed the apartheid regime and agreed on a democratic state. This has to be really thought about. I believe the one-state solution is getting more support these days around the world.

Do you think it's even with the two-state solution based on 1967 borders, if the Palestinian people accept this and they have said some of within their leadership that they would, would you then support it?

A: This is their own business, of course. We have our position, but we are not going to dictate our position to others. But basically, we believe that it cannot be possible. And this is not only the current government position. Even in 1947, before the establishment of Israel, that was the position of Iranians in the United Nations. At that time, the representative of Iran gave a speech and said that with a two-state solution, never fighting would end, and there would be bloodshed all over the years. And that has been correct. Therefore, eventually, there should be one state where Palestinians and others would live together.

The Iranian foreign minister said that Iran supports Palestinian resistance groups politically, ideologically, and with humanitarian aid. Can you confirm that your government doesn't provide military or financial support to these groups?

No. We are ready to support them by all means.

Including supplying the military needs?

A: Even that, if we could access that part of the world. But the road is dead-ended. I mean, there's no way to reach them. It is only their capability and talent that they have been producing whatever they need. Now they have missiles. They have other armaments they need. These have all been developed by themselves. They know how to get arms and how to develop arms. But we will be ready to support them by all means.

So, you would be willing to send military assistance, financial...

If it is possible, indeed, there is no limitation. But it is not possible right now.

## Iranian Navy chief in Baku to strengthen military links

TEHRAN- Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, the commander of the Iranian Navy, has visited the Republic of Azerbaijan to discuss strategies to enhance military cooperation between the two countries.

The commander of the Iranian Navy landed in Baku on Monday, leading a military delegation.

Back in September, Baku hosted a meeting of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Military Commission.

Earlier in August, during a phone conversation with Azeri Defense Minister Colonel General Zakir Hasanov, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed

Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri praised the growing degree of collaboration, engagement, and links between the armed forces of Iran and the Azerbaijan Republic.

"We believe the armed forces can contribute to boosting friendship and fraternity between the two countries," the Iranian top general said, stressing that peace and security along the common borders can only be achieved through cooperation and unity among neighboring countries and that the presence of aliens in the region would lead to tensions.

In a phone conversation between the foreign



ministers of Iran and Azerbaijan on November 18, the Azerbaijani side underscored the need for dialogue and regional mechanisms without the intervention of trans-regional countries.

## Diplomat denies Israeli, British, U.S. charges against Iran

'Iran has not been part of any acts or attacks against US military forces'

TEHRAN- U.S., British, and Israeli officials have made charges against Iran, which the Iranian ambassador to the UN has vehemently dismissed.

On Monday, José de la Gasca Lopez-Dominguez, the president of the UN Security Council, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres received four separate letters from Iran's UN representative, Saeed Iravani.

Rejecting the "baseless allegations and unwarranted references" that the Zionist regime's representative has made against Iran in a letter dated November 13, Iravani said, "The Israeli regime sought to justify and cover up its ongoing violations of UNSCR 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006), its genocidal aggression against the innocent people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and its disruptive, vicious, and terrorist

actions in the region. Accordingly, its endeavors to shift blame onto Iran are entirely unfounded and lack any legal basis."

Iravani added, "I also reject and condemn the unfounded allegations made against my country by the representatives of the Israeli regime during the Security Council open briefing on 29 November 2023, under the agenda item 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question' (S/PV.9489). Iran considers the Israeli regime's dissemination of unfounded allegations nothing more than a desperate attempt to sidestep its accountability for its documented war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity committed in occupied Palestine."

The Israeli regime's envoy has once again turned to "falsehoods and disseminating misinformation to level unsubstantiated allega-

tions against the Islamic Republic of Iran," according to a second letter from the Iranian ambassador.

"I would like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently adhered to the provisions of Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) and remains steadfast in fulfilling its obligations under the Resolution. Accordingly, the allegations presented in the letters are entirely groundless and unequivocally rejected. It is ironic that Israel, an apartheid and occupying regime, consistently violates very basic and established norms and principles of international law, the United Nations Charter, and UN resolutions, yet accuses Iran of violating UNSC resolution 2231," he stated.

Resolution 2231 endorsed the nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA, between Iran, the five

And do you think if that were the case, you could do that, and you did that? Do you think that would further complicate this conflict by supplying weapons to one side?

Basically, you have to think about this conflict's roots. You know, a group of people have gone to the lands of Palestinians, have occupied that land. Now, Palestinians are to defend. This is the right of self-defense. And it's like, for example, if you are living in your house, then somebody would come and kick you out. You have to defend yourself. So, it's the question of self-defense. I believe Israelis do not have such a right because they are occupiers. They claim that whatever crimes they are committing is self-defense, but it's not self-defense. They are occupiers. The right of self-defense is on the Palestinian's side.

The United States has sent messages to you since the start of the war, stressing that they don't want a wider conflict with Iran in the Middle East. Do you believe it's possible to avoid one at this stage, given Israel is continuing its military path in Gaza?

A: Everyone has to try to prevent the expansion of this war. Because it's not in the interest of America or regional states, it's not in the interest of Europeans. And therefore, we have always been against the expansion of this war. But war has its calculations. One mistake may push you to engagement. And that is something that has to be considered. Therefore, nobody can say what will happen in the future. We have to be ready, as well as other countries in the region, to defend ourselves. We're prepared to defend by full means.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## 'Iran-Iraq border security to grow if bilateral pact turns into law'

TEHRAN - Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali-Akbar Ahmadian and senior Iraqi lawmaker Mohsen Ali Akbar Namdar Al-Mandalawi have discussed security cooperation between the two neighbors.

During a meeting on Monday in Tehran, Ahmadian and Al-Mandalawi exchanged views on a range of issues, including the Gaza war and Tehran-Baghdad ties.

They also spoke about the security agreement that Iran and Iraq signed in March 2023

to combat terrorism and safeguard security along their borders.

The separatist militant groups were using Iran's borders with the Iraqi Kurdistan to carry out hit-and-run terrorist activities. Those malicious moves have been greatly reduced as Iraq had clamped down on these groups.

The Iranian official expressed appreciation to the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Kurdistan regional government for their assistance in combating these terrorist groups.

According to Ahmadian, the adoption of the bilateral security pact as a law by the Iraqi parliament could be a crucial and successful step in establishing long-term security and stability at the borders of the two countries, given the Iraqi constitution's ban on using Iraqi territory to launch attacks on its neighbors.

The two also spoke about connections between Tehran and Baghdad, with the Iraqi official stating that his nation is prepared to deepen its ties with Iran and work to remove barriers to trade and economic cooperation between the two.



## Iran FM pushes Caspian states toward collaborative action

From Page 1 ▶ The Iranian foreign minister emphasized the strategic importance of the Caspian region. Acting as a connective nexus between the northern-southern and eastern-western corridors, he pressed for the establishment of security in the Caspian Sea region. His impassioned plea urged joint responsibility among the littoral nations, emphasizing the overarching need for stability, security, and sustainable development.

«Decisions regarding Caspian Sea issues should be unanimous among the five littoral countries,» Amir Abdollahian declared, expressing his belief in the necessity of increased collaboration. He proposed the institutionalization of collaborations in the Caspian Sea and suggested establishing a secretariat or organization to manage and oversee collaborative efforts.

The top Iranian diplomat articulated Iran's firm support for economic development in the maritime sector. He fervently advocated for joint investments in shipping, ports, fisheries, maritime tourism, and the creation of free trade zones within the Caspian Sea.

Acknowledging the environmental challenges that loom over the region, the Iranian foreign minister championed collective cooperation as the panacea for these shared challenges.

«Among the most pressing challenges is the imminent threat of decreasing water levels in the Caspian Sea. The issue has adversely impacted crucial aspects such as port and shipping installations, the delicate ecosystem, aquatic life, and the unique wetlands in the coastal provinces of the Caspian Sea. This



decline has resulted in an escalation of pollutants in the coastal provinces, further exacerbating the environmental challenges faced by the Caspian Sea region,» Amir Abdollahian remarked.

### Amir Abdollahian calls for sanctions on Israel

Shifting the focus to the grim situation in Gaza, the top Iranian diplomat condemned the actions of the Israeli regime, branding them as heinous crimes and mass punishment inflicted upon the defenseless populace. Describing the situation in Gaza as a major humanitarian catastrophe, he urged an immediate global focus on the developments in the besieged Gaza Strip.

«The Israeli regime has killed more than 16,000 Palestinians, including over 10,000 children and women during the war, and destroyed thousands of residential units, hospitals, treatment centers, schools, mosques, and churches,» the Iranian foreign minister said, calling these horrific acts as

«evidence of war crimes in violation of international law that entail prosecution and punishment.»

Unflinchingly, Amir Abdollahian voiced his belief in the necessity for the global community to impose an embargo on Israeli-made goods and to hold Israel accountable for its actions in the Gaza Strip. «It is necessary to halt energy exports to Israel and impose an embargo on goods manufactured in Israel - this is the least we can do to show that we stand with the people of Gaza,» he declared during the meeting.

«Apart from that, the war criminals of the Israeli regime should be tried in international courts and punished,» he further stressed.

In a concluding note, the Iranian official lamented the regrettable delay in the Third Caspian Economic Forum, initially scheduled to be held in Tehran. Despite prior agreements and coordination among all participating countries, he expressed his country's readiness to propose a new date for the forum. Emphasizing the forum's significance in securing

the economic interests of all littoral countries, the foreign minister ensured the continuity of this pivotal economic dialogue.

### Iran, Russia ink cooperation agreement

On the summit's sidelines, Amir Abdollahian engaged in bilateral talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The discussions culminated in the signing of an agreement addressing a pressing issue - unilateral sanctions. Officially titled the «Declaration of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran on ways and means of countering, softening, and compensation of negative consequences of unilateral coercion measures,» this accord marked a significant milestone in diplomatic cooperation between the two nations.

Amir Abdollahian left Tehran on Monday to attend the annual summit of the five littoral states of the Caspian Sea - Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan. Commonly known as Caspian Five, the summit has been a longstanding platform for discussions on regional and international issues.

