

*Ayatollah Khamenei's Instagram and Facebook accounts removed. Why?*

## Freedom of Speech in Meta Style



Protesters at Meta's headquarters demand the company stop removing pro-Palestine content on 12 December, 2023.

## Amir Abdollahian in Doha for talks over ties, Palestine

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian arrived on Monday in the Qatari capital, Doha, on the third leg of a regional tour that is centered on ways to settle the crises and issues in Gaza.

Prior to his visit to Qatar, his regional tour had taken him to Lebanon and Syria.

Iran's top diplomat held talks with senior Qatari officials about a range of issues, including cooperation between Tehran and Doha.

Like the talks in Beirut and Damascus, the main topics of the Iranian foreign minister's meetings with Qatari authorities focused on the developments in Palestine and ways to end the brutal Israeli onslaught against Gaza.

The necessary groundwork for establishing a permanent ceasefire, halting the attacks and crimes of the Zionist regime, and the urgent need to provide assistance to the people of Gaza were among the most important topics of discussions that took place between Abdollahian and Qatari officials.

In a meeting between Amir Abdollahian and the Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, they both talked about the ongoing onslaught on the Gazans. ▶ Page 2

## 67 environmental projects inaugurated to mark Islamic Revolution

TEHRAN – According to the Department of Environment (DOE), a total of 67 environmental projects in 17 provinces of the country have been inaugurated on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The anniversary of the Islamic Revolution is celebrated annually from February 1 to 11.

The projects, costing over 48 thousand billion rials (about \$960,000), were inaugurated simultaneously across the country on Saturday, February 10, IRNA reported.

Filtration and air monitoring stations ranked first with twelve projects, with infrastructure (10), smart management (3), online monitoring of industries (12), wastewater treatment (15), building environmental checkpoints (12), and education (3) in the next places.

Khorasan Razavi province with 19 projects, Tehran province with 8 projects, Lorestan, Hamadan, and West Azerbaijan provinces with 6 projects have the largest number of projects implemented, respectively.

It is the third phase of the environmental projects' inauguration during the current Iranian calendar year, which ends on March 20. ▶ Page 7

## Yemen stages new attack on U.S. vessel

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- Increasing American-British attacks against Yemen have failed to deter Ansarullah from targeting and expanding its naval operations against Israeli/American/British vessels transiting the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.

The spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces, Colonel Yahya Saree, announced in a concise military statement on Monday the targeting of the American vessel "Star Iris" in the Red Sea with a number of suitable naval missiles, confirming a direct hit.

According to the statement, the operation is in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza and in response to the joint American-British aggression on Yemen.

Furthermore, the Yemeni Armed Forces affirmed their commitment to enforcing the decision to prohibit Israeli navigation or vessels "heading to the occupied ports of Palestine" until the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip ceases.

## "Genocide Joe" blasts "Crime Minister"

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The United States' unconditional political and military support for Israel has made it complicit in the war crimes that the regime has been committing in the Gaza Strip since October 7.

The U.S. president remains the Israeli premier's partner in crime as more Palestinians in Gaza are being killed by the weapons that Washington has provided to Tel Aviv.

Last week, the U.S. Senate advanced a \$95 billion aid package that included \$35 billion in aid for Israel.

Nonetheless, Joe Biden has recently sharpened criticism of Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a Sunday phone call, the U.S. president warned the Israeli premier against launching a ground military offensive in Rafah. The city is packed with more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population living in squalid conditions who have fled there under Israeli orders.

On Thursday, Biden also used the phrase "over the top" to describe Israel's strikes in Gaza which have so far killed more than 28,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

## World condemnation of the U.S. and Israel appears to loom ahead...

By Martin Love

What appears to be coming sometime in the near future is the arrival of some major inflection point in history that absolutely ensures a different world generally that what has existed since the end of World War 2.

This will involve a reshuffling of power and influence, and the solidification of the establishment underway of new alliances between major countries and centers of power. In effect, this means a new world order quite different than the world dominated by the United States since 1945. And Allah help us all if this change, which is a foregone conclusion, is ushered in by a third world war. It does not have to be so, although conflicts of varying degrees between countries are part and parcel of the evolving changes. At least at the margin.

What marks the present by and large is the titanic, wasteful struggle of the U.S. to maintain its hegemony, and this struggle has been evident now especially in this century.

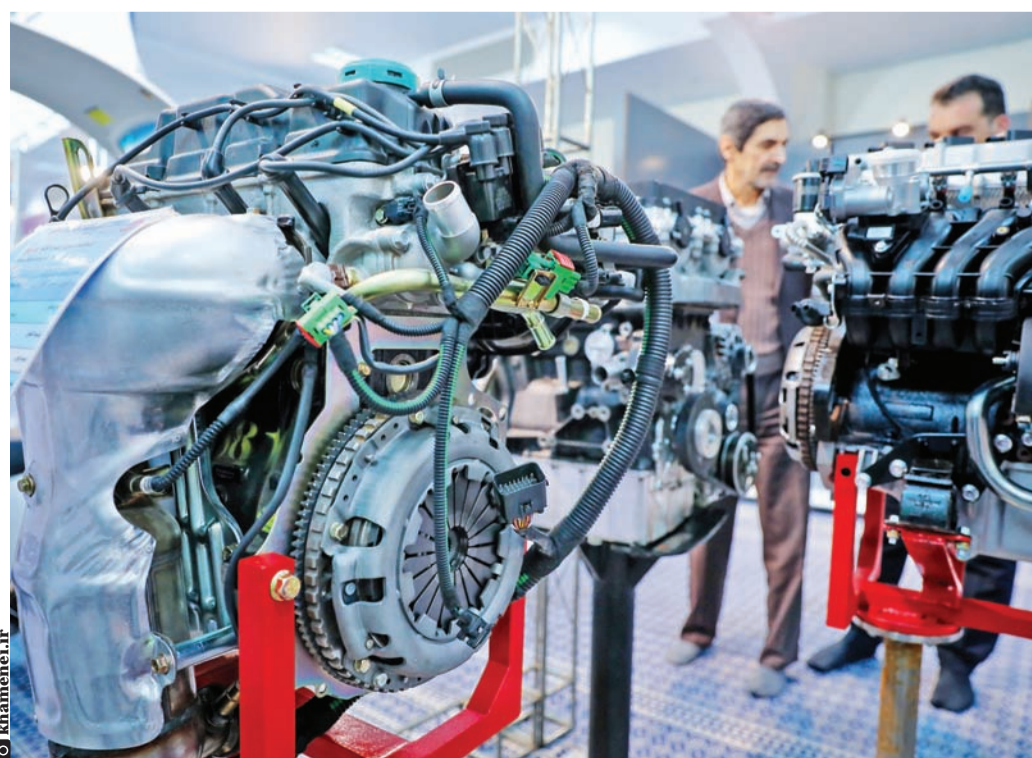
▶ Page 5

## Urdu, Bengali translations of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's "Cell No. 14" unveiled at New Delhi Book Fair

TEHRAN-The Urdu and Bengali translations of the autobiography book "Cell No. 14" written by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei were unveiled at the Iran pavilion at the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF).

The unveiling ceremony was held on Monday in presence of a number of cultural officials from Iran as well as enthusiasts, IRNA reported.

"The Hindi translation of the book is also underway and will be over soon," Farid Asr, the cultural attaché of Iran in India, said at the ceremony. ▶ Page 8



## Taking the sting out of sanctions

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN - When Donald Trump announced that he was re-imposing sanctions on Iran, and even intensifying them, the future began to look bleak and uncertain for me and the large population of Iranian youth.

In 2018, As Trump stood before journalists and spoke of the "maximum pressure campaign", the Iranian public was sent into a furor. Those who had experienced years of sanctions under Barack Obama and had finally breathed a sigh of relief with the inking of the JCPOA, thinking they would finally be free of punishing sanctions, began to await the worst. ▶ Page 4

## Tourist arrivals surge by 52% in Iran's tourism boom: DM

TEHRAN - Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the Deputy for Tourism at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, has revealed a remarkable 52% increase in foreign tourist arrivals to Iran during the first 10 months of this year.

The revelation took place at the opening ceremony of the 17th Tehran International Tourism Exhibition on Monday. Shalbafian emphasized that a staggering 5.4 million foreign tourists visited Iran during this period, showcasing a substantial 52% growth compared to the same timeframe last year.

Highlighting the scale of this year's exhibition, held in 20 halls spanning 60,000 square meters, Shalbafian noted that the event was inaugurated by Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization Zurab Pololikashvili. ▶ Page 6



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## The Gaza war increased regional unity

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

In a note, Kayhan addressed the unprecedented alliance in the region and wrote: While the Western governments of the region have not shown much effort to stop the Gaza war, Iran and the forces around it have demonstrated the face of regional leaders and the main supporters of Palestine. The Houthis have been able to disrupt shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait despite the attacks of the United States and England. The war in Gaza has brought about greater unity in the Muslim world than at any other time in recent decades. America's unconditional support for Israel has further isolated Washington and reduced its popularity in the region, and currently growing support in the region for resistance against the West and Israel is being formed. As a result of the mistakes made by their enemies in Israel and the West, Iran and its allies are likely to gain more influence and leverage in the region. For the U.S., the military power may be satisfactory but Washington cannot stop the escalation of tension in the region except by establishing a ceasefire in Gaza, ending the occupation and establishing a stable Palestinian government.

**Hamshahri: Iran is on the path of progress**

Hamshahri devoted its headline to the important and strategic achievements after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and said: The 45th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution is while according to statistics and surveys, today Iran has achieved important and strategic achievements in many fields. Iran in addition to being considered a regional power in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, is competing with the superpowers of the world in many fields. During the past decades, cruel foreign sanctions created obstacles in the country's progress in various indicators, but reliance on the power of domestic experts caused Iran to be among the world's leaders in many fields, from scientific and academic to health, military, space, nuclear, etc. All this is while the enemies and opposing currents have tried to hide the achievements of the Islamic Republic from public opinion in various ways with large political and media investments in recent years and to denigrate the country's brilliant record by highlighting some deficiencies.

**Sobh-e-No: The popular revolution plays the role of deterring threats**

Sobh-e-No devoted its editorial to the glorious presence of the people on the victory of

the Islamic Revolution anniversary (11 February) and wrote: One of the most significant differences between the Islamic Revolution and other great revolutions in the world, such as the French Revolution or the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, is the popular dimension of this revolution. According to Charles Kurzman, a professor of sociology and West Asian studies at the University of North Carolina and the author of the book "Unthinkable Revolution in Iran", "In terms of the number of people who participated in the Iranian revolution, it is one of the biggest uprisings in the history of the world." Despite the enemy's non-stop efforts to discourage and disappoint the people, the amazing attendance of the people in the celebration of the victory of the revolution is a miracle. This presence and participation in the elections have a strategic aspect and an operational aspect. Its strategic aspect is to show national unity, generate power and promote national security, and its operational aspect is to commemorate the anniversary of the revolution with high popular support. This presence showed the national power and this power will lead to the promotion of national security, which plays an undeniable role in deterring threats.

**Javan: An inevitable interaction with Tehran**

In an analysis, Javan discussed Iran's role in the future decisions of the U.S. in its policies in the Middle East. It wrote: William Burns, the director of the CIA, has considered interaction with Iran to be the key to the security of Israel and the Middle East region. America and its regional allies have always tried to deny the role and influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the developments and trends of the region, but they failed. Moreover, the axis of resistance in the region, from the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon to the Ansarullah movement in Yemen and the resistance groups in Iraq, each has struggled with Israel and America to stop the attacks on Gaza. The sum of these issues and America's claims about Tehran's encouragement and support of proxy groups in the region show that despite ignoring and even denying Iran's influence in regional developments, especially the security of West Asia, Washington is forced to interact with Iran to investigate the issues of this region. In other words, the United States will eventually have to consider Iran's demands, considerations and interests to create stability and peace in the region and stop hostile actions against Tehran and the axis of resistance.

## Iran plans satellite launches from domestic stations in two years: minister

TEHRAN- The Iranian Minister of Information and Communication Technology Issa Zarepour says Iran plans to launch foreign satellites from Iranian stations within the next two years.

Speaking about Iran's objectives in the realm of the space industry, Zarepour highlighted the country's ambition to utilize Iranian satellite carriers for launching satellites belonging to other nations.

He emphasized the significant progress Iran has made in its space industry over the past two years, indicating a strong trajectory for further advancement.

