

Fiery Resistance to Gaza Genocide

Airman Aaron Bushnell sets himself on fire outside Israeli embassy in Washington while screaming "Free Palestine"

▶ Page 5



The moment Aaron Bushnell sets himself on fire outside Tel Aviv's embassy in Washington DC on February 25, 2024 in protest to the genocide in Gaza. The quality of the photo has been promoted through AI. (scan the QR code to see the remarks of the American airman)



Security personnel to safeguard Iran's Friday election

TEHRAN – At least 250,000 security personnel from the police, army, IRGC, and Basij will be overseeing the security of ballot boxes and polling stations across the country on Friday, a senior official from the Interior Ministry said on Monday.

Seyyed Majid Mir-Ahmadi also emphasized that parliamentary candidates and their supporters must respect the law, stating that security forces will decisively confront any lawbreakers.

Aspiring individuals vying for seats in Iran's legislative body have already commenced their electoral campaigns for a term spanning four years.

A historic count of 15,200 candidates have received the nod from the scrutinizing panel overseeing the candidate selection process to compete for the 290 seats in the legislature, marking a significant milestone since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Among the qualified candidates are 1,713 women, a notable increase from the 819 female contenders in the 2020 election. In the Tehran constituency alone, a staggering 3,545 candidates are contesting the elections.

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi recently highlighted the conducive environment for a robust contestation among diverse groups holding varied political perspectives. ▶ Page 3

Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project recommences after ten-year delay

TEHRAN - In a significant step towards enhancing energy cooperation between Pakistan and Iran, Islamabad has given the green light for advancing much-delayed work on the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline within its territory.

The approval comes as Pakistan has scrambled to avoid a staggering 18-billion-dollar fine, with the government authorizing the commencement of long-awaited work on the initial 80-kilometer phase within its borders, Shana reported.

Analysts say the project will improve Pakistan's energy security and support regional industries by providing stable and enhanced gas supplies.

Iran has extended the project deadline by 180 days until September 2024 to avoid a legal dispute with Pakistan at international tribunals.

The project, launched in 2013, had initially required Pakistan to finish the construction of the pipeline on its territory by the end of 2014.

However, the project faced prolonged delays due to the potential challenges it posed for Pakistan amid international sanctions targeting Iran. ▶ Page 4

IRGC chief says Iran does believe Gazans will prevail

TEHRAN- The Islamic Republic of Iran, the chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says, is certain that the Palestinian resistance will prevail against the Israeli regime in the Gaza Strip, where the Tel Aviv regime is perpetrating genocide.

Addressing an event in the north-central holy city of Qom on Sunday, Major General Hossein Salami said, "Today, we're witnessing the enemies' crimes in Palestine."

He went on to add, "They are seeking to attain victory for themselves by killing children, women, and defenseless people."

The Israeli regime has so far failed to achieve any of its goals in the Gaza Strip.

"We believe in these dear people's victory, and know that divine victory is with the devoted people, who do not give up resistance in this lopsided war."

Following the October 7 al-Aqsa Storm, a surprise operation orchestrated by Hamas during which about 250 Israelis were taken prisoner, the Israeli regime declared war on the coastal enclave. ▶ Page 3

Palestinian PM hands resignation to Abbas over Gaza 'genocide'

Palestinian Authority's Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said on Monday that he had officially submitted his government's resignation to President Mahmoud Abbas.

"I submitted the government's resignation to President Mahmoud Abbas on February 20, 2024, and today I submit it in writing," he stated, Wafa reported.

"It comes in light of what Palestinian people, our Palestinian cause, and our political system are facing from a ferocious and unprecedented attack, genocide, attempts at forced displacement, starvation in Gaza, intensification of colonialism, colonizers' terrorism, and repeated invasions of camps, villages, and cities in Jerusalem and the West Bank, its re-occupation, unprecedented financial strangulation, attempts to liquidate the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees, repudiation of all signed agreements, gradual annexation of Palestinian lands, and striving to make the Palestinian National Authority a security administrative authority with no political content," Shtayyeh added.

Bibi's insistence on Rafah assault will mark major failure for the West and intl. system

By Alireza Majidi

TEHRAN - Rafah is the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip, adjacent to Egypt. Located approximately 107 kilometers west of occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), the city covers an area of less than 55 square kilometers, which expanded to around 64 square kilometers during the recent war due to the settlement of refugees in its vicinity.

In 1982, when the Israeli regime handed over the Sinai Desert to Egypt based on the Camp David Accord, the city of Rafah was divided into two parts.

Its southern part became part of Egyptian territory, while its northern part became part of the Gaza Strip. In the early years of the new century, with the Israeli military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the northern part was handed over to the self-governing Palestinian Authority.

In the circumstances of 140 days since the Israeli invasion of Gaza, it can be reasonably asserted that the only point that has remained immune so far from the full-scale ground assault of the Zionist regime is Rafah. ▶ Page 5

Iranian hospitality wins Chinese influencer's heart

TEHRAN – "Traveling to Iran sheds light on the real meaning of the word; Persian", mentioned by a Chinese social media influencer who recently visited the country, participating in a Fam Tour called "Salam Iran".

Pointing to the online information insufficiency about Iran, Zhao Weihong stated that some people are introducing Iran in an inaccurate way on social media platforms, which causes pessimism toward paying a visit to this culturally rich country among Chinese people.

"During a visit to Iran, we faced the satisfying reality which was the complete opposite of available online information," according to the famous influencer.

"When you visit Iran personally and get to know the Persian Empire's history, it comes to light how inadequate the knowledge provided by Chinese online platforms," Zhao Weihong noted. ▶ Page 6



Iran FM laments dire humanitarian situation in Gaza at UN session

TEHRAN – During his speech at the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council at Geneva, the Iranian foreign minister voiced concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip amid Israel's onslaught.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian lamented the dire situation in Gaza and reiterated Iran's diplomatic and international efforts to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis and proposed an extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers from Islamic countries.

He proposed the systematic and widespread 'human slaughtering' of the occupying war-mongering regime of Israel as the most important challenge in the path to the realization. ▶ Page 2

Hungarian FM says economic ties with Iran possible despite sanctions

TEHRAN – Hungary's minister of foreign affairs and trade has said his country is pursuing economic relations with Iran despite Western sanctions making it challenging to maintain bilateral trade and financial ties.

"The pretty extended framework of sanctions against Iran makes it really challenging to build effective economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. But challenging does not mean impossible," Peter Szijjarto said during an interview with the IRNA news agency.

The Hungarian top diplomat visited Tehran earlier this week as the head of a high-ranking delegation. He met with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and signed a trade deal in agriculture and food industries. Szijjarto has also attended a Hungarian-Iranian business forum in Tehran to discuss sectors not affected by sanctions, including pharmaceutical, food, healthcare, and water management industries. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

Russia does not have any Iranian missiles

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

In a note, the Iran newspaper analyzed a fake news report by Reuters that Iran had sent ballistic missiles to Russia. It wrote: Citing anonymous news sources, the new scenario of the Reuters news agency, which claimed a few days ago that Iran had sent a large number of powerful ballistic missiles to Russia, was rejected by the Islamic Republic.

It was a claim that even John Kirby, the spokesman of the White House Security Council, said America has not yet seen evidence confirming the transfer of these missiles from Iran to Russia.

Earlier, Reuters was at the forefront of fake news that is sending military drones to Russia to help this country in the Ukraine war. These claims are not separate from the security and psychological propaganda of the West against Iran and Russia as two regional allies. Also, the war of attrition between Hamas and Israel and the more complicated situation of this (Israeli) regime has affected the military support of the United States for Ukraine. Therefore, it was not unexpected for Western circles to turn to such scenarios to cover up this complicated situation.

Shargh: West seeks to create tension

In an interview with Ali Akbar Farazi, a senior expert on NATO issues, Shargh addressed the West's new false claims against Tehran that the Islamic Republic has sent ballistic missiles to Russia with the aim of using them in the Ukraine war. It wrote: The West's accusations can be investigated from two perspectives. On the one hand, Westerners have tried to divert Russia's attention away from the war in Ukraine and direct it to Iran.