Over the past decade, Iran has diligently prioritized the consolidation of relations with its neighboring countries in the region. Iran's commitment to this diplomatic pursuit has resulted in the clinching of landmark agreements and its active participation in international economic coalitions. This diplomatic trajectory aligns seamlessly with Iran's policy of confronting Western unilateralism, demonstrating the nation's steadfastness on the global stage.

## SPORTS

### Persepolis knocked out of 2023/24 AFC Champions League

TEHRAN - Iran's Persepolis football team lost to Al Duhail of Qatar 2-1 in Group E of the AFC Champions League 2023/24 Tuesday night and failed to book their place in the Round of 16

Shahab Zahedi was on target for Persepolis with a header from the center of the box just seven minutes into the match but two minutes later, right-footed Mohammed Muntari leveled the score in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Shortly after, Persepolis put the visiting team under pressure but their strikers failed to capitalize on their chances

In the second half, Persepolis possessed the ball but Al Duhail produced several dangerous counter attacks.

With 10 minutes remaining, the referee showed the penalty spot after Mohammad Omri was brought down in penalty area but Persepolis defender Giorgi Gvelesiani missed the penalty.

Three minutes later, Michael Olunga silenced the stadium with a left-footed shot.

### Sayyadmanesh likely leave Hull City

TEHRAN - Iranian international winger Allahyar Sayyadmanesh will likely leave Hull City in January, HullDailyMail.co.uk reported.

Owner Acun Ilıcak will again back team head coach Liam Rosenior with funds to strengthen his squad in a bid to give City a final push in the final knockings of the Championship season.

City will target at least one more attacking player to help ease the burden on youngster Liam Delap and the moderately more experienced Aaron Connolly.

Rosenior will look to move out fringe players with Sayyadmanesh likely to be one of those on his way having come close to leaving in the summer, and there will be other departures as Rosenior frees up space both in his squad and on his wage bill.

### Mourinho thrilled with Azmoun's potential

TEHRAN - Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun has proven vital in Roma's recent run of games and Jose Mourinho is thrilled with his potential.

Azmoun - who joined the capital club on loan from Bayer Leverkusen in the summer - was finally able to earn consistent minutes off the bench in some of the Giallorossi's most thrilling wins of the season.

Azmoun's impact proved invaluable in the matches against Monza, Lecce, Udinese and Sassuolo, his contribution ranging from scoring his first goal for Roma to helping in the build-up to Dybala's magnificent goal versus Udinese.

His most recent appearance versus Sassuolo once again showed Azmoun's eagerness to contribute to the team's cause.

According to Corriere dello Sport, the Iranian striker has grown immensely in Mourinho's estimation: the Special One is thrilled with Azmoun's potential and could soon give him a chance to play from the start, perhaps in Dybala's place during Roma's upcoming busy schedule.

### Iran lose to Japan at 2023 World Women's Handball

TEHRAN - Iran suffered heavy 42-10 loss against Japan at the 2023 IHF Women's World Championship Monday night.

Iran had previously lost to Poland 35-15 and Germany 45-22 in Group F.

With their first win at Denmark/Norway/Sweden 2023, Japan progressed to the main round, where they will start with zero points, after their losses against Germany and Poland. The Asian side will face Denmark, Romania and the winner from the Serbia vs Chile tie, but they will have zero points.

On the other hand, Iran are heading to the President's Cup, where they will be still aiming to secure their maiden IHF Women's World Championship, after conceding nine losses in a row now.

### Al Ittihad victorious over Sepahan at AFC Champions League 2023/24

TEHRAN - Al Ittihad topped Group C with a 2-1 win over Sepahan in their AFC Champions League 2023/24 match at King Abdulaziz Stadium on Monday.

Al Ittihad's victory saw the Saudi Arabian club top the group with 15 points, while Sepahan finished five adrift in second place with their Round of 16 hopes hanging in the balance.

The hosts opened the scoring in the 15th minute in style, as Saleh Al Amri scored a sensational free-kick from the right side of the box. The forward's first goal since August saw his curled effort find the top hand corner from range, where Payam Niazmand had no chance of saving it.

Three minutes after the re-start, Sepahan were level. A long ball into the box from Mohammed Daneshgar found Ramin Rezaeian unmarked at the back post who headed past Al Muaiof to equalize.

The Iranian outfit continued to play to their strengths, looking to cross balls into the box from the left hand side, as Al Ittihad continued to struggle to deal with them in the second half.

However, it was the hosts who restored their lead with 20 minutes left to play. Goalscorer Al Amri cleverly turned away from his man before he played in Jota, where the Portuguese was able to prod home inside the box for his first AFC Champions League goal.

«We played two home matches outside of our stadium. I hope we will play at home if we qualify for the knockout stage,» Sepahan coach Jose Morais said.

«It was a very close match and the atmosphere and fans were great. However, the result was fair for Ittihad,» said the Sepahan head coach.

«We wanted to win the match. Sepahan was not going to earn a draw but we conceded two goals,» the Portuguese added.

### Nassaji lose to Al Hilal at AFC Champions League 2023/24

TEHRAN - Nassaji Mazandaran of Iran lost to Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia 2-1 in the AFC Champions League 2023/24 Group D Monday night.

The win took Al Hilal tally in Group D to 16 points while Nassaji can be proud of their maiden appearance in the competition, having collected six points.

It didn't take long for the Saudi Pro League leaders to get ahead after Mohammed Al Burayk was put through unchecked in the 4th minute, his cross finding Michael at the far post who slammed home from a tight angle with Vahid Mohammadzadeh's clearance coming only after the ball had crossed the line at the Prince Faisal Bin Fahd Stadium.

Al Hilal continued to dominate the match and Salem Al Dawsari scored the second goal in the 54th minute.

Mahmoud Ghaedrahmati pulled a goal back with an exceptional volley in the 77th minute.

## Iran's thinking focused on peaceful solution to Palestine issue

From Page 1 ▶ Referendum: Tehran's stance on Palestine issue

Tehran has made constructive efforts at bilateral, regional, and international levels to end the oppressive war against Gazans since October 7.

Back on November 12, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian renewed Tehran's call for holding a referendum with the participation of all Palestinians as a principled political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

Referring to the Arab-OIC summit held in Riyadh, Amir Abdollahian highlighted the proposals of President Raisi such as lifting the blockade on the enclave, holding a tribunal for the Zionist war criminals, and forcing the regime and its Western backers to stop the brutal aggression and genocide, establishing a special fund for the immediate reconstruction of Gaza and the massive dispatch of humanitarian aid convoys.

Emphasizing the right of the Palestinian people to determine their destiny in a meeting with foreign ambassadors and heads and representatives of international organizations residing in Tehran in late November, the head of the Iranian diplomacy apparatus said «referendum» provides the best solution to the decades-long Palestinian crisis.

Rejecting the idea of two governments to solve the Palestinian issue, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani also said referendum presents «the only solution» to the Palestinian issue.

Also last week, the Iranian ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Irvani, echoed Tehran's emphasis on its principled position,

which is «holding a referendum with the participation of all Palestinians».

### Tehran's support for Palestine is spiritual not military

From the early hours that Hamas launched the Storm Operation, Iranian officials clearly stated that Tehran had recognized the right of Palestinians to defend themselves. Also, they described the support for the Palestinian nation «as support for the oppressed.»

Hamas, through releasing footages, has proved that without being noticed by Western and Israeli spy agencies, it had prepared itself for the operation. Therefore, Hamas can defend the Palestinian cause without the military support of Tehran.

Moreover, according to the statements by U.S. officials, Iran has not backed Hamas in the Storm Operation.

Bursting across the border into Israel from the Gaza Strip by land, air, and sea, and firing rockets at Tel-Aviv, the Hamas fighters portrayed the vulnerability of Israel.

In a bid to regain its damaged reputation, the arrogant Israeli Army launched a ground invasion inside the Gaza Strip after a carpet bombing over the small territory.

The Israeli Army, which has been supported by Westerners including top U.S. officers, has found itself in a dead end. The war with Hamas seems like a never-ending war for Tel Aviv. The fallacy of Tehran's military support for Hamas, which has been trumpeted by Western media, is intended to garner more support for Israel by the West.

### The 7 Reasons Iran Won't Fight for Hamas

A close look at Tehran's thinking about escalating the war in Gaza.

By Shahab Zahedi - a visiting fellow at the Middle East Center and the Center for Economic and Political Studies



### Iran not seeking war, yet is quite ready

Tel Aviv's officials have kept promoting the Israel-Hamas war as a proxy war between Tehran and Washington. This policy stems from the regime's helplessness to counter the resistance front.

In an article on December 3, The Hill newspaper cited reasons that a direct military attack of the U.S. Army on Iran would cost Washington too much without much gains.

Thanks to its long-range air defense systems, anti-aircraft missiles, naval mines, and unmanned aerial vehicles, Iran enjoys a high deterrence power, enabling the Islamic Republic to give a crushing response to any military adventure.

On the other hand, in mid-October and during a campaign under the slogan of «I am your opponent,» more than 2,700,000 Iranians booked their names, voicing their readiness to support the legitimate defense of the Palestinian nation.

Iran's surprising military achievements along with the support for the system that is inspired by the Islamic revolution have brought enemies to second thoughts in their threats against Iran.

of Ukrainian children to Russia.

Putin and Raisi last spoke by phone on Oct. 16, a call during which they raised concerns about the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas militants.

Russia's top diplomat and military chief visited Iran earlier this fall.

## Raisi to meet Putin in Moscow on Dec. 7

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will visit Moscow on Thursday for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin confirmed on Tuesday.

Iran's official news agency IRNA had earlier reported on the planned visit, saying that the two leaders would discuss «bilateral issues, including economic interactions, as

well as discussions about regional and international issues, especially the situation in Gaza, [which] will be high on the agenda of the one-day trip.»

«I can confirm. There will be Russian-Iranian negotiations on December 7,» Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters when asked about media reports.

Raisi's visit will come a day after Putin travels to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday for talks on energy and regional politics.