Zarepour underscored the Ministry's objective of ensuring the safe launch and successful orbiting of neighboring countries' satellites using Iranian satellite carriers.

He also noted Iran's self-sufficiency in imaging and evaluating satellites, with ongoing efforts focused on enhancing the accuracy of Iranian satellites.

Iranian satellite carriers are capable of launching satellites weighing between 100 to 200 kilograms, facilitated by ground stations for signal reception.

Highlighting the broader impact of Iran's space industry, Zarepour emphasized its contribution to improving the quality of life for Iranian citizens.

He mentioned plans for further improvements in Iranian launchers, with aspirations to reach the Geo layer within a five-year timeframe.

Zarepour expressed optimism about the future launch of Iranian-made satellites, building on recent successes in satellite deployment.

In a significant development, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) recently achieved a milestone by successfully launching its Sorayya satellite into a 750-kilometer orbit.

This accomplishment underscores Iran's growing capabilities in aerospace technology and its ambitions in space exploration.

The Sorayya satellite was launched using the three-stage solid-fuel Qaem 100 satellite carrier, developed by the IRGC Aerospace Force, marking Iran's first satellite deployment at this altitude.

Following the successful launch, General Ali Jafarabadi of the IRGC Aerospace Force's Space Division expressed readiness to launch satellites for neighboring countries, subject to government facilitation of necessary negotiations.

General Jafarabadi highlighted the IRGC's expertise in launching research satellites weighing less than 100 kilograms and reiterated the success of the recent collaboration between the government and the IRGC in satellite launches.

He affirmed the IRGC's preparedness to conduct multiple launches for the Iranian government, citing the successful deployment of the Qaem 100 satellite carrier and the Sorayya satellite as examples of Iran's growing capabilities in space technology.

## Amir Abdollahian in Doha for talks over ties, Palestine

From page 1 ▶

**"Israeli regime doomed to die if U.S. stops supports"**

During a meeting with about 15 officials from different Palestinian groups in the Syrian capital Damascus on Sunday, Iran's foreign minister noted that the Tel Aviv regime would fall if the U.S. officials put a moratorium on all kinds of supports.

"The Israeli regime totally collapsed after Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, and if it were not for the U.S.'s all-out meddling in the field in support of the Zionist regime and its efforts to resurrect and save it, this collapse would have been completely visible," Amir Abdollahian pointed out.

He went on to add that "the Israeli regime and the U.S. government achieved none of their declared goals since the beginning of the war on Gaza and that they are now forced to hold political talks with Hamas, whom Tel Aviv and Washington called for its demise."

Abdollahian also said that the struggle and resilience of the resistance groups, as well as the sacrifices of people in Gaza and the West Bank, and the practical unity of the Axis of Resistance in solidarity with Palestine helped the nation defeat the occupying regime.



In addition, he hailed the support provided for the Palestinians by the resistance factions in Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria, along with independent and brave governments and nations.

"Today, the Palestinian issue has become the foremost issue of the world. The October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Storm showed that Palestine is alive and that it will not surrender to the will of the Zionist regime and oppressive powers, including the U.S. government," he added.

Amir Abdollahian underscored that Tehran does believe the Palestinian leaders are able to find a solution on the basis of their nations' interests

and the international community.

He then called for unity among Palestinians, saying, "If you are united, the world will submit to your will." "What helped Palestine defeat the Israeli regime until this moment is the trust in God and the Gazans' resilience and sacrifice, as well as the support of the Axis of Resistance."

For their part, the Palestinian officials, stressed that the resistance movement as well as the Palestinian people have dealt devastating blow to the regime in spite of the rising number of martyrs and sprawling destruction of the Gaza Strip.

The leaders also said that the

Gaza war is not a kind of clash and fight between Hamas and the Israeli regime, describing it as an unfair faceoff between the oppressed Palestinian nation and the Zionist regime and its supporters.

Palestinian officials lauded Tehran's stance and position in advocating the Palestinian issue, calling it as "outstanding, distinct, practical and real."

The ongoing war is one of a string of battles that the Palestinians have had against the occupiers, the officials said, vowing to press ahead with their heroic struggle until the "complete liberation" of Palestine.

Israel has achieved little of substance in its incursion into the Gaza Strip since the last four months but the valiant Palestinian nation has won the battle with faith in divine assistance.

There is nothing left of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regime as it has found itself in a quagmire.

Israel waged the genocidal war on the besieged Gaza Strip on October 7 after Hamas carried out Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying regime in retaliation for its increased atrocities against the Palestinian people.

## Iran celebrates 45th anniversary of Islamic Revolution in Jeddah

TEHRAN – A ceremony marking the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Iran was held at the Iranian consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The gathering was attended by Mazen bin Hamli, Director General of the Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah, a large group of consuls stationed in Jeddah, representatives of various countries at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as traders, economic activists, and media personnel.

Hassan Zarnegar Abarghouei, the Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Jeddah, delivered a speech, thanking the guests for joining Iranians in celebrating a big day in their country's history.

In his speech, he referred to the scientific and technological achievements and economic, tourism, and scientific capacities of Iran, emphasizing the necessity of developing relations between Tehran and Riyadh and the readiness of traders and merchants from both countries to expand cooperation.

He further emphasized the need for unity among Islamic countries to end the crimes of the Zionist regime against the besieged Palestinian people in Gaza.

The Iranian Consulate in Saudi Arabia's port city of Jeddah was officially reopened in June of last year. The two countries had severed their ties in January 2016 after the execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, a prominent Shia cleric in Saudi Arabia, prompted angry protests in front of the



Saudi Embassy in Tehran and the kingdom's Consulate in the holy city of Mashhad.

China successfully mediated high-stakes talks between Tehran and Riyadh in March of last year, which led to the conclusion of a deal between the two sides that foresaw the resumption of their ties.

## Iranian military leaders hail IRGC on Guard's Day



TEHRAN- High-ranking Iranian military figures lauded the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on Monday, coinciding with Guard's Day, which marks the birth anniversary of Imam Hussain.

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief

of Staff of the Armed Forces, praised the "bright record" of the IRGC, highlighting their role in "holding the flag of the revolution," safeguarding security, and protecting the nation's achievements. He commended their "faith, sincerity, and dedication to duty" in defending the country's borders since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

General Bagheri drew upon the words of the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who declared, "If there was no guardian, there would be no country," underscoring the vital role the IRGC plays in national security and stability.

**Iranian Army Chief echoes praise for IRGC guardians**

Iranian Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi hailed the IRGC personnel

as a "source of immense pride for the Iranian nation." He emphasized the historical significance of Guardian's Day, stating it "symbolizes the honorable and tumultuous days of the revolution, reminding us all of its lasting legacy."

General Mousavi further emphasized the resilience of the IRGC in a separate message. He acknowledged attempts by "enemies of the country" to discredit the organization, but stressed that through "unity and cohesion, both the IRGC and the Iranian Army are growing stronger each day."

The statement highlights the symbolic nature of Guardian's Day coinciding with the anniversary of the revolution, emphasizing the IRGC's contributions during those challenging times. General Mousavi went on to declare the IRGC "a reality born from the very heart of the revolution."

## Raisi urges further cooperation with China

TEHRAN- In a New Year message to China, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has called for more expansion of bilateral relations.

In a post on X on Sunday, he congratulated the people and government of China over its

Lunar New Year.

"I sincerely congratulate the People's Republic of China on the occasion of the New Year and Lunar New Year and wish Iran and China, as two ancient civilizations, would be full of vitality in the New Year at all levels, especially

for the development of bilateral relations."

He also expressed optimism that "with the advent of the New Year, the world would be filled with justice for all people, especially for the oppressed Palestinian nation."

The Spring Festival marks the

beginning of Chinese New Year, which is also known as Lunar New Year. It marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The first day of Chinese New Year begins on the new moon that appears between January 21 and February 20.

## Iran Judiciary Chief due in Baghdad for talks

TEHRAN- Iranian Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei will pay a visit to Baghdad on Tuesday.

He will leave Tehran for Baghdad on Tuesday in response to the invitation of Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, Faiq Zaidan.

During his sojourn, special work plans will be implemented to strengthen legal and judicial relations between Iran and Iraq as much as possible.

He is scheduled to have meetings with certain Iraqi officials in an effort to fortify bilateral ties.

He is supposed to hold talks with Iranians

residing in Iraq, have negotiation and coordination with Iraqi judicial authorities, follow up the moves done by the Iraqi judiciary given the handling of the case of the assassination of General Soleimani and his comrade Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization.

Last year, Abbasali Kadkhodaei, head of a special legal committee tasked with investigating the assassination of General Soleimani, called for formation of a joint Iran-Iraq court to follow the issue at international courts with greater speed.

"The crime that the regime of the U.S. committed in the assassination of Hajj Qassem

and his companions was an open violation of international law," Kadkhodaei asserted.

He went on to add that the assassination was also a "violation of Iraq's sovereignty and violation of the (political) immunity of other countries' officials."

Kadkhodaei confirmed that so far Iran has demanded punishment for about 90 persons involved in the assassination, including those who aided and abetted in the terrorist act.

Among top figures who are subject to penalty are former U.S. president Donald Trump, his foreign secretary of state Mike Pompeo and national security advisor John Bolton.



# Freedom of speech in Meta style

By Ardalan Mohammadzadeh

TEHRAN- Meta's removal of Ayatollah Khamenei's accounts raises concerns over freedom of speech and proves the company's pro-Israeli stance.

On Friday, Meta stirred controversy by abruptly removing Instagram and Facebook accounts belonging to Ayatollah Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, who had a substantial following of 5.1 million users. The decision, made without prior notice, underscores the company's pro-Israeli stance.

In 2023, the Instagram account KHAMENEI.R ranked among the top 10 accounts of world leaders. Remarkably, posts on his Farsi-language account garnered over one hundred million views in the past three months. This account, active for twelve years, boasts a staggering nine thousand posts that received eighteen million comments.

Formerly known as Facebook, Meta now owns a quartet of platforms: Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger. Headquartered in Menlo Park, California, Meta provided a scant explanation for its actions, citing violations of its Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy as justification for the account removals.

This move coincided with Ayatollah Khamenei's support for oppressed Palestinians and condemnation of



the genocidal warfare in the Gaza Strip, a stance he has steadfastly maintained since October 7th. Meta's actions raise fundamental questions about the role of social media platforms in regulating political discourse and the expression of support for contentious causes.

The incident highlights the delicate balance between freedom of speech and the enforcement of platform policies, particularly concerning influential figures like Ayatollah Khamenei. While Meta's subsidiary platforms profess to foster an environment of free expression and diversity of opinion, their practices often align closely with U.S. laws and policies, potentially stifling dissenting voices that challenge mainstream narratives.

The removal of Ayatollah Khamenei's accounts signals two significant realities. Firstly, it casts

doubt on Western claims of upholding freedom of expression, revealing a willingness to silence expressive and influential voices without hesitation. Secondly, it exposes a broader pattern of support for the Israeli regime, which has faced widespread condemnation for its violent actions against Palestinians. Meta's actions are just one facet of a larger trend of political and media support for Israel, highlighting the West's willingness to sacrifice principles for geopolitical alliances.

As such, it prompts a broader discussion about the power dynamics inherent in digital platforms and their impact on global conversations surrounding geopolitics and social justice.

**Pro-Israeli allegiances: a closer look at Meta's actions**

Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, has long displayed a pro-Israeli stance, a position that has come

under increased scrutiny, especially in light of the recent Israeli aggression and onslaught in Gaza. Even before Meta's recent actions, Zuckerberg's intolerance towards viewpoints contrary to his own was evident.

In 2020, following the assassination of the Iranian anti-terror General Soleimani by the U.S. army at the Iraqi airport, an outpouring of support for General Soleimani flooded virtual spaces. However, Facebook, under Meta's umbrella, swiftly intervened by banning and removing hashtags such as #Soleimani and #WeAreTheNationOfImamHussain.

These actions underscored Meta's staunch alignment with pro-Zionist stances and its readiness to implement restrictions that exceed even the expectations of the Israeli regime.

The implications of Meta's actions extend beyond mere content moderation; they raise profound questions about the role of social media platforms in shaping political narratives and stifling dissenting voices. By aligning with certain geopolitical agendas, Meta risks eroding trust in its commitment to free expression and exacerbating tensions in already volatile regions. As such, Zuckerberg's alignment with pro-Israeli stances warrants closer examination, not only for its immediate consequences but also for its broader implications on digital freedoms and global discourse.

