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Tour of Failure

Blinken pushing for a failed agenda

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken studies a map at a World Food Program (WFP) regional warehouse in Amman on January 7, 2024.

Quds Force chief extends condolences and congratulations on martyrdom of al-Arouri

TEHRAN- The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, conveyed his condolences and congratulations to Ismail Haniyeh on the martyrdom of Saleh al-Arouri.

In a letter addressed to the chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, General Ismail Qaani emphasized that the brothers of the late martyr al-Arouri would become a formidable challenge for the Zionist regime.

Highlighting al-Arouri's significant role in the first intifada and the al-Aqsa intifada, General Qaani noted that the enemy's attempt to mitigate its defeat in Gaza and the West Bank involved targeting resistance commanders.

Earlier on January 3, Ali Shamkhani, the political advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, praised Saleh al-Arouri as a dedicated mujahid. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi also expressed his deepest condolences on Wednesday following the assassination of Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy head of the Hamas politburo.

Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy chief of the Hamas political office, was killed in an Israeli drone strike in southern Beirut late on Tuesday.

Kerman prosecutor says all implicated in terrorist attacks detained

TEHRAN- The prosecutor of Kerman, Mehdi Bakhshi, announces that all terrorists implicated in the most recent fatal attack in the city have been taken into custody.

Bakhshi made the remarks in a television interview on Saturday three days after the terrorist incident.

He added that "thirty-two people have been arrested in connection with Kerman terrorist crime case and are going through preliminary interrogations."

An aggregate of "16 bombs have been discovered throughout Kerman province," the judicial official continued, adding that their explosive capacity exceeded that of the suicide vests used in the assault on Wednesday.

Bakhshi denied allegations that the bombs used in the assault were concealed inside garbage cans and remotely set off, asserting that two suicide bombers—one of whom was Tajikistani—were responsible for both bomb explosions.

Emphasizing that terrorists were not able to plant any explosives inside the cemetery where martyrs are buried, the prosecutor said, "Over the recent months, as many as 23 Daesh terrorists ready to carry out suicide attacks have been arrested across Kerman province." ▶ Page 3

Supporters of Palestine hold rally in Berlin

The people and supporters of Palestine living in Germany participated in the first march in 2024 in support of Palestine, especially the oppressed people of Gaza.

The march was held on Saturday evening in the central streets of Berlin, the capital of Germany, and the supporters of Palestine condemned the genocidal crimes in the Gaza Strip, as well as the support of Germany and the United States to the Zionist regime for the continuation of the war on Gaza.

Protestors, holding Palestinian flags and pictures of the Israeli regime's crimes in the Gaza Strip, demanded an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

In addition to Berlin, the rally in support of Palestine, especially the oppressed people of Gaza, was also held in the other German cities of Hamburg and Nuremberg.

At least 22,722 people have been killed and 58,166 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7.

On average, the number of children being killed every day in the enclave 'is well over 100,' a Doctors Without Borders doctor warns.

2 more journalists killed in Gaza



Two more Palestinian journalists were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, bringing the death toll since Oct. 7 to 109, the government media office said.

In a statement, the office identified the two victims as Hamza Wael Al-Dahdouh, the son of Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief Wael Al-Dahdouh, and Mustafa Thuraya, who lost their lives in an Israeli bombing on their car in the city of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

The media office denounced "in the strongest terms this heinous crime" committed by the "Israeli occupation army against journalists."

Israel aims to "intimidate journalists in a failed attempt to obscure the truth and prevent media coverage," the office added.

The media office called "on all press unions, human rights and legal bodies to condemn this crime and denounce its repeated commission by the occupation."

It also called for pressuring "the occupation to stop the genocidal war against our defenseless people in the Gaza Strip."

Examining Hezbollah's attack on Meron

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- The initial response by Hezbollah to the Israeli assassination of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri in southern Beirut raises key points.

Israel's Air Traffic Control Headquarters in northern occupied Palestinian territories goes much further than what the name entails.

It is the regime's aerial intelligence headquarters and command center, with observation posts, a drone field, radar systems, and other installations related to espionage and cyber warfare.

The complex is responsible for commanding, coordinating, and organizing all Israeli air attacks against Syria and Lebanon.

Experts point out that the Meron air base struck by Hezbollah was the same air base from where the regime commanded, oversaw and dispatched the drone that assassinated the Hamas deputy political leader Saleh Al-Arouri in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

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Interview

Expert explores women's role in Persian carpet weaving

By Afshin Majlesi

ISFAHAN – The art of carpet weaving has been an integral part of Iranian culture and tradition with many women as its silent heroes for centuries.

From the humble villages to the bustling city centers, their skillful hands have meticulously crafted more decorative pieces, carrying forth the legacy of carpet weaving across generations to preserve that top cultural heritage.

However, it seems that their pivotal role in that intricate craft is often overlooked. In an exclusive interview with Mahshad Abzari, ▶ Page 6

Iran's National Orchestra dedicates performance to Kerman terrorist attack's victims

TEHRAN- The National Orchestra of Iran, under the baton of maestro Majid Entezami, paid tribute to the martyrs and victims of the terrorist incident in Kerman during the inaugural night of the "Along with Memories" concert on Friday.

After an 11-year hiatus, maestro Majid Entezami returned to the stage with a captivating performance of his memorable compositions at Tehran's Vahdat Hall. ▶ Page 8

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ICCIMA to host 2 international summits this year

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) announced that the chamber will host the 40th Meeting of the General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA) this year.

Addressing the meeting of the board members of ICCIMA on Sunday, Hossein Selahvarzi said that after 23 years, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture will host the ICCIA meeting in 2024, adding, "We will host the private sectors of 57 Islamic countries in this event."

"It is an opportunity for the development of Iran's economic diplomacy and ▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

Israel is the loser: From Al-Aqsa Storm to Kerman terrorist operation!

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

Kayhan dedicated its editorial to Iran's strategy against Israel's crimes and wrote: By creating tension, the enemy seeks to threaten and neutralize strategic revenge, but the Islamic Republic seeks to eliminate the threat from within these tactical tensions of the United States to provide the basis for a strategic revenge policy. Iran is not looking for tactical revenge without a plan at an inappropriate time and place. One of the goals of the terrorist attack in Kerman was to try to bring Iran into a direct war so that Israel could overshadow the public opinion against itself. In the past two weeks, the Israelis themselves have announced many times that they will enter the next phase, which is to assassinate the leaders of the resistance and to punish Iran. Therefore, the policy of smart strategic patience along with helping and equipping allies and resistance groups in the region is the best strategy that will make both strategic and tactical revenge reach their goals well. Also, this policy will make Israel and America carry the wish of damaging the nuclear, economic, military, and missile infrastructures, and most importantly, destroying the security and comfort of the Iranian nation to the grave.

Siasat-e-Rooz: America's fruitless struggle

In its editorial, Siasat-e-Rooz wrote: Americans have put the policy of projecting and disseminating propaganda against Iran on the agenda. As a repeated accusation, John Kirby, the strategic communications coordinator of the White House's National Security Council, claimed that currently, we believe that Iran has not provided short-range ballistic missiles to Russia, but Russian negotiators are advancing this matter. Following this approach, CENTCOM published a photo and wrote that on the third of January, the Iraqi police found an Iranian-designed cruise missile in this country that had not been launched. Therefore, it can be said that the Americans claim that they are not seeking to expand the scope of the war in the region, but they actually want to impose a new inflammation in the region with the policy of individual and collective terror, so that, in their opinion, on the one hand, they may turn public opinion away from the Palestinian issue, and on the other hand, they ben-

efit from the region with artificial power. Based on this, the resistance front's response to terrorism, with the focus on supporting Palestine, can disturb the equations of Zionist-American terrorism, which still considers killing and crime as the only options for their survival in the region.

Iran: American sweep on the tail of terrorism

The Iran newspaper analyzed Blinken's fourth hasty trip to the region and said: One of the important goals of the U.S. Secretary of State's trip to the region is to establish indirect contact with Iran to prevent the escalation of tensions. Because the authorities of the Islamic Republic consider Israel and America to be the main ones responsible for the escalation of tension in the region and the terrorist attack in Kerman. With the terrorist attack in Kerman, it seems that the scope of Israel's tense activities with the support of America in the region has gained wider dimensions. Therefore, the alleged positions of the United States based on rejecting any accusation about the role of this country and the Israeli regime in the terrorist attack inside Iran is a hasty attempt to clear the minds from the tensions that are occurring one after another these days in the countries of West Asia. According to Amir Abdollahian, Iran's security forces are investigating the details and completing the information related to commanders and perpetrators of assassination.

Hamshahri: Reuters' strange news about the stop of Iran's oil shipments to China

Hamshahri discussed the recent claim of Reuters regarding the stop of Iran's oil shipments. It wrote: According to the Reuters news agency, Tehran demands higher prices from its main customer by stopping the oil shipments. Despite the decreasing trend of discounts last year, Majidreza Hariri, head of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, said: "News has no effect on Iran's oil sales, and considering the sanctions, our country's oil exports are now at their maximum." Alireza Sotoudeh, an energy expert, also believes that considering the increase in China's refining capacity as well as the increase in Iran's oil production, the news about the stop of exports is not true and is nothing more than a claim. The truth is that Reuters created news to create a psychological atmosphere inside Iran.

notes and if Washington does not answer in that time, Iran will file a case with the ICJ.

"Trump, Pompeo, Mackenzie main suspects in assassinating Gen. Soleimani"

Former U.S. President Donald Trump, former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and former Commander of the U.S. Central Command Kenneth F. McKenzie, according to Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi, are the main suspects in the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani.

According to Gharibabadi, the primary charges made against the defendants in General Soleimani's assassination case include willful killing and funding terrorism.

Because he had a proper analysis and comprehension of regional trends in the political, military, strategic, and social domains, General Soleimani was a brilliant military strategist in the region and his methods were always effective in battling terrorists and takfiri groups, he noted.

General Soleimani's notable features, according to Gharibabadi, were protecting and supporting the Axis of Resistance.

He also repeated that the Americans established and funded Daesh in order to use its savagery to defame Islam and Muslims.

The official added that the criminal case against those suspected of assassinating General Soleimani has 96 American defendants, of which 26 have their legal proceedings suspended while 73 others have received indictment.

Declaring it on Monday, Habibzadeh also said that the second notice was written and sent after the United States failed to respond to the first one on holding negotiations.

He stated that the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued the second notification to the U.S. to request arbitration between Tehran and Washington approximately a month and a half ago, adding that the U.S. administration has until the end of April to react.

Iran calls for intl. cooperation to effectively prevent terrorism

TEHRAN- The foreign minister of Iran has demanded that the world community should step up its efforts to combat terrorism in all of its manifestations.

On Saturday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian was on the phone with Catherine Colonna, his counterpart from France.