The trips will make up Putin's fifth trip abroad since the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for him in March over the illegal deportation

## Iran rejects involvement in Yemeni attacks on Israeli ships

From Page 1 ▶ besieged Gaza Strip. The regime's indiscriminate attacks have so far killed more than 16,000 civilians, with 70% of the casualties comprised of women and Children.

Yemen's Ansarullah movement, which counts

itself as part of the Axis of Resistance in West Asia, has responded to Israeli crimes against Gazans by targeting positions inside the occupied territories as well as Israeli ships in the Red Sea. Sana'a has declared it will continue its military operations against the regime until it stops killing women and children trapped in Gaza.

The Yemeni armed forces seized on November 19 an Israeli cargo vessel, named Galaxy Leader. It has also launched ballistic missiles at two Israeli ships sailing in the Red Sea. The UK says one of its vessels has also come under attack by Yemeni forces.



## Intl. exhibition of advertising, branding running in Tehran

TEHRAN – The 19th International Exhibition of Advertising, Branding, Marketing, Export Chain and Related Industries was opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Monday, IRIB reported.

Over 162 domestic and foreign companies along with several knowledge-based companies and startups are participating in this four-day exhibition.

Iran's first comprehensive advertising system for manufactured and exported goods was also unveiled on the first day of the exhibition, whose

slogan is "advertising, transformation and business prosperity".

As reported, from now on, all advertising licenses will be issued through this system.

A conference on technology, advertising and the fourth industrial revolution and several training workshops on various topics, including artificial intelligence in advertising, the role of brands in communication, advertising techniques and sales promotion, are also among the programs scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the exhibition.

## Iran offers 20€b of investment packages in free trade, special economic zones

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council has said that 1,000 investment packages worth nine quadrillion rials (about €20 billion) have been prepared to be offered to investors in the country's free and special economic zones.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of the Second Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Exclusive Exhibition on Tuesday, Hojatollah Abdolmaleki said: "The preparation of investment projects to introduce the country's free and special economic zones to international economic operators and investors was put on the agenda since the beginning of the current [Iranian calendar] year (late March 2023)."

"Investment projects are considered as a tool to introduce the opportunities and advantages of investment in the country's free and special economic zones to the economic operators. The preliminary studies of each of these projects have been done, the infrastructure has been provided and the necessary licenses have been issued," Abdolmaleki explained.

According to the official, the mentioned investment packages have been unveiled in four stages since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year, the last of which worth 2.5 quadrillion rials (about \$5.0 billion) was presented in the EAEU exclusive exhibition.

Abdolmaleki noted that over 370 trillion rials (about \$740 million) of investment has been attracted in the country's free and special economic zones in the current year and investors have also applied to invest 4.3 quadrillion rials (about \$8.6 billion) in 1,400 projects based in seven different free zones across the country.

The secretary of the Free Zones High Council emphasized that these zones are considered as poles of the economic progress, adding:



"Free and special economic zones are frontiers of the country's international economy and more than a third of the country's non-oil exports was done from these zones.

The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 - March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azerbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azerbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

The development of existing free trade zones and the establishment of new FTZs has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

## Tehran, Muscat discussing Preferential Trade Agreement

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said Tehran and Muscat are determined to increase the volume of trade relations and have started negotiations to sign a preferential trade agreement in the near future.

Making the remarks in an expert meeting on the preparation of the 20th Iran-Oman Joint Economic Committee meeting, Mehdi Zeyghami expressed hope that the holding of this meeting will be the basis for the growth and expansion of business relations between the two countries, the TPO portal reported.

Referring to his recent visit to Oman along with Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Aliabadi, the official noted that such business trips will lead to the development of economic relations and the achievement of the trade goals planned by the leaders of the two countries.

Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman signed four cooperation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to

Tehran in late May.

The document on the energy sector was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi.

The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors.

Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki signed the mentioned documents with the ministers of economy and commerce of Oman.

Meanwhile, in mid-July, the former head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for promoting joint investment between the private sectors of Iran and Oman in order to boost the trade exchanges between the two countries.

Hossein Selahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim bin Ahmed Almuaini.

## Raisi submits national budget bill to Majlis

From page 1 ► The data provided in next year's budget bill indicate that the government is taking major steps to distance the economy from oil, as a big portion of the income is set to be gained from sources other than oil and gas.

Oil incomes in the next year's budget bill are

estimated to be 6.2 percent less than the ceiling allowed in the budget law, accounting for only 22.8 percent of the total incomes. On the other hand, the share of tax revenues is twice the revenues from oil and gas sales, which means changing the budget approach from oil revenues to sustainable revenues.

# Transit of goods via Iran's roads rises 32% in 8 months on year

TEHRAN – Transit of commodities through the roads of Iran increased by 32.1 percent during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the deputy transport minister announced.

Shahriyar Afandizadeh said that 8,520,862 tons of goods were transited via roads of Iran in the mentioned eight-month period.

According to the official, transit of commodities through Iran increased by 28.2 percent during the first eight months of the present year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

He announced the achievements resulted from promoting transit negotiations, and the foundations of the «Iran-Way» initiative in the growth of the country's transit this year, and said that 9,458,862 tons of commodities were transited via Iran in the first eight months of the present year.

The continuous trend of recent transit records via the country and the increasing interest of governments, traders, and those active in transport sectors from neighboring, regional and extra-regional countries in the transit and logistics situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicate the fruitfulness of the transformational approach of the 13th government to the strategic issue of transit, with emphasis on the development of all-round economic relations with neighbors, the official stressed.

As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative made by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

As previously announced by Afandizadeh, 10.8 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

The official also announced that Iran registered a new record high with the transit of 8.3 million tons



of non-oil goods in 1401, adding that 2.5 million tons of oil products were also transited via the country in the previous year.

"Considering the transit of 7.5 million tons of non-oil goods in 1400, we have seen a 10.7-percent growth in the transit of this type of goods in 1401 compared to the previous year", he said.

"In 1401, we witnessed important developments and achievements in the strategic and operational areas of the country's transit, whose definitive effects will be seen gradually and steadily on the growth of transit from the country in 1402 and the coming years", the deputy transport minister further highlighted.

Afandizadeh then explained: "In line with the activation and development of the North-South International Transport Corridor, in a tripartite meeting in last September between the high-ranking officials of our country and the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Baku, while aiming to achieve the transit of 15 million tons of goods through this corridor by 2030, agreements were reached in the field of strengthening the cooperation of the three countries in joint investment and financing, the completion and development of key infrastructures and their exploitation, especially the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway line, facilitating cross-border traffic of goods and increasing the quality and quantity of this traffic", adding that the implementation of these agreements is being followed up.

He went on to say, "One of the most important events last year was Iran's full membership in the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In a short period of time after the meeting of the heads of Shanghai in September 1401 in Samarkand, the first six-party meeting of the transport ministers of Iran and the countries of Central Asia, in addition to Russia and Azerbaijan was held in Tehran in October 1401 with the goal of achieving 20-million tons of annual transit between Iran and Central Asian countries, as an area with a very high role and importance in east-west and north-south transit, especially after the recent regional and international developments, which was approved by the members."

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the deputy transport minister noted.

After seven years of reduction in the transit of goods from the country, the growth path of transit resumed in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022) and with the passage of 12.65 million tons of goods through Iran, a growth of 68 percent was achieved.

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and

cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the governments decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

In early June, Afandizadeh announced that the Transport and Urban Development Ministry is preparing a five-year comprehensive plan for increasing transportation and transit relations with Central Asia, as well as the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman countries.

The plan includes the basic strategies and executive roadmap in a step-by-step manner for the next five years and will mark the evolution of the bilateral transport and transit relations with the target countries, including the countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Afandizadeh explained.

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the deputy transport minister noted.

## Over 74m tons of oil products loaded, unloaded in ports in 8 months



During the said period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,787,110 TEUs, which was three percent more than the 1,740,208 TEUs in the first eight months of the past year.

Based on the data previously released by Transport and Urban Development Ministry, the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

The ministry's data show that the loading and unloading of goods in the country's ports reached 152.91 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, while the figure stood at 130.69 million tons in the preceding year.

During the said year, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 2.1 million TEUs with a weight of 24.57 million tons, which was 13.5 percent more than the 1.85 million TEUs in the Iranian calendar year 1399, the report said.

The loading and unloading of goods during the previous year also grew by 12.8 percent in the dry bulk sector, while in the liquid bulk sector the

figure increased by 12.6 percent, in the general cargo sector rose by 13.1 percent, and in the oil sector grew by 22.5 percent.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in a course of five years.

According to the PMO, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

## Iran launches large-scale inverter production line

TEHRAN – Iran's first production line for large-scale solar power plant inverters was officially launched in a ceremony attended by Deputy Energy Minister Mahmoud Kamani on Monday, the portal of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) reported.

The line, constructed by Mapna Electric and Control Engineering and Manufacturing, is going to produce inverters with 250 kilowatts (Kw) of power which can be used in renewable power plants

across the country.

As reported, the construction of the mentioned production line took one year to complete and in case of need, the power of the inverters produced in this line can be increased.

According to SATBA, the results of performance tests and periodical data collection of domestically manufactured inverters has shown that the quality of electricity output of the inverters is comparable to their

foreign counterparts.

Until now, the inverters required by the country's renewable power plants were purchased from Western European countries or China.

By indigenizing the manufacturing technology of utility-scale solar inverters in the country, up to 20 percent of the country's needs for this product will be met, and in addition, the country can also export the product to neighboring countries.



SATBA Head Mahmoud Kamani cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony of an inverter production line in Tehran on Monday.



# Still groggy and bloodthirsty

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN — In Gaza, Palestinians are enduring what could be described as one of the bleakest periods in human history. Over the past two months, 2.3 million people in the region have been forced to abandon all they've ever owned in a quest for shelter from the ceaseless onslaught of Israeli airstrikes.

With safe havens depleted in the enclave, individuals continue their day-to-day existence under the constant shadow of losing their loved ones in any fleeting moment. Those fortunate to still have their families intact witness heartbroken parents sifting through the rubble in search of any sign of their children. Others cling tightly to the lifeless bodies of their young ones, grappling with the incomprehensible reality of their plight. Certain parents have protected their children from harm, yet tragically lost their own lives, leaving their offspring to grapple with an unending future of suffering and anguish on their own. Anyone who manages to evade Israeli bombs must still contend with the separate struggle against hunger and thirst, as the Israeli regime has cruelly imposed these life-threatening challenges on Gazans since October 7.