## A Ukrainian news outlet's allegation unpacked

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- The Kyiv Independent newspaper has disseminated new unfounded allegations about Iran's alleged support for Russia in the Ukraine war.

In a recent development reported by The Kyiv Independent, an English-language Ukrainian online newspaper, Ukrainian military intelligence has put forward an alarming claim.

On Monday, February 12, the Ukrainian online newspaper released a report alleging a collaboration between Iran, Hezbollah, and Russian forces in the Ukrainian conflict theater.

According to the report, Iran and Hezbollah are purportedly providing training to Russian drone operators, equipping them with the expertise to utilize Iranian-manufactured Shahed and Ababil UAVs in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. This training, as detailed in the report, is said to be taking place in Syria, where Russian forces are allegedly being schooled in the operation of drones such as the Shahed-136 "kamikaze" and the Ababil-3.

According to the report, a Hezbollah commander named Kamal Abu Sadiq leads the instruction sessions.

Furthermore, the report goes on to assert that this collaboration extends beyond mere drone operation. It suggests that Syrian fighters are also being integrated into the conflict between Russia and Ukraine through this joint effort.

As the international community closely monitors the evolving situation between Moscow and Kyiv, it becomes imperative to examine the accuracy of these claims and assess their implications for regional stability.

**Unraveling the illusion: exposing attempts to tie Russia-Ukraine conflict to Iran**

In a familiar narrative that seems to recur periodically, a Western-backed outlet has once again drawn false connections between the Ukraine conflict and Tehran, seeking to underscore Tehran's involvement in the ongoing strife between Moscow and Kyiv.

This latest effort appears to be part of a broader strategy to divert public attention away from the fundamental drivers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

By pointing fingers at Tehran and portraying the Tehran-Moscow cooperation as a global threat, these Western entities aim to shift blame and obscure deeper geopolitical dynamics.

Conspicuously absent from this narrative are the roles of NATO's military adventurism near the borders of Russia, Europe's military support for Kyiv, and the United States' interventions, all of which have significantly contributed to escalating tensions between Moscow and Kyiv. Yet, these factors seem to have been conveniently sidelined in the public discourse.

Throughout the unfolding crisis, Tehran has consistently urged restraint and advocated for peaceful resolution. Iranian diplomatic channels have repeatedly called on both parties to de-escalate and prioritize dialogue over violence.

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

## IRGC launches short-range missile from high-speed vessels

TEHRAN- The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy has conducted a test launch of a short-range missile from high-speed vessels.

The missile, known as the Qaem-114 (Iranian Hellfire), is designed for anti-surface operations,

with an estimated range of up to 20 kilometers against maritime targets.

One notable feature of the Qaem-114 is its use of smokeless fuel, enhancing the stealth capabilities of the launching vessel by reducing visibility and

detection.

While the canisters for this missile have been observed on IRGC Navy vessels during equipment ceremonies, this marks the first time images of the missile being fired have been made public.

Book Review Part 4:

## The illusion of imminent collapse

TEHRAN - In Chapter 3 of 'Mirage of Shadows,' Mehdi Mohammadi delved into the West's targeted focus on three key groups—women, influencers, and Generation Z—to instigate and perpetuate riots.

In the subsequent chapter, he reveals that the meticulous planning by the West and Israel for the events leading to the turmoil following Mahsa Amini's passing had actually commenced far ahead of her death.

As previously discussed by the author, Western powers and Israel view the Leader of the Islamic Revolution as their primary adversary and the main hurdle that has effectively withstood their pressures over the decades. Their perspective suggests that any attempts to significantly weaken Iran and mar its regional clout would only succeed once Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei is no longer in the picture. Hence, although Israel and the West were aware that the 2022 riots were unlikely to result in the overthrow of the Islamic Republic, they aimed to create circumstances where rioters could

potentially regain momentum and determination upon realizing that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for whatever reason, would no longer be able to stand them.

Understanding the pivotal role of Ayatollah Khamenei sheds light on two critical events that happened before the passing of Mahsa Amini.

The first event pertains to a declaration made by a figure considered a significant asset of the West, Mirhossein Mousavi. Mousavi, alongside Mehdi Karrubi, triggered the post-election unrest in 2009, regarded as a pivotal moment in influencing Western policies towards Iran. It was during this turbulent period that the U.S. leveraged the tumultuous environment as a pretext to impose severe sanctions on Iran. Mousavi's assertion at the time, alleging electoral fraud by former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was vehemently refuted by authorities and was never proven to hold any water.

The statement released months before the 2022 riots warned about 'Hereditary Rule' in Iran and alleged

that Ayatollah Khamenei's son would be succeeding him as the leader.

While the statement, now revealed to have been written by an MKO-affiliated figure named Ardeshir Amirarjomand and published without Mousavi's notice, offered no evidence as to why such claims were being made, it did presage a grand scheme by the West and Israel aiming to undermine Iran's security.

A while later the New York Times claimed to have heard from people familiar with the leader's health situation that Ayatollah Khamenei was gravely ill and is currently on bed rest under observation by a team of doctors.

The New York Times persisted in its false claims even after the Leader made a public appearance and visited a military academy in full health. While the New York Times' assertions seemed eerie back then, once the 2022 riots happened many figured out the reason for the blatant lies.

The West and Israel sought to influence the Iranian public

by suggesting that the Islamic Republic was more vulnerable than it was in 2009 due to the absence or imminent absence of the Leader. Anyone who had taken part in previous riots in Iran could take to the streets once again as the situation was completely different; the most important figure keeping the Islamic Republic together was now gone and it was easier than ever to topple the government.

The fake news created throughout the course of the riots can be looked at through the same prism. The story of the fall of Oshnavieh, the fleeing of Iranian authorities to Venezuela, and the substantial rift within the armed forces all aimed to portray the Iranian government as an endangered entity on the verge of collapse. This helped embolden the rioters to commit more violent acts against security forces, thinking that they were on the verge of a full-on "revolution" and thus would never have to face reckoning for their acts.

To be continued.

## Iran football need rejuvenation

Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Once again, the Iran national football team failed to seize the opportunity of winning the AFC Asian Cup trophy, extending their pursuit of this coveted prize for over fifty years.

Iran's performance during the 2023 AFC Asian Cup was characterized by notable highs and lows. Amir Ghalenoei, who began his tenure as the national team's head coach in March 2023, hoped that the experienced players comprising the team would lead them to victory and end Iran's 48-year football drought. Unfortunately, this didn't happen, so Iranian football will have to wait for over four years to compete for the cup, adding to over 50 years of anticipation.

The semi-final match against Qatar was a perfect chance for Iran to make it to the AFC Asian Cup final for the first time in over four decades. However, Team Melli squandered this chance with a performance below expectations, especially in defensive plays, compounded by a stroke of misfortune, resulting in a 3-2 defeat to defending champions Qatar.

Many analysts attributed Iran's defeat against Qatar to tactical errors in selecting the starting lineup and then substitutions. However, Ghalenoei believed that misfortune played a more significant role in the team's loss, citing Alireza Jahanbakhsh's shot hitting the crossbar in the final moments of the game as evidence.

The current team consists of players who have been playing together for nearly a decade in the national team, with many having experience in various European and Asian leagues. The prominent stars of this generation include Mehdi Taremi of Porto, Sardar Azmoun of AS Roma, and Alireza Jahanbakhsh of Feyenoord.

Despite being dubbed "the golden generation" of Iranian football, they have yet to achieve significant success. Winning the AFC Asian Cup and advancing to the knockout stage of the FIFA World Cup have been cherished dreams for the Iranian football, and it was expected that this generation would fulfill these aspirations. However, they were eliminated in the group stage of the 2014, 2018, and 2022 World Cups, and in the last three editions of the AFC Asian Cup, they failed to progress beyond the semi-final. It appears that this generation fell short of being the golden generation, prompting Iran to consider generational changes.

With Ghalenoei remaining as the head coach of the Iranian national team until the 2026 World Cup, there are high hopes for a rejuvenation and a new era.

## Iran claim 2024 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship title

TEHRAN - Iran claimed the title of the third edition of the CAFA Women's Futsal Championship on Sunday.

Team Melli defeated Tajikistan 9-0 in their last match at the Dushanbe Indoor Hall.

Iran had defeated Uzbekistan 5-1, Kyrgyzstan 11-0 and Turkmenistan 9-0.

The CAFA Women's Futsal Championship is the annual international futsal championship organized by CAFA for the women's national futsal teams of Central Asia.

A total of 5 (out of 6) CAFA member national teams entered the tournament. with Turkmenistan participating in the tournament for the first time since their establishment in 2022.

Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan competed in the edition.

Iran had won 2022 and 2023 editions.

## Rezaeian among ACL Round of 16 Players to Watch

TEHRAN - As the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 comes to an end, attention quickly shifts to club football, with 16 clubs from across the continent battling for places in the quarter-finals of the AFC Champions League 2023-24 over the next two weeks.

With four clubs from Saudi Arabia joined by two

from Uzbekistan and one each from the United Arab Emirates and Iran, there will be some tasty encounters in the Round of 16 (West).

The-AFC.com looks at key players who could decide the outcome of the upcoming match-ups and Sepahan winger Ramin Rezaeian is among the players.

Fresh of a strong showing at the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 where he helped Iran reach the semifinals for the second time running, veteran right-back Rezaeian returns to AFC Champions League action, having represented three different clubs in the competition throughout his career, previously turning out for Persepolis and Al Duhail before his current campaign with Sepahan.

Despite starting just four of Team Melli's six matches at the AFC Asian Cup, the 33-year-old ranked first amongst all defenders in terms of successful crosses with 10 and second for chance creation with nine.

Rezaeian is Sepahan's top scorer in the AFC Champions League 2023-24 with four goals. He also has the second-most chances created (17) and second-most successful crosses (16) amongst all defenders in the competition.

## Shabab Al Ahli close to landing Iranian midfielder Ezzatolahi

TEHRAN - Vejle midfielder Saeid Ezzatolahi is reportedly on the verge of joining Emirati football club Shabab Al Ahli.

The Iranian media reports suggest that the 27-year-old player has reached an agreement with Shabab Al Ahli.

Ezzatolahi was a member of Iran national football team in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, where Team Melli lost to Qatar 3-2 in the semifinals.

Ezzatolahi had been previously linked with a move to Iranian teams Esteghlal and Persepolis.

## Ghoddos still shapes as important contributor in World Cup cycle

TEHRAN - Iran national football team midfielder Saman Ghoddos still shapes as an important contributor in the coming World Cup cycle.

The 2023 Asian Cup is now over and Qatar, once again, are champions, defeating Jordan 3-1 at the Lusail Stadium on Saturday evening after a hat trick of penalties from Akram Afif.

Brentford star Ghoddos anchored the Iranian midfield as Team Melli moved through the gears and the tournament before playing a key role in their explosion to life against Japan; applying the press on goalkeeper Zion Suzuki that led to his poor attempted clearance and the rapid counter-attack that led to Iran's equalizer.

The 30-year-old's work rate was a key cog in the play of coach Amir Ghalenoei's outfit, leading the team in ball recoveries and finishing among its leaders in touches and chance creation -- presently ranked third for big chance creation amongst all teams at the tournament, per FotMob.

Despite being 30 years old and Iran boss Amir Ghalenoei being called to aggressively pursue a policy of squad rejuvenation in the years ahead by Iranian fans, Ghoddos still shapes as an important contributor in the coming World Cup cycle.

## Bonyadifar to officiate Ventforet Kofu v Ulsan Hyundai

TEHRAN - Moud Bonyadifar has been chosen to officiate the match between Japan's Ventforet Kofu and Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea in the 2023-24 AFC Champions League Round of 16.

The match will be held at the Japan National Stadium in Tokyo on February 21.

Saeed Qassemi and Alireza Ildorom will assist Bonyadifar in this match.

The fourth official is a referee from the Malaysia.



## Public transportation fleet to receive 2,500 electric vehicles by late March



TEHRAN – Iran's public transportation fleet is expected to receive 2,500 electric vehicles by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19), an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry said.

Referring to a plan for the import of electric cars to the country, the Manager of the electric vehicle project of the Industry Ministry Hasan Karimi-Sanjari said: "It is expected that 2,500 electric

vehicles will be added to the public transport fleet before the New Year."