At the same time, Westerners are trying to divert Iran's attention from the war between Hamas and Israel and the Middle East in general to the war in Ukraine and other issues. In a sense they are trying to put Iran in a dilemma.

Therefore, it has been tried to raise alarm about the perceived threat of Iran and Russia in the future. The purpose of these accusations is primarily intended to stop Russia's war on Ukraine. In the current situation, these accusations can create a political, diplomatic, and media atmosphere against Moscow and Tehran, especially as Russia has the upper hand in the war with Ukraine and will probably win the war.

Raisi sends congratulatory message to Kuwaiti emir

TEHRAN- In a message to the Emir of Kuwait Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Muslim nation of Kuwait on the occasion of the country's National Day, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has congratulated the Arab country on the 63rd anniversary of its independence.

Raisi expressed hope that in the light of the efforts and joint efforts of the officials of the two countries, both nations will witness the development of cooperation in all bilateral, regional and international fields.

"The two neighboring and friendly countries have long-standing relations and deep cultural affinity, and during challenges, they have always been friends and helpers of each other," Raisi added.

The president also expresses optimism for more solid ties with Kuwait in various fields, pointing to the long-standing friendship

Hamshahri: An agreement that surprised America and Israel

In an analysis, Hamshahri discussed the relations between Tehran and Riyadh amid the Israeli war in the Gaza Strip and said: Experts believe that although the war in Gaza has created new challenges and opportunities for Iran and Saudi Arabia, the evaluations show that the two countries are not willing to increase tensions and participate directly in the war. In total, the evaluations show that the move between Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic relations can be useful for both countries and gradually move towards reducing tensions and increasing security in West Asia. With China's help, these two countries agreed to normalize relations, which was a surprising issue for the United States and Europe. The resumption of ties showed that even despite ongoing tensions, both countries had strong internal, regional, and international reasons to reduce tensions. The rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia complicated Israel's calculations amid persistent efforts to isolate Iran and Tel Aviv's move to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia. Riyadh and Tehran had compelling internal, regional, and international motivations to de-escalation tensions.

Arman-e-Melli: Iran on the FATF blacklist

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli addressed the new statement of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and said: The FATF declared that Iran will remain on the blacklist of this body. This is despite the fact that, according to some experts, Iran is currently complying with many of the provisions of the FATF, but has not officially accepted it. And in this way, the limitations resulting from it still center around the situation surrounding Iran. Iran's main concern regarding FATF is that if the FATF is fully accepted, Iran's financial management and commercial and non-commercial transactions will be in the hands of others, especially hostile countries. Although the authorities are trying to expand the scope of their business communication by circumventing the laws, they will definitely suffer financial losses. In fact, the exchange of goods and... with countries like China does not bring much financial benefit to Iran, because due to the circumstances, we are forced to exchange goods for goods or carry out financial transactions at a rate much lower than the normal international level.



between the two nations in the face of challenges.

Kuwait's National Day is celebrated on February 25 each year. It marks the day when Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah ascended to the throne in 1950.

Kuwait is a member of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council that has close historical and developing relations with Iran.

areas is affected by financial sanctions.

We need to find a way to conduct our trade with respect to international law. Our national bank is guided by experienced professionals, and we ask them to examine this matter," he noted, adding that Hungary is also granting scholarships to Iranian students to further develop ties between the two countries.

Iran FM laments dire humanitarian situation in Gaza at UN session

From page 1 ▶ of the lofty goals of human rights. The top Iranian diplomat stated, "Indeed, one must admit that the world is facing the most reprehensible moral and humanitarian crisis, which is the result of 80 years of unconditional support for, and condoning, the colonial occupation and the continuous violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. During the past 142 days alone, more than one hundred thousand 'human beings' have been slaughtered or injured or buried under rubble in Gaza, and those who happen to be alive there, are facing an imminent death from starvation and infectious diseases."

Amir Abdollahian also condemned the policies of the United States and the United Kingdom in the Red Sea and their attacks on Yemen, which he said have exacerbated the regional crisis.

He noted that Iran remains steadfast in adhering to and respecting human rights and dignity based on its national, cultural values and the Islamic teaching.

"US shows lack of commitment in ending Gaza war"

Engaging in crucial discussions at the sidelines of the UN session, Amir Abdollahian met with Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Expressing gratitude for the committee's dedicated efforts in Palestine, particularly Gaza, the top Iranian diplomat painted a stark picture of the complex and deeply troubling humanitarian conditions in Palestine. He extended thanks for the committee's responsible initiatives and lamented how misguided political strategies have impeded the resolution of the Gaza crisis.

Amir Abdollahian, drawing from recent meetings with Palestinian Resistance leaders in Beirut and



Doha, portrayed the dire situation in northern Gaza, where over 600,000 residents are grappling with food scarcity and hunger. He critiqued the U.S. stance, emphasizing a lack of commitment from them to ending the conflict, and underscored the imperative for democratic methods and political agreements among all Palestinian groups for effective post-conflict Gaza management.

The Iranian minister also expressed concerns over the impending threat of an Israeli attack on Rafah, with the potential to displace 1.4 million Palestinians, underscoring the magnitude of the human tragedy. While acknowledging the strength of military resistance, Amir Abdollahian stressed the urgent need for swift humanitarian aid.

Amir Abdollahian underscored Iran's persistent political efforts to bring about a resolution to the Gaza conflict. The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in turn, conveyed deep concern about the severe humanitarian situation in Gaza, commending Iran's political endeavors to end the conflict. She outlined the committee's proactive initiatives to send aid and alleviate the consequences of war, highlighting the global community's shortcomings in addressing the crisis. Urging immediate action to tackle dire conditions and the lack of access to

necessities in Gaza, she emphasized the pressing need for urgent efforts and immediate aid distribution. Additionally, she drew attention to alarming humanitarian conditions in other regional countries, underlining the committee's commitment to engaging with all relevant parties capable of managing such critical situations.

Amir Abdollahian also had meetings with his counterparts from Vietnam, Jordan, Kuwait, and Indonesia. Their discussions covered various bilateral and international issues, including the situation in Palestine, particularly the crisis in Gaza. Expressing contentment with the collaborative atmosphere in international forums, he underscored Iran's commitment to nurturing these successful partnerships.

"Immediate ceasefire is necessary as situation in northern Gaza exacerbates"

Furthermore, the top Iranian diplomat engaged in discussions with António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Acknowledging Guterres's contributions to critical global issues, including the situation in Palestine, Amir Abdollahian drew attention to recent meetings with Palestinian Resistance leaders in Beirut and Doha. Commending the Resistance's military capabilities against the

Zionist regime's aggression, he underscored the severe humanitarian situation resulting from the Israeli regime's occupation of the Palestinian territories and the ongoing crimes that this illegal entity keeps committing, notably in northern Gaza.

Expressing regret over Israel's ongoing siege of Gaza, supported by the U.S., to prolong the conflict despite Palestinian groups advocating a sustainable ceasefire, Amir Abdollahian highlighted the deep concern for the humanitarian crisis in northern Gaza. While acknowledging the UN's aid efforts, he emphasized their insufficient scale and noted the U.S.'s lack of commitment has exacerbated the crisis in the Red Sea and Yemen.

Raising concerns about U.S. military actions jeopardizing joint efforts between Iran and the UN to resolve the Yemeni crisis, Amir Abdollahian stressed Iran's support for the UN resolution for the Gaza conflict and to halt the genocide of Palestinians. He affirmed Iran's reliability for regional security contributions.

Guterres, expressing satisfaction with the meeting, voiced concern about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, strongly opposing the collective punishment of Palestinians. Deeming the situation complex and worrisome, he emphasized the urgent need to end these conditions detrimental to the region. Despite the challenges, he appreciated Iran's diplomatic efforts to find political solutions for the Palestinian crisis and reduce regional crises.

Heading a diplomatic delegation, Amir Abdollahian arrived in Geneva early on Monday to attend the 55th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) and the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament.

Tehran, Damascus highlight significance of implementing joint projects



TEHRAN- The Syrian prime minister and Iran's ambassador to Syria on Monday underscored the need to follow up on the implementation of agreements and memorandums of understanding between Tehran and Damascus based on the timetable in a way that ensures the common interests of both countries.