In this article we will take a look at the crimes Israel has committed in Gaza, in the almost two months of war it has waged on the besieged territory.

## No food and water

Israel's war minister announced the beginning of the regime's genocidal attacks on Gaza with unbelievably Nazi-like remarks that have been sidestepped by Western leaders to this day.

Yoav Gallant's statement that "we are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly" was followed by a declaration that the regime would be depriving the entire population of Gaza of food, water, fuel, medicine, and electricity.

Siege is a cruel and outdated tactic used to weaken the enemy, as it puts civilians in a state of devastating



deprivation and disease, which can lead to pressure on armed forces to surrender. Despite Gaza being under siege for 16 years, this is the first time that people's lives have been directly threatened by a lack of food, water, and medication. This issue must be addressed immediately, as it is a clear violation of basic human rights. Humans need an average of five liters of water per day for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene and need to consume 2,200 calories a day to function normally. Palestinians trapped in the world's "biggest open-air prison" are hardly getting any of that.

## No safe-zones in Gaza

Israel has essentially turned the entirety of Gaza into a killing zone. Over 70% of homes in the territory have been reduced to rubble, and even UN buildings, schools, churches, mosques, and hospitals have not been spared from being targeted.

One particular alarming situation is the current siege of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza. Israeli forces have surrounded the hospital with tanks and artillery, and they are targeting any terrified civilians who attempt to flee the overcrowded compound. Tragically, dead bodies are piling up within the hospital, and medical staff are forced to treat patients on the ground due to a severe shortage of medical equipment.

Disturbingly, this is not an isolated incident. Israel has previously raided hospitals on two separate occasions in the past two months, resulting in a killing spree within these facilities. Gaza's Al-Shifa Hospital and the Indonesian Hospital have been left in ruins, with hundreds of innocent people losing their lives while seeking shelter in the facilities that are supposed to be protected under international law.

Israel has attempted to justify these heinous acts by claiming that Hamas fighters were hiding inside the hospitals. However, despite these claims, no evidence has been presented to support these allegations. Instead, these attacks have only generated memes on social media, further underscoring the lack of substantiation for the regime's actions. The regime has extended its criminal acts by detaining the medical staff who have spent every second of their lives in the past two months trying to save innocent people in the Al-Shifa and Indonesian hospitals. The whereabouts of the detainees remain unclear.

But the Israeli military had to take its time killing the ones sheltering in hospitals, after its deadly airstrike on the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital came under widespread scrutiny. The October 17 attack killed hundreds of people taking refuge in the facility. Israel had to change its strategy and begin ground assaults into Gaza's

hospitals as it deemed further heavy bombings on the medical compounds more costly diplomatically. Now it is reducing hospitals to the ground not through a single attack, but with the help of repeated, and perhaps more painful ones.

The regime has so far killed more than 16,000 Palestinians with 70% of the dead comprised of women and children. The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza says so far more than 6,600 children have been killed, with thousands more still under the rubble. Israel is using 1-tonne bombs to kill these innocent beings.

Meanwhile, the West continues to turn a blind eye to the genocide that is unfolding in Gaza. Western leaders send money and logistics to the regime to ensure it can fulfill all its objectives in besieged territory, one of which could be the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

## Optics inside Israel

If there is one thing that everyone on the two sides of the ledger can agree on, it's the fact that Israel suffered a colossal military, security, and intelligence defeat on October 7. The Hamas surprise operation that occurred that day killed over 1000 Israelis, according to the regime's official tally.

Israel's subsequent attacks on Gaza in response to the operation did not only fail to bring back security and confidence to the occupied territories, but actually widened chasm between different Israeli politicians as well as the Jews who were deceived into the Palestinian lands to spend the rest of their lives in a "forever safe haven".

Reports show that Jews' reverse immigration from Israel is on the rise. More and more Israelis have been lining up in front of European embassies since October 7 to apply for European passports.

Those who are still clinging to the idea of a "promised" land for Jews have been taking to the streets inside the occupied territories to voice their disquiet with the regime's disregard towards the loss of Israeli lives.

## UN: "Spare civilians from more suffering"

### Gaza is turning into a recipe for epidemics

From page 1 ► The UN said its head Antonio Guterres "is extremely alarmed by the resumption of hostilities" in the Gaza Strip, including the Israeli military's "renewed ground operations and intensified airstrikes, increasingly in the south of the enclave."

Guterres emphasized the need for unimpeded and sustained humanitarian aid flow to Gaza, noting that people ordered to evacuate have nowhere safe to go and very little to survive on. ??

A statement said the UN chief also remains gravely concerned about the intensified Israeli military raids in the occupied West Bank.

The regime has killed at least 260 Palestinians and injured 3,200 others in the West Bank since October 7.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also called on the Israeli occupation to take measures to protect civilians in Gaza.

The UN agency was notified on Monday by the Israeli regime to remove supplies from its medical warehouse in the south "as ground operations will put it beyond use," its Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on social media.

WHO voiced strong concern on Tuesday as Israeli bombing intensified in southern Gaza.

Richard Peepkorn, WHO representative on the occupied Palestinian territory, said the situation is "getting worse by the hour".

"There's intensified bombing going on all around, including here in the southern areas, Khan Younis, and even in Rafah," he said.

2.3 million people live in the Gaza Strip and over 80 percent, nearly 1.9 million, are now displaced, according to the latest update from the UN agency that assists Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, which is sheltering 1.2 million residents in its facilities.

UN Humanitarian Affairs Office, OCHA, has said limited aid distributions are taking place in the Rafah governorate in southern Gaza and largely stopped in the adjacent Khan Younis governorate due to the intensity of Israeli attacks.

Central Gaza has been effectively disconnected from the south, following the prevention by Israeli forces of movement, including the movement of

humanitarian supplies.?

"Meanwhile, grave concerns persist about waterborne diseases due to water consumption from unsafe sources, particularly in the north, where the water desalination plant and the pipeline from the (Israeli occupation) was shut down," OCHA reported.

Furthermore, there has been almost no improvement in the access of residents in north Gaza to water for drinking and domestic purposes for weeks, it added.

The World Food Program (WFP) continues to warn about the ongoing risk of famine among the entire population in Gaza, especially for those with chronic diseases, older persons, children, and people living with disabilities.?

The situation in Gaza is a "textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster," a UN official has said.

Lynn Hastings, a UN humanitarian coordinator, said shelters are full, the health system is "on its knees"; there is a shortage of clean drinking water and no proper sanitation.

She added that nutrition is also lacking for people "already mentally and physically exhausted".

"If possible, an even more hellish scenario is about to unfold, one in which humanitarian operations may not be able to respond," Hastings said.

"The two most important routes - the coastal road and Salahaddin Road - are now cut off to our teams and trucks, hindering our ability to help people wherever they are."

Hastings also issued a warning about the sources of humanitarian supplies.

"The UN and NGOs alone cannot support a population of 2.2 million, commercial and public sectors must be allowed to bring supplies into Gaza to restock markets," she noted.

The regime has told the UN it will not be renewing a visa for Hastings, the top UN humanitarian aid official for the Palestinian Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Meanwhile, former British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has accused the Israeli regime of undertaking an "act of cleansing of the entire population of Gaza".



"I feel like I am running out of ways to describe the horrors hitting children here."

Corbyn noted that the Israeli response to the al-Aqsa Storm operation on October 7 was in "no way proportionate". His remarks came during a session in the British Parliament on Gaza.

Corbyn, who now sits as an independent MP, told the parliament, said, "It is illegal within international law and is in no way a proportionate response."

He went on to ask whether some in the Parliament think the long-term objective of the Israeli regime is to expel the entire population of Gaza into Egypt??"

## WAR ON CHILDREN

This comes as UNICEF spokesperson James Elder has issued an emotional appeal on behalf of children in Gaza.

"I feel like I am running out of ways to describe the horrors hitting children here," he says in a video posted online. "I feel like I'm almost failing in my ability to convey the endless killing of children here."

Elder added, "And so perhaps if the world could see those at risk. Meet Khaled and Hannah."

The camera then turns to two newborn babies. "Please, meet them, see them," he says. "And pray that they are alive in a few days time."

He went on to say that "this war on children in the south is every bit as ferocious as at any time we've seen during this war"

His remarks come as Israeli airstrikes on two children's schools that were sheltering displaced people in the Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza killed at least 50 Palestinians on Monday, the majority of them children, according to Wafa, the official state-run news agency of the Palestinian National Authority.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

DECEMBER 6, 2023

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

5

## WORLD HEADLINES

### US 'out of money' for Ukraine – White House

The White House has made an urgent appeal to lawmakers to approve additional aid for Ukraine, saying the country is "nearly out of time" as US agencies spend the last remaining funds from previous security packages.

In a letter addressed to congressional leaders on Monday, the head of the White House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Shalanda Young, claimed that past US aid had resulted in "significant military victories" for Ukraine and went on to urge for more.

### Russian oil price cap has 'largely failed' – Politico

The price limit imposed by the G7 and EU countries on Russian seaborne oil sales has essentially failed, Politico reported on Tuesday, citing new research.

The mechanism was agreed last year and bans Western firms from providing insurance and other services to shipments of Russian crude unless the cargo is purchased at or below the \$60-per-barrel price cap. Similar restrictions were introduced in February for exports of Russian petroleum products. The measures were intended to substantially reduce Moscow's energy revenues.

According to new analysis from the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), shared with Politico, over the last year the scheme has cost the Kremlin €34 billion (\$37 billion) in export revenues, the equivalent of around two months' earnings this year. However, that amount is "far less than those who designed the rules had hoped," the report said, adding that the impact had been felt most intensely in the first half of 2023 before starting to fade.

Russian oil now consistently sells for more than the \$60-a-barrel limit, Politico wrote.

"The impact of the price cap has been limited due to inadequate monitoring and enforcement," Isaac Levi, who leads CREA's work on Europe and Russia, was quoted as saying. He added that Western nations have failed to crack down on sanctions loopholes.