According to the official, the mentioned vehicles are already purchased and 600 of them have been cleared from the customs, 600 are still going through customs procedures and 1,500 are being transported into the country.

In late November 2023, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi said: "Currently three models of electric vehicles have been manufactured in the country which will come to the market in the first half of the next Iranian calendar year (starting in late March 2024)".

"We have two or three examples of domestic electric cars that may be released in the first half of next year," Ali-Abadi stated.

According to the official, the government also plans to supply 100,000 electric taxis in big cities by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

## Major electricity projects financed by foreign investors underway in Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Ministry is implementing 61 major electricity projects which have been financed by foreign investment in the north and northeast of the country, according to the country's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir).

As IRNA reported, the mentioned projects are being implemented in northern Mazandaran Province and northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

According to TAVANIR, 46 major projects

including three power transmission stations, 21 power distribution substations, five transmission lines and 17 power distribution lines with a total investment of 1.3 billion yuan, equivalent to 48.540 trillion rials (about \$97 million) are underway in Mazandaran province and 15 projects including two transmission stations, nine substations and four distribution lines worth 457 million yuan, equivalent to 20.545 trillion rials (about \$41 million) are being implemented in Khorasan Razavi province.

## Domestic manufacturers in deals worth \$86m to build 10 vessels for IRISL

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) has signed deals worth \$86 million with domestic manufacturers for building 10 vessels for the country's shipping fleet, Fars News Agency reported.

According to the IRISL Head Mohammadreza Modares-Khiabani, the construction of four of the mentioned vessels has been awarded

to Sadra Neka Shipbuilding Industries and the other six vessels will be constructed by Arvandan Shipbuilding Industries.

Negotiations are also underway to sign a contract for the construction of four more vessels worth approximately \$75 million with another domestic manufacturer, the official said.

## Iran's annual dates export reach \$270m

TEHRAN – Iranian farmers produced 1.3 million tons of dates in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2023) of which 350,000 tons worth \$270 million have been exported, the head of National Date Association of Iran said.

According to Mohsen Rashid Farokhi, Iran is currently the world's third-biggest producer of dates, IRNA reported.

Producing 1.8 million tons of dates per year, Egypt is the first producer of dates in the world, and Saudi Arabia and Iran are ranked second and third, the official said.

Last week, the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade said that the value of Iran's exports of agricultural and foodstuff products increased by 22 percent in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar

year (March 21, 2023-January 20, 2024).

According to Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian producers managed to export over 6.775 million tons of the mentioned products worth more than \$4.873 billion in the said 10 months, also registering an 8.4 percent rise in terms of weight.

As reported, of the total exports, 4.944 million tons with a value of \$2.93 billion were crops, vegetables, and horticulture products, 1.133 million tons worth \$931.96 million were processed food products, and the rest were fishery, livestock, and dairy products.

Dairy products with \$561.4 million of exports, pistachios with \$478.7 million, tomatoes with \$255.4 million, apples with \$248.7 million and fishery products with \$244.9 million were the top five food and agricultural products exported in the mentioned 10 months.

## TEDPIX loses 8,200 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 8,208 points (0.39 percent) to 2,091,895 on Saturday, which is the first 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 deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has stressed the need for diverse financing tools in the country, noting that such tools are currently being provided by the stock market.

"To reduce the speculative and profit-seeking activities of dealers in the country, financing tools should be diversified," Mohammad Shirijian said.

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production in an efficient manner. Now, to accelerate the process of resource transfer and high productivity, the financing should be directed

to the enterprises," the official explained.

Shirijian called on the government and the parliament to pay more attention to the stock market, saying: "If the government and parliament pay more attention to the capital market, we will see the withdrawal of resources from non-productive markets and the reduction of the bubble in other parallel markets (such as currency, coins, gold, housing, and cars)."

Regarding the important ways to secure financial resources in the stock market, Shirijian said: "Sukuk bonds and investment funds are among the most important financing tools of the capital market because they are designed based on the needs and risk-taking levels of enterprises and individuals."

According to the official, the capital market could be very suitable for long-term financing of construction projects and with proper implementation; such funding will lead to sustainable economic growth and development.

# Taking the sting out of sanctions

## Iran showcases domestic capabilities achieved during embargo

From page 1 ► For us, an even harsher round of sanctions seemed impossible to survive. By the end of 2019 over 100 foreign companies had left Iran and the national currency was already tailspinning—the U.S. move to choke off anything the Iranian nation relied on for living sent inflation skyrocketing to rates never experienced before.

While we all knew that we would enter a period of unprecedented economic turbulence, we still had more to worry about than our squeezing pockets. I remember hearing that we would no longer be able to keep at par with regional countries in the energy sector and sufficiently tap into our God-given resources. That the long lines at pharmacies were only going to grow longer with all medications eventually becoming scarce and that all sorts of different sectors would soon begin to grapple with acute shortages.

Some parts of our horrid expectations ended up becoming reality. Sanctions compounded Iran's economic woes and many households could no longer rely on single or double incomes. Rent, food, and almost everything else became much more expensive, forcing people to adopt more cautious spending habits. But a lot of what we feared also never ended up happening.

During the years, most of what we have heard in the media has been revolving around the JCPOA and efforts to revive the deal. Several politicians have been arguing that anything we do and own hinges on the accord. While it is true that the sanctions have extremely baleful effects on people's everyday lives, it seems that a large part of what we have been able to achieve in the face of the sanctions is deliberately being sidelined.

I only began to realize the depth of Iran's efforts in the past 6 to 7 years when I got to visit an exhibition showcasing Iranian-



made products at the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah, close to where the Leader of the Islamic Revolution lives.

Before journalists were allowed to visit the site, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei spent a good four hours viewing the products and speaking to the manufacturers. He visited 40 knowledge-based booths and discussed how the country can further boost domestic production with a focus on science.

The Leader then expressed disappointment with the fact that most Iranians had not been made aware of the domestic achievements. I could not agree more with him when I got to personally view the products and speak to the entrepreneurs who have been spearheading Iran's fight against a project aiming to bring the country to its knees.

People from all sorts of sectors (namely energy, oil, automotive, mining, communications, technology, food, agriculture, medicine, transportation, housing appliances, and textile industries) were present at the exhibition to tell the story of the blood, sweat, and tears they have been putting in to save their country from starrng down the barrel of destitute.

"The truth of the matter is that Iranian scientists and experts couldn't get the chance to shine before the sanctions. As the Leader said, we have not only managed to

eliminate threats but to turn them into opportunities," said Mehdi Abbasi who is an advisor with the Iranian oil ministry. "At least 500 knowledge-based companies have been established in the oil and gas sector in the past few years. They have even come up with innovations and products that have never been made in our country before," he added.

Before I had spoken to these entrepreneurs and representatives, it did not make sense to me how sanctions could manage to help our country in some areas. To me, sanctions were equivalent to pain, poverty,



and hardship. It never struck me that even the toughest of situations could prove beneficial with faith and perseverance.

Others at the exhibition seemed to be of the same mind as Abbasi. An engineer who has taken part in the development of Iranian satellites now orbiting around the Earth told me that everything

is only going to get better from here. "There are a handful of countries that have the same space capabilities as we do. We think that in the future, Iran will be the one launching satellites for other countries, instead of Russia and the U.S.," Mohammad Salari explained.

As I got back home that day, I felt the need to dig deeper into Iran's major domestic achievements. Phase 11 of the South Pars Gas Field, the Persian Gulf Star Oil Refinery, and the booming industries of home appliances, fashion, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals all spoke to the same fact: It seems that we have finally managed to take part of the sting out of the U.S. sanctions, and slowly but surely begun to move towards a promising future.

"Even if we want to sit at the negotiating table with the West, we would only be able to reach a mutually beneficial deal when we are powerful enough to not feel threatened. Tying our whole existence to the sanctions puts

us in a more vulnerable position. We should try to talk to the West while making sure that we wouldn't crumble if they decide to betray us again," warned a Western-based Iranian journalist back in November of 2022, when the U.S. announced that it was halting talks with Tehran on the 2015 Iran deal.

## SEO to help increase role of private sector in stock market

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said his organization is following new plans to increase the role of the country's private sector in the stock market, the Securities and Exchange News Agency (SENA) reported.

Referring to the significant role of the private sector in financing production companies, Majid Eshqi said: "Increasing the role of the private sector in the stock market is one of the serious plans of the Securities and Exchange Organization."

He stated that some measures have been taken to increase the real role of the private sector in the capital market in the last few years, adding that the role of the real private sector has also increased in relation to financing through debt securities compared to the past.

"Considering the emphasis of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, we will do our best to increase the share of the real private sector

in areas like financing and acceptance in the capital market," Eshqi elaborated.

Back in August 2023, Eshqi had said that using the capacities of the country's private sector in the stock market has been one of the main strategies of the organization over the past year.

"One of the main approaches of the Securities and Exchange Organization during the past year has been to use the power of the private sector, because government entities and the public sector do not have the necessary characteristics for economic prosperity, so we must increase the share of the private sector in the capital market," Eshqi said in a conference in Khorasan Razavi Province.

Large industries have their own problems and fluctuations, but small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can compensate for these fluctuations, the official said, adding that the main part of the world economy is moving towards small and medium-sized companies

because value, employment, and innovation lie in such companies.

The SEO head further noted that the stock market should mainly focus on investment and financing, saying: "We need to direct the liquidity flow towards production."

Emphasizing the important role of the seventh National Development Plan (2022–2026) in securing the future of the capital market, Eshqi stated: "One of the major indicators of investment is predictability, so more action should be taken in the seventh development plan to make the economy more predictable."

He pointed to the holding of investment and financing conferences in provinces as a starting point for a new movement towards promoting investment and said: "Economic enterprises do not have enough familiarity with the capital market and such conferences are bridges that provide the necessary platform in this regard."

## Commodities worth \$416m exported from Kerman province in 10 months

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 340,000 tons of goods worth \$416 million were exported from Kerman province in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023-January 20, 2024).

Mohammad-Mehdi Fadakar, the director-general of the province's Customs Department, said that the ten-month export indicates 22 percent growth in terms of weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As previously announced by the head of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, non-oil goods worth \$490 million

were exported from Kerman province in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20, 2023).

Mehdi Hosseini-Nejad said that the annual export from the province fell 49 percent in value.

He named pistachio and copper as the major exported products and said that pistachios and copper cathodes constituted 64 percent of the province's exports in the previous year.

The official further announced that commodities worth \$2.2 billion were imported to the province in the past year, with a 107-percent growth. He named auto parts as the

major imported items.

As previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported 113 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$40.5 billion during the first 10 months of the present year.

Mohammad Rezvani-Far said that the 10-month non-oil export indicates a nine percent growth in weight, but an 11 percent fall in value, year on year, IRIB reported.

The official also said the country exported \$29.9 billion of crude oil in the mentioned 10 months, registering a 10-percent rise, year on year.

Rezvani-Far further announced that Iran has imported 32.7 million tons of goods worth \$54.8 billion in the first 10 months of the present year, which indicates an 11.6 percent rise in value and six percent growth in weight.

He named China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, and India as the major export destinations of Iranian goods in the said period, and the UAE, China, Turkey, Germany, and India as the main sources of import.

Gold, car parts and accessories, and smartphones were the main imported items during this period, according to the official.



# “Genocide Joe” blasts “Crime Minister”

U.S. charm offensive

From page 1 ▶ In the meantime, The Washington Post said in an article that Biden and top administration aides “are closer to a breach” with Netanyahu over the Gaza war and no longer consider him “a productive partner who can be influenced even in private.”

Does Biden’s escalating criticism mean that he is angry at Netanyahu for massacring the Palestinian people in Gaza?

Washington’s unwavering support for Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza shows that the regime’s bloodshed in Gaza does not matter to the U.S.

In fact, Biden’s critical approach is part of a U.S. charm offensive with the Palestinians to deal with the predicaments that he is facing at home.

The U.S. president’s backing of Israel’s assault on Gaza has alienated many voters who helped elect him in 2020.

As the 81-year-old president heads into a reelection campaign, polls show that young voters, people of color, Muslims and Arab Americans strongly disapprove of his handling of Israel’s war on Gaza.

A January survey also showed that approval ratings for Biden’s handling of the war have fallen. It suggested that 50% of Biden voters believe Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians.