According to the official Syrian news agency SANA, Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous and Ambassador Hossein Akbari also called for enhancing cooperation in energy, transportation, trade and banking sectors and raising levels of coordination in various economic fields.

The ambassador expressed the desire and readiness of many Iranian companies to work in the Syrian market and provide everything that contributes to supporting the Syrian economy in the face of the blockade.

Iraqi PM, Iranian ambassador talk about bilateral ties

TEHRAN- Iranian Ambassador Kazem Al Sadegh met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani in Baghdad to talk about mutual cooperation. The media office of the Iraqi prime minister declared that Al Sudani and Al Sadegh had discussions on Sunday. The two parties spoke about measures to broaden their collaboration in all areas, as well as bilateral relations, according to the official press agency of Iraq.

During the discussion, Al Sudani underscored that the Iraqi government is eager to deepen its ties with all neighboring nations and is developing strategies to establish peace and security in the region. Strategic connections and broad bilateral collaboration in political, military, commercial, and cultural domains characterize the relationship between Iran and Iraq. On February 05, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian visited the Iraqi capital Baghdad to hold talks with several high-ranking Iraqi officials.

Iran's envoy also emphasizes that Tehran will continue to propose any solution that would help strengthen the Syrian economy in dealing with Western sanctions and lifting the economic siege on the country.

Arnous, for his part, stressed the Syrian government's interest in taking all measures to develop bilateral cooperation and open new horizons for cooperation in all fields, pointing to the importance of launching joint projects that would benefit both sides.

He also said that the Syrian government is eager to take all necessary measures to develop bilateral cooperation with Tehran and remove obstacles to this cooperation.

The Syrian premier emphasized the importance of launching joint projects that are beneficial for both countries, adding that Damascus is striving to create new horizons for cooperation with Tehran in all areas.

During the meeting, the development of cooperation in energy, transportation, trade and banking exchanges, and increasing coordination in various economic fields were discussed and reviewed.

Furthermore, discussions were held on creating industrial investment plans, including the construction of tractors, tires, iron, powdered milk, and other priority projects that help meet the needs of the Syrian market and domestic production.

During the meeting, Ahmadian reiterated Tehran's commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity, vowing to safeguard its security and stability.

They also noted that both sides are keen to follow their collaboration based on the Iran-Iraq security pact in a bid to maintain security of the two neighboring countries.

The Iraqi premier declared that no country has the right to infringe Iraq's territorial integrity, ruling out any unilateral actions by neighboring countries that contradict international principles based on mutual respect for sovereignty.

Al Sudani also underscored Baghdad's commitment to the principle of good neighborliness and fostering strong relations with regional and global countries.

Also on February 14, in a meeting with Al Sudani, Iranian Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei said that Tehran is the main supporter of

Last week, Akbari asserted that Tehran can fulfill certain internal requirements via cooperation with Damascus.

The ambassador underscored Syria's pivotal role as a strategic ally across multiple spheres including politics, security, military, and economics. Akbari also highlighted Syria's potential in trade and economy, noting that economic collaboration became a focal point following President Raisi's visit to Syria in early May.

The close political alignment between Iran and Syria has laid a strong foundation for bolstering economic ties, further solidifying their strategic partnership.

Iran's robust mining sector has presented a promising opportunity for Syria, which has faced significant material shortages in the aftermath of years of civil conflict.

Additionally, Iran's technological prowess can contribute significantly to Syria's reconstruction efforts.

Furthermore, Syria's unique geopolitical position at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa positions it as a potential gateway for Iran to access markets across these continents. The restoration of Syria, with Iran playing a leading role, has the potential to deepen the collaboration between these strategic allies, enhancing economic, military, and security cooperation.

stability and security in Iraq.

Mohseni Ejei also said there is a pressing need for full implementation of security agreements between Iran and Iraq and comprehensive confrontation with terrorists who have been tasked by the enemies of both Iran and Iraq to threaten and undermine the security of both countries. Iran's top judge also praised the desirable and strong positions of the government and people of Iraq in supporting the people of Gaza, stressing the need to level up political pressure from the Islamic world on the U.S. and the Zionist regime to end the massacre of the people of Gaza.

Mohseni Ejei went on to say that all Islamic nations must rise against the war machine of the Zionists, and it is essential that they activate all mechanisms to stop the massacre and savagery of the Zionists in the Gaza Strip.

Hungarian FM says economic ties with Iran possible despite sanctions

From page 1 ▶ When asked about the challenges of working with Iran due to financial transaction limitations, the minister said the two countries can still cooperate in a multitude of areas.

"There are sectors that are not affected by sanctions, and their trade is entirely free and legal. I don't think that trade in non-sanctioned

Iran calls for nuclear disarmament of Israel

TEHRAN – Iran has sounded the alarm bell over Israel's possession of deadly nuclear weapons, saying the regime's conduct shows its nuclear arsenal poses a threat to not only Palestinians but people across the world.

"The international community must take this threat seriously and make a decisive decision to confront the unprecedented threat posed by this occupying, apartheid, and discriminatory regime to global peace.

This occupying regime has become so emboldened by the support of the United States and some Western countries that it shamelessly threatens both the oppressed people of Gaza and the countries of the region with nuclear weapons," warned Iran's Foreign Minister while addressing a high-level disarmament



conference at the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Israeli cabinet has suggested the use of nuclear weapons against Palestinians in Gaza multiple times during the past months.

That's while since October 7, the regime has carpet-bombed the entirety of Gaza, leveling at least

70% of the strip's infrastructure and buildings. Its deadly military campaign has also left behind a vast carnage of over 30,000 Palestinian civilians, with the rest of the population now grappling with famine and disease.

"The world must acknowledge that nuclear weapons in the hands of such

a regime constitute the most serious and urgent threat to humanity. It is necessary to dismantle all the nuclear arsenals of this regime and subject all its nuclear installations to the inspections and mechanisms of the International Atomic Energy Agency," Hossein Amir Abdollahian added.

The top Iranian diplomat also criticized Washington's untrammelled support for the regime, saying the U.S. has been scuppering regional countries' efforts aimed at making West Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Israel is estimated to have at least 90 nuclear warheads, with fissile material stockpiles of over 200.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has never inspected any of the regime's nuclear sites despite repeated calls from countries in West Asia.

Security personnel to safeguard Iran's Friday election



From Page 1 ▶ He stressed the critical need for candidates and their supporters to adhere strictly to the legal protocols governing the elections,

advocating for a disciplined campaign devoid of mudslinging against opponents.

Meanwhile, the incumbent parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, is set to run from his native region, a remote northeastern constituency. He secured a seat in Tehran's capital four years ago.

Simultaneously, 144 clerics are slated to partake in the race for the 88-seat Assembly of Experts, acting as an advisory council to the Leadership of the Islamic Revolution, with a service tenure lasting eight years.

As per Iran's constitutional framework, the assembly holds the responsibility of overseeing the country's leader and determining a successor.

Ebrahim Raeisi, the president and the current assembly member, is eyeing re-election to the assembly from a constituency in South Khorasan province.

Western-based media outlets have been discouraging Iranian people from voting on Friday, asking them to refrain from showing up at the ballot box no matter what. Despite the ongoing propaganda campaigns, however, it is expected that a large part of the Iranian eligible voters will participate in the election similar to previous elections. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution has advised Iranians to ignore the calls and take part in determining the future of their country.

President tells legal team to be assertive in defending Iranian people's rights

TEHRAN – During a meeting on Monday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi ordered the Department of Legal Affairs to take an offensive approach in dealing with cases that involve the rights of the Iranian nation.

"So far, we have mostly attempted to defend the country in international courts. But with enemies growing

more aggressive by the day, it is now necessary for us to take on a more offensive role," the president explained.

Iran is currently working with its neighbor Iraq to establish legal protocols for the trial of individuals accused in the assassination of anti-terror icon Lieutenant General

Qassem Soleimani, who lost his life during a US drone attack in Baghdad four years ago.