Iran's top diplomat referred to the recent terrorist incident that occurred in the southern Iranian city of Kerman, which resulted in hundreds of deaths or injuries, and emphasized the need for heightened efforts by the international community to combat all kinds of terrorism in a more practical and efficient way.

"Iran is the most honest supporter of security and stability in the region and the world," Amir Abdollahian added.

The Iranian foreign minister mentioned France's actions with the Palestine issue and the end of the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza in other parts of his remarks.

"Security of Gaza, the occupied West Bank, and the entire region are interconnected."

According to Amir Abdollahian, the only way to put an end to the bloodshed in the region is to take concrete measures to halt the killing of civilians, make it easier for humanitarian supplies to reach Gaza, cease the forcible relocation of Gaza's population, and allow Palestinians to decide their own future via democratic processes.

He continued, "The only way to prevent further spread of conflicts in the region and establish lasting peace is



paying due attention to root causes of the existing challenges and having serious resolve to do away with them."

The Iranian foreign minister said the occupying regime of Israel and the United States are behind the ongoing genocide in Gaza, adding, "You cannot eliminate the root causes of instability in the region and express concern about the security in the Red Sea and West Asia region without taking the Israeli occupation into account."

"The security of Gaza, the occupied West Bank, and the entire region are interconnected," Amir Abdollahian said, asserting, "War is not the solution."

The French foreign minister, for her part, reaffirmed Paris' denunciation of the terrorist incident in Kerman.

She expressed worry about the rising tensions in the region and asked Iran to do its part to stop the issues from getting worse.

Last month, Paris called for an immediate ceasefire in the regime's onslaught on Gaza, which was launched

on October 7 following Operation al-Aqsa Storm by the territory's resistance groups.

On Tuesday, Abdollahian stated that U.S. lawmakers are stuck in a "quagmire" in the besieged region, making it expensive for them to escape, since they are supporting the Israeli regime in its "genocidal campaign" against the Gaza Strip.

He also noted that the U.S. is "facing a challenge" and is searching for a "face-saving option" to exit the Gaza conflict.

"Today the politicians in the White House are facing a serious challenge. Some believe that Washington has gone too far and should not have provided full support for Israel's genocide and crimes over the past three months in Gaza and the West Bank," he said.

The terrorist explosions, which were claimed by the U.S.-backed Daesh group, were carried out near the burial site of Iran's late anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani during a ceremony marking the fourth anniversary of his martyrdom. The blasts left 91 people

dead and wounded 286 others, some of them in critical condition.

The Israeli aggression has so far claimed the lives of more than 22,700 people, most of them women and children.

The United States has long maintained a steadfast alliance with the Tel Aviv regime, a strategic partner that shares values and aligns with American interests in the region.

This unwavering support has taken on a heightened significance in recent months, with the United States intensifying its backing of Israel in unprecedented ways.

Since October 7, the United States has stepped up its support for Israel at various levels, demonstrating the depth of the Washington-Tel Aviv strategic partnership.

The U.S. has bolstered Israel's war capabilities amidst the escalating conflict in the Gaza Strip.

Washington's unwavering support for the occupation regime has also drawn worldwide criticism. Such unconditional support undermines efforts to achieve peace in the region.

Speaker links Kerman terrorist attack to Takfiri groups, Zionist regime, and U.S.

TEHRAN- The Iranian parliament speaker has linked the Kerman terrorist attack to the operations of Takfiri groups in the region, the Zionist regime in Gaza, and the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Speaking on Sunday, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf asserted that the terrorist attack in Kerman was a manifestation of the cruelty of Iran's enemies, adding that the perpetrators of this heinous act have no regard for the lives of women, children, and civilians when it comes to fulfilling their nefarious agendas.

He characterized the killing of innocent civilians as a "common thread" that runs through the operations of Takfiri groups, the



Zionist regime in Gaza, and the U.S. in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries.

Ghalibaf further noted that those who seek to whitewash the crimes of the Zionist regime and the United States have also

targeted the cyber realm to undermine the national unity of the Iranian people in the aftermath of the Kerman attack, aiming to weaken the collective resistance against blind terrorism.

"In stark contrast, the Iranian nation has stood united in expressing its condolences to the families of the martyrs and denouncing the perpetrators, effectively thwarting the psychological operations of terror," Ghalibaf emphasized.

The Iranian parliament speaker urged the relevant authorities to implement the order of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution regarding the prompt and just punishment of those responsible for the Kerman attack.

Commander vows forceful response to anti-Iranian action



TEHRAN- The commander of the Iranian Army's ground force has warned that any hostile rhetoric or actions against Iran will be met with a "crushing response."

Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari emphasized that safeguarding the nation's borders is a fundamental aspect of the army's operations.

He asserted, "In the event of any hostile actions threatening our interests, we are prepared to respond with force."

Speaking on Sunday, Brigadier General Heidari emphasized that the Army's ground force is firmly stationed at all four corners of the country's borders and will not hesitate to defend Iran's interests.

He added that if the enemies try to undermine Iran's security or interests, the army will respond with force.

The general also pointed to the Army's active role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people during natural

disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

He added that the Army has a strong presence in the social and political spheres, with 99% of its personnel participating in the recent presidential election.

He concluded by highlighting the Army's contributions to the Arbäeen pilgrimage, which commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. He said that Army personnel are dedicated to serving the pilgrims.

Perpetrators of Shah Cheragh attack to be executed soon

TEHRAN- Three individuals convicted of involvement in the terrorist attack on the Shah Cheragh shrine in Shiraz will be executed in the coming days, according to Iran's Supreme Court Chief Judge.

In a statement addressing the judicial system's role in the ongoing investigation of the terrorist explosion in Kerman, Prosecutor General Mohammad-Jafar Montazeri emphasized the importance of swift and thorough legal proceedings. He instructed security and intelligence agencies to promptly file charges and submit relevant evidence to the Kerman Prosecutor's Office.

Turning to the Shah Cheragh shrine attack, Montazeri confirmed that three of those who have been found guilty and sentenced to death will be put to death soon. These individuals were involved in the armed assault on the holy shrine.

The primary perpetrator, Rahmatollah Nowruzov, a native of Tajikistan, was accused of sedition and collusion against the security of the country. After a thorough investigation, he was indicted by the Public and Islamic Revolution Prosecutor's Office of Shiraz and sentenced to death twice following a 20-hour hearing in the first branch of the Shiraz Islam-

ic Revolution Court.

The defendants in the subsequent tiers were acquitted of the charge of aiding and abetting in war and corruption on Earth due to their lack of knowledge of Nowruzov's malicious intentions.

On August 13, Nowruzov, also known as Aslamyar, opened fire at the Shah Cheragh shrine, leaving two people dead and seven injured. He was armed with an assault rifle and eight magazines containing 240 bullets, of which he managed to discharge 11 before being apprehended.

Kerman prosecutor says all implicated in terrorist attacks detained

From Page 1 ▶ The prosecutor stated that amid rumors of possible terror strikes by Daesh and the anti-Iranian Mujahedin-e-Khalq terrorist cult, the province had to cope with a large number of threats on this year's General Soleimani martyrdom anniversary.

Therefore, the entire province was mobilized to counter any possible threats," he said.

Bakhshi said that the Army, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps' Intelligence Organization, and the Intelligence Ministry were all involved in the mobilization.

The Army was in charge of monitoring small aircraft to a range



of several kilometers, and there were also specialized sniffer dogs to look for explosives.

Claims that there were less security measures in place for this year's anniversary than there were for last

year were refuted by the prosecutor.

He said that more preventive security measures, more security forces, and extensive use of thermal cameras and surveillance drones were all present at this year's event.

The terrorist explosions, which were claimed by the U.S.-backed Daesh group, were carried out near the burial site of Iran's late anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani during a ceremony marking the fourth anniversary of his martyrdom. The blasts left 91 people dead and wounded 286 others, some of them in critical condition.

IRGC adviser foresees Palestinian defense advancements against Israel



TEHRAN – A senior IRGC adviser has shared his belief that Palestinians are close to developing the capability to counter Zionist bombings while strengthening their defensive capabilities.

General Iraj Masjedi, advisor to the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps and former Iranian ambassador to Iraq, made the remarks in the International Conference on Human Rights Defenders on Sunday.

Masjedi highlighted the ongoing missile warfare efforts by the Islamic Resistance Forces, asserting that Palestinians will soon be equipped to prevent Zionist bombings and fortify their defensive capabilities. He underscored the crucial role of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, hailed him as a hero in the fight against terrorists, and contended that his targeted assassination by the U.S. was a result of obstructing their questionable interests.

During his address, Masjedi detailed Soleimani's past visits to Iraq and Syria, carried out at the invitation of their governments to offer assistance and support. He argued that the assassination laid bare false claims by Americans regarding their efforts against terrorism.

Shifting focus to U.S. actions in the region, Masjedi questioned the role of the CENTCOM

commander in Israel and criticized the continuous supply of weapons and bombs by the U.S. planes. Accusing the U.S. of supporting terrorists while purporting to champion human rights, he expressed concerns about their global interference.

Masjedi also highlighted the widespread presence of U.S. military bases globally, raising questions about their purpose and criticizing their interference. He contrasted this with the Iranian Army and the IRGC, maintaining military bases exclusively within Iran.

Discussing the vulnerabilities of the Israeli military, Masjedi pointed to setbacks faced by the Golan Brigade against Palestinian resistance. He concluded his remarks by emphasizing his belief that regional resistance forces, with Iran's support, will ultimately prevail against their adversaries.

Sardar Azmoun linked with Sevilla

TEHRAN – Sardar Azmoun is being targeted by Sevilla as his loan at Roma could end with anticipation.

As reported by Fabrizio Romano, Sevilla has approached Bayer Leverkusen with the objective of signing Azmoun in the January window.

The Spanish club asked Leverkusen whether it would be possible to interrupt his loan at Roma and sign him until the end of the season.

According to Romano, Sevilla is intent on further strengthening its attack as it is currently in La Liga's relegation zone.

Over recent days, however, reports emerged stating that Roma was extremely pleased with Azmoun's output and likely to keep him beyond the expiry of his loan.

uncertainty surrounding two central defenders," said the former national team defender, who has experience playing in the 1998 World Cup.

Pashazadeh also pointed out Iran's higher average age compared to other teams in the 2023 Asian Cup.

"It would have been nice to see more young players in the national team squad and starting lineup, but prioritizing results often hinders their selection.

"Given this, it's understandable that the national team coaches rely more on established and experienced players," Pashazadeh concluded.

Anniversary of death of Gholamreza Takhti marked

TEHRAN – The 56th death anniversary of Iranian legendary wrestler Gholamreza Takhti was held on Sunday.