Likewise, some of his one-time supporters have begun to organize in key swing states to oppose what they call “Genocide Joe’s” re-election under the slogan “Abandon Biden”.

Furthermore, Biden is under enormous pressure from the



progressive wing of his own party to rein in Netanyahu.

Senator Bernie Sanders is among those who are opposed to sending military aid to Israel.

“No one in Congress should support the Biden administration sending military aid to Israel... Netanyahu’s war machine is responsible for an unprecedented humanitarian disaster,” Sanders said on X.

Netanyahu, however, has vowed to continue the Gaza war to achieve his stated goal of destroying the Hamas resistance group. But his goal will remain elusive and is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Earlier this month, the former commander of the U.S. Central Command described Israel’s success in its objectives in Gaza to date as “very limited”.

“They set themselves a goal of removing the political echelon and the military leadership echelon of Hamas when they went in. They have not been successful to date at doing either,” General Frank McKenzie told

CBS News.

But, Netanyahu wants to prolong the military offensive in Gaza as a permanent state of war offers him a lifeline. This is because Israeli officials and the public believe he is responsible for the October 7 attack that was carried out by Hamas and must be held to account.

Even before the October 7 attack, Netanyahu faced growing pressure over corruption charges and controversial judicial reform plans. Demonstrators often hit the streets in Israel to vent their anger at Netanyahu with some protesters calling him “Crime Minister”.

Presently, Netanyahu continues to massacre the Palestinians in Gaza in an attempt to survive his political career.

“Mass massacre”

As concerns grow over Israel’s plans to send ground forces into Rafah, the regime carried out fresh airstrikes on the city.

Dozens of civilians, including women and children who had taken refuge in Rafah, were killed in early

Monday strikes.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned the strikes in Rafah as “mass massacres”.

“Israel is officially continuing to target civilians and transfer the war to Rafah to push the population to get displaced under bombardment,” the ministry said in a statement released on X.

It added, “The recent massacres of the occupation are evidence of the validity of international warnings and fears of catastrophic results of the expansion of the war to Rafah.”

Hamas also denounced Israel’s “massacres” in Rafah as “genocidal”.

“The attacks represent an expansion of the scope of the massacres that Israel is committing... The Nazi occupation army’s attack on the city of Rafah which has claimed the lives of more than a hundred martyrs so far, is considered a continuation of the genocidal war and the attempts at forced displacement it is waging against our Palestinian people,” Hamas added.

As Israel presses ahead with its air raids in Rafah, aid organizations warn of a bloodbath if the regime launches a ground assault on the city. This is because Palestinians in Rafah are already squeezed up against the Egyptian border and have nowhere else to go.

Critical remarks made by the U.S. and its Western allies will fail to prevent new massacres in the Palestinian territory.

The international community should take action to put a halt to Israel’s genocidal war instead of paying lip services.

increased but have done little to dent or deter naval forces aligned with the Sana’a government from increasing attacks against Israeli, American and British vessels in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

In a speech earlier this month, the leader of Ansarullah, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, addressed the operations carried out by the Yemeni armed forces in support of the resistance in Gaza and in solidarity with the Palestinians, emphasizing Yemen’s active and ongoing role in the Israeli war on Gaza.

This support includes measures against ships heading to the “Israeli occupation entity” in the Red Sea and Bab el Mandeb, stating “our role is effective and influential,” and that “the enemy has become desperate”.

Al-Houthi reiterated the readiness to target any ship heading to the occupation entity, emphasizing that the United States and Britain “have entangled themselves in a predicament”.

## Yemen stages new attack on U.S. vessel

American-British attacks on Yemen fail to deter Ansarullah operations

From page 1 ▶ Different forces have stated that they will not hesitate to carry out additional military operations in response to “Zionist crimes” against the security of the 2.2 million civilian population in the coastal enclave.

Earlier on Monday, the British Maritime Trade Operations organization confirmed receiving a report of an incident 40 nautical miles south of al-Makha in Yemen.

On 6 February, the spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces announced the execution of two military operations in the Red Sea. The first targeted an American ship (Star Nasia), and the second targeted a British ship (Morning Tide), indicating that both ships were hit directly by suitable naval missiles.

The U.S. military’s Central Command confirmed that Ansarullah fired three missiles at the Star Nasia, which reported damage but no injuries. Separately, the UK Maritime Trade Operations agency and British maritime security firm Ambrey reported an explosion near a merchant vessel off Yemen’s port of Aden on Tuesday.

Earlier, a member of the Supreme Political

Council in Yemen, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, affirmed that Yemen’s operations would persist as long as the American-Israeli aggression and blockade on the Gaza Strip continues.

The senior Yemeni official also warned the Israeli occupation that “any escalation in Rafah or Gaza would lead to the course of the military operations to escalate. If the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza worsens and mass killings of its residents persist, operations will expand based on field data and the directives of the commander Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.”

The government in Sana’a has asserted the guarantee of navigation of movement in the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the Bab el Mandeb strait for all ships, except Israeli ships and those heading to Israeli ports until the aggression on Gaza ceases.

Recently, Yemeni maritime operations have expanded to target American and British vessels in addition to the U.S. and UK warships in the waters off Yemen in retaliation to the American-British aggression on Yemeni territory.

The joint U.S. and UK attacks have recently

## World condemnation of the U.S. and Israel appears to loom ahead...

From page 1 ▶ The great misfortune for humanity is that the U.S. figured as far back as the 1960s with the war on Vietnam that the primary, even sole, way to maintain dominance was by violence when compassion and cooperation would have resulted in a far better long term outcome for America, which is now in steep and unacknowledged decline in Washington.

Another negative factor has been destructive efforts by the U.S. to foment changes in regimes across the globe that did not seem cooperative enough with the U.S. in its postwar heydays. One early example was the deposition of Iran’s Muhammad Mossadegh in the early 1950s and the installation of the puppet Shah, and this was largely because this elected Iranian leader wanted to fully nationalize Iran’s energy resources. In the case of Vietnam, despite the fact that Ho Chi Minh was not averse to dealing fairly with the U.S., the U.S. fight was against “communism” which was the perennial postwar bogey that frightened the U.S. because its grip was unraveling marginally in Southeast Asia as it already had

with the Soviet Union, which was the major winner of the war against the Nazis. Any country that did not literally kiss the hindmost part of the U.S. was marked for some kind of violence. Why, some were beginning to ask after World War 2, should just one country totally dominate all others and dictate who leads them? This dominance was couched in positive concepts like the promotion of “democracy” and “freedom” and “equality” but in fact this was a chimera of a rationale: the application of sheer military dominance or threat plus diktat by the U.S. was what really mattered. America’s stated “values” are not reliably sought overseas when the U.S. actually crusades for supremacy and the right to be the so-called “exceptional” nation above all others. The mere notion of exceptionalism is nauseating. The hypocrisy and self-service inherent in U.S. moves and policies have become increasingly evident for all to witness.

The selfishness is remarkable to behold!

Americans like this commentator, born in 1947, live now in a world of dismay and angst and foreboding

over the cumulative effect of U.S. foreign policies stretching back to the 1950s. It’s not a ballgame, but the U.S. is on the verge of losing the geopolitical game badly as are its allies in Europe and its alleged ally, Israel, in the Middle East. The allegations that Israel, for one, is a true and trustable ally of the U.S. is a joke. Successive Israeli governments have manipulated and used the U.S. to extract money and arms, and occasionally attacked U.S. assets, too, like the U.S. naval ship “Liberty” in 1967. The relationship is parasitic with benefits flowing to the Zionists alone in fact. It is frightening to realize that Washington thinks support for Israel, especially as it foments pure genocide on the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank, is a positive posture that somehow benefits the U.S. Few Americans realize that what has been happening in Gaza since last October 7 is nothing but a dramatic amplification and escalation of a genocide underway since the Nakba of 1948. Zionists have always wanted an expanded “Israel” emptied of Arabs, Muslims and even Christians.

In Gaza to date, the Israeli Army

has herded most Gazans, over a million, into the Rafah area and the border with Egypt. This was the intent all along. The next possible move is to force the Palestinians into Egypt, but General Sisi is not keen on that. Thus we come to the moment when a possible regional war erupts, including Egypt if the IDF attempts to push towards full ethnic cleansing of Gaza or the alternative of simply murdering a million additional Palestinians. If the Biden Administration refuses to force a cease-fire on the IDF now, and only it can by punishing the Zionist fanatics by withholding further support, and also lives up to its earlier pronouncement that ethnic cleansing will not be allowed, then both Israel and the U.S. are doomed. The arrogance in Tel Aviv and Washington literally cannot be sustained much longer. Most of the world will see to it, one way or another, that this genocide is utterly condemned. This may be the ultimate inflection point in geopolitics since World War 2.

FEBRUARY 13, 2024

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

5

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Palestinian PM: Israel wants to reshape demographic balance by killing Palestinians

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh has said that by “killing, destroying, and trying to displace Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, Israel wants to reshape the demographic balance to its advantage, after it shifted in favor of Palestine, for the first time since 1948”.

Speaking at the beginning of the weekly cabinet session held in Ramallah, Shtayyeh said that the past 400 days were the bloodiest in the contemporary history of Palestine, Wafa reported.

“We have more than 100,000 Palestinians killed, wounded and missing in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, and more than 640 in the West Bank,” he said.

“There are also more than 10,000 detainees, and these are not numbers, but rather they indicate children, women, the elderly, young men and women, and they indicate our families and our people, each of them has a history, status, and name, and had a future that was killed by Israel.”

### Israeli snipers kill seven in Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis

The spokesman for the Ministry of Health in Gaza says Israeli snipers have killed seven people inside Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis, where heavy fighting has been reported in recent days.

“No one can move in the yards of Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis,” Ashraf al-Qudra said in a statement on Telegram, according to Al Jazeera.

“Israeli snipers killed seven citizens and wounded 14 staff and displaced people inside the yard [of the hospital],” he added.

He said that ceilings in the dormitory and operations departments collapsed as a result of the explosions around the hospital.

“We need the protection of the technical staff to move in the yard of the hospital to repair the sewage network,” al-Qudra said.

### Court orders Netherlands to stop F35- parts delivery to Israel

The Netherlands must stop delivering parts for F-35 fighter jets used by Israel in the Gaza Strip, after a Dutch court Monday ruled there was a “clear risk” the planes would be involved in breaking international humanitarian law.

The Appeals Court in The Hague sided with a group of human rights organizations that argued the parts contributed to violations of law by Israel in its war with Hamas, AFP reported.

“The court therefore orders the State to put an end to the further export of F-35 parts to Israel within 7 days,” said the ruling.

“There is a clear risk that serious violations of humanitarian law of war are committed in the Gaza Strip with Israel’s F-35 fighter planes,” added the judge.

In December, the District Court in The Hague had said that supplying the parts was primarily a political decision that judges should not interfere with.

But the appeals court overturned this ruling, saying the Netherlands “must prohibit the export of military goods if there is a clear risk of serious violations of the humanitarian law of war.”

“Israel does not take sufficient account of the consequences for the civilian population when conducting its attacks,” said the court.

### UK has duty to suspend arms delivery to Israel, legal groups tell David Cameron

The UK government has a duty not just to support the orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but to change UK policy by suspending the supply of arms to Israel, the foreign secretary, David Cameron, has been told by 30 UK-based organizations including legal and atrocity prevention groups.

The letter, sent last week, argues the government as a signatory to the Genocide Convention, “is bound to ensure it helps prevent and ensure it is not complicit in violations of the convention. The provisional measures issued by the ICJ therefore have immediate and urgent implications for UK policy,” The Guardian reported.

They add: “In light of the court’s findings, there is now a clear risk, as set out under the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria (SELC), that British arms and military equipment transferred to Israel might be used to facilitate or commit violations of the Genocide Convention as well as violations of international humanitarian law”.

### North Korea develops new rocket launcher controller

North Korea has successfully developed a new ballistic control system for a multiple rocket launcher along with controllable shells, state media KCNA reported on Monday.

The Academy of Defense Science, which oversees the country’s missile development, conducted a “ballistic control” test firing of 240-mm caliber controllable multiple rocket launcher shells on Sunday, KCNA said.

The U.S. and its allies have criticized North Korea’s missile launches.

North Korea accuses the U.S. and South Korea of escalating tensions with their large-scale military drills.

### NATO chief: Trump remarks may put U.S. and EU lives at risk

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has hit back against “any suggestion” countries within the alliance would not defend one another after former U.S. President Donald Trump said he would not abide by the collective defense clause at the heart of the alliance if reelected.