Raisi also commented on South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice stressing the importance of backing Cape Town in its pursuit of justice.

"Regarding the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, although it is clear to everyone that the International Court is under the control of the hegemonic system, this does not absolve us of responsibility, and we must utilize all capacities to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people and condemn the crimes of the Zionist regime."

Strong voter turnout will safeguard Iran's national security: military

TEHRAN – The spokesman for Iran's Defense Ministry has urged the citizens to exercise their voting rights in the parliamentary elections, highlighting the crucial role of participation in shaping the nation's future.

As Iran stands on the cusp of pivotal parliamentary elections scheduled for March 1, Brigadier General Reza Talei-Nik, in an interview with Fars news agency, stated, "The discussion surrounding electoral participation is undeniably of great importance. Elections serve as the mechanism for empowering the institutions of our country. In essence, all institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran are directly or indirectly shaped based on the people's votes."

He further highlighted the unique identity of the Iranian nation as Islamic and revolutionary, noting that living in a region at the forefront of global developments brings about national and international consequences from elections. General Talei-Nik emphasized that beyond the immediate results of elections, a strong voter turnout would send a powerful message

of cohesion and resolve to the international community.

"In the face of perceived threats to Iran by adversaries in both domestic and foreign arenas, the extent of the people's participation in elections becomes a crucial consideration across national and international domains," General Talei-Nik noted.

The Iranian Parliament, known as the Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majlis, plays a central role in the governance structure, responsible for passing laws, approving budgets, and overseeing government policies. Almost 15,000 candidates have been approved to compete in the parliamentary elections that are held every four years. In order to secure a position as a lawmaker for a four-year term, a victorious candidate is required to obtain a minimum of 20 percent of the votes cast within their respective constituency.

Concurrently with the elections of the Islamic Consultative Majlis, the Assembly of Experts



election will be held on March 1, where 144 candidates are vying for 88 seats at the body, which elects and oversees the performance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution and is in a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss Leader.

Mohammadreza Shahcheraghi, deputy minister of interior for political affairs and the head of election headquarters, said around 59,000 polling stations will be opened on the day of elections and nearly 800,000 people will be involved in the process of overseeing the elections.

IRGC chief says Iran does believe Gazans will prevail

From Page 1 ▶ Thus far, the military assault has claimed the lives of about 30,000 people, most of them women and children, with unwavering political and military backing from the United States.

Nonetheless, the resistance groups in the region have promised to keep fighting the occupying regime and hold off on freeing the detainees until the war is completely stopped.

"Glorious political epic"

Elsewhere in his remarks, the top commander said that the Iranian nation will create a "glorious political epic" by staging maximum engagement in the parliamentary elections on Friday, March 1.

"The nation will once again serve the enemy with a hefty punch in the mouth, and will show that they will not accord the least value to the enemy's demand," he said.

"The enemies are trying to dissuade the people from turning to the ballot boxes," he said, "but the nation knows that this is a political battle between

us and our enemies, who are after our elimination and seek to separate us from Islam and destroy our will"

The senior general added, "Iran's enemies will suffer defeat in the political battle too."

Iran is scheduled to hold the sixth term of elections for the Assembly of Experts and the 12th term of elections for the parliament on March 1 since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Constitutional Council has approved 14,200 candidates for the March 1 parliamentary election.

The Constitutional Council spokesperson, Hadi Tahan Nazif, stated that a comprehensive evaluation process resulted in the qualification of a total of 14,200 candidates for parliament, with the final week focusing on scrutinizing appeal files.

He also stated that the number of candidates for the Assembly of Experts election increased to 144 people.

Tahan Nazif emphasized that the names of these qualified candidates were promptly

communicated to the interior minister, and the Constitutional Council concluded its evaluation on February 8.

Mohammadreza Shahcheraghi, deputy minister of interior for political affairs and the head of election headquarters, said around 59,000 polling stations will be opened on the day of elections and nearly 800,000 people will be involved in holding the elections.

On February 17, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi announced that 103 parties and 20 electoral coalitions had declared their readiness for the late winter election.

Minister Vahidi further revealed that several other coalitions are also gearing up for participation.

On Sunday, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, called for massive turnout in the polls, saying that the path of reform passes through elections.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Iran defeat India at FIBA Asia Cup 2025 qualifier

TEHRAN – Iran finished their FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Qualifiers Window 1 campaign unbeaten following an 86-53 beatdown of India, Monday at the K.D. Jadhav Indoor Hall.

Five players finished in double figures in the lopsided win, with lead swingman Behnam Yakhchali leading the way with a game-high 15 points.

Salar Monji and 18-year-old forward Mohammad Amini produced identical numbers of 14 points and 9 rebounds, with the former netting a game-best efficiency of 23.

Sajjad Mashayekhi, the hero in their overtime escape of Qatar last game, supplied 11 points. Meisam Mirzaei flirted with a double-double with 10 points and 9 boards.

Team Melli were holding a slim three-point lead late in the second period until Mirzaei led a 9-2 run that gave themselves a 42-32 lead heading into halftime.

Iran would go on to break the game open in the third, pouring 25 points while holding the home team to 12 to head into the final chapter up with a commanding 67-44 lead.

A team that shot 47.8-percent from the floor, the Iranians imposed their will on the boards, 47-24, and dished the ball well that led to 19 team assists. They also had 10 steals as their defense forced India to commit 18 turnovers, which they turned to 25 points.

Iran had defeated Qatar 76-74 on Feb. 23 in Tehran. The 2025 FIBA Asia Cup qualification is being played from June 2022 to February 2025, to determine the FIBA Asia-Oceania nations who will join automatically qualified host nation Saudi Arabia at the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup.

The qualification process started in 2022, with Pre-qualifiers being contested on sub-zone and regional basis. Eight teams will advance to the qualifiers, joining the sixteen teams from the 2023 FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

Persepolis part ways with Nabil Bahoui, Shahab Zahedi

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club parted company with their forwards Nabil Bahoui and Shahab Zahedi on Monday.

Bahoui and Zahedi joined Persepolis in the summer but both of them failed to meet expectations.

Swedish Bahoui just scored one goal for the Reds, while Zahedi netted six goals.

Persepolis completed the signing of Issa Alekasis in the January transfer window and have been reportedly linked with Togolese striker Peniel Mlapa.

The 33-year-old player has previously played in 1860 Munich, 1899 Hoffenheim, Borussia Mönchengladbach, and Ittihad Kalba.

On 7 October 2009, Mlapa made his debut for the German under-19s as a 90th-minute substitute against Luxembourg. A few weeks later, he was called up to represent Togo in their final World Cup qualifier, but he declined this invitation and progressed to the German under-21 squad.

He finally accepted a call-up to the Togo national team for 2017 AFCON qualifiers against Tunisia in March 2016. On 1 June 2017, he made his debut with the Togolese national team, in a 3-0 defeat against Nigeria

Olfati takes silver at Gymnastics World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran's Mahdi Olfati claimed a silver medal at the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG)'s World Cup held in Cottbus, Germany. Olfati came second with a final average of 14.900.

Armenia's Artur Davtyan, the 2022 World champion on vault, picked up the title with

15.050.

The bronze medal went to China's Chen Yilu with 14.850.

The series continues with the World Cup of Baku, slated for March 7 to 10.

FIG World Cup refers to a number of events organized by the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) across seven competitive gymnastics disciplines: 1) acrobatic gymnastics, 2) aerobic gymnastics, 3) men's artistic gymnastics, 4) women's artistic gymnastics, 5) women's rhythmic gymnastics, 6) trampoline and tumbling, and 7) parkour.

Iran beach soccer set record in 2024 World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran national team won the bronze medal in the FIFA Beach Soccer World UAE 2024 Dubai and charted a milestone in the prestigious event.

The curtains came down on the World Cup on Sunday with Brazil emerging champion for a record-extending sixth time.

Asia was represented by four teams and each charted milestones of their own with remarkable performances.

The-AFC.com takes a look at the facts and figures of Iran at UAE 2024 Dubai.

Team Melli emerged third for the second time, having also won the bronze medal in the 2017 edition. It missed the 2019 and 2021 editions.