The memorial was held at Ibn-e-Babouyeh Cemetery in southern Tehran, near Shahr-e Ray, where he is commemorated every year by the Iranians. Takhti was born in Tehran on August 27, 1930 and was found dead in a hotel room on Jan. 7, 1968.

He won the gold medal in the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, defeating Boris Kulayev from Soviet Union in the final match.

Takhti also claimed two Olympics silver medals in 1952 Helsinki and 1960 Rome.

He won two World Championships gold medals in 1959 Tehran and 1961 Yokohama.

The freestyle wrestler also seized a gold medal in the 1958 Asian Games held in Tokyo, Japan.

Takhti is the most famous wrestler in Iranian history. The legend was known for his chivalry and sportsmanship and continues to symbolize the essence of sports to the Iranian people.

Alfons Groenendik to be named Persepolis coach?

TEHRAN – Alfons Groenendik has been reportedly nominated to take charge of Persepolis football club.

The 60-year-old Dutch mentor has been with Ajax Amsterdam development teams, Willem II, U Cluj, Excelsior, ADO Den Haag and Al-Wahdah FC.

He is currently Turkish side Antalyaspor assistant. Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi has stepped down from his role and the club is looking forward to find a replacement.

Oman national football team current coach Branko Ivankovic is also a candidate to lead Persepolis.

APOEL Nicosia interested in Saeid Mehri: report

TEHRAN – Cypriot professional football club APOEL Nicosia has reportedly shown interest in signing Saeid Mehri.

APOEL is headed by former Esteghlal coach Ricardo Sá Pinto.

Mehri is dissatisfied with his playing time in the new season and has canceled his contract with Esteghlal. The media outlets have reported that Mehri will join APOEL in the January transfer window.

APOEL are a Cypriot professional football club based in Nicosia, Cyprus. APOEL are the most successful football team in Cyprus with an overall tally of 28 national championships, 21 cups, and 13 super cups.

Pashazadeh expresses concerns over Iran's long-term prospects

TEHRAN – Mehdi Pashazadeh, a former Iranian national football player and football expert, believes that the current attitude of the national team is not a good sign for the future.

Iran national team secured a 2-1 victory against Burkina Faso in their final friendly match before the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

"Team Melli have shown promise in friendly matches, and I'm optimistic about their performance in the Asian Cup," Pashazadeh said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"Nonetheless, it cannot be overlooked that Iran's planning, preparations, facilities, and support are relatively insufficient compared to other prominent teams in the continent. Iran's primary football problem, in my opinion, is a focus on results over everything else.

"In Iran, managers and coaches prioritize short-term results over long-term planning, both at club and national levels," he added.

Pashazadeh also mentioned the national team's strengths and weaknesses with coach Amir Ghalenoei.

"Without a doubt, our team possesses a formidable attack. Iran's difficulty lies in the defensive aspect of midfield players and the

Iran beat youth Russia in handball tournament

TEHRAN – Iran's men's handball team defeated youth Russia 29-27 in the four-team Friendship Cup on Sunday.

The match was held at the Volleyball center "Dynamo" in Moscow.

Iran had lost to Belarus 29-28 in their first match on Friday but defeated Russia 29-26 a day later. Iran participated in the tournament as part of preparation for the 2024 Asian Men's Handball Championship to be held in Manama, Bahrain from Jan. 11 to 25.

Iran are drawn in Group B along with South Korea, China, and New Zealand.

Persepolis on verge of reaching agreement with Ivankovic

TEHRAN – Media reports suggest that Persepolis football club have reached a verbal agreement with Branko Ivankovic.

Yahya Golmohammadi announced his resignation last week and the Iranian club is going to find a replacement as soon as possible.

Ivankovic currently is Oman national football team head coach.

Reza Darvish, general manager of Persepolis, has said Golmohammadi has made his final decision and will not continue as the team's head coach.

On 5 April 2015, Ivankovic was confirmed as the new manager of Persepolis, signing a 1+1?2-year contract with the club.

After good performances with the club, which left the team in the first place with six matches remaining, Ivankovic extended his contract with Persepolis in April 2016 to the end of the 2017-18 season and in 2017 to the end of the 2019-20 season.

After the end of the 2018-19 season, it was reported that he was signed for Ahli Jeddah before returning to Croatia for his annual vacation.

Ivankovic announced that he would leave Persepolis on 11 June 2019.

Iran, China to strengthen defense ties, academic collaboration

TEHRAN – Officials from Iran's National Defense University and their counterparts from China reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing defense ties, defense diplomacy, and academic cooperation.

A delegation from the Chinese National Defense University (NDU) visited the Iranian National Defense University, engaging in discussions with Iranian officials and gaining insights into the university's educational, research, and international activities, particularly in attracting foreign students.

During a joint meeting, Iranian National Defense University Deputy Head Brigadier General Khosrow Bolhasani expressed gratitude for the Chinese President's condolences following a recent terrorist attack in Kerman. He emphasized the longstanding and multifaceted

relations between Iran and China, spanning political, economic, cultural, and defense spheres.

General Bolhasani highlighted China's steadfast support for Iran and underscored the need to elevate academic collaboration to match the level of cooperation in other domains. He also highlighted the university's efforts in attracting foreign students, including the initiation of doctoral-level programs for international students since 2022.

The head of Chinese delegation, Senior Colonel Tai Jinsong expressed his appreciation for the warm hospitality extended by the Iranian National Defense University.

He outlined the Chinese delegation's objectives, which centered on bolstering military relations, strengthening defense



diplomacy, and fostering academic exchanges through faculty collaborations.

Jinsong expressed hope that at least one Chinese student would pursue studies at the Iranian National Defense University in the upcoming academic year. He emphasized the significant role the Iranian university plays in the Islamic Republic's armed forces and underscored the need for further strengthening academic and scientific cooperation between the two universities.

Iranian and Chinese senior

officials reportedly mapped out a roadmap for future bilateral relations.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation provided insights into China's defense policies in the evolving global landscape.

The Head of Iran's National Defense University Esmail Ahmadi Moqaddam, addressed recent regional developments and the strategic significance of Iran-China cooperation in the current context, reiterating the importance of deepening ties between the two universities.

Vibrant elections and martyrdom culture key to national progress, authority: presidential aide

TEHRAN – The Iranian Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs has emphasized the significance of holding vibrant elections with high voter turnout in bolstering Iran's authority and security.

Mohammad Hosseini stressed that such elections contribute significantly to the nation's advancement and progress.

Hosseini also underscored the importance of preserving the culture of martyrdom in Iran, asserting that as long as this noble culture remains deeply embedded in the society, the country's independence, security, dignity, progress, and authority will remain

firmly safeguarded.

Recalling the momentous contributions of Martyr Soleimani in strengthening the Islamic system and unifying the resistance front, Hosseini lauded his unwavering dedication to serving the people and assisting the oppressed in the region in their quest for liberation from tyranny.

Addressing the West's blatant hypocrisy regarding human rights, Hosseini pointed out the irony of Western officials orchestrating riots in Iran under the guise of human rights concerns, while they stand idly by and remain unfazed by the Zionist regime's brutal killings

of thousands of innocent children.

He condemned their shameful silence and inaction in the face of such atrocities.

Hosseini highlighted the growing global awareness of the Zionist regime's crimes and genocidal actions, noting that significant populations in various countries, including Europe and America, are rising up in protest against this injustice.

He expressed hope that such demonstrations will continue to gain momentum and ultimately lead to a positive change.

Gen. Soleimani martyr of all Muslims: Turkish Politician

TEHRAN – The chairman of Turkey's Patriotic Party has described Iran's late anti-terror icon Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani as a military leader whose endeavors benefited Muslims across the world.

"Qassem Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis are not only the martyrs of the Iranian and Iraqi nations but also the martyrs of the whole Islamic world and all the people of the world in the struggle against imperialism and Zionism," Dogu Perinçek wrote in a letter to the Turkish president's assistant.

He noted that the Islamic world has many heroes who wouldn't hesitate to stand against terrorism and imperialism, and General Soleimani was undoubtedly one of them.

"They thought that by assassinating Qassem Soleimani, they could occupy Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, and Palestine, but they could not achieve their desire," the politician said, adding that the U.S. and Israel are still working to fulfill this desire.

"Only with armed determination can we prevent

aggression in our region. We can only stop the massacre in Gaza and the West Bank by resorting to force," he stated.

Perinçek explained that General Soleimani's ultimate goal was to establish an independent Palestinian state, with the occupied al-Quds as its capital. He said it is still possible to reach this objective by staying unified.

"Today, a front has been formed that extends from the Caucasus and the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Arabian Sea.

We should make use of this opportunity and try to root out imperialism and Zionism once and for all".

The chairman of the Patriotic Party also stressed that resistance forces are currently in good spirits thanks to the legacy of General Soleimani.

"Today being thankful towards Qassem Soleimani makes you a Palestinian. To be a Palestinian means you should become a hero. We are all Palestinians; we are all Qassem Soleimani."

Shahid Soleimani petro-refinery's executive operations to begin soon



NIORDC Managing Director Jalil Salari (C)

TEHRAN- The managing director of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said on Saturday that the executive operations of Shahid Soleimani petro-refinery complex will begin within the next few months, Shana reported.

Making the remarks in the signing ceremony of a contract on ceding 450 hectares of the Special Economic Zone in Bandar Abbas in southern Hormozgan Province, Jalil Salari said the National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) is carrying out the project's assessment and studies.

The contract was inked by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) and the Shahid Soleimani Petro-Refinery Company.

Salari said the main aim of the plant setup is to complete the petrochemical industry's value-added chain.

According to the official, 25 percent of the plant's production capacity will be allocated to petrochemicals and a limited volume of gasoline

– around 6.5 million liters – will also be produced.

The petrochemical and gasoline output of the complex could be increased if needed, he added.

The expertise and technical know-how of domestic companies, including the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) and knowledge-based firms, will be used to implement the project, said Salari, adding "We have earlier applied the knowledge of the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) to construct such facilities."

A big company comprising Shahid Soleimani, Persian Gulf Star, and Bandar Abbas refineries will be set up to produce a part of the products and equipment required for the project, Salari finally announced.

Back in August 2022, major Iranian banks signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) with domestic companies to provide \$17.8 billion for the construction of Morvarid Makran refinery and Shahid Soleimani petro-refinery.

Shahid Ghasem Soleimani Petro-refinery, is going to have a total processing capacity of 300,000 barrels per day (bpd), and nearly 65 percent of the products produced in this petro-refinery will be fuels and 35 percent will be chemical products.

The MOUs for funding the mentioned complexes were signed in a ceremony attended by President Ebrahim Raisi and Oil Minister Javad Oji.

During the ceremony, Bank Meli Iran, Tejarat Bank, and Refah Bank signed an MOU with NIORDC, the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), Ahdaf Investment Group, and Tadbir Energy Development Group for investing \$11.1 billion in Shahid Ghasem Soleimani Petro-refinery.