In what would be a stunning abandonment of a decades-long core U.S. commitment, Trump, who is running for re-election in November, said during a campaign event Saturday he would encourage Russia to do “whatever the hell they want” to any NATO member country that doesn’t meet spending guidelines and would not offer such a country U.S. protection.

In a statement, Stoltenberg said such comments put European and American soldiers at an increased risk.

“Any suggestion that allies will not defend each other undermines all of our security, including that of the US, and puts American and European soldiers at increased risk,” Stoltenberg said.



## Tourist arrivals surge by 52% in Iran's tourism boom: DM



From Page 1 ▶ The exhibition boasted a strong international presence, with 12 countries hosting booths, 13 foreign delegations in attendance, and active participation from 68 booths representing various countries.

Expressing gratitude for Raisi's administration focused attention on the tourism sector, Shalbfian cited a remarkable 1,607 projects currently underway.

In conclusion, the Deputy for Tourism highlighted the President's dedicated focus on the tourism sector, mentioning 13 transformative plans under direct presidential supervision. One of these plans aims to attract more foreign tourists to the country.

The 17th Iran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition 2024 has kicked off at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground on February 12. This exhibition is considered Iran's premier tourism industry event.

## Three ancient trees among Iran heritage list newcomers

TEHRAN – In a notable development, the Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Golestan province proudly unveiled the recent registration of three ancient plane trees into Iran's national heritage list.

Mohammad-Javad Savari detailed that during a recent session of the Supreme Council for the Registration of natural heritage sites in Iran, attended by environmental experts, forestry pioneers, and representatives from the Ministry of Environment, the Organization of Forests and Rangelands, and the Director-General of the Registration of Historical, Cultural, and Natural Heritage at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, three natural heritage sites in Golestan province secured their official position on the national list.

Savari provided further insights into these registered sites, saying that these trees have an approximate age ranging between 350 to 400 years.

Savari emphasized that with the inclusion of these three sites, Golestan province has now accumulated a total of 44 entries in the country's national natural heritage list.

Expressing his optimism, Savari highlighted the province's abundance of springs, waterfalls,

and natural wonders. "The strategic move to register these invaluable natural sites on the national heritage list marks a pivotal step toward preserving Iran's rich natural heritage. I anticipate that this initiative will pave the way for significant opportunities, attracting both domestic and international travelers to explore the wonders of Golestan province," he added.

Furthermore, shedding light on the cultural and historical importance of Plane trees, it's noteworthy that they have always been revered as symbols of fertility and the lush greenery of nature in Iranian culture. Traditionally believed to possess healing properties, these trees were thought to prevent the spread of fever and infectious diseases. Planted predominantly in sacred areas such as prayer sites and holy shrines, they hold a unique place in the cultural tapestry of Iran.

Adding to its allure, Iran boasts an opulent tourist circuit featuring 27 UNESCO World Heritage sites, with treasures like the vast Hyrcanian Forest and the mesmerizing Lut Desert among its natural wonders. As Iran ambitiously looks forward to 2025, the country aims to carve a more substantial share in the global tourism industry, leveraging its rich cultural and natural heritage.

## Sistan-Baluchestan hosts the local food and handicrafts exhibition

TEHRAN – The Head of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Nimruz city in Sistan-Baluchestan province has announced the launch of a food and handicrafts exhibition in the city.

Iraj Nasirabadi stated on Monday that the exhibition, featuring local handicrafts and traditional foods, kicked off at the Nimruz Mosque.

He urged a strategic focus on domestic productions and employment opportunities for the youth, anticipating progress and significant success in various initiatives.

Nasirabadi noted that the county officials present at the exhibition's opening responded to the demands of artisans by pledging support to activate the handicrafts market. They expressed their commitment to purchasing handicraft products as gifts for guests, contributing these artisanal items to the cultural heritage of the county.

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions.

## Iran in frames



Nestled in the heart of capital Tehran, the Glassware and Ceramic Museum, also known as the "Abgineh" Museum, resides within a historic 90-year-old building. Originally owned by Ahmad Qavam, a notable figure from the Qajar era, the building underwent various transformations, until it was repurposed into a museum in 1980.

# Raisi discusses Iran's vast capacities in meeting with UN tourism chief

TEHRAN – In a high-profile meeting with the Secretary-General of the UN World Tourism Organization, the Iranian President underscored the pivotal role of the tourism industry, emphasizing the imperative for the organization to spotlight Iran's cultural, civilizational, and tourist assets on the global stage.

Expressing contentment with the collaboration between the organization and the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi stressed the criticality of forging connections with international bodies within the tourism sector.

Notably, he urged the UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili to personally explore Iran's tourist attractions, underscoring the World Tourism Organization's vital role in amplifying awareness and showcasing Iran's cultural and tourist potential to a diverse global audience.

During the meeting, Raisi delved into the Iranophobia project undertaken by Western countries, characterizing it as a colonial approach and emphasizing the urgency of countering such strategies.

Pololikashvili lauded the President's participation in the International Tourism Exhibition as a clear indication of the Iranian government's unwavering commitment to the tourism sector. He interpreted this engagement as a positive message resonating with tourism professionals in Iran and the broader region.

Addressing negative portrayals by certain Western



media outlets against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General highlighted Iran's rich culture, civilization, historical landmarks, and the government's significant strides in advancing tourism, particularly in the realm of health tourism, through the cancellation of visa requirements with numerous countries worldwide.

**Iran on the path to post-pandemic tourism revival: UN tourism chief**

Speaking at the 17th International Tourism Exhibition in Tehran, Pololikashvili announced a return of global tourism statistics to pre-COVID levels. He mentioned, "We're on the road to global tourism recovery, and Iran has experienced a 5% increase in tourist arrivals compared to the pre-pandemic period."

Expressing his delight during the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Pololikashvili stated, "Today, we've come together for a lively celebration." Encouraged by the latest UNWTO statistics showing global tourism reaching 84% of pre-COVID levels, he em-

phasized the ongoing recovery.

Referring to Iran's recent tourism figures, Pololikashvili noted, "In December and October, Iran saw a 5% increase in tourist arrivals compared to the pre-pandemic period, which is noteworthy."

Commending Iran's decision to lift visa requirements with 33 countries, he described it as a significant step in opening Iran's doors and fostering tourism growth. Pololikashvili expressed hope that this move would promote cultural exchanges and economic cooperation.

Viewing the Tehran exhibition as an opportune moment to confidently envision Iran's tourism future, he stated, "Iran, with its rich culture and numerous attractions, welcomes tourists from around the world."

Referring to the guests from various countries as messengers of unity, he highlighted tourism as a crucial pillar for economic growth and employment.

**Yazd, Kandovan inscribed as international tourist sites**

The Secretary-General of the

UN World Tourism Organization and the Chairman of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) handed over the global registration plaque to Yazd city and Kandovan village in Iran.

At the opening ceremony of the 17th Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, Pololikashvili presented the global registration plaque for the village of Kandovan to Rahmati, the governor of East Azarbaijan province.

Moreover, the Chairman of the ACD presented the registration plaque designating Yazd as the tourism capital for member countries of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) to Mehran Fatemi, the governor of Yazd.

During the program, after receiving the registration plaque for Yazd, Governor Mehran Fatemi highlighted the importance of seizing this opportunity to strengthen cultural ties between nations, promote global peace, and enhance the country's tourism and economic capabilities. He viewed the most significant achievement of the event as the establishment of an Asian union and international collaboration among member countries to foster economic and cultural relations.

The 17th Iran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition 2024 has kicked off at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground on February 12. Representatives from 11 countries are expected to attend this three-day exhibition. This exhibition is considered Iran's premier tourism industry event.

## Iran, Armenia discuss boosting tourism ties

TEHRAN – In a meeting with the President of Armenian Tourism Federation on Saturday, Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Embassy Mohammad Asadi-Movahed discussed promotion of tourism and handicrafts between Iran and Armenia.

The meeting underscored the importance of cultural collaborations between Iran and Armenia, emphasizing the pressing need to enhance cultural interactions between the two nations.

Petrosyan, President of Armenian Tourism Federation, warmly welcomed the statements of the Iranian Cultural Attaché, expressing the shared sentiment of extensive cultural collaborations between Iranian and Armenian societies. He stressed, "It is our right to stand together, and I strongly advocate for substantial cooperation in the field of tourism with Iran."

Continuing to stress the importance of increased global cooperation, Petrosyan acknowledged past achievements and highlighted, "In the realm of tourism and the expansion of interactions in this field

between Iran and Armenia, we've established the Armenian-Iranian Cultural-Culinary Festival (Navasard). This initiative aims to showcase the rich cultural collaborations between Iran and Armenia to the global audience."

Petrosyan, recognizing the value of the Hamedan Cultural Week in Yerevan, praised Hamedan's cultural programs, with special commendation for the captivating execution of traditional music.

Also present in this meeting, Mohammad-Reza Khalaji, the Deputy of Handicrafts at the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in Hamedan province, shed light on the exceptional collaborations between Hamedan and Armenia, surpassing those of other Iranian provinces. Khalaji enumerated the cultural similarities and peaceful coexistence between the people of Hamedan and Armenians, further accentuating the climatic resemblances shared by Hamedan and Armenia.

Furthermore, Khalaji highlighted the diverse capacities and capabilities of tourism in Hamedan. He emphasized not only



the prominence of handicrafts like Lalejin pottery industry and the globally renowned woodcarving art in Malayer city but also the significance of tourism and cultural heritage. Khalaji outlined the abundance of natural features in Hamedan, including picturesque springs, serene lakes, the natural allure of Alvand Peak, and the remarkable Ali-Sadr Cave – the world's largest water cave – as unique attractions that set the region apart in the country. These natural wonders, he argued, contribute to the province's allure for both local and international visitors.

## 800-year-old gold ring unearthed in Polish castle

An extremely rare medieval gold artefact has been found in the depths beneath a tower of the Wawel Royal Castle in Poland, which served as a residence for Polish kings for centuries.

The artefact, a decorated gold ring, was found by researcher Jerzy Trzebinski during ongoing excavations and investigations at Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow, the second-largest city in the European country.

Trzebinski found the gold ring beneath a part of the castle known as the Danish Tower, which is one of the structure's four residential towers.

The castle itself forms part of a fortified medieval architectural arrangement that sits on top of a limestone outcrop named Wawel Hill, on the bank of the Vistula River.

It is claimed that the complex is the most historically and culturally significant site in the whole of Poland, featuring several buildings of great importance, like the Wawel Cathedral and the castle.

The former was constructed roughly 1,000 years ago and at one time served as the site where Polish monarchs were crowned and

buried. The current castle's construction is believed to have begun in the 13th or 14th centuries, although the building has been added to over time.

The castle served as the residence of Polish kings for hundreds of years, but it now houses one of the most popular art museums in Poland.

The Wawel Hill site comprises part of the Historic Center of Krakow, which was given UNESCO World Heritage status in 1978. The historic center, the former capital of Poland, is located at the base of the Wawel complex and features Europe's largest market square, in addition to several historic houses, palaces and churches.

The golden ring, found in the castle complex recently, was unearthed in an archaeological layer, resting on top of the remnants of a stone structure – thought to be a kind of defensive shaft.

The gold artefact, which researchers believe dates from the 11th or 12th centuries, displays a decoration composed of two opposing anthropomorphic faces.

"Wawel never ceases to amaze us. Recently, an extremely rare discovery has been made in the form of a golden early medieval ring," a statement from the castle museum said.

The museum added that the find was a "unique discovery", mainly due to the fact that very few medieval golden rings have been found in Poland. These types of adornments from this period in history, and this region, are generally without decoration, or feature only simple geometric patterns.

"The specimen uncovered at Wawel is unique because of its decoration," the museum said. "This is the only example where human – and, in general, figurative – images are depicted on an early medieval ring from Poland. You have to admit it is impressive."

The gold ornament also makes no references to Christianity, a religion which began to establish itself in Poland in the 10th century. Researchers think the two opposing faces may be a reference to the two-faced god Janus, from Roman mythology.

(Source: GreekReporter)



# 67 environmental projects inaugurated to mark Islamic Revolution

From page 1 ▶

## First and second phases

The first phase kicked off during national environmental week in 19 provinces of the country, from June 6 to 12, 2023. A total of 101 environmental projects costing over 110 thousand billion rials were implemented.