Iran lost its semi-final tie to Brazil in heartbreaking fashion, with the eventual champion scoring the winner with just 42 seconds remaining on the clock, having come back from 2-0 down.

Iran's Mohammadali Mokhtari took the Bronze Scorer award with seven goals. Belarus' Ihar Bryshtsel won the Golden Scorer award with 12 goals while Portugal's Leo Martins took the Silver award.

In a tournament which saw 38 goals scored from bicycle kicks, Iran led the way with 10 spectacular finishes.

U17WAC draw to reveal thrilling Indonesia 2024 showdowns

TEHRAN – The stage will be set for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024 on Thursday, March 7 at 3pm when the official Final Draw ceremony takes place at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Eight teams will discover their Group Stage rivals for the ninth edition of the tournament that will be played from May 6 to 19, 2024 in Bali, Indonesia, who will hold it for the first time.

Half of the final cast was determined after two qualifying rounds, which began with 24 sides in April and concluded in September. Australia, Korea Republic, Thailand and the Philippines came through to join the three highest seeded sides from the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 – defending champions Japan, DPR Korea and China PR – and Indonesia, who automatically qualified as hosts.

China PR, Japan, Korea Republic and Thailand are the only teams to reach the final tournament of every edition to date, while the Philippines will make their debut after becoming the 21st different side to qualify, the-afc.com wrote.

As the Host Association, Indonesia will be seeded first for the draw, with the remaining teams ranked by their performances at the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Thailand 2019. The teams will be divided equally into two groups to contest a single-round league format, with the top two finishers in each group qualifying to the Semi-finals. The seedings are as follow:

Pot 1 (Ranked 1st and 2nd): Indonesia, Japan

Pot 2 (3rd and 4th): DPR Korea, China PR

Pot 3 (5th and 6th): Australia, Korea Republic

Pot 4 (7th and 8th): Thailand, Philippines

The top three teams at the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup Indonesia 2024 will qualify for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2024, which kicks off on October 16, 2024 in the Dominican Republic.

Iran's nominal power generation capacity exceeds 92,000 MW



TEHRAN - The nominal capacity of Iran's power plants has reached 92,055 megawatts (MW), according to the latest data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC).

The IGMC data for the 10th Iranian calendar month (ended on January 20) indicates that the country's power generation capacity has increased by 1.4 percent compared to the previous year, IRNA reported.

As reported, the capacity of the country's gas power plants increased by 3.1 percent to 23,330 MW, accounting for 25.3 percent of the country's total power generation capacity.

The total capacity of renewable power plants also increased by 20 percent compared to the previous year, reaching 1,120 MW.

Most of Iran's power generation capacity is supplied by thermal power plants. Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share of the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

The total capacity of the country's thermal power plants stands at over 72,000 MW, according to the Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH).

Increasing the country's power generation

capacity and preventing blackouts during peak consumption periods have been among the Iranian Energy Ministry's top priorities since the current government administration took office in 2021.

In August 2021, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian announced that his ministry was planning to boost the country's power generation capacity by 35,000 MW over the next four years.

The mentioned figure would be achieved through the construction of thermal power plants with 15,000 MW of capacity, and renewable power plants with a capacity of 10,000 MW by the public and private sectors, as well as the construction of new power plants with 10,000 megawatts capacity by large industries.

According to Iran Water and Power Resources Development Company (IWPCO), the company is also constructing new hydropower plants with a total capacity of 4,000 MW across the country.

The IWPCO Deputy Head Mashallah Tabe-Jamaat said on Sunday that the company is also conducting preliminary studies for the construction of 1,200 MW of new hydropower plants.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rises and the significant decrease in rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new programs to meet the country's power demand during peak periods and to prevent outages.

Constructing new units in the country's power plants and also building new power plants for major industries are among the mentioned programs that are being pursued seriously by the ministry in collaboration with other related government entities.

and finance, arrived in the free zone on Sunday along with Iran's special envoy to Afghanistan Hassan Kazemi Qomi.

Bavar said that the Afghan delegation will assess the capacities and facilities of the Chabahar Free Zone and port to enhance transit and exports to Afghanistan.

Additionally, discussions with Iranian authorities will take place regarding the implementation of agreements made during the recent visit of Abdul Ghani Baradar, Afghanistan's acting deputy prime minister for economic affairs, to Iran.

Afghan economic delegation visits Iran's Chabahar free zone

TEHRAN - An economic and technical delegation from Afghanistan is visiting the Chabahar Industrial Free Trade Zone to explore trade and investment opportunities in the Iranian port.

Akbar Bavar, the public relations and international affairs manager of the Chabahar Free Zone, told IRNA on Sunday that several residential, commercial, and hotel projects will be inaugurated during the visit.

The Afghan delegation, including officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, industry and commerce, transport and civil aviation,

Water level of Iran's major dam reservoirs declines 25%

TEHRAN - The total volume of water stored behind Iranian dams is currently estimated at 22.41 billion cubic meters, showing a 25 percent decline compared to the previous year, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Based on the latest data released by the Energy Ministry, in the first 155 days of the current water year (September 23, 2023) up to February 24, 10.43 billion cubic meters of water entered the dam reservoirs of the country, indicating a decrease of 15 percent compared to the same period of the last water year when the water inflow was 12.2 billion cubic meters.

Iran's total dam reservoirs currently stand at 50.5 billion cubic meters, according to the Energy Ministry data, of which only 45 percent is currently full. Out of a total of 183 currently operational dams across Iran, 52 are related to the Caspian Sea catchment area, 12 are based

in the Urmia basin, 68 dams are located in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman watersheds, 34 dams are in the Central Plateau, 11 dams are in Sarakhs catchment basin, and another six dams are located across the eastern boundary basin (Hamoun).

A recent report by Nature Scientific Journal on Iran's water crisis indicates that from 2002 to 2015, over 74 billion cubic meters have been extracted from aquifers, which is unprecedented and its revival takes thousands of years along with urgent action.

Three Iranian scientists studied 30 basins in the country and realized that the rate of aquifer depletion over a 14-year period has been about 74 billion cubic meters, which is recently published in Nature Scientific Journal.

Also, over-harvesting in 77 percent of Iran has led to more land subsidence and soil salinity.

Average daily gasoline consumption reaches 132m liters

TEHRAN - Average daily gasoline consumption in Iran has reached about 132 million liters, Oil Minister Javad Oji said on Monday.

"Despite the significant temperature decline in the country in recent days, none of the country's 4,200 gas stations suffered from disruptions or fuel shortages," Oji told reporters

on the sidelines of a visit to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Dispatching Center.

"My colleagues at Iran's National Oil Products Refining and Distribution Company, along with providing gasoline around the clock, have also efficiently supplied the country's power plants with liquid fuel these days," the official added.

Working group meetings of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission kick off in Tehran

TEHRAN - The specialized working groups of the 17th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee have started meeting in Tehran to discuss areas of cooperation before the main event which is due to be held on Wednesday.

During the first two days of the 17th meeting of the Joint Economic Committee of Iran and Russia, which is being held from Monday to Wednesday (February 26-28), expert meetings will be held and after the discussions, the working groups will present numerous cooperation documents in various fields to Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who are the heads of the joint committee.

Iranian and Russian experts from different economic sectors will explore all avenues in 20 working groups to promote bilateral cooperation and prepare the ground for outlining a comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MOU) by beating off the existing challenges.

The mentioned working groups



include oil and gas, banking and finance, transportation, information technology, trade and investment, business groups, science and education, energy, standards, sports, customs, agriculture, and industry.

Oji and Novak will sign the cooperation document on the last day of the meeting.

Over the past two years Iran and Russia, both facing U.S. sanctions, have developed cooperation in all areas to neutralize the unjust sanctions.

The 16th meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee was held in Russia during October 29-November 1, 2022.

The two countries signed four documents for cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the mentioned meeting.

The strategic document for the development of bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was signed by Oji and Novak, who co-chaired the meeting.

A loan MOU was also signed between Iran's Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Ali Fekri and Vladimir Ilyichev, Russia's deputy economy minister for the signaling of the Incheh Borun-Garmsar railway project.