Regarding the role of the innovation ecosystem in optimizing and improving the productivity of the agricultural sector, the official stated: "The ecosystem of agricultural innovation is the main topic of modern knowledge-based agricultural studies, and various surveys show that the development of science, technology, and innovation are considered as the main drivers of productivity and economic growth in the agricultural sector."

"Considering the undeniable effects of innovation and innovative technologies on improving productivity in the agricultural sector, various countries have prioritized supporting the development of the innovation ecosystem to ensure the production, transfer, dissemination, and application of innovative technologies in this sector," he added.

situation continues (NIORDC) will be able to manage gasoline consumption in the holiday season, Shana reported.

Back in August 2023, Oil Minister Javad Oji said there are currently 4,400 active gas stations across the country.

The minister noted that despite the increase in consumption there is no concern about fuel supply.

overhaul operations, the work on 43 percent of which has been completed, IRNA reported.

In order to ensure the proper operation of power plants in the peak consumption period, the annual power plants overhaul program in Iran starts every year in early September.

Summer months constitute Iran's peak demand periods, so most of the power plant overhaul programs are scheduled to take place during the autumn, winter, and spring seasons.

exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

Iran becomes 2nd most innovative country in agricultural sector in Central, South Asia

TEHRAN – Iran has become the second most innovative country in Central and South Asia in the agricultural industry, said the head of the country's Agricultural Research Education and Extension Organization.

According to Mojtaba Khayam-Nekouei, Innovative Farms are one of the main components of the country's innovation ecosystem in line with the implementation of Article (5) of the bylaws on supporting knowledge-based production in the agriculture and natural resources sector.

These farms were established to create a network of productive innovative farmers and use their capacities to accelerate the process of transferring and spreading innovative technologies in the production fields, Nekouei said.

Average daily gasoline consumption reaches 113m liters

TEHRAN - Average daily gasoline consumption in Iran has reached about 113 million liters in the 10th month of the current Iranian calendar year (started on December 22, 2023), the managing director of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said.

According to Jalil Salari, the consumption of petroleum products in the country has been following a downward trend and if the current

Thermal power plants' overhaul operations halfway through

TEHRAN – The overhaul operations of thermal power plants across Iran has progressed 43 percent and the mentioned power plants will be ready for the summer peak consumption period, an official with the country's Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) said.

According to Naser Eskandari, the deputy head of TPPH for strategic affairs, about 360,000 power plant units with a total capacity of 51,000 megawatts are currently undergoing

TEDPIX gains 1,100 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 1,104 points (0.05 percent) to 2,154,816 on Sunday, which is the second day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock

ICCIMA to host 2 international summits this year

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) announced that the chamber will host the 40th Meeting of the General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA) this year.

Addressing the meeting of the board members of ICCIMA on Sunday, Hossein Selahvarzi said that after 23 years, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture will host the ICCIA meeting in 2024, adding, "We will host the private sectors of 57 Islamic countries in this event."

"It is an opportunity for the development of Iran's economic diplomacy and strengthening our economic ties with the Islamic states, attracting investment, making joint ventures, and expanding export", the ICCIMA head stressed.

He also announced that Iran's Chamber will host the next meeting of the private sector of the D8 countries in the new year and added, "We expect that chambers across the country, joint chambers, and also associations will put this issue on their agenda in order to host this event at the best way to develop



trade and export."

Members of the D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI) are the following National Chambers of Commerce and Industries of the eight founding countries of D-8:

- a) The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI)
- b) Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce (FEDCOC)
- c) Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN)
- d) Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA)
- e) National Chamber of Commerce

and Industry of Malaysia (NCCIM)

f) Nigeria Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA)

g) The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI)

h) The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)

Elsewhere in his remarks, Selahvarzi announced the formation of the ICCIMA structure transformation committee in line with modification of processes and improvement of performances, and said, "The establishment of this committee was one of our major

plans." The committee has started drafting the vision document of the Iran Chamber for the next year, he added.

The head of ICCIMA further stressed the strengthening of competitive domestic production.

In this line, he called on the government to take necessary actions and support the private sectors in tow major fields.

The first one was allocation of foreign currency for the import of raw materials, to prevent from idle status of the production units and unemployment.

The second one was modification of the structure and regulations related to the foreign currency commitments, so that the companies' problems and barriers related to the export will be removed.

Selahvarzi stressed that the ICCIMA board hopes that using the capacity of the chambers across the country, joint chambers, and associations it will be able to strengthen the position of the private sector, develop trade and export, and implement the Leader's order to focus on passing the chain of sanctions.

FTA with EAEU, an opportunity for Iran to expand export markets



TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has called the conclusion of the free trade agreement (FTA) with Eurasia an opportunity to increase the competitiveness of the country's production and industrial units and an incentive to expand export markets.

Stressing the importance of increasing the export of knowledge-based goods and commodities with higher added value and also the necessity of diversifying export goods and markets, Mehdi Zeyghami said: "Entering the Eurasian market is a prelude to the presence in larger and more complex markets and joining the WTO."

As the TPO portal reported, the official also emphasized the importance of establishing export consortia, export management companies (EMC) and commercial centers for boosting foreign trade, and underlined the need for using the capacity of such entities for trade with distant countries and larger markets.

Iran and the EAEU member states, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Armenia, signed a free trade agreement in a ceremony in St. Petersburg on December 25, 2023.

Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Abbas Aliabadi signed this agreement, which is the

result of more than two years of negotiations and expert work, on behalf of Iran.

On behalf of the EAEU, the deputy prime ministers of the member countries signed the agreement.

The signing ceremony was attended by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari, EAEU Minister in Charge of Trade Andrey Slepnev, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, and a number of EAEU officials.

After signing, this agreement needs to be approved by the parliaments of six countries (Iran and EAEU five member states) in order to become a law and become operational.

According to the information received by the IRNA reporter in St. Petersburg from the free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU, the parties will completely eliminate tariffs for 87 percent of goods in their trade exchanges.

In the meantime, each of the parties prepares a negative list that includes goods that are considered sensitive goods for one of the parties and it is not possible to remove the tariff.

Last week, EAEU Minister in Charge of Trade Andrey Slepnev said that Iran will become one of the most important trade partners of the Eurasian Economic Union with the signing of an FTA between the two sides.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali.

He also called the agreement the most important cooperation document between the two sides. Jalali, for his part, said the free trade agreement is the result of intensive negotiations and the will of the two sides to develop their relations.

In 2018, Iran and the EAEU inked a preferential trade agreement (PTA), which came into effect on

October 27, 2019.

The two sides later began negotiations to upgrade the PTA to an FTA after the success of the former.

Back in August, Slepnev said that the EAEU is ready to boost its annual trade with Iran to \$30 billion.

The official said the preferential trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU resulted in the trade between the two sides doubling and it is expected that by signing the free trade agreement the trade between the two sides will be doubled once again.

"The signing of the comprehensive agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Union will provide suitable conditions for mutual access to the markets for both sides," Slepnev said.

"We know very well that the volume of trade with a large country like Iran is still not very high, and therefore, it seems that targeting 30 billion dollars of annual trade is a good way to develop trade between our countries," he noted.

The Eurasian Economic Union was established in 2015 at the initiative taken by Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. Afterward, the Republic of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined the Union.

The head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) Agriculture Committee has said the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union has facilitated Iran's access to the \$70-billion agricultural and food products market of the EAEU nations.

"The Eurasian countries are directly or indirectly neighbors of our country, and we share land border with Armenia, and have sea borders with the countries of Kazakhstan and Russia, and have access to Kyrgyzstan and Belarus. These countries are a very wide market for our country," Arsalan Ghasemi told IRNA two weeks ago.

Loading, unloading of goods stand at 9.6m tons at ports of west Hormozgan

TEHRAN – As announced by a provincial official, 9,624,473 tons of oil products and non-oil goods were loaded and unloaded at the ports of the west of Hormozgan province, in the south of Iran, during the first nine months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2023).

Morteza Salari, the director-general of Ports and Maritime Department of the province, put the amount of oil products loaded and unloaded at the mentioned ports at 4,480,974, and that of the non-oil goods at 5,143,499 tons in the mentioned nine-month period.

As previously reported by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran increased by 6.1 percent in the first nine months of the present year, as compared to the same period of time

in the past year.

As the organization reported, 172,767,051 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports during the nine-month period.

During the said period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,917,354 TEUs, which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of the same time span in the previous year.

Based on the data previously released by the 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.

Beijing ortho Technology Co., Ltd. lost a Chinese and English contract stamp, is now declared invalid. The stamp style is as follows:

Ortho

北京奥图科技有限公司
Beijing Ortho Technology Co., Ltd.

Blinken pushing for a failed agenda

By Mona Hojat Ansari

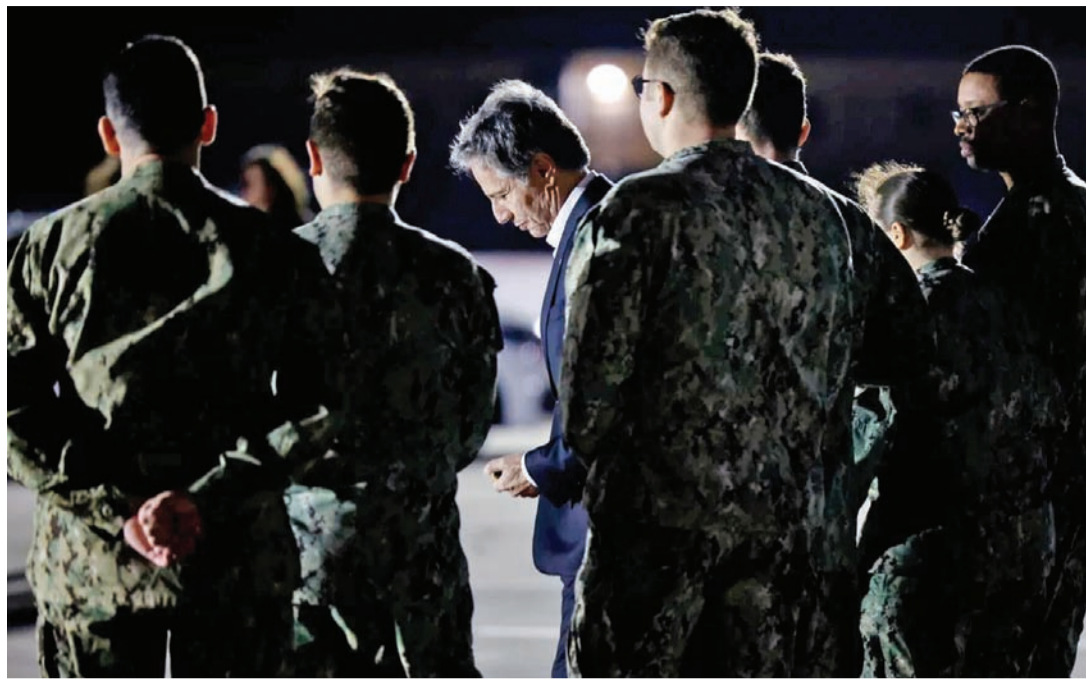
TEHRAN - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Turkey on Sunday after getting his car doused with red paint by pro-Palestinian protesters waiting outside his Virginia residence.