### Civilian deaths in Gaza are a stain on Israel and its allies: NRC

Norwegian Refugee Council chief Jan Egeland says the bombardment of Gaza "now ranks amongst the worst assaults on any civilian population in our time and age".

"Our colleagues in Gaza ask themselves a simple question: how is it that these atrocities are beamed across the world for all to witness, and yet so little is done to stop them?"

### Civilians suffering the most in Gaza: ICRC

Civilians have overwhelmingly borne the brunt of the hostilities in the Israeli-Hamas war, the ICRC office in Tehran said in a report sent to the Tehran Times.

Following the resumption of fighting, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) fears that the civilian population now faces increased suffering and urges the parties to the conflict to do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties and harm.

"A very high number of civilians have been killed and maimed, including thousands of children. Homes, hospitals, and other infrastructure critical to the survival of the civilian population have suffered colossal destruction," said Pascal Hundt, in charge of ICRC operations in Gaza. Current conditions do not allow for a meaningful humanitarian response, and I fear will spell disaster for the civilian population."

The rules of international humanitarian law are clear and must be applied by all parties to the armed conflict:

- Civilians, including humanitarian workers

Countries supporting Israel with arms must understand that these civilian deaths will be a permanent stain on their reputation. They must demand an immediate ceasefire in Israel and Gaza," he said in a statement.

Israel's invasion of Gaza has resumed after two periods of ceasefire.

At least 15,899 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since October 7.

At the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, ambulances have been seen bringing dozens of wounded people in.

"What's happening here is unimaginable," Hamza al-Bursh, who lives in the neighbourhood of Maan, one of several in and around the city where Israel has ordered civilians to leave, told the AP.

"They strike indiscriminately."

Residents said troops had advanced following heavy air raids to Bani Suhaila, a town just east of Khan Younis. Halima Abdel-Rahman, who fled to the town earlier in the war from her home in the north, said they could hear explosions through the night.

"They are very close," she said. "It's the same scenario we saw in the north."

### Putin to hold talks in UAE, Saudi Arabia on December 6

Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman al Saud and President of the United Arab Emirates Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during his working visits on December 6, Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters.

"The meetings will kick off in the UAE, after the official meeting at the airport and the meeting at the palace. There will be talks between the delegations. Afterwards, there will be a one-on-one dialogue between Putin and Mohammed Al Nahyan," Ushakov said.

Putin will then visit Riyadh. Again, the delegations will hold talks there, followed by a dialogue between the Russian president and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. After that, Putin is scheduled to return to Moscow.

### Israel considers flooding Gaza tunnels with seawater- WSJ

Israel has assembled a large system of pumps that may be used to flood tunnels used by Hamas under the Gaza Strip in a bid to drive out fighters, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing U.S. officials.

Around the middle of November, Israel's army completed the set-up of at least five pumps about a mile north of the Al-Shati refugee camp that could move thousands of cubic meters of water per hour, flooding the tunnels within weeks, the report said.

and medical personnel, must be protected and respected, and everything possible must be done to avoid or minimize civilian casualties.

- Everything possible must be done to avoid or minimize damage to civilian homes and infrastructure such as medical facilities, water and electricity plants.

- Access of civilians to basic necessities and to goods essential to their survival must be ensured.

- Rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need must be granted.

- All those deprived of liberty must be treated humanely.

- Hostages must be released.

The ICRC's humanitarian action seen over the last week has allowed some humanitarian aid into Gaza and families separated due to conflict to be reunited. We stand ready to support further humanitarian initiatives and will continue to seek access to all persons deprived of liberty.



## Cuban first lady tours palace complex in northern Tehran



TEHRAN – On Monday evening, the Cuban first lady Lis Cuesta Peraza paid a visit to the Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex in northern Tehran.

Peraza, who is also a Cuban politician and former tourism executive, toured various museums and halls of the complex during a visit that took around three hours, IRNA reported.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel and his wife embarked on a historic journey to Iran, arriving in Tehran on Sunday night. The invitation, personally extended by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, not only symbolizes a diplomatic gesture but also heralds Miguel Díaz-Canel's inaugural presence in Tehran.

Their trip holds historical significance,

marking the first instance of a Cuban president setting foot in Iran since Fidel Castro's visit to Tehran in June 2001.

Sprawled on about 110 hectares of mountainside parkland in northern Tehran, the Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex used to be a royal summer residence during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras.

The complex was initially established and inhabited by some Qajar monarchs in the 19th century. It has undergone further expansions from the 1920s until the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The site embraces a variety of buildings, some of which turned out to be house museums showcasing a wide range of royal families' memorabilia including lavishly-made furniture, dishware, automobiles, carpets, and miniature paintings.

## International tourism to end 2023 close to 90% of pre-pandemic levels

International tourism is on track to recover almost 90% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of this year. According to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), an estimated 975 million tourists travelled internationally between January and September 2023, an increase of 38% on the same months of 2022.

The newest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer also shows:

- \* World destinations welcomed 22% more international tourists in the third quarter of 2023 compared to the same period last year, reflecting a strong Northern Hemisphere summer season.

- \* International tourist arrivals hit 91% of pre-pandemic levels in the third quarter, reaching 92% in July, the best month so far since the start of pandemic.

- \* Overall, tourism recovered 87% of pre-pandemic levels in January-September 2023. That puts the sector on course to recover almost 90% by the end of the year.

- \* International tourism receipts could reach USD 1.4 trillion in 2023, about 93% of the USD 1.5 trillion earned by destinations in 2019.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The latest UNWTO data shows that international tourism has almost completely recovered from the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 with many destinations reaching or even exceeding pre-pandemic arrivals and receipts. This is critical for destinations, businesses, and communities where the sector is a major lifeline."

### The Middle East (West Asia), Europe and Africa lead recovery

The Middle East continues to lead the recovery by regions in relative terms, with arrivals 20% above pre-pandemic levels in the nine months through September 2023. The Middle East remains the only world region to surpass 2019 levels this period. Visa facilitation measures, the development of new destinations, investments in new tourism-related projects and the hosting of large events, help underpin this remarkable

performance.

Europe, the world's largest destination region, welcomed 550 million international tourists over the period, 56% of the global total. That represents 94% of pre-pandemic levels. The rebound was supported by robust intra-regional demand as well as strong demand from the United States.

Africa recovered 92% of pre-pandemic visitors this nine-month period, and arrivals in the Americas reached 88% of 2019 numbers this period, as the region benefitted from strong US demand, in particular to Caribbean destinations.

Asia and the Pacific reached 62% of pre-pandemic levels this period due to slower reopening to international travel. However, performance among subregions is mixed, with South Asia recovering 95% of pre-pandemic levels but North-East Asia only about 50%.

Moreover, the World Tourism Barometer includes more focused data on regions, as well as sub-regions and individual destinations.

### Tourism spending strong

Strong demand for outbound travel was reported by several large source markets this period, with many exceeding 2019 levels. Germany and the United States spent 13% and 11% more respectively on outbound travel than in the same nine months of 2019, while Italy spent 16% more through August.

The sustained recovery is also reflected in the performance of industry indicators. Drawing on data from IATA (the International Air Transport Association) and STR, the UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker details a strong recovery in air passenger numbers and tourist accommodation occupancy levels.

Against this backdrop, international tourism is well on track to fully recover pre-pandemic levels in 2024 despite economic challenges such as high inflation and weaker global output, as well as important geopolitical tensions and conflicts.

(Source: UNWTO)

# Yazd hotels to trial scheme for handicrafts' practical application

TEHRAN – The UNESCO-designated city of Yazd has been selected for a pilot project to ensure a practical application of handicrafts in its hotels and guest houses.

Yazd has been chosen as a pilot city for implementing the practical application of handicrafts in Iran's accommodation and hospitality units, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The decision was made at a recent session attended by Maryam Jalali-Dehkordi, the deputy minister for handicrafts, Mohammad-Saleh Jokar, the secretary of the tourism fraction of the Iranian parliament, Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, the director-general of the domestic tourism development office, Seyyed Mohsen Haji Saeed, the head of the tourist guide association, as well as Yazd province's tourism chief, the report said.

Jalali-Dehkordi stated that nowadays, attention to handicrafts extends beyond this field alone, saying: "We must have a synergy in all three areas of tourism, cultural heritage, and handicrafts."

She emphasized the need for the use of handicraft products in hotels and traditional accommodations, referred to their experiences in numerous trips to other countries, and said: "One remarkable point is that we should make our handicrafts practical and utilize them in accommodation units."

Elsewhere in her remarks, the official highlighted the independence of countries in the field of handicrafts, stating: "One of the interests of neighboring countries and even those with different cultures is Iranian handicrafts, which enables us to use



[cultural] diplomacy in favor of introducing the cultural heritage and arts of our country."

Last year, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced that many Iranian handicrafts have untapped potential for becoming practical. "We must incorporate handicrafts into everyday life and make them practical."

Zarghami made the remarks during the official induction ceremony of his new deputy for handicrafts, Jalali-Dehkordi, who replaced Pouya Mahmoodian.

These handmade products are still far from what they should be, and every related organization needs to get involved to fill this gap, the minister explained.

Handicrafts must become an integral part of people's lives, which means that colors and designs must change, and the products need to be diversified, inexpensive, packaged, and branded, he added. "I request all the colleagues in this section to engage all their experience and energy in this task since that is where good ideas will flourish."

As mentioned by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the value of Iran's handicraft exports stood at \$400 million during the first ten months of the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (Mar. 21, 2022–Jan. 20, 2023). "Compared to the same period a year earlier, the figure represents some 30 percent growth."

At present, a total of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts". The World Crafts Council is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that was founded in 1964 to promote fellowship, foster economic development through income-generating craft-related activities, and organize exchange programs, workshops, conferences, and exhibitions.

