

Ayatollah Khamenei highlights Israel's failure to achieve its goals in Gaza

Small Group of People in Small Land Have Crippled U.S., Israel



Iran says U.S., Israel diverting attention from 'root causes' of Red Sea situation

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations has rejected the United States' accusations against Iran regarding Yemen's operations in the Red Sea, calling them baseless and a distraction from the real issues.

"The purpose of the U.S. and the Israeli regime to make such baseless accusations is clear: to divert international attention away from the root causes of the current situation in the Red Sea, namely the ongoing genocide and barbaric massacres that are being committed by the Israeli regime and fully supported by the U.S. against the innocent Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as their participation in coordinated military aggressions and malevolent activities against other nations in the region," Amir Saeed Irvani said in a letter to the head of the UN Security Council.

Israel's bombing campaign against the Gaza Strip, coupled with its ground offensive into the territory, has killed over 23,000 Palestinian civilians since October 7. Despite repeated international calls for a ceasefire, Israeli leaders claim they would continue attacking Gaza until the enclave no longer poses any risks to the regime. That's while Israel has imposed a full siege on the region, denying the over 2 million population there of food, water, and medication. Figures show that about 5% of Gaza's population is now either lost or dead. ▶ Page 2

Iran to file a complaint against U.S. government by end of April

TEHRAN - Iranian Vice President for legal affairs Mohammad Dehghan has warned the United States that Iran will file a lawsuit against the American government at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

"If the U.S. does not respond to our warnings by the end of April, we will take legal action at the ICJ," Dehghan stated.

He further detailed the legal proceedings against those responsible for General Soleimani's killing, clarifying that the case filed at the ICJ is against the U.S. government, while the domestic court proceedings aim to hold individuals directly involved in the assassination accountable.

Dehghan emphasized that Iran is committed to pursuing justice for General Soleimani's killing through both domestic and international legal channels.

Russia needs interaction with Iran in its conflictual geopolitics

By Mohammad Hassan Sangtarash

Russia is facing a "geopolitical conflict" in the peripheral area, which cannot be solved in the short term by pursuing the current political-security approaches. Iran is the only geopolitical breathing space for Russia.

On its northern border, Russia competes with Norway, Canada, Denmark and the United States, which have coasts adjacent to the Arctic. Since Finland has joined NATO and Sweden's membership to the military block is imminent, Russia is under siege and pressure from the West and the Baltic Sea, which has a severe impact on the port of St. Petersburg and the Baltic Sea fleet.

Also, Russia is indirectly engaged in a war of attrition with NATO members on the Ukrainian front. ▶ Page 5

The future of Palestine: Who is relevant?

By Dr. Jin Liangxiang

The last months had seen the bloodiest conflict in the Gaza Strip as Israel had launched relentless and unproportionate retaliation against Palestinians, which had aroused a new round of debates about the future of the legitimate cause of Palestinians.

The misfortune of Palestine primarily lies in the unbalanced international power structure among a variety of other reasons. The future of Palestine will finally depend on the evolution of the international balance of power, which is on the course.

There is a very special logic behind the tragedy of the Palestine issue. The starting point of the very special logic behind the Palestine issue is Israel's efforts and mentality to maximize its own interests. Israel, in the last decades, ▶ Page 5

Israeli army suffers high casualties in Gaza

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- The Israeli military has admitted that nine of its troops have been killed during combat with the Palestinian resistance in Gaza.

It comes on the same day that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyah said the regime was nowhere close to victory in its war on Gaza and indicated the reasons behind Operation al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023.

The Israeli military on Tuesday initially stated that four soldiers had been killed in Gaza, then later announced the names of five others killed in the enclave.

The latest Israeli army fatalities come a day after media reports surfaced that another nine soldiers had been killed in Gaza after they were caught up in two operations by the resistance. ▶ Page 5

Construction of 200,000 National Housing Movement units begins in new towns

TEHRAN- As announced by the managing director of New Towns Development Company, the construction of 200,000 units of the National Housing Movement plan begun in the new towns.

Alireza Jafari also announced that 140,000 National Housing Movement units are currently under construction in the new towns across the country.

As announced by the head of the National Land and Housing Organization, 1,000 units of the National Housing Movement have been completed across the country and are ready to be handed over to applicants.

"Our priority at the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development is to accelerate the progress of the National Housing Movement program and we must know that the faster completion of these projects, even for one day, means solving the housing problem for a family," Arsalan Maleki said on January 1. ▶ Page 4

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Public Relations Department of Iran Aluminum Company



Iran, Tajikistan to boost links in knowledge-based sector

TEHRAN - Vice President for Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy, Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, has said a range of good opportunities are available for fostering science and technology-based cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan, particularly founding joint consortia for knowledge-based products and services.

He made the remarks on Tuesday in a meeting with Rustam Emomali, the chairman of the Tajikistan National Assembly and mayor of Dushanbe.

The scientific and research centers of the two countries provide the grounds for the development of collaboration, IRNA quoted Dehqani-Firouzabadi as saying.

"We are ready to expand the cooperation in the form of a comprehensive program, relying on young, educated, and expert human resources," he added.

Emamoli, leading a delegation, arrived in Iran on Monday and visited Iran's House of Technology and Innovation (iHiT) on Tuesday. ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

Violating message with action

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

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the contradictory policy of the U.S. in the region and wrote: America is sending messages to Iran repeatedly. As Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said earlier, "America has sent several messages since the first days of the Zionist regime's barbaric attack on Gaza." One of the subjects was for Iran to be restrained. This was America's first request to Iran. The second issue was that the United States emphasized in its messages that it does not seek to expand the scope of the war. In almost all of these messages, America asks Iran to advise the groups in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and the region not to take action against Israel and American bases. Iran has clearly said that it does not have any group of proxies in the region. It seems that the American and Israeli authorities should take the warning of war expansion more seriously after Tel Aviv entered the terror phase. Because this approach has brought the fragility of the developments to a peak and the U.S. Foreign Secretary should look for a solution to prevent its unpredictable dimensions in the region.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Iran is a serious competitor of arms manufacturers

In an analysis, Siasat-e-Rooz discussed the achievements of the Ministry of Defense of Iran. It wrote: Although Iran was under military sanctions for years, it was able to become one of the producers of defense military weapons by taking advantage of its domestic capabilities. Iran can export its military weapons more through regional marketing and be a serious competitor for Western products. Meanwhile, the price of Iran's weapons is more reasonable than that of the weapons of countries such as America, Russia, China, and other countries producing weapons. Iranian drones are now known in the world and have a lot of demand. Ballistic missiles, ground-to-ground, ground-to-air, sea-based, and targeted missiles, and dozens of samples of Iran's military and defense products can be exported and generate hard currency. This incident is a response to military sanctions on Iran and those who consider Iran's military achievements to be weak because the most important factor that has made the enemies not make mistakes is military progress.

Kerman terrorist attack Israeli attempt to compensate for losses: army chief

TEHRAN - The chief commander of the Iranian Army on Tuesday condemned a terrorist attack on the southeastern city of Kerman as a cowardly act aiming to make up for the humiliating losses of the Israeli regime in Gaza.

"The illegitimate Zionist regime, with the support of the U.S. and other Western countries, is seeking revenge for its heavy and historical defeat against Hamas by killing unarmed and defenseless children, women, and non-combatants. However, nothing will compensate for its egregious defeat, and the passing of these victims will only hasten the downfall of the Zionist apartheid regime," Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi told Iranian media.

Twin explosions ripped through Kerman on January 3, as thousands of people were walking towards the burial site of late anti-terror icon Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, to commemorate his 4th martyrdom anniversary. At least 93 people were killed during the blasts which were caused by suicide bombers, and dozens more were injured.

Iran's army chief said the tragic attack in Kerman was a "cowardly act by those who lack the ability to fight on the battlefield and resort to massacring unarmed individuals".

The Daesh terror group claimed responsibility for the attack, while several Iranian officials have hinted towards an Israeli hand in the explosions. Remarks by Mossad-affiliated social media accounts who rejoiced at the loss of lives shortly after the attack took place seemed to confirm Israel's complicity. Iranian intelligence forces have so far arrested at least 23 suspects and seized dozens of weapons and explosives from the detainees.

Arman-e-Melli: willingness of the parties for a nuclear agreement

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli discussed the continuation of the process of nuclear negotiations after the developments in the region and said: It seems that the developments in the region affect the way the world views the JCPOA. Of course, it does not mean that the West does not want an understanding with Iran on the nuclear issue, but after controlling the crisis in West Asia, it seems that in order not to deepen the dispute in the region over the nuclear issue, they will probably turn to the acceleration of negotiations related to the JCPOA. The conditions of the region may influence the nuclear negotiations and make the ground of the nuclear negotiations multifaceted. These developments, of course, will change the negotiating table and its panels on the part of Iran, and it seems that a new ground will be created for negotiations in the nuclear case. According to Fereydoon Majlesi, you should not think that Iran and the West are looking for non-understanding on the nuclear issue. There are signs that Iran wants to solve its economic problems. Inflation, the bad economic situation, and the need to rebuild the country are obvious, and there is no need to continue the sanctions.

Ettelaat: Iran and regional cooperation

In an article, Ettelaat dealt with Iran's regional cooperation. It wrote: There are countries in the neighborhood of the Islamic Republic of Iran that provide the possibility of Iran's communication with the surrounding areas. On the other hand, Iran is located in a region that provides the connection of landlocked countries in three directions, the North, Central Asia (including the five republics of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan), and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan and Armenia) in the east and west of Caspian Sea with international waters. Now, the Islamic Republic of Iran is experiencing cooperation within the framework of new regional organizations that are influenced by two regional land powers, China and Russia. Iran has a population with a suitable combination of trained and efficient human resources and ready for economic development. By taking advantage of these capacities, the Islamic Republic of Iran can be an independent regional power even without having a strategic ally.



Iran has vowed severe revenge for the terrorist attack which became the deadliest one in the past 3 decades, saying it reserves the right to respond to the perpetrators of the tragedy whenever and wherever it sees fit.

Israel seems to be trying to escalate its unsuccessful campaign in Gaza and turn it into a regional war as it seeks Washington's direct involvement in its fight against resistance forces. The regime has in the past weeks, assassinated a top Iranian military advisor in Syria, killed a Hamas leader in Beirut, and struck a senior Hezbollah member in southern Lebanon. Analysts believe Israel has little chance of defeating Hamas in Gaza, and hence is looking for ways to provoke Iran and its allies into starting a wider war with international reverberations.

The regime's latest wave of brutal onslaughts against the besieged Gaza Strip, which began after a successful Hamas operation in the occupied territories on October 7, has so far killed more than 23,000 civilians and exposed a quarter of Gaza's population to famine. Also, over 90% of the people in Gaza have been displaced and the majority of the infrastructure has been destroyed.

Targeted killing of journalists in Gaza leaves indelible mark in history: Iran FM

TEHRAN - Iran has condemned the targeted killing of journalists by Israeli military forces over the past three months.

More than three months have elapsed since the outbreak of an unjust war on the people in Gaza Strip, during which 111 journalists and camerapersons have tragically lost their lives. This represents an unprecedented and horrifying statistics in the history of conflict in the region," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian wrote in a post on the X, formerly known as Twitter, on Tuesday.