In the second phase, 58 environmental projects were launched in 15 provinces of the country including Ardabil, Lorestan, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Sistan-Baluchestan, Hamedan, Qazvin, Ilam, Tehran, Kordestan, North Khorasan, Khuzestan, Qom, Bushehr, Khorasan Razavi, and Mazandaran during Government Week, from August 24-30, 2023.

Some of the projects included air quality monitoring stations, industrial sewage treatment plants, environmental checkpoints, environmental laboratories, dust measuring stations, office buildings in cities, and online monitoring systems.

More than 34 trillion rials (about \$68 million) were allocated to the projects.

## Recent measures

Within the last decades, environmental problems have greatly affected nature and people's lives. Air pollution, as a man-made problem originating from economic and industrial factors, ac-



counts for millions of deaths every year.

The Department of Environment by developing environment houses aims to deal with the country's environmental challenges and needs through improving the process of scientific and knowledge-based research.

It also seeks to improve the individual, organizational, and managerial capacities of innovators, inventors, entrepreneurs, students, and academic faculty members of universities.

The number of protected areas under the super-

vision of the Department of Environment has increased 5.5 times after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Before the Revolution, there were a total of 58 protected areas in the country.

The comprehensive plan studies the condition of wildlife, vegetation, water, and soil. Based on that, the land is classified into several zones.

In these zones, parts of the area are considered only for protection, parts for recreation and nature tourism, and small parts for administrative activities, he explained.

A series of restrictions are imposed on these zones. For example, road construction or mining are banned. These limitations will ultimately lead to better management and preservation of the region.

The fifteenth day of Esfand – the last Iranian calendar month, which falls on March 5, has been approved to be registered on the national calendar as the 'Environmental Protection Education Day'.

The registration of the Environmental Protection Education Day in the country's official calendar is known as a valuable event for the environmental society of the country education in the field of environment is one of the basic steps to preserve and protect the country's environment.

## UNODC holds training course for anti-narcotics officers, experts



TEHRAN – The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Iran held a five-day specialized training course for experts and officers from the Drug Control Headquarters, Anti-Narcotics Police, and Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, Russia, from January 22 to 26.

The course titled "Searching Method of Illicit Drugs with Use of Trained Dogs", was organized with the cooperation of the Central Customs Canine Training Centre of the Russian Federation, which is a World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Dog Training Centre, in Moscow Region.

The UNODC Iran has been actively present in the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1999 and considers Iran as one of the strategic partners for drug control and crime prevention in the region and has been supporting the Islamic Republic of Iran by providing technical assistance and training for years ever since its establishment, the UN website announced in a press release on February 6.

UNODC Iran also has a history of cooperation with the governments of the Russian Federation, in which the Iranian delegation had presentations and shared their knowledge, also asked their questions regarding structure, staffing, equipment and other technical aspects of management of the center.

The comprehensive curriculum of this training encompassed theoretical topics and lessons on various topics regarding drug-detecting dogs.

In addition to various lectures and specialized seminars and classes envisaged under the curriculum of this training, practical visits, trainings, and demonstrations were foreseen for the members of the delegation, which significantly enriched the courses, and complemented the theoretical section.

The delegation also visited different sections of the center including the veterinary ward.

On the third day of the event, a visit to Sheremetyevo airport was arranged in which various restricted access sections of the airport, including passenger areas, Customs check, luggage transfer, and canine unit stationed at this airport were shown to the participants.

On the fourth day of the event there was a round table headed by Mr. Cherkavsky, head of the Central Customs Canine Training Centre of the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, in which the Iranian delegation had presentations and shared their knowledge, also asked their questions regarding structure, staffing, equipment and other technical aspects of management of the center.

In a message, the UNODC Iran

Country Representative, Alexander Fedulov, hoped that this specialized training which was among a series of activities organized under generous funding of the Russian Federation, would be beneficial to participants and highlighted the importance of global cooperation to fight the menace of drugs.

In his message, Fedulov reiterated the importance of global support for drug control activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, considering the geographical location of Iran, bordering Afghanistan as the main producer of Opium and Methamphetamine.

At the graduation ceremony, certificates were handed over to the participants from the Islamic Republic of Iran by the head of the Central Customs Canine Training Centre of the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation.

In this event, he expressed his willingness to continue cooperation with UNODC and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the future for further cooperation and knowledge sharing.

## Study-visit workshop in Tashkent

Anti-narcotics police and law enforcement experts and officers from the Drug Control Headquarters participated in a three-day study visit organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) office in Iran from December 4-6, 2023, in Tashkent – Uzbekistan.

The study visit encompassed various activities and topics, inter alia session on "Construction and structure of an optimal canine center, management of an optimal canine center; staffing of an optimal canine center; breeding, health, treatment,

food, etc. for drug-detecting dogs", the report added.

The attendees learned about the specific ways of training and dealing with working dogs. They also acquired needed practical knowledge for managing kennels.

According to the report, the members of the Iranian delegation visited the veterinary ward and had the opportunity to directly ask their questions from the specialized medical staff.

The head of the medical center provided the delegation with pertinent information and answered questions regarding structure, staffing, equipment, and other technical aspects of the management of the veterinary ward.

At the end of the training and pursuant to the official ceremony at the Regional Customs Canine Centre of Uzbekistan, memorial trees were planted to symbolize enduring fellowship among partners in Iran and Uzbekistan and continuous cooperation in the future.

Highlighting the importance of international cooperation in the fight against narcotics, Alexander Fedulov, the UNODC representative in Tehran, hoped that future activities of a similar nature would continue upon the provision of support by donors.

## Iran is committed to fight against narcotics

On February 5, Iranian anti-narcotics police reported the seizure of more than 500 tons of different types of narcotics in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year that started in March 2023.

Iran has spent a huge sum of money fighting the war on drugs, and apart from that, many anti-narcotics forces have sacrificed their lives in this way.

## Over 400 Iranian universities in Webometrics world ranking 2024

TEHRAN – A total of 435 Iranian institutions are among 11,989 institutions ranked in Webometrics world ranking 2024.

Tehran University is the top among Iranian institutions. Its ranking has improved from 305 in 2023 to 285 in 2024, Mehr news agency reported.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (445), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (606), Sharif University of Technology (639), Amirkabir University of Technology (792), Iran Science and Technology (890), Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (920), Iran Medical Sciences University (940), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (940), and Shahid Beheshti University (967) are ranked second to tenth, respectively, in the country.

According to this year's ranking, 338 other institutions have been ranked between 4,000 to 31,000.

Web or Webometrics is the largest academic ranking of Higher Education Institutions offering every six months an independent, objective, free, open scientific exercise for providing reliable, multidimensional, updated, and useful information about the performance of universities from all over the world.

## Iranian universities' rankings in Webometrics world ranking 2024 has improved compared to last year.

Cybermetrics laboratory publishes two editions of the "Webometrics" system annually in January and July. Supporting open access, electronic access to scientific publications, and access to other academic resources is one of the first goals of this rating system.

The Ranking Web is not a ranking of the websites of universities. It is a Ranking of Universities. It uses both webometric (all missions) and bibliometric (research mission) indicators

Editors of the Ranking Web are scientists working at one world-class public research institution with long experience in metrics-guided evaluation. Impact (or visibility), accessibility (or transparency/openness), and excellence (research) are metrics that Webometrics uses to evaluate institutional websites.

The key purpose of Webometrics publishing is not only to rank websites but also to improve web publishing.

The objective is not to evaluate websites, their design or usability, or the popularity of their contents according to the number of visits or visitors. Web indicators are considered as proxies in the correct, comprehensive, deep evaluation of the university's global performance, taking into account its activities and outputs and their relevance and impact.

Based on the January edition 2024, the top 10 universities in the world have also been introduced. Harvard University, Stanford University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology are the top three universities, followed by Oxford University, University of Michigan, Berkeley University in California, Cornell University in New York, University Washington, Columbia University in New York from the U.S., and the University of Pennsylvania.

## Global rankings

According to the results of the 2023-2024 edition of the University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), 71 Iranian institutions were included in the ranking compared to 64 institutions in the 2022-2023 edition.

URAP World Ranking is based on six academic performance indicators including number of articles, citations, total document, scientific productivity, research impact, and international collaboration. In the academic performance ranking of 71 universities in Iran, Tehran University was ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231, IRNA reported.

Tehran University of Medical Science (277), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (436) were ranked second and third, respectively.

In the 2023 edition of URAP, the University of Tehran was ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231.

Golestan University of Medical Science (1307), University of Hormozgan, Amol University of Spe-

cial Modern Technologies, Vali-e-Asr University of Rafsanjan, Ilam University, University of Science and Technology of Mazandaran are institutions that had recently been ranked among the best in the world in the 2023-2024 edition.

The main objective of URAP is to develop a ranking system for world universities based on academic performance indicators that reflect the quality and the quantity of their scholarly publications.

In line with this objective URAP has been annually releasing the World Ranking of Higher Education Institutions since 2010, and Field Rankings since 2011.

The most recent ranking gathered data about 3,000 Higher Education Institutes (HEI) in an effort to rank these organizations by their academic performance. The overall score of each HEI was based upon its performance over several indicators.

Since URAP is an academic performance-based ranking, publications constitute the basis of the ranking methodology. Both quality and quantity of publications and international research collaboration performance are used as indicators.

In December 2023, the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) released a report, ranking 115 governmental and 17 non-governmental universities according to six indices.

Education counts for 30 percent, Research counts for 25 percent, Technology and Innovation counts for 20 percent, International Outlook counts for 10 percent, and Social Services, Infrastructure, and Facilities counts for 5 percent, ISNA quoted the ISC head Ahmad Fazl-zadeh as saying.

The universities of Tehran, Ferdowsi of Mashhad, Tarbiat Modarres, Shahid Beheshti, and Shiraz were placed first to fifth in the ranking.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2024 has listed 36 Iranian universities among the world's top 1,000 institutions, compared with 29 universities in 2023.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 include 1,904 universities across 108 countries and regions.

The ranking is based on 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five areas: teaching, research environment, research quality, industry, and international outlook.

Sharif University of Technology ranked first among Iranian universities with a rank in the range of 301-350.

Amirkabir University came next with a rank in the range of 351-400. The University of Tehran and Iran University of Science and Technology both were in the range of 401-500.

Shahid Beheshti Medical University, Tehran Medical University, and Iran Medical University were in the range of 601-800.

This year's ranking analyzed over 134 million citations across 16.5 million research publications and included survey responses from 68,402 scholars globally. Overall, it collected 411,789 data points from more than 2,673 institutions that submitted data.

Oxford University was at the top of this ranking for the eighth year in a row.

The highest new entry in this ranking was the Catholic University of Italy, which was ranked 301-350. However, most of the institutions joining the rankings for the first time this year were in Asia.

The United States was the most represented country with 169 institutions, as well as the most represented among the top 200 institutions, with 56 universities.

India, with 91 institutions of higher education, was currently the fourth most represented country and had surpassed China (86).

Four countries entered this ranking for the first time, all of them in Europe. The addition of Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Armenia was contrary to last year's trend, which caused these countries to be represented in the ranking of the world's top universities.

In addition to the 1,904 ranked institutions, an additional 769 universities were listed with "reporter" status, meaning they submitted data but did not meet the eligibility criteria to receive a rank and agreed to appear as reporters in the final table.

The world's top ten universities in 2024 were as follows:

University of Oxford, Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, University of Cambridge, California Institute of Technology, Imperial College London, University of California, Berkeley, and Yale University.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 'Green taxes not used for environmental development'

While the Municipality of Tehran receives green taxes paid by pollutant industries, the money is not used for developing the environment or improving the industries, Ali Moridi, head of department of environment's (DOE) soil and water office has said.

The DOE is trying to revise the law and receive green taxes to use it toward eradicating air and water pollution, wastewater treatment and environmental issues, along with technology and industries improvement, he said, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Referring to proper laws adopted on waste management, he stated that there are rules which obliges the waste management affairs of the DOE to make the manufacturing and import industries pay taxes and spend the taxes on waste management and recycling.

"Accordingly, if industries do not produce contaminated or hazardous waste, they will be subjected to tax exemptions," he added.