Meanwhile, a bilateral memorandum was also signed by Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, the director-general of international cooperation at Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education, and Russia's Deputy Minister of Health Sergey Glagolov for cooperation in the field of health and medical education.

Also, another MOU was signed between an Iranian and a Russian holding for the implementation of EPC projects for product transfer pipelines.

According to Kazem Jalali, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, the export of Iranian products to Russia reached more than \$2.0 billion in 2023, which shows a significant increase compared to previous years.

Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project recommences after ten-year delay



From page 1 ▶ The delay has upset Iran, which has already invested \$2.0 billion in the pipeline

on its side of the border having completed its section of the pipeline.

Pakistan had also expressed its commitment to constructing an 800-kilometer pipeline to the Iranian border by the end of 2014.

However, Islamabad couldn't fulfill its end of the bargain amid U.S. pressure and under threat of sanctions.

The IP pipeline will allow Pakistan to start receiving 750 million cubic feet of gas from Iran daily once the pipeline is completed and commissioned. In February 2019, Tehran

notified Islamabad of its intention to move forward with arbitration court proceedings for not constructing the pipeline in Pakistan's territory within the specified time frame under the IP gas line project and invoked the penalty clause of the Gas Sales Purchase Agreement (GSPA).

In September 2019, Pakistan's Inter-State Gas Systems (ISGS) and the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) signed a revised agreement for the pipeline's construction, which stipulates that neither Iran nor Pakistan will take the other to court for delays or impose fines until 2024.

Iran's port capacity to increase by 200m tons

TEHRAN - The container capacity of Iranian ports is going to increase by 200 million tons with the completion of two new ports in the Makran Coasts, namely Makran Port and Persian Gulf Port, according to Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister.

Reporting on the recent developments in the maritime sector in line with the policies for maritime-based economy, Mehrdad Bazrpash said: "upon operation of Makran Port, which is currently under construction, the container capacity of Iran increases by 200 million tons."

Only in one and a half year, in Shahid Rajaei Port, the unloading

and loading capacity has increased by more than 20 percent, and due to simultaneous investments of the government in the development of large and small ports, the unloading and loading capacity of Iran's ports are about 300 million tons, Bazrpash informed.

During 11 months (from March 2023 to January 2024), the sea trade in Iran has grown by more than nine percent, sea transit by 34 percent, and passenger arrival from sea borders by 10 percent, the minister said.

According to the official, in addition to developing and increasing the capacity of large ports such as Shahid Rajaei, Imam Khomeini, and

Shahid Beheshti, the Government is also investing in small ports like Khamir, Sirik, and Arvand Kenar.

The increase in capacity of the maritime cargo and passenger transportation is the result of more than 500 trillion rials (about \$1.0 billion) of the private sector's investments, along with the government's investments, Bazrpash said.

Currently, only in the completion of the first phase of Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar, 81 trillion rials (about \$162 million) has been invested by the private sector, and there is a tender for the implementation of the second phase of this Port, he added.

Bazrpash also informed about the construction of one-million-ton grain silos, a 30 percent increase in mechanized grain vacuums, and also the construction of 40 vessels with a total investment of more than \$120 million.

He further added that: "all indicators in the marine trade show a significant growth".

The loading and unloading of petroleum and non-petroleum goods in the Special Economic Zone of Imam Khomeini Port in the last 11 months exceeded 42,500,000 tons, which has increased by three percent compared to the same period in the last year, Bazrpash added.

Over 230,000 National Housing Movement units delivered to applicants

TEHRAN- The head of the Housing Foundation of Islamic Revolution announced that 230,722 units of the National Housing Movement have been completed and handed over to the applicants, IRNA reported.

Gholamreza Salehi said 435,557 units of the National Housing Movement are under construction in cities and villages across the country.

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

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

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

In late September 2023, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in

the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples to help them build houses.

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

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

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

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

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

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first

group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini.

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

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

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

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

TEDPIX drops 16,700 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 16,700 points (0.08 percent) to 2,049,437 on Monday, which is

the third 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).

Airman Aaron Bushnell sets himself on fire outside Israeli embassy in Washington while screaming "Free Palestine"

Fiery Resistance to Gaza Genocide

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Domestic backlash to the United States' unwavering support for Israel's genocidal war on Gaza once again hit the headlines following the tragic death of an active-duty member of the American Air Force.

On Sunday, Aaron Bushnell set himself on fire outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. to vent his anger at his country's support for Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

Video posted on social media shows him walking up to the driveway of the Israeli embassy, setting his phone down on the ground and pouring an unknown liquid from a bottle over himself. He then ignited it while yelling "Free Palestine" repeatedly.

The flames consumed Aaron's body and he finally fell to the ground. While Aaron was engulfed in flames, some police officers who were standing nearby with guns drawn, called on him to get on the ground.

The footage, that Aron livestreamed himself on Twitch, explains his reasons for the act of protest.

"My name is Aaron Bushnell, I am an active-duty member of the United States Air Force and I will no longer be complicit in genocide...I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest, but compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their



colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

The 25-year-old officer was taken to hospital in a critical condition but he succumbed to his injuries.

The video was only seen by a few dozen people on Twitch before it was removed by the platform, but more than one million saw it on X.

Before his death he posted online: "Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide? The answer is, you're doing it. Right now.'"

Aaron's move comes as the administration of President Joe Biden faces growing pressure over Washington's political and military support for the Israeli war on Gaza.

the slogan "Abandon Biden".

In the face of domestic pressure, Biden sharpened criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brutal military campaign in Gaza.

But, the Biden administration's criticism of the regime did not go beyond words.

In action, the White House refused to attach conditions to military and political support for Israel. The U.S. has vetoed three UN Security Council resolutions that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Reports also suggest that the U.S. administration is preparing to send more weapons to Israel. This is in addition to the \$3.8 billion military assistance that Washington gives Tel Aviv annually.

The U.S. stands by Israel as fears grow over a potential Israeli genocide in Rafah amid the regime's anticipated ground invasion into the southernmost Gaza city.

Rafah is packed with more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population living in squalid conditions who have fled there under Israeli orders.

But Netanyahu, who is sometimes referred to by his nickname Bibi, insists on carrying out a ground assault on Rafah under the pretext of eliminating the Hamas resistance movement.

However, the assessments by the Israeli military's intelligence have revealed that Netanyahu's dream will remain elusive.

Bibi's insistence on Rafah assault will mark major failure for the West and intl. system

From page 1 ▶ a city that once had a population of around 200,000. However, Israel's invasion and the transformation of the Gaza Strip into a devastated war zone forced the majority of Gaza's population to seek refuge in this area.

Today, Rafah's population is estimated to be around one and a half million, while the entire area of Rafah province is approximately 64 square kilometers.

In other words, nearly 23,500 people live in each square kilometer! It is worth noting that almost half of this population of one and a half million are children.

The population density, alongside the harsh obstacles on the Egyptian border and the Zionist regime's barriers to sending humanitarian aid, has led to minimal living conditions in Rafah.

Even the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza without a ground attack may pose grave challenges for the people in these areas in the coming months.

According to a report by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), nearly half a million people in Rafah are grappling with various illnesses, and providing treatment or care for them has become almost impossible.

In such a situation, the Netanyahu cabinet strangely insists on attacking Rafah. The Israeli premier has publicly declared six times that the only area still under the control of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad is Rafah, and a ground operation must be pursued in this region to break Hamas's power. Benny Gantz, considered a centrist figure, has also stated that if captives are not released by the month of Ramadan, a ground operation will be initiated in Rafah.

Even former Israeli military figures critical of Netanyahu, such as Amos Yadlin, have implicitly expressed their support for the invasion of Rafah. It can be reasonably said that the current atmosphere in the Netanyahu cabinet is almost uniformly supportive of a military assault on Rafah.

Consequently, it must be noted that unless external parties intervene, Tel Aviv is likely to launch the Rafah operation soon.

The serious consequences of attacking Rafah.