In the post, he extended heartfelt condolences to Wael Dahdouh, Al Jazeera's Gaza bureau chief, who recently lost his son in an Israeli air raid in southern Gaza. Israeli forces killed Hamza Dahdouh, a photojournalist, and his colleague Mustafa Thuraya by targeting the vehicle that they were travelling in.

Wael Dahdouh, 52, had already



lost his wife, daughter, grandson and 15-year-old son in October in an Israeli air raid that hit the house they were sheltering in.

"The heightened global awareness and judgment surrounding the plight of Gaza have become a cause of deep concern for the Zionists, intensifying the world's abhorrence

and animosity toward the criminal regime. Their desperate attempts to control the narrative will face increasing international condemnation," Amir Abdollahian noted.

He further emphasized the immediate need for accountability and justice in the face of such egregious violations by the Israeli forces.

Tehran condemns Israel's assassination of senior Hezbollah commander

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, vehemently denounced Israel's recent assassination of a senior Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon, labeling it a "despicable terrorist operation."

Kanaani made the remarks in a statement issued on Monday, reacting to the killing of high-level commander from Hezbollah's elite Radwan forces Wissam Hassan al-Tawil by an Israeli drone attack targeting his car in the village of Khirbet Selm.

The spokesman characterized the Zionist regime's resort to terrorist operations as a "glaring manifestation of its evident military weakness and failure." He stated, "The regime suffered severe

blows in its attempts to assert dominance on the battlefield, notably in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, during the Al-Aqsa Storm operation and the three-month conflict against the Palestinian people in Gaza."

In issuing a warning to the global community, including the United Nations Security Council, Kanaani highlighted the Zionist regime's "overt and adventurous" endeavors to escalate conflict and war in the region. He also emphasized the ongoing war crimes committed by the Zionist regime against Palestinian citizens in Gaza and the West Bank, condemning its explicit violation of Lebanon and Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The spokesman stressed that the regime's recourse

to organized terrorism constitutes an immediate threat to regional and global peace and security. "Undoubtedly, the criminal Zionist regime and its supporters bear direct responsibility for the inevitable consequences stemming from such terrorist and adventurous actions," he further noted.

As the deputy head of a unit in Radwan force, Al-Tawil is the highest-ranking Hezbollah member to be killed since the Israel-Hamas war began. His killing comes just days after Saleh Al-Arouri, the deputy head of the political bureau of Hamas, and three others died in a strike on an office building in Beirut. The situation raises concerns about the potential for a wider regional conflict.

Iran says U.S., Israel diverting attention from 'root causes' of Red Sea situation

From page 1 ▶ In solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, the Yemeni armed forces have been targeting ships in the Red Sea connected to Israel or traveling to and from the occupied territories. The U.S. has formed a coalition against Yemeni forces in the Red Sea, where a significant portion of global trade passes through, and is risking the spread of a new war, instead of pressuring Israel to stop its genocidal attacks on the Palestinians. Washington and Tel Aviv accuse Iran of orchestrating the Yemeni attacks, while Tehran



has repeatedly clarified that it has no authority over resistance forces in the region.

"The United States cannot deny

or cover up the incontestable reality that recent incidents in the Red Sea are directly related to Israel's continued atrocities against the Palestinian people in Gaza. The United States and the Israeli regime bear full responsibility for the reprehensible crimes unfolding in occupied Palestine," Iravani pointed out.

He emphasized that any U.S. intervention in the Red Sea could jeopardize regional peace and reiterated Iran's commitment to maritime security and freedom of navigation.

"Cautioning against any provocative or irresponsible actions by the United States that may endanger regional peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Iran urges the Security Council to uphold its responsibilities to address the causes of the current situation in the Red Sea. In this regard, the Security Council must take decisive measures to compel the Israeli regime to halt its bloodshed, cease its aggressive acts, and steadfastly adhere to its international obligations under humanitarian and human rights laws".

Raisi outlines three-step transformation strategy for administrative bodies

TEHRAN - Iranian President identified three key steps for transforming the country's administrative bodies: cognitive transformation, process improvement, and institutional reform.

Speaking at a gathering on Tuesday, Ebrahim Raisi emphasized the need for a transformative approach to address shortcomings in the country's administrative systems and human resource management.

"Transformation requires us to envision the optimal state of affairs and formulate a plan to bridge the gap between our current reality and our desired future," Raisi stated.

He stressed that the first step in transformation is cognitive transformation, which involves fostering a mindset that embraces change and seeks to improve processes and systems.

"We must instill a revolutionary spirit among our officials, encouraging them to actively seek transformative change," Raisi said.

The second step, according to Raisi, is process

improvement, which requires a thorough evaluation and streamlining of bureaucratic procedures to eliminate inefficiencies and delays.

He further underscored the imperative to scrutinize the current operational procedures, emphasizing that a comprehensive review is essential.

He also advocated for a meticulous examination of the administrative workflow within the organization, suggesting that enhancements could be achieved by streamlining, refining, and optimizing existing processes.

In outlining the third step, he expounded on the necessity for an institutional transformation. This transformation, he emphasized, should entail a redefinition of the institution's role, ensuring a clear and well-defined set of missions. The objective is to enhance efficiency and accountability, establishing a framework where the institution is fully equipped to carry out its responsibilities effectively.

He emphasized the importance of self-monitoring, stating that the most effective control system is one that instills a sense of accountability among individuals.

Raisi also highlighted the importance of effectively utilizing human resources, which he likened to a trust bestowed upon managers.

"Managers must accurately assess and utilize the capabilities of their personnel, ensuring that each individual is placed in a role that aligns with their skills and expertise," he said.

"Managers, especially those in administrative and financial positions, have a responsibility to streamline and simplify bureaucratic processes," he stated.

"We have a responsibility towards our human resources," Raisi said, reiterating the importance of addressing personnel issues, where the presence of inefficient staff can hinder the overall productivity of a department and even drag down the performance of others.

Tehran to host fifth PUIC and first APA summit Wednesday

TEHRAN- The fifth emergency meeting of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) and the first meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) will take place in Tehran.

Iranian Parliament will host the meeting on the Palestine issue.

The summits, held under the slogan of "Cooperation of Parliaments for Palestine," will bring together representatives from 26 Islamic and Asian countries, including Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Oman, China, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Indonesia, Ta-

jikistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Maghreb, Bahrain, Turkey, UAE, Pakistan, and Chad.

Representatives from 14 countries will attend the summits at the level of speaker and vice speaker of parliament.

The PUIC and APA summits aim to strengthen cooperation among parliamentarians from Muslim and Asian countries to address regional and global issues, with a particular focus on the Palestinian cause. The summits will also provide a platform for discussing ways to promote peace, stability, and development in the region.

Memorial book opens at Iran's embassy in Sweden

TEHRAN - Swedish officials and diplomats have attended the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Sweden to sign a memorial book in honor of victims of a terror attack that took place in Iran's southeastern province of Kerman on January 3.

The dignitaries expressed their sympathy with the people and government of Iran and condemned the terrorist attack which took the lives of at least 93 people. They also gave their condolences to Mohammad Ahmadi, the chargé d'affaires of Iran's embassy in Stockholm. The Kerman terror attack

took place after two explosions ripped through a route leading to the burial site of Iran's anti-terror icon, General Qassem Soleimani, as people had gathered to mark the fourth anniversary of his assassination by the United States.

The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the blasts.

The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran was raised at half-mast in Iranian embassies across the world a day after the tragedy. Memorial books have also been opened in several countries.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlights Israel's failure to achieve its goals in Gaza

Small group of people in small land have crippled U.S., Israel

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has met with a number of people from Qom Province. The meeting took place in the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah on January 9, 2024, on the 46th anniversary of the historic uprising of the people of Qom against the oppressive Pahlavi regime.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei spoke about the grievous explosion in Kerma, noting that, «Due to this sad, tragic event that took place in Kerma, the [Iranian] nation has become grief-stricken in the true sense of the word. We do not insist on accusing others. But we do insist on finding and crushing the main culprits and those behind the scenes of this tragedy. Our honorable officials are busy working on this. I am well aware of what they are doing. They have done a good job. They are doing a good job. God willing, they [the officials] will be able to punish them [the culprits] for their actions.»

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also drew attention to the issue of Gaza, pointing to the gradual realization of the predictions made by discerning individuals regarding the unfolding of events in Gaza.

«It was predicted that the Palestinian Resistance would be the victors in this field, and the side that would be defeated would be the evil and cursed Zionist regime. Today, this prediction is coming true,» he asserted.

He considered the three-month period of Zionist crimes and child killings in Gaza as an unforgettable incident that will forever be etched in history, adding that, «Even after this regime is destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth, these crimes will not be forgotten and they will go down in history. They massacred thousands of children in a matter of weeks. However, the patience and resistance of the Palestinian people compelled them to retreat.»



Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the evident signs of defeat and failure of the Zionist regime over the span of around 100 days of committing crimes.

«They said that we will destroy Hamas and the Resistance and displace the people of Gaza. But they failed to do that, and today the Resistance remains strong, vigorous, and fully prepared, while the Zionist regime is exhausted, humiliated, and filled with regret. The true nature of the Zionist regime has been exposed,» he noted.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution defined this rivalry as a valuable lesson, emphasizing the importance of standing against oppression, coercion, arrogance, and usurpation. He stressed the need for the Resistance to stay updated and prepared, never falling prey to the enemy's deceptive tactics. «With the assistance of God, the Resistance should target and strike the enemy whenever and wherever possible,» he added.

Commending the patience and steadfastness exhibited by the people of Gaza, he stated, «With their patience and resilience, a small group of people in a small land have crippled the US with all its brags and also the Zionist regime, which is hanging on to the US.»

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that «God willing, a day will come

when the Iranian nation and the Muslim nations will witness the triumph of patience and steadfastness and faith in God over the enemies and demons that pervade the world.»

During the meeting, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution also spoke about Qom, where he described it as the «city of uprising, knowledge, and jihad.» Pointing to the enduring lessons of the spontaneous uprising of the religious citizens of this city on January 9, 1978, he remarked, «This grand incident, which took place in protest against the measures taken by the dependent [Pahlavi] regime in publishing an insulting article against Imam Khomeini, is proof of the populace's power to influence major events.»

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the overthrow of the dependent and oppressive taghut regime, which occurred within a year of the uprising of the people of Qom as a tangible result of the people's presence there.

He also elaborated on the strategy employed by the Arrogant Front in Iran. He stated that the U.S. and the Zionist regime are at the opposite end of Imam Khomeini's strategy which was to bring the people into the picture and to empower them in their endeavors and battles. Instead, he said, «they have adopted the grand strategy of 'pulling the Iranian people out of the

picture' and they continue to pursue this policy even today.»

The Leader of the Revolution considered the attempt to downplay the involvement of people in important occasions as one of the enemy's tricks to sideline them. The reason for this enmity, he said, is that they understand the factors behind Iran's progress, prestige, and its emergence as an important power in the region. This includes the establishment of a unique strategic depth for the system through Resistance forces across the region, as well as the failure of various conspiracies such as coups, imposed wars, and security schemes. The Leader underlined that the active participation of the Iranian people in various endeavors has been the key to these achievements.

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that using fear tactics to «scare people of the world powers, the US, and the Zionist regime» is another strategy to sideline the people. «If the Iranian people were to succumb to fear from any particular power, the Islamic Republic would cease to exist. Furthermore, many of the powers that claimed to dominate and rule the region, are now fearful of the Iranian nation,» he asserted.