### Yazd, a don't miss destination

In July 2017, the historical core of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that

are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Cultural heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. Furthermore, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

The historical core of Yazd is chockfull of mudbrick houses, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

Yazd is home to numerous qanats which have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements for thousands of years. The man-carved underground qanat system relies on snow-fed streams flowing down the foothills of surrounding mountains. The earliest water supply to Yazd is estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE). However, many others have been continually repaired and used over time, and most surviving Ab-Anbars (traditional mudbrick cisterns) can today be traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

## Expert seeks UNESCO heritage status for Iraj fortress, calls it remarkable phenomenon of Persian architecture



TEHRAN – A cultural heritage expert has proposed the nomination of the Iraj fortress for possible inclusion in UNESCO's cultural heritage register.

On Tuesday, Qadir Afround, the director of Shahr-e Rey's national cultural heritage base, said the ancient fortress is a remarkable phenomenon in the history of Iranian architecture, and it has enormous potential to become a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Speaking to ISNA about the necessity of the world registration for this ancient fortress, Afround stated: "This adobe fortress, spanning approximately 1.5 Km by 1.280 km, is undoubtedly a remarkable phenomenon of Iran's historical architecture, identified by archaeologists as a military base for Iranian soldiers during the Sassanian era."

"This unparalleled adobe architectural masterpiece has astonishing dimensions and measurements; its area is approximately 200 hectares, with a length of about 1.5 kilometers and a width of around 1.3 kilometers. The wall and rampart's diameter exceeds 20 meters, comprising four

gates in the four main directions.

"The fortress, which is registered on the national heritage list, contains 146 towers spaced every 30 meters, along with over 800 rooms on both sides of corridors or servant quarters, constructed with a height of over 6 meters, surrounded by a massive moat spanning several meters wide."

Afround continued: "We are planning to focus on inviting and engaging archaeological expeditions to continue the research and seasonal excavations at 'Iraj Castle' for the second phase of conservation and restoration, concentrating on the southern gate."

The expert stated that among the most critical objectives of the national site are determining the ownership rights, resolving illegal encroachments and occupations, and providing substantial and serious protection for this ancient adobe fortress.

The effective effort will reopen the doors to tourists to benefit local communities from the blessings of cultural tourism's economic prosperity, he said.

"Moreover, it will attract investors' attention to this extraordinary tourism capacity, eventually witnessing significant developments and transformations in the region."

The director of Ray's National Heritage Site concluded: "One of our primary goals is strategic planning for the global registration of this adobe fortress, and I have no doubt that if the people, as the rightful owners and custodians of this magnificent monument, along with intellectuals, cultural and social activists, and national and local government officials contribute and support, 'Iraj Castle' will be among the top priorities for registration in Iran and the world heritage list."

Famed as Qale Gabri by the locals, the ruined monument is one of the various castles and fortresses that can be found near the gates of the old city of Rey, now in southeast Tehran. Gabri stands in the Varamin plain of Rey and others are located in Kasni, Deh Khiz, Tappeh Begam, and Moqim Abad.

The history of settlement in Rey dates from the 3rd millennium BC. It is featured in the Avesta (the original document of Zoroastrianism, an Iranian religion) as a sacred place, and it is also mentioned in the book of Tobit, of the biblical Apocrypha, and by classical authors.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE). It was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in Western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad. Islamic writers described it as a city of extraordinary beauty, built largely of fired brick and brilliantly ornamented with blue faience (glazed earthenware). It continued to be an important city and was briefly a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century, it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220, the city was almost destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

Rey, however, retains enough history to give it a different sensibility. Its key sight is the elaborately decorated Shah Abdol Azim Shrine. Beside the shrine complex is a lively bazaar, while further afield are a couple of minor historical attractions.

## Colorful bust of a sad deity found at Amphipolis ancient grave

A bust depicting a woman or goddess, dated at the end of the 4th century BC, is one of the highlights of the Archaeological Museum of Amphipolis in northern Greece.

The female bust was found together with 16 other busts of various types in a woman's grave in the eastern cemetery of Amphipolis.

The exhibit is impressive as the bust has retained the color of clothing despite the passage of time.

The figure wears a tunic and a robe

that covers the back of the head and shoulders. Details of the fabrics, the double necklace around the neck, the flower she holds in her right hand, the hair, and the lips are rendered in red.

Dynamic touches of black color in the design of the eyes render with great success the expression of restrained sadness. The white coating emphasizes the ideal of skin beauty for that time.

Similar busts are found in houses, sanctuaries, and tombs, always as trib-

utes to deities associated with fertility, reproduction, and the regeneration of nature, the Greek Ministry of Culture says.

Amphipolis was an important ancient Greek polis (city), and later a Roman city, whose large remains can still be seen.

The city was originally a colony of ancient Athenians and was the site of the battle between the Spartans and Athenians in 422 BC.

It was later the place where Alexander the Great prepared for campaigns leading

to his invasion of Asia in 335 BC. Alexander's three finest admirals, Nearchus, Androthene and Laomedon, resided in Amphipolis. After Alexander's death, his wife Roxana and their son Alexander IV were imprisoned and murdered in 311 BC.

Excavations in and around the city have revealed important buildings, ancient walls and tombs. The finds are displayed at the archaeological museum of Amphipolis. The Lion of Amphipolis monument nearby is a popular destination for visitors.

The Archaeological Museum of Amphipolis, which is an integral part of the archaeological site of the same name and presents the history of ancient Amphipolis and its wider area, showing aspects of life and culture that developed there from prehistoric times to the Byzantine period.

The nearby vast Amphipolis Tomb, or Kasta Tomb, has captivated both archaeologists and history enthusiasts worldwide since its discovery in 2012. The question of who is buried there remains a mystery.

The Amphipolis Tomb is the largest burial mound ever discovered in Greece and by comparison dwarfs that of Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, in Vergina.

In April 2023, after years of restoration work, Greece partially opened the monument which can be visited by specific groups of people, such as scientists, researchers, educators, and tour operators.

(Source: Greek Reporter)



TEHRAN - The National Research and Technology Week will commence on Sunday, December 10, with the theme of 'Research and technology: drivers of boosting productivity and curbing inflation'.

Holding an exhibition of research and technology achievements from December 11 to 13 in Tehran, and setting up exhibitions of Iranian-made products throughout the country are among the programs of the Research and Technology Week, IRNA reported.

Days of the Research and Technology Week are named as follows.

Sunday, December 10, is the day of 'Research, School and Future-makers'.

Monday, December 11, is the day of 'Developing the Market of Domestically Produced Products'.

Tuesday, December 12, is the day of 'Scientists and Scientific Leaders Propel Research and Technology'.

Wednesday, December 13, is the day of 'Research and Technology at the Service of Society and Industry'.

Thursday, December 14, is the day of 'Research, Technology, and Social Efficacy'.

Friday, December 14, is the day of 'Human Sciences and Basic Sciences the Pillars of Development and Progress'.

And Saturday, December 15, is the 'Research Day'.

**Science and Technology development**

In February, President Ebrahim Rai-



si said science and technology are the cornerstones of national development.

The chain of knowledge, research, innovation, and technology ensures sustainable development in the country, he added.

The president made the remarks at the ending ceremony of the 36th Khwarizmi International Festival, the 24th Khwarizmi Youth Award, and the 1st Khwarizmi Innovation and Technology Award, which was held in Tehran, IRNA reported.

"Our religious leaders benefited from the knowledge and advised the society to learn science and wisdom.

They gave a privileged position to wise men, scientists, and researchers and always encouraged someone who was a person of wisdom and thoughtfulness."

"Our interaction with all nations and governments in the

world should be for the transfer of knowledge and technology, and our interaction with all neighboring countries, in the region and globally, should be based on this criterion," Raisi highlighted.

**Innovation, technology ecosystem**

The country's progressing process of development has accelerated with the emphasis on the formation of the technology and innovation ecosystem and the approval of laws for supporting knowledge-based companies and boosting Iran-made products.

Today, we are witnessing the positive effects of adopting the approach in the economy, culture, and daily life of people.

the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has reported that the sales of knowledge-based compa-

nies in the fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) hit 4,000 trillion rials (about \$10 billion) compared to the fiscal year 1399, an increase of 86 percent year on year.

Improving the scientific level of society, achieving high global rankings in the number of scientific articles, references, and patenting, reducing the illiteracy rate, and increasing the number of university courses and students are only a part of the achievements after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The total number of knowledge-based companies in the country reached 8,368 companies in the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), showing a 90 percent growth year on year.

"Biotechnology, agriculture, and food industries", "high-tech pharmaceuticals and products for diagnosis and treatment", "advanced materials and products based on chemical technologies", "advanced machinery and equipment", "devices, and medical equipment", "electricity and electronics", telecommunication", "information technology and computer software", are the fields of activity of the country's knowledge-based companies.

In line with the law enforced on May 24, 2022, knowledge-based production is a priority of the government so the plan for promoting knowledge-based products has progressed well so far.

## Over 130 Iranian women among world's top 1% most-cited researchers

From page 1 ▶ One of the indicators of scientific authority is the number of highly cited scientists in each country, and Iranian women researchers have a special place in the field of scientific authority at the national and international level, Fazelzadeh added.

ISC's main responsibilities are to introduce highly-cited researchers and to provide the possibility to identify and introduce elite researchers and scholars.

According to its missions, ISC is responsible for monitoring the status of science and technology in Iran, Islamic Countries, and the world.

One of the indicators of scientific authority is the number of highly cited researchers in each country.

Among Iranian highly-cited researchers, women are also present and have played their part in the scientific authority of Iran.

Using the data indexed in the ISC database, ISC identifies highly cited Iranian researchers in Human Sciences, Social Sciences, Art, and Architecture.

In the latest announced list, highly cited researchers have been introduced in the period of 10 years (2011-2021). The criteria for selecting researchers in this list is the number of citations made to their scientific productions.

According to the recent report of ISC, in the list of one percent of researchers in the world which is based on the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database, a total of 135 Iranian female researchers have been recognized in the areas of Agricultural Sciences, Clinical Medicine, Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Pharmacology and Toxicology, Neuroscience and Psychology, Engineering, Material Science, Psychiatry/Psychology, Computer Science, Interdisciplinary, Social Science, generalities and some have obtained the necessary points even in several fields.