Chanting "shame on you" and "war criminal", people asked the diplomat to stop his unquestioning support for the Israeli regime. The diplomat, however, spoke to Turkish officials about how Ankara, whose shipments of oil and food have kept Israel on its feet in the past three months, would be able to play a crucial role in Gaza once Israel is done destroying the entire strip.

Blinken's vision for a post-war Gaza requires that Israel first grabs full control over the Palestinian territory. Some reports suggest that the U.S. would like to establish a government in Gaza similar to the unpopular Palestinian state of Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank, a shell of a government that helps Tel Aviv further suppress Palestinians by arresting the citizens wanted by Israel itself.

Blinken's most recent journey to West Asia follows a series of unsuccessful attempts to implement American initiatives during his last three visits to the region. Previously, the U.S. dispatched the diplomat to engage with Arab leaders in an endeavor to facilitate the displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. He has also tried to press regional nations into forming a coalition to confront Yemeni armed forces in the Red Sea, who have been impeding vessel access to Israeli ports in response to the regime's genocidal attacks on Gaza. It appears that once again, the American official has traversed over 250,000 miles, leaving a significant carbon footprint with his private jet, all to no avail.

Military pundits are of a mind that Israel is losing to Hamas. Despite the devastating toll



of nearly 23,000 Palestinian casualties, the displacement of 90% of Gaza's population, and pushing a quarter of Gazans to the brink of famine, Israel has little to show in terms of tangible achievements.

Apart from the prisoners that were exchanged between Hamas and Israel as a part of a Qatari-mediated ceasefire in November, the regime has not managed to secure the release of any of its captives held in Gaza. It did "free" some of them by sending them to the afterlife, but has so far been unable to find any Israeli captives on its own. The regime has also been unsuccessful in eliminating any high-ranking members of the group in the Gaza Strip, despite causing extensive damage to its infrastructure.

Israel did claim recently that it had dismantled Hamas' "military framework" in northern Gaza and plans to extend this to central and southern areas. However, recent and ongoing events challenge the credibility of Israel's proclaimed military gains in northern Gaza. Despite Israel's claims of uprooting Hamas' military presence, rockets continue to target Tel Aviv after being launched from northern Gaza. Furthermore, the area that the regime purports to

have brought under significant control recently inflicted heavy losses on Israel's most elite forces, the Golani brigade, compelling their retreat to the occupied territories.

"In one of the battlefields in Gaza, we were surprised by heavy gunfire towards us. We did not know the source of the gunfire. Many among us were killed and injured. I ordered the soldiers not to advance further until the dead and wounded were evacuated. The fighting in the Shuja'iyya neighborhood [in northern Gaza] was very harsh and a battle of minds. We had to be cautious of explosive devices. The fighters were just tens of meters away from our forces, waiting for us, eating dates and drinking water, and they waited for us to enter so that they could eliminate us," recalled a Golani Brigade commander while speaking to Israeli media.

Blinken might think that Israel would somehow be able to change the equations and emerge victorious in Gaza after he allegedly forced U.S. President Joe Biden to fast-track two shipments of lethal weaponry to the regime. However, the sustainability of continuing the war appears to be in question, even for the most warmongering

lunatics in Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet.

The settlements in the vicinity of Gaza and Lebanon's Hezbollah have now turned into ghost towns, with inhabitants vowing never to return to the illegal structures. Over 500,000 Israelis have left the occupied territories following the successful October 7 operation by Hamas, and more are lining up outside European embassies to leave as they grapple with tremendous economic pressure. High-tech companies, typically a source of pride for Israel, are in shambles, and at least 220,000 reservists working in different sectors have been called up. Israel's agricultural sector also teeters on the edge of a crisis as a significant number of foreign workers, predominantly from countries like Thailand, have opted to depart the occupied territories.

Given the current circumstances, it's puzzling why Blinken is discussing his "post-war Gaza" strategies. What is evident though is that the diplomat, along with the majority in the Biden administration, is likely to be remembered in history as a vociferous supporter of a widespread genocide against the Palestinian people.

Examining Hezbollah's attack on Meron

From page 1 ▶ It is 15 kilometers away from the Lebanese border and hosts top Israeli generals, elite units, and highly specialized officers.

THE RETALIATION

Hezbollah said on Saturday morning that it had fired at least 60 long-range precision guided missiles and rockets at the Meron air base.

The attack on one of the most strategic and sensitive sites left the Israeli regime in shock.

Reports indicate that the level of the bombardment by Hezbollah set off sirens in 94 Israeli settlements. Sirens were later also blaring in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

The footage published by Hezbollah of the retaliatory operation shows plumes of black smoke, which means the Israeli Iron Dome system or Patriot batteries were unable to intercept the attack.

The Meron Air Traffic Control Headquarters sits atop Mount Jarmaq (Meron), which is considered the highest peak in occupied Palestine.

Experts say Grad rockets were used as part of two salvos.

The heavy black plumes of smoke indicate that the complex was directly hit by vehicles and other structures left ablaze.

PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

Hezbollah described the operation as an "initial response".

Experts highlight that it would have been sufficient for the Lebanese resistance to say this was "the response" or "a response" to the assassination of al-Aroui.

Hezbollah wants to make it clear that this was the "preliminary" response, which means there will be a second response.

The possibility is that the "initial" response



was retaliation for the assassination of al-Aroui.

The statement issued by Hezbollah alluded to this. "As part of the initial response to the crime of assassinating the great leader Sheikh Saleh al-Aroui ... the Islamic resistance (Hezbollah) targeted the Meron air control base with 62 various types of missiles".

The second response could come (perhaps at a later time) to the flagrant Israeli violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

INTELLIGENCE

The Israeli Meron air base is no secret facility to the resistance. There is a second air base in the northern Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, but it does not carry the same capabilities that Meron possesses.

What has put Israeli media in a state of hysteria is that the retaliatory operation was conducted in broad daylight, at a time when drones were flying and landing at Meron.

This indicates the high degree of intelligence and prowess that Hezbollah has under its hands that it is able to target one of the most sensitive Israeli sites in clear daylight, bypassing all Israeli monitoring means.

In a speech, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, announced the decision to respond, saying

that staying silent would be more dangerous.

Before he made those remarks on Friday night, the operation went into effect on Saturday morning.

Hezbollah's "initial" retaliation can be attributed to the assassination of al-Aroui.

The operation by the Lebanese resistance is the complete opposite of the Israeli assassination of al-Aroui, which took place in the dark before sunrise.

Israeli media said targeting Meron was conducted with "a high degree, and it is worrying in terms of the amount of information Hezbollah has about very strategic places."

Hezbollah published a video showing how strategic the Meron air base is to the Israeli regime while describing all of its capabilities.

WHAT NEXT?

According to experts, if the regime wants to escalate its northern front beyond the roughly one dozen air raids it conducted in southern Lebanon following the Hezbollah attack on Meron, then the Lebanese resistance has the means to escalate the battlefield further by surprising the regime again.

Hezbollah considered that targeting a sensitive Israeli complex and causing a considerable level of destruction to it was bigger than killing several Israeli officers during the daily exchange of fire along the Lebanese-occupied Palestinian border.

It is conducting this already on the battlefield.

This was the "initial response". All eyes are now on Hezbollah's second response and how that will unfold.

Western diplomats are rushing to the region in a bid to lower the crisis in Gaza from spiraling into an all-out war between Hezbollah and the Israeli occupation.

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WORLD HEADLINES

China puts sanctions on 5 US defense industry companies

Beijing sanctioned five US defense industry companies in response to a similar move by Washington, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Sunday.

The move came after the United States' call to sell arms to Taiwan and Washington sanctioned Chinese businesses and individuals for different reasons.

Beijing described the arms sales by Washington to Taiwan as a "blatant violation of the one-China principle". Wang also criticized "the illegal unilateral sanctions the US has imposed on Chinese companies and individuals under false pretenses," saying they "seriously harm China's sovereignty and security interests."

US sanctions also "undermine the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and violate the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of" sanctioned-Chinese actors, said the statement.

"In response to these gravely wrong actions taken by the US and in accordance with China's Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law, China has decided to sanction five US defense industry companies, namely BAE Systems Land and Armament, Alliant Techsystems Operation, AeroVironment, ViaSat and Data Link Solutions," read the statement.

"The countermeasures consist of freezing the properties of those companies in China, including their movable and immovable property, and prohibiting organizations and individuals in China from transactions and cooperation with them," it added.

Gaza death toll surpasses 22,700

At least 22,722 Palestinians, including 9,600 children, have been killed by the Israeli army since the start of the war on Oct. 7, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Real numbers are believed to be much higher as the authorities in Gaza have been unable to regularly update casualty numbers since last November amid a collapse of the enclave's health system.

Obama sends election warning to Biden - WaPo

Former US President Barack Obama has urged current leader Joe Biden's advisers to bolster his 2024 reelection efforts amid failing ratings for the sitting president. Obama reportedly believes Biden's chances will be improved by empowering people in the campaign to act without the need to seek approval from the White House, according to the Washington Post.

Obama and Biden discussed the campaign during a private lunch at the White House in recent months, the Washington Post reported on Saturday, citing sources familiar with the matter. The former president reportedly became "animated" while talking about the 2024 election and the prospect of a Trump victory.

Obama recalled the success of his 2012 campaign, when top aides took charge of reelection operations on the ground across the country, and criticized Biden's approach of leaving his advisers in the White House.

Italian foreign minister calls for formation of EU army

The European Union should form its own combined army that could play a role in peacekeeping and preventing conflict, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said.

In an interview with Italian newspaper La Stampa, Tajani said that closer European cooperation on defence was a priority for the Forza Italia party that he leads.

"If we want to be peacekeepers in the world, we need a European military. And this is a fundamental precondition to be able to have an effective European foreign policy," he said in an interview published on Sunday.

"In a world with powerful players like the United States, China, India, Russia - with crises from the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific - Italian, German, French or Slovenian citizens can only be protected by

something that already exists, namely the European Union," he added.

However, efforts have been more focused on NATO expansion, with EU nation Finland joining the alliance last year and Sweden also on track to become a member.

Tajani also said the 27-nation EU should streamline its leadership and have a single presidency, rather than the current structure of a European Council president and a European Commission president.

The foreign minister became leader of Forza Italia following the death of Silvio Berlusconi last year.