The Leader noted that various strategies have been employed to remove individuals from the picture, and one of them involves attempts made by foreign media to dissuade people, particularly the younger generation, from looking forward to a hopeful future.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that another tactic that is used to clear the scene from people's involvement has been to «create discord and division among the people.» After clarifying this strategy, he underlined that the key to countering these schemes is for the public to actively engage in political, economic, electoral, and even security matters.

Dutch saboteur behind Natanz nuclear sabotage died in accident: report

TEHRAN- A Dutch engineer behind Natanz nuclear sabotage reportedly died in a mysterious accident, according to a report by Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant.

Erik van Saben played a crucial role in the Stuxnet cyber-attack that damaged Iran's Natanz nuclear facility.

The engineer was responsible for infiltrating the Stuxnet malware into the Natanz facility in 2006. The malware, which was created in collaboration between the United States and Israel, targeted Iran's nuclear program.

A U.S. intelligence contractor, Edward Snowden, has previously claimed that the Stuxnet operation was codenamed «Operation Olympic Games.»

The de Volkskrant report also revealed that van Saben was working with Dutch intelligence agencies at the time of the attack. In 2006, the CIA director reportedly announced a secret cooperation agreement with the Dutch Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD).

Stuxnet caused widespread damage to Iran's nuclear program, but it also had a significant impact on other countries, including India,

Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Despite his involvement in the Stuxnet attack, van Saben died in a motorcycle accident near Sharjah, UAE, on January 16, 2009. The Dutch intelligence agency has stated that it does not consider the accident to be suspicious, but van Saben's family believes otherwise.

The revelation of van Saben's identity and the circumstances surrounding his death have sparked renewed scrutiny of the Stuxnet attack and its broader implications.

Criminal actions will not halt Zionists' decline: defense minister

TEHRAN- Iran's Defense Minister, Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani, addressed the recent terrorist attack in Kerma, asserting that such actions cannot thwart the decline of Zionists.

Highlighting the criminal and terrorist activities attributed to the Zionists, General Ashtiani remarked, «The undeniable reality is that the Zionists are making their last desperate efforts. Considering the

grave crimes they have committed, they find themselves increasingly isolated from the global community.»

He further emphasized that, faced with significant strategic setbacks, the Zionists resort to such brutal actions, but these endeavors will prove futile.

«These ruthless measures will not propel terrorists and enemies any closer to their objectives, and they will have no impact on

altering their circumstances,» stated the general.

General Ashtiani underscored that the Zionists are in a downward spiral, experiencing a continuous decline. He concluded by reiterating Iran's steadfast commitment to supporting the resistance front and condemning any form of oppressive regime.

«In response to these measures, Iran remains resolute in its path,



dedicated to bolstering the resistance front and denouncing any dominance-based regimes.»

Navy chief emphasizes domestic expertise, religious authority

TEHRAN- Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani has underscored the importance of domestic expertise and religious authority in the Navy's advancement.

Addressing young military officers, Rear Admiral Irani emphasized the need for continuous learning and a «can-do»

mindset, drawing inspiration from the Islamic Revolution's achievements in various fields, including military, cultural, scientific, and political.

He highlighted the Navy's reliance on indigenous knowledge and research, stating that all facilities, equipment, and achievements

are rooted in the expertise of Iranian scholars and scientists.

Rear Admiral Irani also emphasized the significance of religious authority within the Armed Forces, attributing it to the years of dedication and efforts by the political-ideological organization.

Government announces plans to boost voter turnout

TEHRAN - Iranian government spokesperson Ali Bahadori Jahromi has outlined the government's strategy to increase voter turnout in the upcoming elections.

In a statement on Tuesday, Jahromi emphasized the importance of maximizing public participation in the electoral

process, stating that «all bodies have a responsibility to ensure the highest level of voter engagement.»

Regarding the government's stance on the parliament, Jahromi reiterated the belief that a strong parliament, coupled with a strong government, can drive the country forward.

He also affirmed the government's support for political activists and parties from all factions within the framework of Islamic Republic laws. Furthermore, he highlighted the government's efforts to enhance the capacity for enthusiastic participation by providing quality services to the public.

In conclusion, Jahromi emphasized that increasing voter turnout is crucial for the country's progress and prosperity. He underscored the government's commitment to improving services, controlling prices, and enhancing living standards to foster greater public engagement in the electoral process.

Friendly: Iran victorious over Indonesia

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Indonesia 5-0 on Tuesday in their last warm-up match ahead of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

Saman Ghoddos, Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Shahriar Moghanlou and Mehdi Ghaedi (two goals) were on target for Iran in the match held in Doha, Qatar behind closed doors.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Sunday with a match against Palestine.

Iran will also meet Hong Kong and the UAE on Jan. 19 and 23, respectively.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, are going to bring an end to the title drought in the competition.

They have not won the title since 1976.

Daei among the biggest players in AFC Asian Cup history

TEHRAN - Until Cristiano Ronaldo came along, Ali Daei was the highest male goalscorer in the history of international football. But the Iranian remains the all-time top marksman in the Asian Cup.

One of the best headers of the ball in the modern era, Daei made his name at the 1996 Asian Cup with eight goals including four in the 6-2 quarter-final victory over South Korea.

Iran went on to take third place in the competition with Daei earning a move to Qatari club Al-Sadd. He then joined German side Arminia Bielefeld with fellow Iran star Karim Bagheri.

After seven goals in 25 games in his debut Bundesliga season, Bayern Munich came calling. But the striker was a peripheral figure at the Bavarian giants and, despite scoring six goals in 23 matches and winning the league title, opted to join Hertha Berlin.

He was not a prolific goalscorer in the capital but his influence was keenly felt at Hertha before his transfer to Al Shabab in the UAE. While still in Germany, he played in his first FIFA World Cup in 1998 and continued to lead the line for his country.

Daei scored three goals in the 2000 Asian Cup, taking his tally to a record 11, as Iran fell in the quarter-finals to South Korea.

In the 2004 edition, Iran went out in the semi-finals to China with Daei having scored just once in the tournament at that point. But in the third-place playoff against Bahrain, he converted a late penalty to make it 3-3 before coolly sidefooting home the winner in the 90th minute.

With 14 goals, he is four clear of South Korea's Lee Dong-gook in the all-time Asian Cup goalscoring table. And later in 2004, he became the first man to score 100 international goals with four in a World Cup qualifier against Laos.

Despite advancing years and deteriorating fitness, he played in the 2006 World Cup before retiring with 109 goals in 148 games for Iran. He is one of his country and his continent's greatest ever players.

Iran handball delegation arrive in Manama

TEHRAN - Iran's men's handball national team arrived in Manama, Bahrain Tuesday morning.

Team Melli have been drawn in Group B of the 2024 Asian Handball Championship along with South Korea, China and New Zealand.

Iran will face New Zealand in its opener on January 12.

Last week, Iran took part in a tournament in Moscow, where the team lost to Belarus and defeated Russia and youth Russia as part of preparation for the Asian championship.

Minister for Sports and Youth chairs NPC annual general assembly

TEHRAN - The Governing Body of Iran National Paralympic Committee met in their 23rd Annual General Assembly (GA) on Tuesday and discussed various topics with emphasis on the final preparations for Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

The meeting, which was chaired by Iran Minister for Sport and Youth Affairs Kioush Hashemi, heard updates on several topics including NPC plans for the new year, upcoming Games, reports from national cooperative federations, etc.

Opening the meeting, NPC CEO's Kamal Javanmard presented the National Paralympic Committee's Annual Report which highlighted the growth and breadth of the Iran Paralympic Movement's work in the last year, including preparation process for Hangzhou Asian Para Games and its results. He also explained the NPC plans for the upcoming events including Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, Tashkent 2025 Asian Youth Para Games and Aichi-Nagoya 2026 APG.

After a detailed review of the NPC plans, General Assembly also approved the financial reports delivered by the Board of Auditors.

The General Assembly also featured an election for the Governing Board and Hamed Mirza Hosseini elected for NPC's Treasurer position.

The meeting was attended by I.R. Iran Minister for Sport and Youth Affairs and his Deputies, NPC President and other officials, NOC Secretary General, representatives from National Cooperative Federations (NCFs), para sports experts, para-athletes' representatives, coaches' representatives, the other GA members.

Ali Daei offers condolence over death of Beckenbauer

TEHRAN - Iranian football legend Ali Daei has sent messages of condolence to the family of Franz Beckenbauer over death of the German great football icon.

Beckenbauer, one of Germany's greatest soccer players, who captained the team to World Cup victory in 1974 and won the tournament again as manager in 1990, died on Sunday aged 78, his family said in a statement on Monday.

«Sending heartfelt condolence to the family and friends of the legendary Franz Beckenbauer. His impact on the world of football will always be remembered. Rest in peace Kaiser,» Daei wrote on his Instagram account.

Beckenbauer is regarded as one of the greatest footballers and managers in history of Bayern Munich and Germany football teams. Daei also was a member of Bayern Munich in 1998-99 season.

Iran's slogan at 2023 AFC Asian Cup unveiled

TEHRAN - The Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) has unveiled the slogan of Team Melli in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

«To the end of life for Iran» is Iran's slogan in the prestigious event.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Sunday with a match against Palestine.

Iran will also meet Hong Kong and the UAE on Jan. 19 and 23, respectively.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, are going to bring an end to the title drought in the competition.

They have not won the title since 1976.

20% of govt. entities' electricity needs to be supplied by renewables in 4 years



TEHRAN – The Iranian government has urged all its executive bodies to take the necessary measures to supply 20 percent of their electricity needs through renewable sources within the next four years, the portal of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced.

As reported, all executive bodies subject to Article (5) of the Civil Service Law are required to supply five percent of their electricity consumption through renewable and clean energy sources as of the beginning of the next Iranian calendar year (March 21) and increase it to 20 percent (five percent per year) over four years.

In case of not following the mentioned decree, the excess energy consumed by the

entities will be calculated in their electricity bill based on the maximum electricity rate at the Green Electricity Board of the Iran Energy Exchange in the month before the billing.

Renewables, including hydropower, account for nearly seven percent of the country's total energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Earlier this month, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said that his ministry is following good plans for developing the country's renewable power plants.

Mentioning a plan for the construction of new renewable power plants across the country, the energy minister said: "The construction of more than 10,000 megawatts (MW) of power plants has been started, and one is being put into operation every day."

Mehrabian said the ministry is also implementing new programs to expand the country's power grid to be able to cover the new power plants.

In late December, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi ordered the beginning of a project for the construction of solar power plants with a capacity of 4,000 MW across the country.

TEDPIX gains 2,500 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 2,565 points (0.12 percent) to 2,156,521 on Tuesday, which is the fourth day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock 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).

The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) mentioned the measures taken by this organization in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (which ended on March 20, 2023) and explained the priorities and key plans of the SEO in 1402.