In such a situation, an attack on Rafah could become a major disaster for two reasons:

1- Rafah is the only remaining part of the Gaza Strip that has remained immune from the Zionist regime's ground assault. In their ground operation, the Israelis have literally "plowed" the region, implementing the "scorched earth" strategy, eliminating the possibility of life and survival. In such a situation, Rafah is the last place where the people of Gaza can continue their lives, despite all the challenges.

2- Currently, close to one and a half million people live in Rafah. In other words, the population density reaches around 23,500 people per square kilometer.

Given these two points, a military offensive would lead to two major catastrophes; firstly, a large-scale humanitarian massacre would occur, and thousands, if not tens of thousands, would perish within a short span of a few weeks. Secondly, a substantial portion of the population, in the hundreds of thousands, would be displaced.

It is noteworthy that from the six-day war until 2023, the number of Palestinian martyrs – even at its highest estimates – was less than 50,000.

However, just in the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza, around 30,000 individuals have become martyrs, and with the potential invasion of Rafah, this figure will likely surpass even that harrowing death toll.

The reality is that the Middle East has not experienced forced migrations or displacement on this scale within such a short time frame since 1967.

Hence, it must be emphasized that neither politicians nor security and military experts have an accurate estimation of the consequences of this catastrophe.

It is unclear how security equations will change and what the long-term security implications will be for the region if a full-scale Israeli military assault goes ahead.

Why does Netanyahu insist on attacking Rafah?

Against the backdrop of the ongoing situation, why does Netanyahu insist on carrying out the ground operation in Rafah? The truth is that after "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" Netanyahu has been pursuing three main goals.

1- Eliminating Hamas (at first Netanyahu vowed to destroy Hamas and now he wants to dismantle its structure)

2- Releasing captives

3- Changing the governing system in Gaza and establishing a system that can guarantee Israel's security.

Netanyahu argues that he has continued the war for nearly five months to fulfill his first and third goals. So, if he stops the war, he has practically abandoned his project. In other words, fulfilling the first and third goals depends on the complete seizure of Rafah.

With regard to the second goal, Netanyahu told Biden in a phone call that two Israeli captives were released following a raid in Rafah.

Various sources in the Netanyahu cabinet claim that a significant number of captives are held in Rafah and they cannot be released unless a ground operation is conducted there.

The right-wing prime minister insists on launching a ground incursion into Rafah and ignores international pressure.

Western countries' efforts to prevent Rafah operation

Western and regional countries have ramped up efforts to deter the ground military operation

in Rafah.

On behalf of the United States, Brett McGurk is engaged in serious talks to dissuade Israel from the ground military operation in Gaza in exchange for a political agreement.

In line with that, he travelled to Tel Aviv and Cairo and he is now leading Paris negotiations.

This comes two weeks after Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns visited the region where he discussed ways to reach a political deal and ceasefire in Gaza.

CNN also reported high-ranking American officials believe that the anticipated operation in Rafah makes any agreements on ending the Gaza war and reaching a ceasefire impossible. They also believe Netanyahu is not interested in reaching a political deal.

The European Union has a more transparent approach in this regard.

26 out of 27 EU states have called for an immediate ceasefire and urged Israel to avoid its imminent ground incursion into Rafah.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said foreign ministers from 26 member states had agreed on a statement calling for "an immediate humanitarian pause that would lead to a sustainable ceasefire." He said Hungary was the only European country that did not give its consent.

In a statement, Belgium, which took over the six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union from Spain on January 1, called on Israel not to attack Rafah. The Israeli foreign minister also said 26 EU countries have made a similar demand.

Belgium's deputy prime minister also called on his government to adopt sanctions against Israel and investigate the bombings of hospitals and refugee camps in Gaza.

"It is time for sanctions against Israel. The rain of bombs is inhumane," Deputy Prime Minister Petra De Sutter told Nieuwsblad newspaper in November. "It is clear that Israel does not care about the international demands for a ceasefire," she said.

Senior Spanish and Irish officials have also called for reviewing ties with Tel Aviv.

President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins said in November, "Collective punishment is not something we can accept and claim to be advocates of international law."

He added, "It is simply unacceptable that hospitals and those being cared for within them are threatened by the basic lack of resources, damaged or indeed threatened with destruction, or those within them forced to be evacuated."

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has also said that Israel has been systematically occupying the Palestinian territories and called for the recognition of the State of Palestine.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Over 7,250 Palestinians arrested in West Bank since October 7

The Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) said that the Israeli forces detained about 7,255 Palestinian citizens from the West Bank since the beginning of the aggression against the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023.

The commission and the PPS explained, in a press statement that the data related to detention cases includes those who were kept in detention by the occupation and those who were later released, according to Wafa News Agency.

They added that the Israeli forces continue to implement systematic arrest campaigns, as one of the most prominent established policies that escalated in an unprecedented manner after October 7, not only in terms of the number of detainees, but also in terms of the crimes they committed.

HRW: Israel blocking aid to Palestinians in violation of ICJ order

Israel has failed to comply with an order by the United Nations' top court to provide urgently needed aid to desperate people in the Gaza Strip, Human Rights Watch said Monday, a month after a landmark ruling in The Hague ordered Israel to moderate its war.

In a preliminary response to a South African petition accusing Israel of genocide, the UN's top court ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza, ABC News reported.

In its ruling last month, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to follow six provisional measures, including taking "immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

Human Rights Watch said Israel was not adhering to the court's order on aid provision, citing a 30% drop in the daily average number of aid trucks entering Gaza in the weeks following the court's ruling. It said Israel was not adequately facilitating fuel deliveries to hard-hit northern Gaza and blamed Israel for blocking aid from reaching the north, where the World Food Program said last week it was forced to suspend aid deliveries because of increasing chaos in the isolated part of the territory.

Thousands in Spain's Zaragoza rally for 'Free Palestine'

Thousands of people took to the streets of the Spanish city of Zaragoza in support of "Free Palestine" as Israel prepares to attack Rafah – the last remaining shelter for hundreds of thousands of civilians and the backbone of international aid deliveries.

The Sunday demonstration was part of a nationwide protest organized by non-governmental organizations, Turkey's Anadolu reported.

Protesters gathered in Plaza del Pilar and created a mosaic of the Palestinian flag with banners in their hands.

They also chanted slogans such as "Boycott Israel," and "Free Palestine" and demanded an end to the "genocide."

Israel stands accused of genocide at the

International Court of Justice over its deadly onslaught on the Gaza Strip.

Artists call for Israel to be excluded from Venice Biennale

More than 4,000 artists are calling for Israel to be excluded from one of the world's biggest and most prestigious art exhibits.

Signatories to the letter say: "There is no free expression for the Palestinian poets, artists, and writers murdered, silenced, imprisoned, tortured, and prevented from travelling abroad or internally by Israel. There is no free expression in the war crime of cultural genocide," Al Jazeera reported.

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott, which endorsed the letter, says: "Any official representation of Israel on the international cultural stage is an endorsement of its policies and of the genocide in Gaza."

PACBI argues that there are precedents: The Biennale banned apartheid South Africa from 1968 onwards, and in 2022 banned Russian artists connected to the government.

Hezbollah downs Israeli drone over Lebanese territory

The Israeli army confirmed on Monday that Hezbollah had shot down its military drone in Lebanese territory.

Earlier on Monday, the Lebanon-based Hezbollah resistance group said it shot down an Israeli Hermes 450 model with a surface-to-air missile over the Tuffah region of southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Lebanese security officials said Israel has targeted eastern Lebanon for the first time since the war on Gaza began in October last year.

At least two people were killed and three others wounded as a result of air strikes, the officials said.

Israel said the air raids were "in response to the launch of a surface-to-air missile" that downed the Israeli drone.

AU, OIC condemn Israeli violation of intl. law

Representatives from the African Union (AU) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) presented compelling arguments at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

During the concluding session of the ICJ hearing, both AU and OIC lawyers emphasized Israel's violation of international law by obstructing Palestinians' right to self-determination.

They highlighted Israel's deliberate attempts to change the demographic makeup of the occupied West Bank through the establishment of Israeli settlements, making it difficult for Palestinians to exercise their rights.

Quoting Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, the OIC lawyers pointed out a stated policy to increase settlements in the West Bank, aiming for one million settlers, up from approximately 700,000 currently.