## عوارض آلاینده‌گی صرف از تقای محیط زیست

### نمی شود

مدیرکل دفتر آب و خاک سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: عوارض اخذ شده از صنایع آلاینده در محل خودش و با هدف رفع چالش محیط زیست هزینه نمی شود. به گزارش خبرنگار علمی ایرنا، «علی مریدی» سه شنبه افزود: در سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست در تلاش برای بازنگری این قانون هستیم تا زمینه ای فراهم شود عوارض آلاینده‌گی به حساب صندوق ملی محیط زیست وارد و صرف حل مسایل زیست محیطی شود و بتوانیم به صنایع برای ارتقای فناوری و تصفیه پساب ها کمک کنیم.

مدیر کل دفتر آب و خاک سازمان حفاظت ادامه داد: البته قوانین خوبی در زمینه مدیریت پسماند تصویب شده است که سازمان محیط زیست را مکلف کرده تا از صنایع تولیدی و وارداتی درصدی را به عنوان مالیات اخذ و به صندوق ملی محیط زیست واریز کند تا صرف هزینه پسماند و بازیافت شود. وی خاطر نشان کرد: بر همین اساس اگر صنایعی، آلودگی و پسماند آلوده یا خطرناک ایجاد نکنند شامل معافیت مالیاتی می شوند.





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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:19 Evening: 18:02 Dawn: 5:29 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:53 (tomorrow)

## Iranian bookstores reveal “The Nazi Conspiracy”

TEHRAN- “The Nazi Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill”, a book by American writers Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch, has recently been published in Persian.

Translated by Seyfollah Sadeqi, the book has been published by Morvarid Publications in Tehran.

Originally published in 2023, “The Nazi Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill” sheds light on a lesser-known chapter of World War II, unveiling a sinister plan by the Nazis to assassinate three of the most prominent Allied leaders.

Through meticulous research and compelling storytelling, the book vividly brings to life the covert plan that threatened to alter the course of history.

In 1943, with only Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin standing in Hitler’s way, the Allied leaders embarked on a dangerous

mission to meet in secret in Tehran to discuss their strategy against Nazi Germany. However, unbeknownst to them, the Nazis had uncovered their plans and devised an assassination plot that could have changed the course of the war.

Meltzer and Mensch delve into the daring rescues, body doubles, and political intrigue surrounding this pivotal meeting of the Big Three and the deadly Nazi scheme. Through their detailed narrative, they illuminate the relentless efforts of the greatest political minds of the twentieth century as they strategized to defeat the enemy, narrowly averting a catastrophe that could have had catastrophic consequences for the world.

“The Nazi Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill” offers readers a gripping account of the high-stakes diplomatic maneuvers, covert operations, and shadowy machinations that defined this tumultuous period in history.

## Mark Ruffalo calls for ceasefire in Gaza

Mark Ruffalo is calling for an Israel-Hamas ceasefire. At the DGA awards in Beverly Hills on Saturday night he told Deadline the pins on his lapel represented “peace lilies and Artists for Ceasefire”.

Ruffalo said that Artists for Ceasefire is “calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. There are 1,200 Israelis dead and 27,000 Palestinians,” he continued.

“We’ve come to understand this bombing isn’t working, we’re not going to bomb our way to peace, and all we’re saying is, what’s wrong with giving a ceasefire a chance? We have a million refugees on the border of Rafah right now, who are looking at another bombing surge, and we have 400,000 people starving to death right now, without any humanitarian aid being able to get in there.

So, we’re asking the leaders of the world, especially President Biden, to demand a

ceasefire, a lasting ceasefire, and give peace a chance instead of just a continued bombing, the escalation of violence and what will soon become a regional war that America will be dragged into.”

Ruffalo explained he had no plans to make a statement during the awards ceremony itself since, he said, “it’s really for Yorgos tonight.” Ruffalo is set to present the Feature Film Nomination to his “Poor Things” director Yorgos Lanthimos.

In Lanthimos’ “Poor Things,” Ruffalo stars as Duncan Wedderburn, a comedic cad character who whisks Emma Stone’s Bella away on a cruise, before discovering her uncontrollable and thoroughly unexpected personality.

We will soon see Ruffalo in “Mickey 17,” Bong Joon-ho’s much-anticipated new film, based on Edward Ashton’s science fiction thriller novel Mickey7.

## Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

# War drama “Majnoon” crowned best at 42nd Fajr Film Festival

TEHRAN- The wartime drama “Majnoon,” which centers on Martyr Major General Mahdi Zeinoddin, has been awarded the Crystal Simorgh for best film at the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival.

Directed by Mehdi Shamohammadi and produced by Owj Arts and Media Organization, the film centers on the courageous actions of Mehdi Zeinoddin, one of the notable martyrs of Iran who rose to leadership at a young age during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1989), particularly on Majnoon Island during the Khaybar operation.

The film also brought Maestro Majid Entezami the Crystal Simorgh for best composer during the closing ceremony of the festival held at Milad Tower on Sunday evening.

Additionally, Behzad Khalaj and Shabnam Qorbani won best supporting actor and actress awards for their roles in “Majnoon”.

Behrouz Afkhami was awarded best director for his work on “The Morning of The Execution”, which explores the final moments of Tayyeb Haj Rezaei and Esmail Rezaei after the 1963 uprising.

Arastou Khoshrazm also won the best actor award for the film.

The best actress award went to Maral Bani-Adam for her role in “Parvin”.

Directed by Mohammadreza Varzi, the film is about the life story of Parvin Etesami (1907-1940), one of the most prominent Persian poets of the 20th century.

Kouhyar Kalari was honored with the best cinematographer award for “Summer of the Same Year” by Mahmoud Kalari.

Kamyab Amin Ashayeri and Mehmoosh Bayani received best



Left to right, up: Behrouz Afkhami, Arastou Khoshrazm, Javad Ezzati, Maral Bani-Adam, Behzad Khalaj, Shabnam Qorbani

set design and best costume design awards for their collaboration on the film.

Hassan Hassandoust was recognized as the best editor for “Parviz Khan” directed by Ali Saqafi, who also received an honorable mention for best screenplay.

Morteza Kohzadi was named best makeup artist for “Ahmad”, directed by Amir Abbas Rabiee, and Mohammad Baradaran won the best visual effects award for his work on the same film.

In the New Outlook Section of the festival, “Parviz Khan” was named best first film, while Javad Ezzati received the Crystal Simorgh for the best director for his debut directorial “Blood Alligator”.

In the Cinema Salvation, the international section of the festival, Crystal Simorgh for the best film was awarded to “Blaga’s Lessons”,

directed by Stephan Komandarev from Bulgaria.

The film recounts the story of Blaga, a seventy-year-old recently widowed former teacher with strong morals. When telephone scammers deceive her out of money she had saved for her husband’s grave, her moral compass gradually begins to falter.

Alejandro Rojas and Juan Sebastián Vasquez from Spain were honored with the best director award for their film “Upon Entry.”

The movie depicts the challenges faced by Diego, a Venezuelan urbanist, and Elena, a contemporary dancer from Barcelona, as they encounter difficulties at Newark Airport while embarking on a new life in the United States.

“The Best Century of My Life” from Italy earned director and writer Alessandro Bardani the Crystal

Simorgh for the best script, while the award for outstanding artistic contribution was presented to Angelo Rallis for “Mighty Afarin: In Time of Flood,” a co-production from Greece and Bangladesh.

In this segment, Mahmoud Kalari from Iran received the special jury award for his film “Summer of the Same Year.” This year’s edition of the festival attracted an impressive total of 621 submissions from 87 countries, showcasing a diverse range of cinematic talent from around the globe.

In addition to Iran, countries such as the U.S., France, India, Turkey, Italy, Yemen, Brazil, Russia, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Mexico, China, Britain, Ireland, Iraq, South Korea, Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden, Greece, Australia, Poland, Lebanon, Japan, Hong Kong, and Syria registered their works for participation in the international section of this edition.

## Urdu, Bengali translations of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s “Cell No. 14” unveiled at New Delhi Book Fair



From page 1 ► The book covers the first half of the life of Ayatollah Khamenei, from his early childhood all the way to the 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought the monarchical regime to an end in Iran. In his book, the author skillfully transports readers to a tangible and realized space through simple yet comprehensive literature. The book’s narrative is devoid of

imposing or imaginative elements, resulting in a striking sense of concreteness and realization.

It is a remarkable saga of a young cleric blessed with an indomitable spirit who fights a dictatorial regime with his sermons and speeches as well as with his organizational abilities. He never loses hope despite being sent to prison and exile, and finally emerged victorious against all odds.

The book serves as a source of inspiration to all activists around the globe who are trying to bring about social and political change.

It also contains unpublished photos of the Leader, his father and his children, in addition to a photo collection of paintings related to the topics in the book.

The Persian edition of the book was published by the Islamic Revolution Publications in 2019. It

was a translation of the Leader’s book that was originally written in Arabic.

Last year, the Spanish and Portuguese translations of the book were also published.

Iran Book and Literature House represents Iran at the event, with more than 800 titles in various fields including Iranology, art, calligraphy, religion, Persian education, classic and contemporary literature, children and young adults, and Sacred Defense among others. The books are presented in Persian, English and Urdu. Held for 50 years, the NDWBF has been a major calendar event in the publishing world. The Fair is organized by National Book Trust, India (under the Ministry of Education, Government of India).

This year’s edition of the fair started on February 10 and will wrap up on February 18.

## 39th Fajr International Music Festival to honor three veteran musicians

TEHRAN-Three veteran Iranian musicians will be honored at the closing ceremony of the 39th Fajr International Music Festival (FIMF) on February 17.

Fazlollah Tavakol, Darvish Reza Monazami, and Ali Rahimian are the Iranian artists who will be commemorated at a ceremony on the last day of the festival, Honaronline reported.

Born in Tehran, Tavakol, 81, is a master of violin and santur - Iranian instrument similar to hammered dulcimer - and a famous composer of Persian traditional music. He holds a master’s degree in economics from the University of Cambridge; however, music has been his only occupation throughout his life.

He started learning music from the age of six. His father bought him a santur when he was eight years and he learned Persian music under the tutelage of Master Ali Tajvidi (1919-2006). Tavakol’s genius in playing santur convinced his master to invite him to the radio orchestra when he was only 14.

At the age of 16 he joined the famous radio program Golha (flowers), which

broadcast the finest classical Persian music by the best singers and musicians of the time (1956-1979), and performed as a soloist accompanying many well-known singers including Mahmoudi Khansari and Akbar Golpayegani.

Later he expanded his cooperation with radio as a composer as well. His production of new melodies saw many other singers keen to work with him.

In 1993 he established a new orchestra at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) together with violin virtuoso Asadollah Malek (1941-2002) and recorded several solo and duet performances.

His music is pleasant, popular and up to date so his compositions are welcomed by different generations. Tavakol collaborated with Golpayegani again in 1993 in two albums and four years later his first album with the renowned traditional singer Alireza Eftekhari was released and was followed by more albums in later years.

In 2016, Tavakol received the first-class degree in art, which is equivalent to a doctoral degree.

Monazami, 84, is a kamancheh virtuoso, composer, and kamancheh and violin instructor. One of Hossein Yahaghi’s students, He first learned how to play kamancheh by himself and then practiced with masters such as Yahaghi and Ali Asghar Bahari.

After being admitted to the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, he learned the basics of dastgah - the standard musical system in Persian music - with Nur-Ali Borumand and Dariush Safvat. Later his cooperation with Mohammad Reza Lotfi played a key role in the formation of Sheyda Ensemble.

In the 1990s, at the invitation of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Monazami became a member of the academic staff of the faculty. In the same decade, he collaborated with Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Parviz Meshkatian in some albums. He later served as the vice-chancellor of the Faculty of Fine Arts and also became the head of the faculty as well.

Ali Rahimian, also known with the artistic name of Homayoun Rahimian, is the permanent conductor of Iran’s

National Orchestra.

Rahimian, 69, is a musician, conductor, and composer. He holds a bachelor’s degree in music from the University of Arts and has received a first-class artistic degree from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

He was the first musician of the Chamber Orchestra of the Radio and Television of Iran. He has also served as the senior member of the Expert Council of the Music Unit and the High Music Council of the Radio and Television Organization.

Being a prominent violinist, during his professional career as a composer and musician, Rahimian has composed over 100 pieces of music.

The 39th edition of FIMF will be held from February 12 to 17 in Tehran and other provinces. Organized by the Music Office of the Deputy for Artistic Affairs of Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the festival encompasses various sections such as the competitive (Barbad Award), non-competitive, and research sessions.