In a message on the occasion of the New Year, Majid Eshqi wrote:

In 1401, one of the main goals of SEO was to protect the rights of investors and restore their confidence in the capital market. In this regard, various programs were targeted and implemented: (1) Development and improvement of intelligent monitoring systems in market sectors and financial institutions, (2) Payment of interest through the comprehensive customer information system of Sejam, including annual and annual profits, so that small shareholders can ensure that they receive their profits at the lowest cost, (3) Launching new investment instruments, including certificates of deposit of gold bullion, crude oil and gas condensate, so that small shareholders can invest in basic and relatively inflation-proof assets in small amounts, (4) Diversification of investment funds to cover the tastes and needs of a wider range of retail investors, (5) A jump in the licensing of financial institutions with the aim of improving the competitive environment and increasing the quality of customer service, (6) Building trust through the promotion of the Capital Market Stabilization Fund's status and introducing the shareholder portfolio insurance plan for retail investors, (7) Improving market micro-structures such as increasing the range of volatility with the aim of smoothing the market flow, and (8) Issuing new guidelines for corporate governance in order to protect the rights of shareholders by publishers. Today, we can say with pleasure that the trust of small shareholders has been significantly restored as a fundamental step towards popularizing the economy.

In addition to the above actions, the Securities and Exchange Organization has always tried to lay the ground for the continuation of sustainable growth and increase the efficiency of the capital

market by carrying out structural reforms, and in this regard, five key programs are prioritized:

1- Indirect investment development: In the past year, a good amount of diversity was created in indirect investment instruments, especially investment funds, and we continue to focus on deepening these new and efficient instruments and promoting them for investors.

2- Creating a platform for transparent and diverse financing: By defining technical and legal infrastructures to facilitate micro and macro financing by the private and non-governmental sectors, a new chapter of financing projects and businesses was established, and the government was able to implement its plan to transfer the shares of companies along with the transfer of operational management without harming the capital market. The initial offering of shares of businesses based on new technologies was also a big step towards the financing of knowledge-based companies, which will be followed seriously in the current year in a higher volume and of course according to the market capacities.

3- Smart regulation and monitoring: The organization's new approach to smart and preventive monitoring, along with the launch of systems for speeding up the handling of complaints, promises a new move that will greatly help to reduce violations in this market by formulating the necessary regulations in the amendment of the stock market law.

4- Revision of the regulatory infrastructure: Due to the necessity of implementing professional and uncomplicated principles and rules in the direction of the sustainable development of the capital market, in addition to the measures taken in order to amend the corporate governance guidelines for publishers and the guidelines for identifying and reporting the confidential information holders in the organization, some reforms, which need the changes in the stock market law, have also been considered in cooperation with the legislator, which will definitely ensure the long-term interests of the capital market.

5- Derivative market development: Some basic measures in the field of capital market infrastructure and also in the field of designing derivative instruments with the aim of making the market two-way and providing risk management instruments for market participants were implemented in the past year, and therefore there is full readiness and determination to make these efforts come to fruition with the introduction of new derivative instruments, especially in the stock market, from the beginning of this year.

Over 33.86m car tires produced in 9 months

TEHRAN- Iranian tire manufacturers produced 33,868,349 car tires in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2023), indicating one percent rise as compared to the number of tires produced in the same period of time in the previous year.

This number of produced tires weighed over 216,815 tons, with a one percent decline year on year, Mehr News Agency reported citing Industry Ministry data.

According to the mentioned data, in the said period, 15,779 million passenger car tires were produced, showing a three percent decrease year on year.

Production of the tires of agricultural vehicles reached 361,508 with no change compared to the previous year's same period, and that of road



building and industrial vehicles increased 48 percent to 41,501 in the period under review.

In the first nine months of the present year, 5,805,122 bicycle and motorcycle tires were also produced, registering a five percent decline compared to the previous year.

Production of tubes increased

by 13 percent to stand at 10,227,898.

The tire industry has a 60-year history in Iran. Currently, 11 tire manufacturing companies are active across the country that produce tires for passenger cars, trucks, buses, vans, road construction, and agriculture machinery, as well as bicycles and motorcycles in addition to other

types of tubes.

Some 15,000 people are directly employed in this industry and more than 250,000 people are indirectly involved in the value chain of this industry.

The Iranian tire industry, despite the continuation of sanctions and the coronavirus pandemic conditions, as well as some domestic restrictions, has been following a thriving and successful path over the past few years.

In addition to the successes achieved in terms of the output amount, Iranian tire manufacturers have entered new areas including production of the wide-base tires and the tires of SUVs.

Wide base tires, which are a new generation of heavy vehicle tires, have been produced for the first time in West Asia by Iranian producers.

Construction of 200,000 National Housing Movement units begins in new towns

From page 1 ► The National Housing Movement is one of the major policies of the 13th government in the housing sector, and according to this policy, the construction of four million residential units is planned in four years.

It is one of the projects through which the government is trying to help low-income individuals in society become homeowners.

Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Hadi Abbasi-Asl has emphasized the acceleration in implementing the Housing Construction Leap Law to achieve the goals of the 13th government.

In late September 2023, Transport and Urbana Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpush announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples in order to help them build houses.

The National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages.

After the National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director

of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini.

The mentioned units were delivered to the applicants in five provinces throughout the country.

The Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to construct 100,000 units under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

According to Norouzi, the headquarters also completed and handed over 2,000 such units back in April, 2023.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the official said construction of the National Housing Movement units is underway by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini in 27 provinces.

President Ebrahim Raisi has stated that the National Housing Movement is the flagship project of the 13th government to meet the needs of the people, and in addition to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, all relevant organizations are also striving to achieve it.

ICCIMA holds meeting to explore ways of financing SMEs



TSE Head Mohammad Goudarzi (2nd Left)

TEHRAN – The members of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Investment and Financing Committee met on Monday to discuss ways that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from stock market financing methods.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, in this meeting the

attendees stressed that SMEs can use the new capacities of the capital market to provide financial resources for their projects, which, of course, requires transparency and familiarity with new methods of financing.

During the meeting which was attended by Head of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) Mohammad Goudarzi, the

official said: "Tehran Stock Exchange has created a new opportunity for any company that makes more than 100 billion tomans (1.0 trillion rials or about \$2.0 million) to enter the stock exchange. With this situation, small and medium-sized companies with a capital of over 120 billion tomans (1.2 trillion rials or about \$2.4 million) can enter the capital market and be financed through it."

Mentioning some of the financing tools that the stock market is providing, Goudarzi said: "One of the financing tools is financing through publishing the shares of a project. The problem with this method, however, is that provincial chambers of the ICCIMA do not have a coherent database. Meaning that it is not clear

how much working capital a company has; What companies and what size are active in the chambers of commerce? Which company has the standard for using the capital market resources?"

"We do our best to attract companies into the capital market. If a small business has problems regarding financing through the capital market, it can refer to the Tehran Stock Exchange and the Securities Secretariat. Any company with a profit of over 100 billion tomans per year can use these capacities," he added.

According to the official, the companies that use the stock market resources to finance their projects will be exempt from paying tax.

National steel festival, exhibition underway in Tehran

TEHRAN – The Fifth National Iranian Steel Festival and Exhibition (NISF) kicked off at Milad Tower Convention Center on Tuesday, IRIB reported.

The opening ceremony of the event was attended by industry officials, producers, and

entrepreneurs active in the steel industry.

The three-day event is mainly focused on the indigenization of the knowledge for domestic production of machinery and equipment used in the steel industry.

In this festival, the country's major mining and steel companies will present their needs to knowledge-based companies, startups, and local manufacturers in order to benefit from the capabilities of local producers.

TCCIMA, TIEC ink cooperation MOU

TEHRAN – The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and the Tehran Industrial Estates Company (TIEC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to cooperate on facilitating the activities of private units in Tehran province's industrial parks.

The MOU is aimed at the growth and

development of small and medium-sized enterprises and to solve the challenges of private sector economic operators and business owners in the industrial parks of Tehran province, the TCCIMA portal reported.

The MOU was signed in a ceremony attended by the TCCIMA board members, the chamber's secretary general and

the head of Tehran Industrial Estates Company along with the deputy head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO).

During the signing ceremony, the two sides also announced their readiness to cooperate on strengthening the country's SMEs to have more innovation in their products and services.

From page 1 ▶ had annexed through wars the territories belonging to Palestinians based on UN General Assembly Resolution 181 adopted in 1947, and UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967. It encroached Palestinian lands by building settlements deep into Palestinian territories. In the current war on Gaza, which started in October 2023, it is believed that Israel intends to take all the lands in the Gaza Strip.

According to an article written in 2013 by Tzipi Hotovely, Israeli Ambassador to the UK, Israel should take five steps to annex all Palestinian territories. The proclamation, though unbelievable for the international community, is being proven to be the true policy that the Netanyahu government is pursuing.

The last decades have also seen that Israel has been maximizing its security interests. As is known, Israel has built the most powerful military forces in the region in the last decade in terms of both quality and quantity. Israel is also the only country in the region that has nuclear weapons without any IAEA inspection. In addition, Israel has been lobbying for the demilitarization of Palestine for decades for the sake of its own security.

Any country has legitimate concerns for its security. However, live and let live. Though Israel's concerns for security should be respected, it is not legitimate to disregard the legitimate security concerns of the other side of the story.

The second part of the logic lies in U.S. domestic politics being hijacked by pro-Israel lobbyists. For decades, the U.S. has adopted an extremely biased approach toward the Israel-Palestine conflict. The reason simply lies in that U.S. presidents and congresspersons are almost unanimously supporting Israel



unconditionally. According to "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, political donations from pro-Israel lobbyists have been very effective.

The third part of the logic lies in some European countries being hijacked by their Atlantic relations. Though European countries are well aware that instabilities in the Middle East would put them as the most serious risk due to U.S. biased policy, these countries, including Britain, Italy, Germany, and even France in some way regard supporting the U.S. as a way to maintain Atlantic relations so as to win U.S. security protection. That explains the reason why a significant number of European countries have followed U.S.-biased policy while keeping blind eye to the humanitarian disasters of Palestine.

A realistic approach to international relations theory does not explain all the complicated international issues but does explain the dynamics behind the Palestine issue. The U.S. remained the most important actor in the world, and Europe remained another important relevant partner. Even when they were united even in modest ways, they created obstacles to the resolution of the Palestine issue and other crises as well. Their approach has been the primary reason why

the Palestine issue has not been resolved in a reasonable way over the last decades.

Their joint support has encouraged Netanyahu to continue relentless military action in the Gaza Strip. Their joint veto of UN Security Council resolutions have nullified the efforts of the Council to play a role in stopping the conflict.

Fortunately, the world is seeing changes in the balance of power. According to statistics, the total GDP of BRICS after its expansion of January 2024 will be more than 28 trillion USD, 30 percent of the world total while the total of G7 remains 26 trillion USD, and their total population will be 46% of the world total.

Despite its diversity, BRICS countries share a variety of crucial similarities in current international politics. A majority of them are dissatisfied with the domination of the US dollar in international financial transactions and the instrumentalization of the currency as a pressure tool. A majority of them also strongly support the legitimate rights of Palestinians. Also, they overwhelmingly voted for the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire. On November 21, 2023, an extraordinary BRICS summit was held on the Palestine issue, and a chair's summary condemned any

kind of individual or forcible transfer or deportation of Palestinians from their own land.

BRICS is one but not the only body that has supported the legitimate rights of Palestinians. The year 2023 also saw a robust rise of the Global South in favor of Palestine, unifying the Arab and Islamic worlds. The joint voice of the extraordinary summit of Arab and Islamic countries in solidarity with Palestinians was heard across the world on November 11, 2023.