### Iranian women have proved their capabilities in various scientific fields both nationally and internationally.

Fazelzadeh went on to say that according to the Stanford University List which was conducted by a number of researchers from Stanford University and the Elsevier Institute via analyzing the data of the Scopus database, 60 highly cited Iranian female researchers are among the top two percent in the world (service performance) in eight subject areas including Clinical Medicine, Chemistry, Biomedicine, Strategic Technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Nanotechnology, etc.), Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Physics and Astronomy, Information and Communication Technology, and Engineering.

316 female Iranian highly-cited researchers are among the top two percent of the world (one-year performance) in 14 subject areas of Clinical Medicine, Biomedicine, Chemistry, Engineering, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Strategic Technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Nanotechnology, etc.), Information and Communication Technology, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Physics and Astronomy, Environment, Design and Construction, Public Health and Health Services, Biology, Social Sciences, Communication and Textual Research have obtained the necessary points.

Some 46 female researchers in 13 subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting, Geographical Sciences, Psychology, Social Sciences, Knowledge and Information Science, Language and Linguistics, Educational Sciences, Economic Sciences, Sociology and Political Sciences, Language and Literature, Historical Sciences, Theology and Islamic Studies and other areas gained the needed points.

#### Iranian female scholars

While the West is trying to show a distorted image of Iranian women, the promotion of women's status in Iran and their presence in



various scientific and academic fields is undeniable

Despite all the problems and challenges that women all over the world face, they do not give up their dreams and goals and strive to be useful in society. Like many women in the world, Iranian women have also proved their capabilities in various fields and succeeded both nationally and internationally.

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in February 1979, Iranian women have shone in different political, social, cultural, scientific, educational, and artistic fields in both national and international arenas during the past 44 years.

The scientific progress of Iranian women in the years after the Islamic Revolution has been very impressive.

Despite some difficulties, the Iranian female population has been provided with the opportunity to study at universities in various fields so that educated women are seen as one of the most important social assets of the country today.

In the pre-Revolution era, most of the female pupils were keen on studying art and medical sciences at universities, but nowadays, they study in all fields including engineering, mathematics, economy, and agriculture.

As of 2006, women accounted for over half of university students in Iran and 70% of science and engineering students. In 2012, according to UNESCO data, over 2 million out of 4 million students in tertiary education in Iran were females, thus marking the fifth largest female enrollment after China, India, the US, and Brazil. In engineering fields, Iranian female enrollment ranked first in the world and in science fields second, after the US.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in one of his speeches on December 16, 1992, said, "... No one should propagate that by preserving one's hijab, modesty, homemaking and raising children, one cannot acquire knowledge. Thank God, today we have so many female intellectuals and scientists in various fields of our society: hardworking, intelligent, and valuable university students; high-level graduates; outstanding and high-ranking physicians! Today, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, various fields of sciences are available for women..."

Iranian women have proven they can contribute greatly to the advancement of science, as 345 female researchers are on the Highly Cited Researchers list of the world.

In the previous edition of the Highly Cited Researchers revealed by Clarivate, 15 researchers were from Iranian institutions, but in the 2022 edition, 12 Iranian researchers have been included.

Global statistics show that 28 percent of researchers are women. It is worth mentioning that Iranian women are among those researchers, who presented much research at domestic and international levels.

The Iranian women have succeeded in playing key roles in managing startups and accelerators, facilitating groups and companies active in agriculture, industries, architecture, pharmaceutical, and economic sectors, they also shone in the entrepreneurship area.

Iranian women have been able to achieve countless successes in various fields. It is difficult to name all these women. There are also many successful Iranian women all over the world who are famous in many fields of science and technology. A number of these women have achieved the highest honors in certain fields.

## Iran to boost sci-tech co-op with Syria, Cuba



The Iranian deputy science minister Mohammad-Reza Mohammadzadeh Attar (R), and the Syrian vice president Mohamad Amer Tlas met in Tehran on Monday.

TEHRAN - Iran has reached agreements with Syria and Cuba to expand cooperation in the fields of science and technology.

Mohammad-Reza Mohammadzadeh Attar, the Iranian Deputy Science, Research, and Technology Minister; and Mohamad Amer Tlas, the Syrian Vice-President for the National Union of Students, in a meeting in Tehran on Monday, discussed ways to enhance scientific and technological cooperation.

The necessity of establishing a joint science and technology park in Syria was highlighted.

The officials also agreed to hold an exhibition of Iran's scientific achievements in Syria to make Syrian students acquainted more with the technologies and innovations of Iran and Iranian universities.

Syrian students who are interested in studying in Iran will be granted scholarships for master's and Ph.D. degrees.

It was also decided to strengthen Persian language courses in Syria by dispatching professors from Iran.

#### Iran, Cuba boost tech ties

Meanwhile, On the sidelines of Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel's visit to Tehran on Monday, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Iranian Vice Presidency for

Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba.

The main objective of this agreement is to promote and expand scientific and technological cooperation based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, through the development of joint cooperation projects in the fields of science and nanotechnology, biotechnology, climate change, and other areas agreed by the parties.

The agreement also includes the exchange or designation of scientists and researchers to carry out joint projects and share experiences, transfer, or exchange technology in the fields of science, technology, and innovation.

Moreover, it involves organizing or providing support to hold symposia, conferences, forums, seminars, workshops, and training courses in areas of mutual interest.

Establishing a joint working committee and a joint science and technology center are other goals of the agreement.

#### Science diplomacy

In July 2022, Deputy Science Minister Peyman Salehi said despite U.S. sanctions, the international activities of Iranian scientists have increased year by year so that more than 35 percent of Iranian articles in Scopus have been multi-national projects.

Science diplomacy is the use of scientific collaborations among nations to address common problems and build constructive international partnerships.

It is a form of new diplomacy and has become an umbrella term to describe a number of formal or informal technical, research-based, academic, or engineering exchanges, within the general field of international relations.

The national budget bill for the current Iranian calendar year 1402, which started on March 21, has earmarked about 37 trillion rials (\$75 million)

for science and technology.

The bill increased the budget by 35 percent compared to the past year's budget, ISNA reported.

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology was formed in 2006 with the aim of creating an environment for supporting knowledge-based companies and providing the ground for the development of technological industries.

A total of 8,034 knowledge-based companies have so far been established across the country.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei designated the current Iranian calendar year as the year of "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating."

Over the past couple of years, the concept of a 'knowledge-based company' has changed to a 'knowledge-based society', meaning that supporting knowledge-based companies will lead to many social and economic advantages for the public.

The Leader reemphasized the importance of boosting domestic production, as he had done in past years, saying the reason he placed so much emphasis on production was "because it boosts economic growth, it creates employment, it reduces inflation, it increases per capita income and it improves public welfare."

To this end, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has executed and supported several projects toward the goal of boosting knowledge-based production.

Moreover, the development of an innovation ecosystem is on the agenda, according to which 65 houses of innovation have been set up across the country.

The Innovation and Prosperity Fund has paid a total of 240 trillion rials (nearly \$500 million) to support knowledge-based companies over the [Iranian calendar] year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 2 billion tons of soil erodes annually in Iran: expert

Iran loses 2 billion tons of soil per year as a result of land use changes, rainfed agriculture, and overgrazing, Hossein Akhiani, environmental and botanical expert has announced.

"Sometimes, to support agriculture, land use changes permits are issued, while being unaware of its dire consequences on the soil," he lamented, YJC reported on Saturday.

"Iran is responsible for the loss of 10 percent of the world's total soil erosion per year due to unsustainable agriculture, overgrazing, destruction of natural reservoirs," he said.

## فرسایش سالانه ۲ میلیارد تن خاک در ایران

کارشناس محیط زیست و گیاه شناس گفت: سالانه ۲ میلیارد تن خاک در ایران به دلیل تغییر کاربری زمین، کشت دیم و چرای بی رویه فرسایش می‌شود.

به گزارش باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، حسین آخانی اظهار کرد: برخی زمان‌ها برای حمایت از کشاورزی اجازه تغییر کاربری به زمین داده می‌شود، اما غافل از این هستیم که به دلیل ناپایداری خاک ده‌ها برابر خسارت ناشی از آن را باید تحمل کنیم.

وی بیان کرد: ایران ده درصد کل فرسایش خاک جهان را دارد و این به دلیل کشاورزی ناپایدار، چرای بی رویه، و از بین بردن شبکه هیدرولوژیک است.





Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**  
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
Email: info@tehrantimes.com  
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430  
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

DECEMBER 6, 2023

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The people of the world are like travelers in a caravan, who are carried on in their sleep.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:11:55 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:31 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:00 (tomorrow)

## Yazd to host 25th Intl. Storytelling Festival



TEHRAN- The 25th International Storytelling Festival is set to take place in the central Iranian city of Yazd, hosting storytellers from Iran and other countries.

Organized by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon, the festival will be held from December 18 to 21 under the theme “Let’s Make a Smile with a Story”, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The festival will feature various sections including classical and modern storytelling, traditional rituals, sign language storytelling, 90-second stories, and international storytelling, the report added.

Moreover, four new sections titled “Stories of General Soleimani,” “Smile,” “Children of Gaza,” and “Police” have been added to this edition of the festival.

Some 17,000 storytellers from across the world have been submitted to the festival so far.

The festival’s international jury will include judges from Turkey, South Africa, Argentina, India, Scotland, Kenya, England, Malaysia, Uganda, Tanzania, Lesotho, Lebanon, and France.

Back in September, Farhad Falah, the director of the festival stated that this year’s festival will focus on new approaches and

special awards, particularly emphasizing the use of humor and comedy in storytelling.

Although “Let’s Make a Smile with a Story” is the motto for this year’s festival, the slogan embodies storytelling’s wisdom as well, he noted.

While the utilization of humor and comedy in storytelling is an essential element of this year’s festival, the core principle is the creation of a new outlook that produces a smile amidst wisdom through storytelling, he explained.

He also acknowledged Iran’s significant role as one of the leading countries in storytelling on the global stage as he stated that it places great responsibility on the organizers to ensure that the festival is impeccably organized.

The organizers will exert their utmost effort to make sure it is held in the best possible manner, he said.

He also underlined the significance of storytelling as a vital tool for education and the development of children and young people, which will be a definite focus of this year’s festival.