European defence cooperation has risen up the political agenda since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine almost two years ago.

Israel will likely not be winner in a war with Hezbollah: DIA

Israel will likely not succeed in winning a war with Hezbollah in Lebanon as it invades Gaza because its forces would be stretched too thin, The Washington Post reported.

Citing the assessment from the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), The Washington Post reported that Biden administration officials have "privately" warned Israeli leaders against entering into direct conflict with Hezbollah.

It also cited unnamed officials as saying Israel's military has targeted "US-funded and trained Lebanese Armed Forces" more than 30 times since the Gaza war began.

"US officials are concerned that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may see an expanded fight in Lebanon as key to his political survival amid domestic criticism," the news report said.

US defense chief says he takes responsibility for secret hospitalization

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement on Saturday that he took "full responsibility" for secrecy surrounding an ongoing, week-long hospitalization for a still unspecified medical condition.

Austin, who is 70, was admitted on New Year's Day to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for what the Pentagon has said were "complications following a recent elective medical procedure," a fact the Defense Department kept under wraps for five days.

The top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Roger Wicker, accused the Pentagon of failing to inform Congress immediately about such matters, as required by law.

But it is unclear how widely the information was shared even within President Joe Biden's administration. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Biden was only informed on Thursday evening. Still, Biden maintained confidence in Austin and the two spoke on Saturday evening, a second U.S. official said.

Woman in 90s pulled alive from rubble five days after Japan earthquake

A woman in her 90s has been pulled alive from a collapsed house in western Japan, 124 hours after a major earthquake hit the region, killing at least 126 people, toppling buildings and setting off landslides.

The woman in Suzu city, Ishikawa prefecture, survived for more than five days after the 7.6 magnitude quake on Monday. Nationally broadcast news footage showed helmeted rescue workers covering the view of the area with blue plastic, and the woman was not visible.

Chances for survival diminish after the first 72 hours. Several other dramatic rescues have been reported over the past few days as soldiers, firefighters and others joined a widespread recovery effort.

Among the 126 dead was a five-year-old boy who had been recovering from injuries he sustained when boiling water spilled on him during the earthquake. His condition suddenly worsened and he died on Friday, according to Ishikawa prefecture, the hardest-hit region.

Expert explores women's role in Persian carpet weaving



From Page 1 ▶ a carpet expert, delves into the historical significance and profound impact of women in shaping the narrative of this artistry that has not only adorned floors but woven tales of heritage and identity.

In this conversation, the expert shares with us the historical significance of women in the evolution of this ancient art form, the challenges they face today, and the essential role of education and governmental support in preserving this invaluable heritage.

What's your definition of a Persian carpet as someone who has been involved in carpet design for years?

Carpets in Iran are an inseparable part of people's daily lives. We coexist with carpets in various ways – resting on them, walking over them, and aesthetically, they contribute significantly to the beauty of our homes.

Carpets not only represent the deep history, art, and social life of our nation but have been an element embedded in Iran's culture since ancient times. Interestingly, most of its creators in bygone eras were women.

Abzari said that in addition to their aesthetic delights, Persian rugs are somehow a cultural medium. For instance, if you were to ask audiences outside the country about examples of Iranian art, Persian carpet may be the first.

What else about women's roles?

In the past, women were responsible for all the stages of carpet production, from procuring raw materials to designing and mentally crafting them. The mental designs, reflecting their aspirations, desire, and beliefs, were transmitted from mother to daughter in the form of symbolic patterns. These patterns were based on the culture and lifestyle of these women.

So, why are women seen behind weaving looms?

This trend persisted for centuries until the Qajar era [1789-1925] when the carpet export and trade sector thrived, shifting focus from the weavers' taste and mindset to the preferences of mainly European buyers. Consequently, the value of women, as the primary creators of carpets, diminished, and their role became confined, primarily, to weaving.

Especially during the onset of multinational corporations investing in Iran, this situation limited women's roles to mere weavers, causing significant harm, as documented in Western travelogues. For instance, a report in the [then] British consulate in Kerman by a female physician, one of the founders of the city's first hospital, highlighted that a considerable portion of women's deaths during childbirth was due to the physical toll of sitting and weaving carpets since childhood.

This continued into the early Pahlavi era when labor protection laws were introduced, mainly focusing on male workers in factories, neglecting the women who shouldered the significant burden of carpet production.

What are existing prospects?

Despite recent advancements in universities and higher education centers significantly

advancing the industry, young women entering these domains such as weaving, design, and restoration are evident. However, a major portion of this profitable trade in investment, marketing, and sales remains predominantly in the hands of men. Consequently, gender challenges persist in legitimizing women in this field.

Any prompt solution?

In the realms of carpet marketing and exhibitions, women are still not acknowledged as primary figures. Consequently, it is noticeable that only men are visible in this field at exhibitions and conferences.

These women, despite all the difficulties and challenges, are still recognized as the primary pillars of this industry. However, for their promotion, there is a need to develop education, dialogue, technical skills, active participation in global markets, and create more educational opportunities.

What is your suggestion for the continuation of this ancient art among newer generations?

Above all, I believe education plays a pivotal role in the current era.

Traditional face-to-face methods or specialized workshops are no longer enough for training new generations of carpet designers and weavers.

Accordingly, a comprehensive approach to innovative teaching methods, understanding tools, and different markets is necessary to generate more interest in this extraordinary art form among the new generation.

However, regrettably, in higher educational institutions, there is still an emphasis on traditional methods that negatively impact students in this field.

Such educational efforts are expected to reach their maximum potential when the community of carpet weavers feels the protective umbrella of government and relevant institutions.

Glimpses of Persian carpet

Persian carpets are sought after internationally, with patterns of Persian garden being arguably the most characteristic feature of them all. Weavers spend several months in front of a loom, stringing and knotting thousands of threads. Some practice established patterns. Some make their own.

Each Persian carpet is a scene that seems ageless, a procedure that can take as long as a year. These efforts have long put Iran's carpets among the most complex and labor-intensive handicrafts in the world. When the weaving is finally done, the carpet is cut, washed, and put out in the sun to dry.

Throughout history, invaders, politicians, and even enemies have left their impact on Iran's carpets. As mentioned by the Britannica Encyclopedia, little is known about Persian carpet-making before the 15th century, when art was already approaching a peak.

Travel facilitation helps diminish Iranophobia, minister says

TEHRAN – Iran's tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has said the impact of anti-Iran sentiments, fueled by the U.S. and some other Western powers, will be diminished by attracting more visitors to the ancient land.

The minister underlined Iran's recent decision to waive visa requirements for 32 countries, which according to him, helped foil concerted efforts by adversaries, namely the United States and certain Western powers, to propagate Iranophobia.

Zarghami made the remarks on Saturday evening during his visit to South Khorasan province, saying the increased inflow of international tourists to Iran diminishes that fearmongering tactic.

"Despite the concerted efforts of some countries to dissuade their citizens from visiting Iran and to create a negative perception, the personal experience of tourists visiting the historical and cultural sites of Iran has effectively dispelled these apprehensions."

"The attempts made by enemies to create Iranophobia among var-



ious nations cannot overshadow the eagerness of some foreign nationals to explore Iran's attractions," Zarghami said.

Talking about the importance of diversifying Iran's economy away from sole reliance on oil exports, he emphasized the crucial role of tourism as a "clean industry" for the country's economic future.

"We cannot solely rely on the nation's oil resources for economic sustenance. The future economic growth of Iran is intricately tied to

the flourishing tourism industry," he added.

Last month, the Iranian government agreed to abolish visa requirements for passport holders from 32 countries and waive visas for tourist groups from Russia.

The visa-waiver program was approved for India, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Belarus, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, and Seychelles.

The Islamic Republic has previously visited cancellations with some countries like Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Oman, China, Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria, in various forms – unilateral, bilateral, and group visa cancellations, including airport visas, which were implemented in some cases.

The latest data provided by the tourism ministry suggests the number of foreign arrivals in the country reached 4.4 million during the first eight months of the current Iranian year (started on March 21), which shows 48.5 percent compared to that of last year.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 27 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Revival of forgotten handicrafts resonates in Zanjan province

TEHRAN – Zanjan's tourism directorate is to launch a new campaign to revive the fading glory of traditional handicrafts across the west-central Iranian province.

On Saturday, Seyyed Mikael Mousavi, the directorate's deputy for handicrafts, disclosed plans aimed at revitalizing discontinued crafts within the region.

Mousavi expressed hope that this initiative would contribute not only to increased employment but also to the economic prosperity of the handicraft sector within the province.

He elaborated on the progress made so far, stating, "Copperwork in Zanjan city, jajim weaving, curtain-making, felt weaving in Tarom county, and kilim weaving in Khodabandeh have been revived through efforts made by local artisans, initiating their production and rejuvenation through educational classes."

Highlighting the pivotal role of adequate financial allocation, Mousavi emphasized that sufficient funding could significantly promote education activities in the realm of handicraft development.

According to available data, currently, there are 55 active branches of handicrafts in the province. Reviving obsolete crafts could substantially bolster the growth and dynamism of this sector.

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.

Persian Caravanserais: three-day event to honor centuries of hospitality

TEHRAN – A three-day event titled "54 UNESCO-registered Iranian caravanserais" is aimed to underscore those places that provided shelter, food, and water for caravans, pilgrims, and other trekkers for millennia.

Organized by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the event will commence at the Niavaran Cultural and Historical Complex on January 11, IRNA reported.

According to organizers, a book focusing on the registered Iranian caravanserais in UNESCO, presented through photography and painting, will be unveiled in the event.

Additionally, a 45-minute documentary featuring several architectural luminaries, including Master Ali Akbar Nasrabadi, Shahriar Cyrus, Dariush Zahedi, and other scholars, researchers, and globetrotters, will be screened.

Their narratives will delve into the introduction and the significance of Iranian caravanserais, exploring their architectural styles from the Sassanid to Safavid eras.

Following the inauguration ceremony, an exhibition showcasing artworks by architects and intellectuals, focusing on Iranian caravanserais through photographs, paintings, and hand-

icrafts used in these historical sites, will be inaugurated.

Last September, a selection of 54 century-old roadside inns won a UNESCO label under the name: The Persian Caravanserai. The shortlist, however, is only a small percentage of the numerous caravanserais built along the ancient roads of Iran.

Caravanserai or caravansary is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara"; the former stands for a group of travelers and the latter means the building.

They often had massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard and stables behind them, with doors in the corners of the yard.

For centuries, caravanserais constituted key parts of a rich circuit of travel and trade by providing shelter, food, and water for caravans, pilgrims, and other trekkers. For many travelers, staying in or even visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a broad experience; they have an opportunity to feel the past, a time travel back to

a forgotten age.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran were built during the Achaemenid era (550 – 330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588 to 1629, he ordered the construction of a network of caravanserais across the country. Such roadside inns were once constructed along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world to shelter people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Road may be the most famous example, dotted with caravanserais.