The last two decades have seen the negligence of the Palestine issue. The year 2023 was the most difficult time for Palestinians. The tragedy that started in October last year is still continuing. So far, more than 23,000 people, mostly children, have lost their lives and 75 percent of the Gaza population has been displaced. But changes for the better are already visible as their legitimate cause for nationhood has become the focus of the international community. Leaders of Arab and Muslim countries have become well aware of the connections between the Palestine issue and their own agendas.

The changes could be slow but will be resultful. Justice is defined by justice itself, and will also be defined by the power of those upholding justice. The Arab world, Muslim countries, and Global South will see their due roles in correcting the historical mistakes.

All in all, the long suspension of the Palestine issue should be attributed to the unbalanced power structure, and Palestinians are the victims of power politics and bullying hegemony. The changing of the international dynamics defined by multi-polarization, together with the efforts of Palestinians themselves, will deliver a bright future for Palestinians.

Dr. Jin Liangxiang is Senior Research Fellow of Shanghai Institutes for International Studies

Russia needs interaction with Iran in its conflictual geopolitics

From page 1 ▶ The Russians were involved in conflict with Georgia earlier in the Caucasus and separated the regions of Ossetia and the autonomous region of Abkhazia from Georgia, which is still the subject of dispute between Tbilisi and Moscow. Georgian authorities say these two areas are occupied by Russia.

Tension is also increasing between Russia and Poland, although it is unlikely that Russia will be able to open a new front with Poland. However, Warsaw is strengthening its defense power for a possible war with Russia. Close defense interactions have been formed between Poland and South Korea, which include the sale of advanced Korean weapons, including FA-50 fighters, K9A1 self-propelled howitzers, HOMAR-K MLRS rocket launchers, and K2 tanks.

It goes without saying that Poland has signed many arms contracts with NATO members, including the United States.

Another issue is the fatal blow that the Russian Black Sea fleet received from Ukraine, and one of the most important challenges of the Russia-Ukraine war is the security of the Russian fleet and ships in the Black Sea.

It should be noted that Russia faces another challenge in the sea. To cross the Black Sea and enter the Mediterranean Sea, it needs access to two straits, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, which are controlled by Turkey.

Not long ago, Ankara closed these waterways to the Russian fleet for a while based on the Montreux agreement and on the pretext of the war in Ukraine.

Currently, due to the critical conditions of Turkey's economy and Erdogan's approach to Western countries, there is a possibility that we will once again see the aforementioned waterways closed to the Russian fleet.

Of course, the challenge between Russia and Turkey has other dimensions. Ankara is interested in forming the Turan Army with the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) which includes Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Hungary. This strategic goal of Turkey is in line with the Western strategy for NATO expansion to the East.

Not long ago, we witnessed the opening of the NATO relations office in Astana, Kazakhstan, by the American ambassador to the country.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Jeremy Corbyn calls on UK government to support ICJ genocide case

Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the British Labour Party, has called on the UK government to support the genocide case filed by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"Many people are very pleased that the government of South Africa has taken an initiative in going to the International Court of Justice to hold Israel to account for the deaths of so many wholly innocent people in Gaza," Corbyn said in a speech in the UK parliament on Monday.

"Cannot the government understand that and at least support South Africa's process?" Corbyn added.

South Africa and Israel will present oral arguments at public hearings in The Hague on Thursday and Friday this week, as the UN's highest court considers South Africa's request the court takes "provisional measures" to protect Palestinians with "extreme urgency".

The governments of Bolivia, Jordan, Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Comoros, and Djibouti, as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), have expressed support for South Africa's application to the court. Meanwhile, France's UN ambassador has said that Paris will support the court's decision.

Ofer Cassif – a Knesset member representing the far-left, Arab-majority Hadash coalition – has also expressed his support for this week's hearing at the ICJ assessing South Africa's accusations of genocide against Israel.

In a post on X, he accused the Israeli government of leading "South Africa to turn to The Hague".

"My constitutional duty is to Israeli society and all of its residents, not to a government whose members and its coalition are calling for ethnic cleansing and even actual genocide," he wrote.

In October, Cassif was suspended by the Israeli parliament's ethics panel after he compared Netanyahu's Gaza plan with the Nazis' "Final Solution" against Jews in Europe.

WHO: Gaza's health system rapidly 'collapsing'

Sean Casey, an emergency medical teams coordinator in Gaza, has warned the enclave's entire health system is rapidly breaking down as medical staff and patients flee facilities in southern Gaza.

"What we're seeing is really worrying around a lot of the hospitals and an intensification of hostilities, very close to the European Gaza Hospital," he said. "We are seeing the health system collapse at a very rapid pace."

Since October 7, there have been about 600 attacks on hospitals and vital medical infrastructure in Gaza, according to the WHO, killing 606 people within the healthcare facilities.

British surgeon says Gaza 'beyond worst thing' he's seen

A British surgeon who led an emergency medical team in central Gaza says the situation at Al-Aqsa hospital has been "beyond any doubt the worst thing" he's seen in his career, as Jordan's monarch warned Israel's bombardment was creating an "entire generation of orphans." "There's been multiple traumatic amputations of children ... horrific burns, the likes of which I've never seen before," Dr. Nick Maynard told CNN's Isa Soares on Monday after his team found themselves with no choice but to withdraw from the hospital, following increased Israeli military activity.

He said that often "there is no pain relief to give to these patients at all," underscoring the dire humanitarian situation and lack of medical supplies in the Palestinian enclave following more than three months of Israeli bombardment.

Swedes told to 'prepare for war'

Top Swedish officials have urged the country's citizens to prepare for a potential war, amid rising tensions with Moscow. The statements were made at the Folk och Forsvar National Conference in Salen.

In a speech on Sunday, Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom hailed his country's expected membership in NATO as "the biggest change in Swedish security policy in more than 200 years."

Billstrom warned that "Russia will constitute a serious threat to the security of Sweden and Europe for the foreseeable future." He added that Stockholm "must be realistic and assume – and be prepared for – a drawn-out confrontation."

Lebanon says Shebaa Farms must be part of conflict solution

Lebanon's caretaker foreign minister, Abdallah Bou Habib, has told a UN official that reclaiming the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms must be a non-negotiable part of any solution to end the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

"The Shebaa Farms are an essential pillar in the comprehensive solution and stopping tension in the south, and cannot be skipped," he told Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the under-secretary-general for peace operations in a meeting in Beirut.

He said "Hezbollah has a right to its position" in reference to the group's firm stance that there will be no negotiations before there is a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Habib added that the "Lebanese army is an essential partner in ensuring security and stability in the south" and the fact that its forces have come under 34 Israeli attacks since the start of the war is not helping the situation.

Israeli army suffers high casualties in Gaza

Resistance pounds Tel Aviv as Haniyah gives reasons for the October 7 attack

From page 1 ▶ An Israeli military statement on Tuesday also said dozens of soldiers have been injured over the past 48 hours.

The military also announced on Monday that more than 100 of its soldiers had sustained injuries over the past 24 hours. The regime's news outlets described Monday as one of the toughest days so far in the Israeli war on Gaza.

According to Israeli media reports, 514 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the start of the regime's war on Gaza on October 7, including 180 soldiers who were killed since the start of ground offensives in the coastal enclave on October 27.

According to the reports, more than 1,000 soldiers have been injured since the start of the ground offensives in Gaza, with around 250 in serious condition.

Many experts believe the casualty figures of the Israeli army are more than likely to be an undercount and several Israeli papers have reported that the number of wounded soldiers in Gaza is several times higher than the figures being announced.

The Israeli newspaper Maariv said, "Three months have passed since the outbreak of the war, and partial data on the soldiers' injuries are now being revealed," adding that "there are approximately 3,221 soldiers wounded since the beginning of the war".

The Hebrew paper said about 2,335 soldiers who were admitted to hospitals have not returned to combat duty.

Other Israeli media outlets have cited medical staff in the occupation army who have revealed that a quarter of the soldiers receiving psychological treatment in private clinics, about 9,000 soldiers, have not returned to combat duties in Gaza.

Several days ago, the regime's media reported an estimate by the "Israeli Ministry of Security" indicating that about 12,500 soldiers would be permanently disabled as a result of the war on Gaza.

On the battlefield, the military wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam brigades, has said its fighters thwarted a raid in the central Gaza Strip's al-Bureij camp, where the regime believed one of its captives had been taken.

The botched attempt, according to the al-Qassam brigades, resulted in the death of Israeli soldiers and the seizure of their military equipment.

In a statement, al-Qassam brigades also said that members of an Israeli military unit were killed and injured after coming under attack in a house in an area in the southern city of Khan Younis, where they had taken refuge inside.

Palestinian resistance factions continue to confront the occupation army's attempts to advance in central and southern areas of the enclave, which is currently witnessing the most intense battles.

The occupation army has effectively withdrawn from the northern Gaza Strip after reducing its civilian infrastructure to rubble but failing to achieve any success.

In a show of its ongoing strength, the armed wing of Hamas has fired rockets at multiple cities and settlements in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, including a barrage of missiles at Tel Aviv and its suburbs.

Israeli media reported sirens sounding in Tel Aviv and some 30 other cities and towns.

The al-Qassam brigades said in a statement that it had "bombed Tel Aviv with a missile salvo in response to the Zionist massacres against civilians."

The head of the Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, has said that the only way for the «Zionist prisoners to leave Gaza alive» is to release all Palestinian prisoners in the occupation prisons.

In a televised speech, Haniyeh indicated that "the declared Israeli goals of the war are: eliminating the Hamas movement, recovering the captives, and implementing a displacement plan (for Gazan civilians)".

He stressed that the "army of the occupation and the Zionist and Western intelligence have been unable to achieve none of these goals after 100 days of war."

Haniyeh also cited several reasons that led to the al-Aqsa Storm Operation on October 7. "The marginalization of the Palestinian issue on a local and international level, the arrival of [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's] Zionist government, which placed on top of its agenda the displacement of our people, the desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque and changes to its status quo."

The final issue Haniyeh pointed out was "the processes of normalization and integration of the (Israeli) occupation into the region at the expense of our people and our cause."



Haniyeh cites the "displacement of our people and integration of the occupation (regime) into the region at the expense of our people" as some of the reasons for the Oct. 7 attack.

As regional and international actors scramble to find a ceasefire to end the Israeli war on Gaza, many global leaders have accepted that the Palestinian struggle has been long lost in the minds of the international community.

The ultra-right cabinet members of the Netanyahu government have been condemned for encouraging settlers to go on deadly rampages against Palestinian civilians in occupied West Bank villages.

Netanyahu's coalition government, which is the most radical of its kind in Israel's history, came into power in January last year.

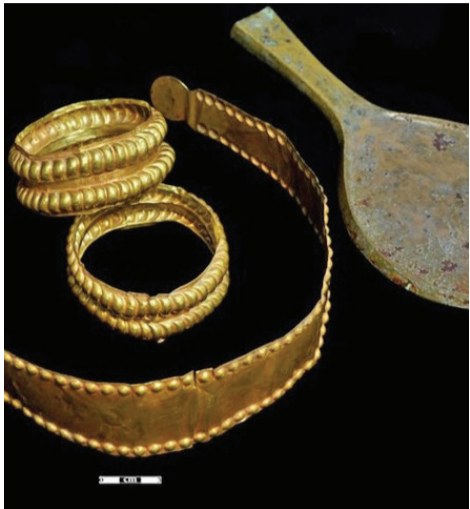
This is while the Netanyahu government had instructed the military to raid the occupied West Bank on an almost daily basis, making 2023 the deadliest for Palestinian civilians (before October 7) since records by the United Nations began.