The festival aims to encourage families to revert back to the authentic nature of storytelling for educational purposes, he mentioned.

The festival also serves as a platform for different educational activities, providing support to a variety of content forms that are founded on storytelling, he stated.

The narrative foundations of storytelling are present in several forms of production, including animations and films, he said and added: “Storytelling has been utilized as a tool for the education and guidance of mankind by divinity, and Iran is harnessing its potential for empowering and educating children and young people.”

# Iranian projects among winners of World Architecture Festival

TEHRAN-Seven projects from Iran are among the winners of the 16th World Architecture Festival (WAF) announced on December 1 in Marina Bay, Singapore.

The Iranian works were selected as the winning projects of various categories. In addition, four projects were included in the highly commended list presented by the jury panel including 140 judges from 68 countries, Mehr reported on Monday.

“Vast Gallery & Artist Residency” in Tehran by Persian Garden Studio is the winner of In the Completed Buildings: Retrofit category.

Located in the historic center of Tehran with an area of 1,120 sqm, Vast Gallery & Artist Residency, originally was built in the 1930s and consisted of three residential floors and five retail stores.

With renovation and the new programming for rehabilitation of the building after 40 years of abandonment, two residential units were transformed into six smaller units and an office space was added to the program. Retail stores were converted into a cafe, pastry shop, and a gift shop, inviting visitors to the complex and highlighting their significant impact on the project’s identity thriving from daily communication with the neighborhood residents.

The purpose of defining, designing, and executing such projects is to attract a new generation to the center of Tehran. In recent years, several neighborhoods have lost their identity as residential areas have taken on commercial or administrative use. By creating multipurpose projects in which residential use is an essential fragment, part of the population will return to these neighborhoods to live, work, and create.

In the Future Project: Civic category, “Border Village Community Center” in Eshaqabad village, Sistan-Baluchestan province, by Nextoffice, Studio of Architectural Research & Design has won the main prize.

Located in one of the remote parts of Iran (near the Pakistan border), Eshaqabad has both geographically and contextually the farthest distance from the central parts of the country, therefore, suffers from shortages of basic social infrastructure. “Rereading the existing situation with the help of professional facilitators in empowering local communities, we discovered that a multipurpose community center with a focus on crafts, skills-based learning, and encouraging interactional activities can have significant added value to the life of the rural,” the architect of the project explained.



“Shiraz Cultural and Recreational Complex: The Thickened Earth” by Nextoffice, the winner of Future Project: Leisure Led Development category.

Taking a careful financial approach, this spontaneous gesture aspired to use locally available resources, instead of employing non-local contractors. The educational spaces contain a preschool, classes, and a library. The public spaces include a Divan-ja (men’s Gathering Hall), an open amphitheater, and a multi-purpose hall where self-development workshops can be held. Various courtyards, customized for particular ranges of age, connect all these areas. Another project by Nextoffice titled “Hormoz Eco Resort” in Hormoz Island, Hormozgan province, has won in the Future Project: Competition Entries category.

The project simultaneously refers to the structure, the urban and rural fabric of southern Iran’s settlements, and corresponds to the climate of the region, and the form, by paying homage to the indigenous heritage, mud-brick structures, and wooden textures found in these areas.

This project has about 8,800 sqm of area, out of which 4,800 sqm are allocated to residential spaces, including 18 suites, 11 budget accommodations, 11 villas, and an additional 4,000 sqm are dedicated to recreational zone, including a restaurant, café, kitchen, sports club, and service areas. It is hopefully anticipated that in future operational scenarios, the service spaces will be managed by local people, contributing to economic empowerment, revitalization, and the flourishing of indigenous arts while improving cultural development.

Also designed by Nextoffice, “Shiraz Cultural and Recreational Complex: The Thickened Earth” in Shiraz, Fars province, has been selected as the winning project in Future Project: Leisure Led Development category.

“By delving into the authentic architecture of Shiraz, we identified two fundamental elements, the grand bazaar, and the central courtyard, in organizing the urban space. The expansive public plaza was defined to serve as a social space, catering to both the city and the complex itself for interaction, hosting events, exhibitions, and diverse ceremonial activities,” the architect explained

about the project.

By dividing the land into different elevation layers and placing programmatic units among them, we could create different platforms aligned with the topography. In addition to enabling the natural light reception and visual extension for each platform, the ceiling of each level could be considered the courtyard of the next. So, more public spaces were provided, and the buildings are merged with the site which contributed to economic efficiency (utilizing the thermal capacity) as well as project feasibility (cut and fill balance).

Nextoffice has also won the main prize of INSIDE: Retail category with its “Bijou Shop in Tehran Grand Bazaar”. The project included the interior design of a jewelry store. “It is as if along a dark narrow corridor, the store’s walls have thickened, and irregular scratches on the stones become a platform for showcasing the products,” the architect said.

Considering the security issues, multiple measures were taken which can be categorized into two major areas. Firstly, the development of filters for the store’s entrance (including CCTV cameras, roll-up metal doors, and exit detection lights) and secondly, the protection of displayed items on the walls and stands (utilizing same-material covers on cabinets, attaching them to the display area through cables or light sensors).

Ultimately, it can be said that in this design, the organic nature of the deep underground mine is combined with the geometric order of human-made elements—as the characteristic of modern architectural spaces today— something between random organic shapes and a matrix grid.

Kalbod Studio is the winner of Future Project: House category with its “Digging for Light (Ganats Villa)” project in the village of Ernan, central city of Yazd, which is adjacent to a mound where human tracks from 12,000 years ago exists. It is also close to a seasonal lake, to lots of dried qanats, a serious of underground historic water canals,

and to numerous villages without proper public, health and educational facilities.

“To add something to community, we established two other programs: school and water reservoir,” the architect said about the project. In the home, spaces are illuminated by either direct or indirect light. Direct lights entering from domes or glass pool are all skylights. School’s sunken pathway was inspired by Yazd alleys to create shade, thermal comfort and rhythmic play with light and shadow. Classrooms and library enjoy both skylights and light coming from the pathway.

Water reservoir connected with existing qanats serves community and provides water for agricultural fields. It takes its form from traditional reservoirs of the region and has a unique presence with its windcatcher on the landscape. The windcatcher/light catcher provides air circulation for the underground pathway. This pathway joins all three programs and is a reinterpretation of qanat system with its domed skylights.

“Kuzeh Valley” in Rudehen city, Tehran province, by FMZD is another Iranian project selected as the winner of the Future Project: Residential category.

The main strategy in the “Kuzeh Valley” project is to create a structure with the aim of coexistence and maximum participation in public space. The created space is designed to return to the original concept of a street, a space for children to play and neighbors to interact.

The geometry of the project is formed by interconnected and inhabitable urns, in a way that residents forget the concept of a city and the hustle and bustle associated with gray buildings. On the other hand, these inhabitable urns with warm colors are the best elements for harmonizing with the surrounding plains.

The four Iranian projects that have been commended by the festival include “Ivankhaneh” by Dida Office in the Completed Buildings: Housing category, “Namak Abroud Plaza” by FMZD and MARZ in the Completed Buildings: Shopping category, “Nefaar” by Nextoffice in Future Projects: House category, and “35” by Shid Architects in Inside: Workplace (Small) category.

The World Architecture Festival (WAF) is an annual festival and awards ceremony, one of the most prestigious events dedicated to the architecture and development industries. It is the only event where around 550 shortlisted architects present their projects live in crit rooms to a judging panel that selects the prize winners across 44 categories.

## Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Kike from Puerto Rico

## Tehran Times CEO Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati asks for active collaboration in face of “truth crisis”

From Page 1 ▶ We must always uphold ethics and communicate fairly,” He urged adding that people around the world are becoming more attached to social media as each year goes by.

Rahmati, however, noted that the increasing use of social media also comes with some advantages including the widespread share of information and access to enhanced educational resources.

“Media plays the most crucial role in changing

the cognitive system of humans, shaping societal values according to its own desires.”

More than 450 participants from 101 countries and regions, including representatives of 197 mainstream media outlets, think tanks, government agencies, diplomatic missions to China, UN agencies and international organizations attended the 5th World Media Summit which began on Saturday and will last till December 8.



## Iranian documentary wins award at Grand Off festival

TEHRAN-Iranian documentary “Austrian Bridge” directed by Ahmad Azad received an award at the 17th edition of Grand OFF - World Independent Film Awards, which came to an end in Warsaw, Poland, on Monday.

The film won the best cinematography award, honoring its cinematographer Reza Heidarippanah, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

“Austrian Bridge” follows the story of Veresk Bridge, which spans two cliffs in the Abbasabad area, connects the railways of Tehran to the Caspian Sea region. The arch bridge is one of the masterpieces of engineering of the 20th century.

The film explores the impact of this architectural marvel on both above-ground and underground structures in transportation systems worldwide. It delves into the intriguing influence of this architecture while also recounting the legends and tales from nearly a century of the bridge’s history, deeply rooted in the culture, music, and literature of northern Iranian province of Mazandaran.

The construction of Veresk Bridge began in 1934, a few years before the outbreak of World War II. In 1936, during the rule of Reza Shah, the bridge was officially inaugurated in Savadkuh, the hometown of the Shah himself.

Stories have been passed down regarding the inauguration ceremony, where Shah requested foreign engineers and their families to stand beneath the bridge as the first train crossed over. This gesture aimed to alleviate fears among the public, who were concerned about the bridge’s ability to withstand the weight of a passing train.

Regarded as one of the exceptional achievements of the Danish engineering firm Kampsax, which comprised Danish, German, and Austrian engineers, Veresk Bridge played a significant role in the extensive Trans-Iranian Railway network in northern Iran. Numerous

craftsmen from different nationalities, including Swiss and Italian individuals, contributed to the construction of this remarkable bridge. Adjacent to the bridge stands a memorial structure erected in honor of the construction workers who tragically lost their lives during the bridge’s construction, as well as in the nearby tunnels. Walter Aigner, the Austrian Chief Engineer, rests in the local Veresk cemetery, in accordance with his last wishes.

Beneath the bridge lies a tunnel that trains pass through after crossing the bridge, gradually descending in altitude before reaching the train station.