Second Announcement



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Esfahan Steel Co. intends to purchase 7 items forged mill rolls through international tender.

The prospective bidders should register their offers / bids in ESCO's Comprehensive System of Suppliers at www.esfahansteel.ir up to 16.01.2024

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M.H.Pishdar
Equipment Purchasing Manager,
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Over 80% of Iranians welcome traditional medicine

TEHRAN – Surveys show that more than 80 percent of people in the country intend to benefit from Iranian traditional medicine, Nafiseh Hosseini-Yekta, the director of the health ministry's Persian medicine office, has said.

Their interest in traditional medicine has never faded, she said, adding that traditional medicine is being taught in universities, ILNA reported on Sunday.

Traditional medicine has its roots in the culture, customs, and traditions of Iranians and has always been of interest to them, the official highlighted.

With over 500 graduates in the field and numerous research articles that have been published, the country has been able to improve its position by being ranked fourth in the production of science in the field of traditional medicine in the world, following China, India, and the United States.

Persian traditional medicine, with its unique capabilities, can be used as complementary to conventional medicine.

She went on to say that traditional medicine and conventional medicine are complementary. Each of these medicines has unique capabilities that can be used together.

But it can only be prescribed by someone who has fully mastered both fields.

Unfortunately, extremists threaten people's health by either misusing their interest in traditional medicine or depriving them of the right to use the indigenous medicine of the country along with conventional medicine.

Iran helps developing draft on traditional medicine strategy

In November 2023, Iran attended the World Health Organization's consultative sessions on developing a draft of a new traditional medicine strategy as the only representative from West Asia.

The event took place from November 27- 30, 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, IRIB reported.

Arman Zargar, Iran's advisor to the traditional medicine office



at the Ministry of Health, participated in the event at the invitation of the WHO headquarters in Geneva.

The International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines Unit of WHO, WHO-IRCH, invited 20 experts in the field of traditional medicine from all over the world to develop a draft of traditional medicine strategy for the period 2025-2034.

The invited experts were from China (3 representatives), Australia, Canada, Switzerland, (2 representatives each), Iran, Malaysia, England, South Korea, South Africa, Ghana, Norway, Thailand, Philippines, Brazil, and India (1 representative each).

Within 3 days of intensive work, the entire initial draft was reviewed in the presence of Rudi Eggers, WHO Director of Integrated Health Services, and Kim Sungchol, head of the WHO Traditional Complementary and Integrative Medicine Unit.

The rest of the work would be carried out remotely by the volunteer representatives after the end of the sessions based on the determined issues.

Zargar assessed the level of the meetings as very high and the discussed topics of fundamental importance for the future integration of traditional medicine in the health system of the member countries of the World Health Organization.

He also considered the presence of Iran in this meeting as the only representative from West Asia to be important both from the point of view of Iran's global reputation in traditional medicine and also as a unique opportunity to apply the viewpoints of Iran and Iranian medicine in preparing the most important universal draft of traditional medicine strategy.

It should be noted that WHO's current document of traditional medicine strategy (2014-2023) has been extended until 2025, and the document being written would be reviewed for approval after its finalization in the up-

coming General Assembly of the World Health Organization.

Persian traditional medicine

For the time being, 48 government-owned and 19 privately-owned traditional medicine centers are offering services, Hosseini-Yekta noted, saying that more than 32,300 individuals referred to the centers last Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023).

More than 100 research and technology projects on the development of traditional medicine have been implemented in the country.

In this line, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has supported the printing and publishing of books and encyclopedias on Iranian traditional medicine, IRNA reported.

Previously, she said Iran ranks fourth worldwide in the production of science in the field of traditional medicine, and the remarkable achievement will improve in the coming years.

Over 17,000 books have so far been published about Persian traditional medicine, which has been recognized by the World Health Organization, she noted.

Iranian traditional medicine strongly focuses on prioritizing health maintenance and disease prevention over treatment.

It is one of the most ancient forms of traditional medicine. It is grounded in the concept of four senses of humor: phlegm (Balgham), blood (Dam), yellow bile (Safra), and black bile (Sauda). The concept of the four senses of humor is based on the teachings of Rhazes and Avicenna in an elaborate medical system.

So far, about 30,000 plant species have been identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species which is more than the whole of species found in Europe.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants, in other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 tril-

lion rials (around \$4 million) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilograms.

Iran holds 40% share of market for medicinal plants

Iran holds some 40 percent share of the market for medicinal plants in the neighboring countries, an official with the Ministry of Health said in October 2023.

"A large volume of pharmaceuticals, supplements, food products, and beverages are exported to Iraq, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, and Afghanistan," IRNA quoted Hamidreza Banafsheh as saying.

Iran is among the leading countries in the field of medicine and health technology, supplying 98 percent of pharmaceutical items to the domestic market, the official noted.

"Nearly 450 out of 1,400 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of herbal medicines, biotechnology, and food industries."

He went on to say that the National Institute for Medical Research Development aims at expanding exports of medicinal products.

Since most of the raw materials for the production of herbal medicines are native to the country, these products can internationally compete with those of the other countries, he added.

Besides, some 15 to 20 percent of Iran's herbal medicines are unique in the world. Iran has the capacity to introduce new herbal medicines to the world, he highlighted.

Producing and commercializing pharmaceutical plants are the best ways to introduce the rich resources of herbal medicines which, in addition to making foreign currency revenues for the country, will lead to the scientific authority of Iran in this field, he concluded.

According to the chairman of the Union of Medicinal Plants Exporters of Iran, the country's export of medicinal plants can be increased through meeting world standards.

Mohammad-Ali Rezaei Kamal-Abad stated that world standards are increasing due to the health-oriented consumption of herbal products, and failure to comply with these standards will lead to the return or destruction of these products.

"In the past years, poisons have entered the country, which is not only not used in other countries, but has also caused water and soil pollution in our country", he lamented.

FAO empowers Iran in combating desert locust upsurge

TEHRAN – The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has played a crucial role in supporting the Islamic Republic of Iran in addressing the significant Desert Locust upsurge from 2020 to 2022.

Notably, the country has successfully averted an upsurge over the past year with the support of FAO initiatives.

Through the Technical Cooperation Emergency Programme, "Urgent action for capacity building to control Desert Locust infestation in the Islamic Republic of Iran," FAO effectively strengthened the monitoring and control capabilities of the Plant Protection Organization of the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad. Technical support was received from the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok, and its headquarters in Rome.

Operational from 2020 to 2023, the project made substantial contributions to the Plant Protection Organization, enhancing its strategies and capacities to combat Desert Locust outbreaks. Hundreds of Desert Locust and agriculture officers were trained in locust biology, behavior, and modern practices for surveillance, monitoring, control, and management of Desert Locust infestations. These efforts have significantly improved the management of locust outbreaks, mitigating the adverse effects on agriculture and local flora.

An effective Desert Locust contingency plan was developed at the governmental level, integrating management strategy and enhancing preparedness and response capacities of the Plant Protection Organization at the national level.



While the upsurge has been defeated, FAO emphasizes the cyclical nature of locust infestation. FAO will continue collaborative efforts with the Islamic Republic of Iran through the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in South-West Asia (SWAC), Desert Locust Control Committee (DLCC), and Desert Locust Information Officer (DLIO) workshops. This ongoing partnership aims to maintain surveillance and response mechanisms, strengthening defenses against future upsurges of this destructive migratory pest insect.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. FAO's mandate is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

DOE plans to expand Persian cheetah habitat



on breeding in captivity, and maintaining the cheetah population in the habitat.

Stating that in the last two years, many good things have been done to revive the cheetah population, Akbari went on to say that the situation of the cheetah in general is concerning in the country, but it does not mean to give up hope for the increase in Asiatic cheetah population.

Efforts to save cheetah

The battle to save Asiatic cheetahs and prevent their extinction, complicated by various natural and human-induced threats, is in full swing in habitats across Iran.

In 2007, Iranian wildlife experts decided to mark August 31 as 'National Cheetah Day' in a bid to encourage and promote the idea of preserving the last remaining population of Asiatic cheetahs on Earth — in Iran.

The Asiatic cheetah is relatively smaller than its African cousin. It has distinctive black tear marks running from its eyes down the side of its nose, fawn-colored fur that is paler on the sides, and small black spots scattered on its body.

Raising people's awareness and increasing rangers are among the steps taken to conserve Persian cheetahs.

Also known as the 'Persian cheetah', the species became extinct in virtually all countries in Asia and only a small population continues to live in Iran. It is categorized as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

They inhabit desert-like mountain areas in central, eastern, and southeastern parts of the country, in wildlife refuges located in the provinces of Semnan, Yazd, Kerman, and north, south, and Razavi Khorasan.

Camera traps installed by environmental bodies in their habitats monitor the endangered species' population to evolve ideal strategies for protecting them.

However, serious threats primarily posed by habitat fragmentations, drought spells, prey loss, persecution by livestock herders and their dogs, road accidents, and illegal poaching are shrinking the vulnerable population of the world's fastest mammals.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Rainfall increases Lake Urmia level

Recent rainfall has increased the level of Lake Urmia to 1,271 meters, a step closer to its ecological level of 1,274 meters.

The lake is expected to reach its ecological level within 10 years by completing the restoration plans which started four years ago.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program's office in West Azarbaijan province, said that the Lake's level is now 58 cm higher than it was last year.

According to the latest monitoring, the lake's water volume is estimated at more than 3.6 billion cubic meters.

He added that the lake surface area has reached 2,883 square kilometers, adding that the figure is increased by 538 square kilometers compared to the same period last year.

افزایش سطح تراز دریاچه ارومیه بر اثر بارش

بارش های اخیر تراز فعلی دریاچه ارومیه را به یک هزار و ۲۷۱ متر و ۳۸ سانتی متر رسانده است که در حال رسیدن به تراز اکولوژیک یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر است.

به گزارش ایرنا، فرهاد سرخوش رییس دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه گفت سطح دریاچه ارومیه اکنون ۵۸ سانتی متر بیشتر از زمان مشابه سال گذشته است.

طبق آخرین پایش صورت گرفته حجم آب این دریاچه بیش از سه میلیارد و ۶۷۰ میلیون مترمکعب برآورد شده است.

وی با بیان اینکه وسعت دریاچه ارومیه در حال حاضر به بیش از ۲ هزار و ۸۸۳ کیلومتر مربع رسیده، اضافه کرد: وسعت این دریاچه نیز نسبت به سال گذشته ۵۳۸ کیلومتر مربع افزایش دارد.