Palestinian prisoners have been deprived of their most basic human rights, whilst female prisoners subjected to physical abuse.

The same government of Netanyahu had encouraged more settlers to desecrate the holy al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) on a more regular basis.

Several countries in the West Asia region have also normalized ties with the occupying regime.

Six moveable properties in Golestan added to national heritage list



TEHRAN—A total of six historical moveable properties in the northern province of Golestan have recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, CHTN reported on Tuesday.

Two identical golden bracelets, one golden forehead band, one handle-less engraved mirror, and two kohl containers are the new properties added to the prestigious list.

Golestan is home to hundreds of historical

and natural sites, with UNESCO-registered Gonbad-e Qabus – a one-millennium-old brick tower – amongst its most famous.

Narratives say the tower has influenced various subsequent designers of tomb towers and other cylindrical commemorative structures both in the region and beyond. According to the UN body, the mudbrick tower bears testimony to the cultural exchange between Central Asian nomads and the ancient civilization of Iran.

Gorgan, the provincial capital, is famed for being home to an ancient defensive wall of the same name (“The Great Wall of Gorgan”) which stretched some 200 km in length and was built to prevent the invasion of the northern tribes.

Also known as the Red Wall or the Red Snake, it is the longest ancient barrier between Central Europe and China, longer than Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall put together, and the third-largest wall in the world after the walls of China and Germany. However, most parts of the gigantic monument are still hidden underneath the surface through some segments that have so far been unearthed and even restored to their former glory.

Qajar-era bazaar in Semnan undergoes restoration

TEHRAN—A restoration project has commenced on a Qajar-era (1789-1925) Bazaar in Aradan county, north-central Semnan province, a local tourism official has said.

The project involves repairing the damaged parts and flooring, Abbas Khaksar explained on Tuesday.

The historical structure has been inscribed on the national heritage list.

Bazaars in the ancient Islamic world were vividly described in the folktales of “The Thousand and One Nights.”

Bazaars are typically roofed for protection against the hot desert sun, either with a single roof, with individual vaulted cupolas or domes, or with awnings.

In Iranian culture, bazaars have made great contributions to commercial activities. Meanwhile their extended activities can be traced to social, cultural, political, and religious roles.

Most mazes and passages offer certain commodities such as carpets, metalwork, toys, clothing, jewelry, kitchen appliances, traditional spices, herbal remedies, and natural perfumes. One can also bump into colorful grocery stores, bookbinders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, tobacconists, tailors, flag sellers, broadcloth sellers, carpenters, shoemakers, and knife-makers.

In addition, there are divided carpet sections in a bazaar that enable visitors to browse hand-woven Persian carpets and rugs. From another point of view, bazaars are also synonyms for foods, with their unmissable colorful stalls

of vegetables, herbs, and spices. Yet, most of these ingredients might be mysterious to a foreign eye.

Browsing through a traditional bazaar may provide new experiences and fresh points of view on ancient Iran. Such excursions can be made either in person or by “off-the-beaten-track” tours. Not only it’s an opportunity to discover dozens of unique local ingredients, but it’s also a chance to taste street foods and delicacies, in some traditional bakery known only by locals and shopkeepers.

While roaming over a vaulted bazaar, people-watching and even mingling with them is one of the best ways to take the pulse of the ancient land.

The main populated centers of Semnan province lie along the ancient Silk Road (and modern-day Imam Reza Expressway), linking Rey (Tehran) with Khorasan (Mashhad). While few visitors spend much time in the area, driving through, you can easily seek out several well-preserved caravanserais (notably Dehnamak and Ahowan), cisterns (the Cafe Abenbar in Garmsar is a special treat), and ruined mud citadels (Padeh is lumpy but fascinating). The large, bustling cities of Semnan, Damghan, and Shahrud (Bastam) all have a small selection of historic buildings and Semnan has a fine old covered bazaar.

Semnan is bounded by the provinces of Khorasan Razavi and South Khorasan on the east, Isfahan on the south, Qom and Tehran on the west, and Mazandaran and North Khorasan on the north.

Rescuers free tourists and guides trapped in Slovenian cave

Rescuers successfully freed five people from a cave in Slovenia on Monday, two days after the group went missing.

Two guides and three tourists entered the cave, named Krizna Jama (or “Cross Cave”), in southern Slovenia on Saturday morning, after a period of heavy rain, and failed to return later that day.

A third guide went to search for them but could not find the missing group, and the Slovenian Cave Rescue Service (CRS) was activated to recover them.

The European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) said in a post on Facebook on Monday that they had successfully been evacuated, praising those involved in an “excellent operation.”

The water cave is one of Slovenia’s most well-known tourist destinations, with visitors able to take a boat ride to explore inside.

The ECRA sent divers into the cave on Sunday and successfully made contact with the group, but were unable to evacuate them because high water levels had blocked the two safe passages, the service said in a statement on Monday.

The group were about 1.3 miles from the cave entrance, and were in good physical and mental condition, the ECRA said.

“The morning brings positive information; the water level in Krizna Jama has decreased overnight,” the agency said on Monday morning, before the operation retrieved the group.

The ECRA added that decreased water levels meant rescuers could navigate a boat around the cave area, “which is very promising for the rescue of trapped individuals.”

(Source: CNN)

Golestan Palace to showcase Iran’s cultural heritage in Nowruz exhibition

TEHRAN— An exhibition showcasing the rich tourism potentials and historical artifacts of Iran’s cultural heritage is scheduled to take place at the prestigious Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran during the Iranian New Year holidays in March.

This initiative aims to highlight the diverse cultural offerings of the country’s provinces, Afarin Emami, the director of Golestan Palace announced on Tuesday, CHTN reported.

Golestan Palace, which is Tehran’s sole World Heritage site, consistently welcomes between 12,000 to 15,000 visitors daily during Nowruz, she explained and added: “Its extensive space provides an ideal setting for the presentation of Iran’s captivating tourist attractions, as well as its intriguing cultural and historical sites.”

To realize this vision, tourism officials from all across Iran have been invited to contribute their respective historical artifacts, representative of their regions, to be showcased at Golestan Palace during the holiday period, she noted.

It is anticipated that this event will transform the palace into a



unique platform for acquainting visitors with the country’s remarkable cultural and historical treasures, she said.

Emami also highlighted the importance of museums as a means for the public to witness the dynamic museum activities and cultural and historical endeavors taking place in Iran.

Consequently, museums should be accorded significant attention by their managers and foster closer interactions with one another to facilitate more of these extraordinary events, she concluded.

A destination for domestic and international travelers, Golestan Palace is located in the heart and historic core of Tehran. The palace complex is one of the oldest in the Iranian capital, originally built during the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) in the historical walled city.

Located in the heart of Tehran, the palace is like a beautiful pearl that evokes an innate sense of the luxury of Persian kings. Beautiful fountains and lush greenery surround the palace.

Following extensions and additions, it received its most

characteristic features in the 19th century, when the palace complex was selected as the royal residence and seat of power by the Qajar ruling family (1789–1925). At present, the Golestan Palace complex consists of eight key palace structures mostly used as museums and the eponymous gardens, a green shared center of the complex, surrounded by an outer wall with gates.

The palace contains numerous ornaments dating from the 19th century, which are one of its distinguishing features. Palace visitors are impressed by the palace’s lavish decoration: painting, mural, fresco, marble carvings, mirror mosaic, and stained glass.

Talar-e Salam, or the reception room, is perhaps the most famous hall in the palace and is where the kings welcomed foreign guests arriving in Iran. Beautiful mirrorwork by Iranian masters decorates the ceilings and walls of this hall, and marble mosaics cover the floors.

UNESCO has it that the complex exemplifies architectural and artistic achievements of the Qajar era including the introduction of European motifs and styles into Persian arts.

Sassanid fortress to host national food festival



TEHRAN— Qale Falak-ol-Aflak, which is a Sassanid era (224–651) fortress located in Khorramabad, the capital of western Lorestan province, is planned to host a national food festival, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The festival is designed to develop and promote event-based tourism while preserving local customs, traditions, and empowering the local communities in Lorestan and Khorramabad, Ata Hassanpur explained on Tuesday.

He also emphasized that the festival’s key aspects include the mastery of cooking traditional

and local dishes, the exhibition of handicraft products, as well as the celebration of local customs and traditions.

The national food festival will be held from January 24 to February 2.

Iranian cuisine, usually dominated by fragrant herbs, varies from region to region. It principally accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

Experts say that food is not merely an organic product with biochemical compositions. However, for members of each community, food is defined as a cultural element.

No Persian meal is complete without an abundance of herbs. Every table is usually set with sabzi khordan, a basket of fresh herbs, radishes, and scallions, which are eaten raw and by the handful. Persian cuisine is, above all, about balance — of tastes and flavors, textures and temperatures.

The unmissable eight-towered Falak-ol-Aflak Castle dominates the city as one of the most visited travel destinations in the region for both domestic and foreign sightseers.

The fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651). It seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

Soaked in history and culture, Lorestan is one of the lesser-known travel destinations

in Iran, which mainly acts as a gateway to the sweltering plains below in adjoining Khuzestan province. Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Iranian cuisine varies from region to region and accentuates freshness, deliciousness, and colorfulness.

The region was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC.

Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

Ancient reliefs become target of treasure hunters in Turkey

An academic has cautioned that urgent protection is required for the historic Adamkayalar (Men of Rock) reliefs in the southern province of Mersin, which have been vandalized by people looking to find supposedly hidden treasures.

Adamkayalar (“adam” means men and “kaya” means “rock” in Turkish meaning man-rocks) is a place consisting of reliefs and figures made on the slopes of the Şeytan Deresi Canyon (Devil Creek Canyon), in a strategic position overlooking Kizkalesi in Mersin.

In terms of size, workmanship, and story, it is a rare value not only in Türkiye but worldwide.

It is comprised of two main locations. The first is the rock reliefs carved into the rocks of Devil Creek Valley, and the second can be found in the northeast section of the valley, where remnants of castles, bastions, and settlements still remain.

“Adamkayalar holds significance on par with the

Nemrut and Göbeklitepe regions. Therefore, it is imperative that Adamkayalar be promptly designated as an archaeological site. A project should be devised and immediately put into action,” said Murat Durukan, the chair of the Archaeology Department at Mersin University.

Stating that Adamkayalar, located 60 kilometers west of the city possesses an immense potential as a tourism magnet, Durukan pointed out that this potential remains underutilized, and with the implementation of facilities, security measures, cameras, and lighting systems, Adamkayalar could be transformed into a unique destination.

“These are relatively simple projects. If we put them into action without delay, we can confidently say that both Mersin and Anatolia could gain a new tourism attraction,” he added.

Archaeologists think that the people depicted on the reliefs represent the kings and queens

of the Ancient State of Olba and the purpose of these was to commemorate the dead.

There are 19 figures in 9 niches (cavities) in Adamkayalar. These 19 figures consist of 11 men, 4 women, 2 children, 1 mountain goat and 1 eagle. These reliefs depict various scenes in a story-telling manner. Each of the figures, such as the soldier’s farewell scene, the ritual scene, the dead feast scene, the scene where a man holds a bunch of grapes in one hand and holds a goat by the horns with the other, has a different story.

In one of the reliefs, a figure is depicted pouring a liquid from the jug in his left hand into the bowl in the other hand, and this depiction gives us information about the presentation of liquid, which is among the ancient burial traditions.

Especially the cult of commemoration of the dead comes to the fore here. The inscriptions under the reliefs provide information about the name of the important person

who died or the name of the person who made this relief. Based on these inscriptions, it is understood that the last version of the reliefs was completed in the 2nd century, during the Roman Empire. It is understood that the reliefs were completed in approximately 250 years, and the artistic style change in the construction of the reliefs is noticed due to the long duration of their construction.

Thanks to the relatively difficult transportation, Adamkayalar, which has been very well preserved until recently, was destroyed by some treasure hunters in 2015.

Although it was stated that there would be no items of financial value for treasure hunters in Adamkayalar, this statement was not sufficient. However, it is known that people of that period made their graves in other places that no one knows against the risk of theft, and this knowledge puts the famous reliefs in danger of extinction.

(Source: Arkeonews)

Over 29,000 multiple births registered in 9 months

TEHRAN – Within the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 2023), 29,728 multiples were born in the country, according to the Civil Registration Organization.

Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, and Khuzestan provinces had the highest number of multiple births with 4,318, 2,622, and 2,351 cases respectively, IRNA reported.

Out of the registered multiple births, 28,148 were twins, 1,506 were triplets, 64 were quadruplets, and 10 were higher-order multiple births.

Some 34.6 percent of registered births were first-born children; 38.9, 17.6, 5.1, and 2 percent were related to second-born to fifth-born children.

Multiple births last year

During the past Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023), 38,321 multiples were born in the country.

Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, and Isfahan provinces had the highest number of multiple births with 6,093 cases, 3,096 cases, 2,864 cases, and 2,121 cases respectively, ISNA reported.

Last year, a total of 18,205 twins, 602 triplets, and 25 quadruplets were born in the country.

Baby boys outpacing girls

Some 51.9 percent of babies born in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year were boys, outpacing girls with



48.1 percent.

According to the Civil Registration Organization, the ratio of male to female births in this period was 108, which shows a 0.9 percent growth compared to the same period last year (104), IRNA reported.

It is emphasized that the number of male births in the world is more than the number of female births. The 'natural' sex ratio at birth is around 103 to 107.

This ratio gradually decreases in the following years due to the high death rate of the males. Around 20-25 years of age, this ratio is balanced and reaches 100.

Based on the statistics of the Civil Registration Organization, the average age of the mother at the first childbirth is 27.4 in the whole country in the six-month period.

The figure is 28.1 in urban areas and 24.4 in rural areas. The highest average age of mothers at first childbearing is in Tehran

province, 30.3, and the lowest is in Sistan-Baluchestan province, 22.6.

Also, in the mentioned six months, 524,637 births were registered in the country; Tehran province with 66,035 and Semnan province with 3,387 births hold the record for the highest and lowest number of births in the country.

Population growth policies

Paying attention to the law on supporting families and the youth will pave the way for the development of the country and will also reduce the population crises, but the accurate and timely implementation of the law requires willpower both from people and officials.

According to the national center for monitoring population policies, from 2001 to 2015, the number of births has been increasing in the country, but after 2015, the number of births started to decrease with an almost steep slope.

In 2020, the number of births in the country (1,114,000) decreased by more than 29 percent compared to 2015 (1,570,000), a decrease of more than 450,000 births, which was unprecedented in the last few decades.

The number of births in the year 2021 (1,116,000) also shows an increase of about 2,000 compared to the year 2020.

Also, the rate of births from about 20 per thousand population in 2015 has reached its lowest level in the last 50 years with a significant decrease to 13.24 per thousand population in 2021.

The population growth rate reached 0.73 percent in 2020 and 0.68 percent in 2021 despite an increase of 2,000 births compared to 2020.

Estimates show that due to the slight increase in births last year compared to 2020, the population growth rate this year will also decrease.

Also, as long as the fertility rate is below the replacement level, it is expected that the country will face a further decrease in the population growth rate in the coming years.

In Iran, about 10.5 percent of the population was over 60 years old in 2020. In 2050, the population over 60 years is forecast to increase to 33 percent.

Also, about 7 percent of the population was over 65 years old in 2020. In 2030, the population over 65 years is forecast to increase to about 10 percent.

Iran achieves technology to manufacture dressings for EB patients

TEHRAN – An Iranian knowledge-based company has gained the technology for producing wound dressings for Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) patients.

EB is a severe and life-threatening skin condition that causes extremely painful wounds. Many are children, who are often referred to as "butterfly kids" because of their fragile skin.

The product is a sort of stick that is non-adherent and needs to be replaced every three days.

The dressing has passed the lab tests and inspection of the Food and Drug Administration. It is going through the final stages of obtaining a license from the Ministry of Health.

Sanctions on medicine

In July 2022, Iranian Ambassador to Stockholm Ahmad Masoumifard severely criticized a Swedish company for refraining from selling special bandages which are vital for patients suffering from Epidermolysis Bullosa in the country.

"A Swedish company manufacturing medical supplies is still refraining from selling bandages needed for EB patients in Iran under the pretext of U.S. sanctions," the envoy wrote on his Twitter.

Across the country, 950 people have been

diagnosed with EB, but considering that EB is estimated to occur in 1 newborn per 50,000 live births, it is suggested that in Iran 1,200 people are suffering from EB.

Without the bandages, they face difficulties even in their daily routine, including walking, eating, or even breathing, and unfortunately, there is no alternative treatment for such pain.

The criminal policy of the United States caused the death of 15 EB patients from 2010 to 2018 when the Swedish bandage maker decided to halt shipments to Iran due to fear of secondary sanctions as part of over-compliance.

In October 2021, experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council said over-compliance with United States-imposed sanctions against Iran is harming the right to health, and people with rare skin diseases are among those affected, many of them children.

As a result, EB patients in Iran can no longer enjoy the right to health, said the experts.

Export of medicine and medical equipment rise

Iran has experienced a significant rise in

exports of medicine and medical equipment in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year that started on March 21, 2023.

"Exports of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment grew by 300 percent in the first four months of the year," IRNA quoted Heidar Mohammadi, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, as saying.

Around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market is produced by Iranian companies, he highlighted.

Currently, the production of medicine, medical equipment, and powdered milk is supported by subsidies. So, their exports were very limited, but it is hoped that their exports will increase next year, he explained.

Referring to the shortage of 100 drug items in the country, he said: "Currently, nearly one and a half percent of the country's pharmaceutical need is imported. Along with domestic production, it is done as soon as the domestic production meets the demand."

A total of 227 knowledge-based firms are supplying medical equipment for health centers across the country, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iran, Tajikistan to boost links in knowledge-based sector

From page 1 ▶

iHiT in Dushanbe

Fiروزabadi and Emamoli signed a memorandum of understanding to found a joint innovation and technology house in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

Based on the memorandum of understanding, the two countries will define joint projects for expanding technological and research cooperation.

A joint committee has been formed to follow up on planning, coordinating, observing, and evaluating the progress of the joint activities; in case needed, the two sides will hold online meetings to offer suggestions based on the results of evaluations.

Tehran, Dushanbe call for enhanced scientific co-op

In January 2023, the Iranian deputy science minister and the president of Tajikistan's Academy of Sciences held a meeting to discuss ways to boost relations in the field of science and research.

Zohidi Nizomiddin Shamsiddinzoda, the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, also attended the meeting, IRNA reported.

The two sides emphasized the need to develop scientific and technological cooperation by forming a joint committee in the near future.

Vahid Haddadi-Asl, the Iranian official, referred to common religion and language and geographical proximity as factors that can be effective in deepening the cooperation between the two countries, saying that the past relations between the two countries have been in line with cooperation and friendship.

The Exchange of academic staff members, cooperation of academic staff members in scientific projects, and participation in scientific seminars of the two countries should be strengthened, he highlighted.

The Tajik official, for his part, pointed out that Tajikistan is interested in cooperating with Iran, saying: "By exchanging the scientific achievements of the two countries, we can further help the development of the two countries."

"We are ready for the participation of Iranian professors in scientific conferences of Tajikistan," the president of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan added.

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

He made the remarks at the COMSTECH (the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) ceremony.

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

In 2021, Iranian scientists published more than 77,000 scientific articles in the Scopus database, so that, Iran has been ranked 15th in science production, he said, IRNA reported.



The country also ranked 15th and 16th in the world in terms of scientific references, he added.

Pointing to the history of Iran's scientific activities in the past two decades, Salehi said that Iran ranked 56th in science production in 1996 and ranked 15th in 2021. Accordingly, we are leading the region in science production.

Out of a total of 77,000 articles published by Iranian scientists in the Scopus database last year, 35.7 percent were related to international joint activities. Despite the sanctions, the amount of joint scientific activities of Iranian researchers has increased every year.

Iranian scientists are not limited by geographical and political borders, and apart from multi-national projects, the increase in Iranian researchers' citations also proves this issue.

Referring to research centers, institutes, and science and technology hubs, he highlighted that in the past years, with the establishment of 240 innovation centers, as well as 49 science and technology parks, we have launched a complete roadmap to transform science into technology.

Iran ready for sci-tech cooperation

"We are keen to engage with the international community and share our research with them while benefiting from the best practices, developments, and achievements of other countries in the fields of science, technology, and innovation," IRIB quotes Firouzabadi as saying on November 3, 2023.

The innovation ecosystem and knowledge-based companies in Iran are a testimony of the sustainable potential of our youth and the pivotal role of women in management levels, he said.

He went on to say that knowledge-based companies play a key role in developing new technologies and solutions to face today's challenges, they have a profound impact on the preservation of basic human rights such as the right to life, health, work and development, and at the same time they deal with inequalities, poverty and unemployment in society.

"Despite unilateral economic sanctions and challenges in accessing coronavirus vaccines and related medical equipment, Iran has achieved an impressive 76 percent vaccination rate among its population against COVID-19," Firouzabadi added.

Iran's active participation in international cooperation and sharing knowledge and initiatives to strengthen the global response to this epidemic, especially in developing and less developed countries, demonstrate its unwavering commitment to promoting human rights and improving the well-being of communities around the world.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Army to set up five field hospitals nationwide

TEHRAN – The Iranian Army will set up five field hospitals in the country to offer services to COVID-19 patients, IRIB reported on Thursday.

A 120-bed field hospital built by the Army, equipped with advanced medical devices to provide services to the people and medical staff, was inaugurated on April 24 in Isfahan province.

This field hospital is equipped with an ICU ward, ventilators, cardiac monitoring systems, oxygen generators, and resuscitation rooms, which offer services to coronavirus patients.

The Army, as it is present in various fields, can provide significant services to those infected with the pandemic with all its might, Abdolrahim Mousavi, Commander-in-Chief of the Army said.

اعلام ساخت پنج بیمارستان صحرائی ارتش در کشور

فرمانده کل ارتش جمهوری اسلامی ایران دستور ساخت پنج بیمارستان صحرائی ارتش در کشور را صادر کرد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صدا و سیما، امیر سرلشکر عبدالرحیم موسوی تاکید کرد: ارتش همان گونه که در زمینه‌های مختلف حضور داشته می‌تواند با تمام توان خود خدمات قابل توجهی به بیماران کرونایی ارائه دهد.