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JANUARY 8, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you fail to attain your desire, do not blame others, and accept your fate in any case.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:11 Evening: 17:27 Dawn: 5:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:15 (tomorrow)

“Coal” to represent Iran at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film “Coal,” directed by Saman Lotfian, has been selected by the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in the International Competition section in its upcoming edition due to be held from February 2 to 9 in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Lotfian’s debut directorial work will have its international premiere at the prestigious French festival, IRNA reported.

In the 2023 movie, Eesa and Mokhtar, miners, get into a fight. Eesa pushes Mokhtar and makes him fall. Mokhtar’s oxygen tank starts leaking, without anyone noticing. Eesa discovers methane gas and saves some people, but Mokhtar dies due to an empty tank. Eesa, torn, faces a choice: lie and become a hero or confess everything and carry the weight of killing Mokhtar.

The cast of the short flick includes Sajad Afsharian, Nasrollah Radesh, Mehdi Miami, and Mahmonir Bitari among others.

Basically a cinematographer, Lotfian is known for “When the Moon Was Full” (2019), “Drown” (2020), “Atabai” (2020), “Pinto” (2021), “Squad of Girls” (2022), and “Endless Borders” (2023).

Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival has been the biggest short film festival for 40 years, the essential meeting place for spectators, professionals, youngsters, and school children. Audiences have a choice of 600 films, across all sections, and the three competitions (National, International, and Lab). The programming team receives each year more than 7000 short film submissions. In terms of audience and professional presence, it is the second-largest film festival in France after Cannes.

IAF cinematheque to show Adam McKay’s “The Big Short”

TEHRAN-The cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran is set to show “The Big Short,” a 2015 American biographical crime comedy-drama film directed and co-written by Adam McKay, on Monday.

The film screening, which is to start at 5 p.m., will be followed by a review session with the presence of the film critic Khosrow Naqibi, Mehr reported.

Co-written by Charles Randolph, it is based on the 2010 book “The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine” by Michael Lewis showing how the 2007–2008 financial crisis was triggered by the United States housing bubble.

The film stars Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling and Brad Pitt, Jeremy Strong, and Marisa Tomei among others.

It consists of three separate but concurrent

stories, loosely connected by their actions in the years leading up to the 2007 housing market crash.

A critical and commercial success, the film grossed \$133 million on a \$50 million budget and received acclaim for the performances of the cast (particularly that of Bale), McKay’s direction, editing, and the screenplay. The film won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in addition to nominations for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor (Bale), and Best Film Editing.

It will be the 570th program of the IAF cinematheque, which is dedicated to the screening of the famous films from Iran and the world.

The Iranian Artists Forum is situated at Artists Park on North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

Cartoon of Day

SAFICARTOONS

Free Palestine



Mr.Safi

Free Palestine
Cartoonist: Mo Safi from England

Iran’s National Orchestra dedicates performance to Kerman terrorist attack’s victims

TEHRAN- The National Orchestra of Iran, under the baton of maestro Majid Entezami, paid tribute to the martyrs and victims of the terrorist incident in Kerman during the inaugural night of the “Along with Memories” concert on Friday.

After an 11-year hiatus, maestro Majid Entezami returned to the stage with a captivating performance of his memorable compositions at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall.

At the end of the concert, Entezami dedicated the evening’s performance to the martyrs of Kerman, expressing hope that such tragic events would never recur on Iranian soil.

The “Along with Memories” musical event, organized through a collaborative effort between the Rudaki Foundation, the Music Office of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and the Iranian Music Society, will be on stage until Tuesday.

The concert features a selection of nostalgic pieces, including “The Symphony of the Epic of Khorramshahr,” “The Glass Agency,” “From Karkheh to Rhine,” “The Fragrance of Joseph’s Shirt,” “The Train,” “Duel,” “Zaal and Simorgh,” “The Insane Flew Away,” “Sheikh Bahai,” and “Great Expectation.”

At the age of 75, Entezami excels not only as a conductor but also as an accomplished oboist. With an impressive portfolio of over 80 movie compositions, nine television series scores, and 10 suite symphonies, he has repeatedly been honored with the Best Original Score award at the Fajr International Film Festival.

Having studied at the renowned State University of West Berlin under the guidance of Karl Steins and Lothar Koch in 1968, Entezami went on to deliver remarkable performances with the Berlin University Symphony Orchestra in cities like Lyon, Nancy, and Marseille, France, from 1969 to 1972.

In 1973, Entezami heeded the invitation of the Tehran



TEHRAN TIMES
Photo: Bahman Vakhshour

Symphony Orchestra and held a triumphant Mozart concert as the oboe soloist, conducted by Helge Dorsch. Subsequently, he returned to Germany to join the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the West Deutsche Philharmonie.

In 1974, he became a member of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, taking on the roles of a faculty member at the Tehran Conservatory and the music department of the University of Tehran. Notably, in 1976, Entezami presented two impressive oboe recitals accompanied by Lucette Martirosian on piano and harpsichord, and Ivan Pristas on bassoon. He also demonstrated his exceptional talent as a viola d’amore soloist during a concert with the Les Jeunes Musicales de l’Iran orchestra, conducted by Ali Rahbari and Valodia Tarkhanian.

Despite being the son of famous Iranian actor Ezzatollah Entezami, Majid’s entrance into the cinema industry was his own.

He has a profound understanding of the picture and has always tried to tell the untold essence of the story. He also has experience with a variety of styles which has given his

portfolio variety, from comedies to epic war movies.

The music of Entezami is orchestral and based on western classical music, but with Iranian instruments and unusual rhythms which give his works an eastern feel.

Every theme and musical color heard in Entezami’s work has a rational explanation in the story. He believes that music tells a part of the story that is not already told in the picture. Some of his works seem to be narrative, almost like part of the script, but he maintains that no director has ever asked him for such characteristics.

Iran’s National Orchestra was founded in 1998 under the conduction of the renowned Iranian composer Farhad Fakhreddini.

The orchestra had been formed by Persian traditional instruments, strings and woodwind instruments. During its history, the orchestra focused on Persian composers’ compositions including pieces by renowned figures such as Fakhreddini, Ali Tajvidi, and Hossein Alizadeh among others.

Wednesday’s terrorist attack

in the southern city of Kerman resulted in the tragic loss of 89 lives.

The attack took place near the tomb of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the revered Iranian anti-terrorism commander, during a memorial ceremony commemorating four years since his martyrdom.

On Thursday, the ISIS terrorist group claimed responsibility for the dual explosions that rocked Iran. According to a statement released on its affiliate Telegram channels, two ISIS members detonated explosive belts amidst the crowd gathered at the cemetery in Kerman on Wednesday. The extremist Sunni Muslim group, notorious for its acts of violence, took pride in its role in the deadly incident.

The memorial, held in honor of General Soleimani, marked the fourth anniversary of his untimely death. The esteemed commander was assassinated in Iraq in 2020 by a U.S. drone strike. In the wake of this bloodiest attack since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Tehran has vowed to avenge the loss of lives and ensure justice prevails.

Iranian movies line up for Indian folklore festival

TEHRAN- Over a dozen of Iranian movies are on screen in different sections of the 7th edition of International Folklore Film Festival, which is currently underway at the Indian city of Kerala.

“Dance of the wolf” by Behzad Yaghmouri, “Silent Victims” by Amir Hossein Saqafi, “Girls of the Wind” by Fereydoon Afi, “Pretty” by Mahtab Rezaei, “The Woman” by Sahar Mahmoudi and “Mermaid” by Ghazaleh Razavi are among the films.

The festival also screens “Dela” by Fatima Abahamzeh, “Lady of the City” by Maryam Bahrololumi, “Bone” by Goli Zarei and “Fallen Shadows at Sunset” co-directed by Hiva Amini and Mehdi Golnari.

The world of folklore films and documentaries is limitless in its scope. It encompasses every aspect of human life, as

we are all connected to the rich tapestry of folklore. From rural traditions to the roots of our culture, from the aesthetics of our heritage to the mythologies that shape our beliefs, folklore encompasses it all. It extends to the arts, handicrafts, and the natural way of life that has been passed down through generations.

Folklore is nourished by a strong and expansive oral tradition, as well as the traditions of handicrafts and the arts. These tributaries flow together to create a vast body of knowledge and art that finds its origin in the wonders of nature and the diverse resources it provides. For filmmakers delving into the world of folklore, their challenge lies in capturing and visualizing the essence of tradition, natural heritage, and culture. It is an endeavor that requires skill and creativity,



A scene from “Lady of the City” by Maryam Bahrololumi

as they strive to bring these intangible elements to life through the medium of film.

The 7th International Folklore Film Festival will come to an end on January 10.

Harold Pinter’s “Ashes to Ashes” at Tehran’s Arghavan Theater

TEHRAN-The play “Ashes to Ashes” written by English playwright Harold Pinter and directed by Hengameh Yadegari is on stage at Arghavan Theater in Tehran.

In this extended one-act, two-hander play, which is a dialogue between a married couple, Yadegari also acts along with Soheil Pourjafar.

Written in 1996, “Ashes to Ashes” is a triumph of power and concision. In the living room of a pleasant house in a university town outside of London, Devlin, threatened by his wife Rebecca’s recollections of an abusive ex-lover, questions her relentlessly in his need for a single truth. In her seamless blending of what she knows of

violence with the wider violence of the world, Rebecca reveals an eerie communion with the dead victims of unnamed political barbarities.

Harold Pinter (1930–2008) was a playwright, screenwriter, director and actor. A Nobel Prize winner, he was one of the most influential modern British dramatists with a writing career that spanned more than 50 years. His best-known plays include “The Birthday Party” (1957), “The Homecoming” (1964) and “Betrayal” (1978), each of which he adapted for the screen. His screenplay adaptations of others’ works include “The Servant” (1963), “The Go-Between” (1971), “The French Lieutenant’s Woman” (1981), “The Trial” (1993) and “Sleuth” (2007). He also

directed or acted in radio, stage, television and film productions of his own and others’ works.

Many of Pinter’s earlier plays present a profound sense of the anxiety of the outsider and focus on persecution and torture—psychological, emotional, physical—as nightmarish conditions that require no logical source. After two decades of explicitly and implicitly denying the existence of any political themes in his work, Pinter began incorporating specific political speech and addressing the conditions of torture and persecution against groups of people in a series of short one-act plays in the 1980s.

His dramas often involve strong

conflicts among ambivalent characters who struggle for verbal and territorial dominance and for their own versions of the past. Stylistically, these works are marked by theatrical pauses and silences, comedic timing, irony and menace. Thematically ambiguous, they raise complex issues of individual identity oppressed by social forces, language, and vicissitudes of memory.

Pinter received over 50 awards, prizes and other honours, including the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2005 and the French Légion d’honneur in 2007.

“Ashes to Ashes” will run through January 18 at the Arghavan Theater located at Ziba Dead-end, Neauphle-le-Château St., Hafez Ave.