بیمارستان صحرائی ۱۲۰ تختخوابی ارتش مجهز به دستگاه‌های پیشرفته پزشکی برای ارائه خدمات به مردم و کادر پزشکی، چهارم اردیبهشت در اصفهان راه اندازی شد.

این بیمارستان صحرائی با تمام نیازمندی‌ها از جمله «آی. سی. یو»، ونتیلاتور، مونیتورینگ قلبی، دستگاه اکسیژن ساز، و اتاق احیا به بیماران کرونایی خدمات ارائه می‌دهد.



Rescue and relief drill held in Tabriz

Some ten thousand people attended a rescue, relief, emergency response, and shelter-in-place drill in the northwestern city of Tabriz on Monday.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society organized the event with the participation of representatives from four provinces.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:12 Evening: 17:29 Dawn: 5:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

Siamak Filizadeh's works on display in Saint Petersburg's Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art



TEHRAN-An exhibition of artworks by the Iranian artist Siamak Filizadeh is underway at the Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

In the exhibition titled "Born to Be Pawn," Filizadeh meticulously unravels historical narratives, blurring the lines between past and present and between fantasy and reality, Galleryinfo reported.

"All of these images, collages, individuals, and scenes stem from my own sense of confusion. Through this exhibition, I aim to convey my feelings of disconnection and bewilderment, inviting viewers to engage with these narratives," he said.

"The overlapping layers and concurrent narratives in these montages are not mere fantasies or legends but rather reflections of our contemporary world. The tales within this project feel both distant and intimately close to me. Narratives from the Torah and the Quran unfold on the streets of a seemingly fictional city, a city that feels both remote and familiar," he added.

"Everything lies within these nuances: the grain of concrete walls, the hue of garments, flushed countenances, moments of dread and celebration, and the myriad of meticulously chosen and photographed miniatures. They coalesce to form a narrative. It's not about a grand tale; these seemingly trivial details, which emerged from grand narratives, now tell stories suspended between reality and fiction, belonging neither here nor there," the artist noted.

"Perhaps every inhabitant of this city can be

likened to the builders of the Tower of Babel, who aspired to touch the divine. While the Tower of Babel no longer stands, the quest to connect with God endures. Could it be that every city signifies this pursuit of the divine? We're familiar with the tale of Babylon – that in striving for God's stature, our languages were confounded and communication shattered," Filizadeh continued.

"My narrative is yet another chronicle of aspiring for the divine. This time, the tower stands tall. Its pinnacle is lost in the vast sky's expanse, seemingly touching the divine. Yet, even with a shared language, the city's inhabitants found understanding each other elusive. A golden pickaxe was forged to bring down the tower," he said.

Filizadeh 54, received his high school diploma in Art in 1990 and graduated from the Tehran Azad University with a B.A. degree in Graphic Design in 1995. From 1988, he started his career as a graphic designer, working in different fields of design, advertising, branding, and visual arts.

He has worked as art director and graphic designer for a number of large institutions and international festivals and received numerous poster and book design prizes. His works are in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum (California, the U.S.) and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York City, the U.S.) as well as in various private collections worldwide.

Erarta is the largest private museum of contemporary art in Russia. Erarta Museum collection contains over 2,800 works, dating from the 1950s to the present and ranging from realism to abstraction and primitivism, by more than 300 artists from all across Russia. In addition to paintings, it includes drawings, prints, sculptures, installations, and video art.

Every year, Erarta stages around 40 temporary exhibitions of paintings, sculptures, photographs, fashion, design, and video art. The museum showcases up-and-coming talents from Russia and abroad and established stars of the global art scene.

Cartoon of Day



Palestinian journalists

Cartoonist: Mahmoud Rifai from Jordan

Imam Reza poetry festival to feature intl. workshops, literary gatherings

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN-The poetry section of the 21st edition of Imam Reza (AS) International Festival will be hosting a series of educational workshops and literary gatherings; the organizers have announced.

The specialized poetry section of the festival has meticulously planned a range of side programs, featuring educational workshops and national and international literary gatherings, the director of the festival Farhad Qaemian announced during a press conference held in Tehran on Tuesday.

The poetry section itself is comprised of four distinct categories, including Persian, Azeri, Arabic, and a dedicated section for children and youth poetry, he explained.

A series of seven educational workshops and poetry gatherings, boasting the participation of esteemed poets specializing in Persian verse, are among the highlights of the festival's Persian poetry section, while four informative educational workshops will be held across four provinces in children and youth poetry festival, he added.

Meanwhile, for the Azeri poetry festival, six workshops



and literary gatherings have been orchestrated, he noted.

Additionally, prominent literary figures will lead six workshops and literary gatherings across six provinces as part of the Arabic poetry festival, he stated.

Qaemian also mentioned the holding of international gatherings for these festivals and said: "Afghanistan has been designated as the host for the

international gatherings of the Persian poetry festival, while Basra and Najaf will play host to the international gatherings of the Arabic poetry festival."

"Kirkuk in Iraq and Istanbul will serve as the vibrant locations for the Azeri poetry gatherings, brimming with cultural exchange and artistic fervor," he concluded.

The Imam Reza (AS) International Festival is held annually in various provinces of

the country as well as in several other countries.

This festival encompasses various fields such as articles, plays or screenplays, produced shows, stories, visual arts, books, literary texts, poetry, press and digital works, and radio and television productions.

The festival will come to an end in Mashhad on May 19, 2024 that marks the birthday of Imam Reza (AS).

"The Play That Goes Wrong" underway in Tehran

TEHRAN-Iranian director Saeed Taghvaei has on stage "The Play That Goes Wrong" written by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer, and Henry Shields of Mischief Theatre Company at Mehregan Theater in Tehran.

Written in 2012, it is a farcical murder mystery, a play within a play, about the Cornley Drama Society that are putting on a 1920s murder mystery, but as the title suggests, everything that can go wrong... does! The accident-prone thespians battle against all odds to make it through to their final curtain call, with hilarious consequences.

After benefitting from a large and sudden inheritance, the inept and accident-prone Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society embark on producing an ambitious 1920s murder mystery. They are delighted that neither casting issues nor technical hitches currently stand in their way. However, hilarious disaster ensues and the cast start to crack under the pressure.

Before the play starts the audience sees the backstage staff doing last-minute adjustments to the set, including trying to

mend a broken mantelpiece and find a dog that has run off.

During the performance, a plethora of disasters befalls the cast, including doors sticking, props falling from the walls, and floors collapsing. Cast members are seen misplacing props, forgetting lines, missing cues, breaking character, mispronouncing words, stepping on fingers, being hidden in a grandfather clock, knocked unconscious, and being manhandled off stage.

"The Play That Goes Wrong" won the Best New Play at Broadway World UK Award and Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy in 2015.

It has been translated and produced in over 30 countries, including China, Spain, Greece, France, Italy, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, Argentina, Turkey, and Russia among others.

Mischief Theater is a British theater company that was founded in 2008 by a group of students from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in West London, and directed by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer,

and Henry Shields. The group originally began by doing improvised comedy shows, but by 2012 they expanded into comedic theatrical performances that includes choreographed routines, jokes, and stunts.

The company is primarily known for their comedic performances as the fictional theater company, the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society, enacting amateur performances that go wrong. In addition to "The Play That Goes Wrong," other works by the company include the TV series "The Goes Wrong Show". Several of the stage performances by the company have been shown in the West End of London, and also in theatres across the United Kingdom, North America, and Europe.

The cast of the "The Play That Goes Wrong" include Minoo Manouchehrinia, Farshad Farhadpour, Kasra Hedayatnia, Omid Azadkhani, Navid Dousti, Anita Shariati, Arash Sobhani, and Farhan Haghighian.

The play will remain on stage until January 27 at Mehregan Theater located at No. 3, Farhangi (Behnam) Alley, Vesal Shirazi St., Enqelab St.

Journalist casualties in the Israel-Gaza war

The Israel-Gaza war has taken a severe toll on journalists since Hamas launched its unprecedented attack against Israel on October 7 and Israel declared war on the militant Palestinian group, launching strikes on the blockaded Gaza Strip.

The Committee to Protect Journalists announced on its website on Monday that it is investigating all reports of journalists and media workers killed, injured, or missing in the war, which has led to the deadliest period for journalists since CPJ began gathering data in 1992.

CPJ is an American independent non-profit, non-governmental organization, based in New York City, with correspondents around the world. It promotes press freedom and defends the rights of journalists.

As of January 8, CPJ's preliminary investigations showed at least 79 journalists and media workers were among the more than 23,000 killed since the war began on October 7—with more than 22,000 Palestinian deaths in Gaza and the West Bank and 1,200 deaths in Israel.

The Israel Defense Forces told

Reuters and AFP that it could not guarantee the safety of their journalists operating in the Gaza Strip, after they had sought assurances that their journalists would not be targeted by Israeli strikes, Reuters reported on October 27.

Journalists in Gaza face particularly high risks as they try to cover the conflict during the Israeli ground assault, including devastating Israeli airstrikes, disrupted communications, supply shortages and extensive power outages.

As of January 8, 79 journalists and media workers were confirmed dead: 72 Palestinian, 4 Israeli, and 3 Lebanese; 16 journalists were reported injured; 3 journalists were reported missing; 21 journalists were reported arrested.

CPJ is also investigating numerous unconfirmed reports of other journalists being killed, missing, detained, hurt, or threatened, and of damage to media offices and journalists' homes.

"CPJ emphasizes that journalists are civilians doing important work during times of crisis and must not be targeted by warring parties," said Sherif Mansour, CPJ's Middle East

and North Africa program coordinator. "Journalists across the region are making great sacrifices to cover this heart-breaking conflict. Those in Gaza, in particular, have paid, and continue to pay, an unprecedented toll and face exponential threats. Many have lost colleagues, families, and media facilities, and have fled seeking safety when there is no safe haven or exit."

A report from the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) released on Friday highlights a shocking death toll among Palestinian journalists in Gaza, surpassing the mortality rate of combat soldiers in recent wars.

According to the IFJ, of the approximately 1,000 journalists working in Gaza at the start of the Israel-Gaza conflict, 75 have been killed, equating to a 7.5% mortality rate. This figure contrasts starkly with the death rates of U.S. soldiers in past conflicts, as reported by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: 1.4% in Korea, 1.7% in Vietnam, 1.8% in World War II, and 0.06% in Desert Storm, the organization said. The American War Library notes a 5% mortality rate for U.S. Marines in Vietnam, the highest among

combat soldiers.

Journalists in Gaza, armed with cameras and notepads, are facing a severe threat from one of the world's most sophisticated armies, IFJ said. It added that unlike soldiers, who are trained to evade injury and can expect prompt medical attention, journalists lack such support. A recent incident involved Gazan photographer Mohammed Balousha, who, after being shot, saved his own life using a blast trauma pack supplied by the IFJ, highlighting the precarious conditions they face.

The toll on journalists extends beyond deaths. Many have lost homes, family members, and lack essentials like food, water, and fuel. They carry their equipment on their shoulders, providing the world's only insight into life in Gaza due to restrictions on international reporters.

Many Gazan journalists believe they are targeted by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), with some reporting threats from callers claiming to represent the IDF.

Efforts to address these dangers include calls for the International Criminal Court to broaden its inquiry into the IDF's treatment of journalists, sparked by the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May 2022.