The lawyers urged the ICJ to declare Israel's occupation illegal and call for its withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Isfahan aims to attract surge of Chinese tourists with new initiatives



TEHRAN - Isfahan has announced an ambitious plan to attract over 20 million Chinese visitors in a year in a bid to bolster the tourism industry of the province.

Hamidreza Mohaqqueqian revealed this initiative on Sunday, coinciding with the auspicious birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi (AS) and the commencement of the Chinese New Year, CHTN reported.

He said, among various efforts made by the provincial tourism directorate, in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mahan Airlines, a familiarization tour was organized recently for Chinese social media influencers in Kashan and Isfahan.

The tour saw 11 active influencers from East Asia, particularly China, who boast a combined following of over 20 million on social media platforms, journey to Isfahan Province.

Mohaqqueqian added that during their visit, these tourism influencers explored various tourist attractions in Kashan and Isfahan, including the UNESCO World Heritage sites like Fin Garden, Imam Square (Naqsh-e Jahan), among others such as Borujerdi House, the ancient Silk Road complex, Chehel Sotoun Palace, and the cultural-historical axis of Jolfa.

Clarifying the objective behind the im-

plementation of this plan, the official emphasized its aim to boost foreign tourism in Isfahan in 2024 and effectively promote the attractions and tourism infrastructure of the region.

Isfahan, one of the top travel destinations in Iran, seeks closer ties with China through a consulate proposal. Last year, Isfahan Mayor Ali Ghasemzadeh proposed the idea of opening a consulate office in the ancient city during his meeting with Chinese diplomats.

Ghasemzadeh stressed the need for bolstering support for Chinese people willing to visit Isfahan. "China can establish a consulate in Isfahan to help facilitate and support the travels of its nationals," the mayor said.

He referred to the 25-year memorandum of understanding signed between Iran and China, saying there are many economic and tourism capacities embedded in the accord that should be taken advantage of.

The mayor then talked about a sister-city agreement between Isfahan and Xian, saying: "Xian has been Isfahan's sister city for 34 years... In fact, it marks Isfahan's first sister city... and that precedence is important for us."

Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The ancient city has long been nicknamed as Nesf-e-Jahan, which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see half the world.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

M'Zab Valley

A traditional human habitat, created in the 10th century by the Ibadites around their five ksour (fortified cities), has been preserved intact in the M'Zab valley. The property is situated 600 km south of Algiers, in the heart of the Sahara Desert.

According to UNESCO, the five ksour of the M'Zab Valley form an extraordinarily homogenous ensemble constituting, in the desert, the mark of a sedentary and urban civilization possessing an original culture that has, through its own merit, preserved its cohesion throughout the centuries.

Comprised of ksour and palm groves of El-Atteuf, Boumoura, Melika, Ghardaia and Beni-Isguen (founded between 1012 and 1350), the M'Zab Valley has conserved practically the same way of life and the same building techniques since the 11th century, ordered as much by a specific social and cultural context, as by the need for adaptation to a hostile environment, the choice of which

responded to a historic need for withdrawal and a defensive imperative.

Each of these miniature citadels, surrounded by walls, is dominated by a mosque, the minaret of which functions as a watchtower.

The mosque is conceived as a fortress, the last bastion of resistance in the event of a siege, and comprises an arsenal and a grain store.

Around this building, which is essential for communal life, are houses built in concentric circles up to the ramparts. Each house constitutes a cubic cell of standard type, illustrating an egalitarian society founded on the respect for the family structure, aiming at the preservation of its intimacy and autonomy.

At the beginning of the first millennium, the Ibadis created in the M'Zab, with local materials, a vernacular architecture which, with its perfect adaptation to the environment and the simplicity of its forms, is an example and an influence for contemporary architecture and town-planning.

Iran in frames



As raindrops patter softly upon the streets of Shiraz, southern Iran, visitors to the tomb of Hafez are undeterred by the weather, their spirits lifted by the poetry that permeates the air. Umbrellas in hand, they navigate the pathways leading to the revered poet's final resting place, seeking solace and inspiration amidst the tranquil ambiance of the garden.

Qeshm Island: a journey through Iran's geological wonderland

TEHRAN - Qeshm, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, stands out as one of Iran's most enchanting destinations.

Shaped like a dolphin, this island is rich in natural wonders, geological marvels, and a diverse array of wildlife.

Its intriguing history reflects influences from Dutch, French, and Portuguese settlers, evident in the ruins and ramparts scattered across the landscape.

Situated in the Strait of Hormuz, off Iran's coast, Qeshm boasts a vast expanse where traditional Bandari livelihoods thrive, revolving around trade, handicrafts, and Lenj-style fishing—a tradition dating back centuries.

Qeshm's formation history, shaping its unique appearance, has earned it recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Here are five natural treasures awaiting exploration on this captivating island:

Hara Mangrove Forest

Embark on a day trip to the Hara Mangrove forests, immersing yourself in a fairy-tale realm of underwater trees, tranquil waters, and melodious birdcalls.

Hérons, flamingos, and pelicans grace the landscape, alongside an assortment of reptiles



and peculiar sea creatures. These mangroves serve as vital ecological nurseries for both birds and fish, accessible primarily via local shrimp fishing boats or limited tourist tugs.

Optimal viewing occurs during low tide, revealing the full majesty of the Hara trees emerging from the water.

Stars Valley

For avid backpackers, visiting the vast island, the picturesque Stars Valley beckons, showcasing remarkable rock formations sculpted by weather erosion over millions of years.

Red pointy cones, pillars, arcs, and bulkheads adorn the landscape, reminiscent of an otherworldly realm.

The valley's appearance evolves with each heavy rainfall

due to its weak structural composition, offering an ever-changing spectacle.

Namakdan Salt Cave

Discover the geological marvel of Namakdan Salt Cave, a dynamic creation shaped by rainfall-induced transformations.

Accessible to the public for the initial 100-200 meters, this living salt cave mesmerizes visitors with its colorful salt crystal tunnels. Torchlight exploration unveils a surreal landscape, inviting guests to witness nature's intricate artwork firsthand. Adjacent beaches complement the cave's allure, adding to the charm of any excursion.

Chahkuh Valley

Located in Qeshm's northwestern region, Chahkuh Valley entices visitors with its serene

ambiance and captivating rock formations.

Carved by heavy rain and tectonic movements, the ivory cliffs stand as a testament to nature's artistic prowess. Strict conservation measures protect this geo-site, prohibiting any damage to its pristine cliffs.

Ingeniously utilized by local communities, natural rock formations serve as wells, storing and cooling water for dry seasons. Nature's ingenuity shines in this breathtaking valley.

Hengam Island

Despite its small size, Hengam Island offers boundless beauty and recreational opportunities. Silver beaches invite relaxation, while the pristine sea beckons swimmers and divers alike. Scuba enthusiasts flock to explore the coral reefs and shipwrecks dotting the coastline.

Early mornings present the chance to witness playful dolphins, setting the tone for a day filled with wildlife encounters. Tropical birds, gazelles, and turtles call Hengam home, adding to its allure as a nature lover's paradise.

Each of these natural treasures on Qeshm Island promises an unforgettable experience, blending natural beauty with cultural intrigue.

Iranian hospitality wins Chinese influencer's heart

From Page 1 ► The familiarization tour is part of Iran's tourism ministry's efforts to introduce the country's rich tourist spots and its hospitable people to foreign tourists.

Addressing the Iranian people as the most attractive aspect of the trip, the Chinese influencer mentioned that Iran is home to numerous fascinating cultures and lifestyles which could serve as the most considerable competitive advantage for the country in the tourism field.

Zhao also referred to a documentary about Zahedan's people as one of the most motivating factors for him to be enthusiastic

about paying a visit to Iran.

Earlier this year, a group comprising 10 well-known Chinese influencers with a slogan of nature and climate diversity had a two-day trip to Hormozgan Province, located in the south part of Iran, regarding creating content as a part of "Iran Salam" familiarization tours to introduce Iran to foreign tourists.

Last October, Deputy Tourism Minister Ali-Asgar Shalabafian said Chinese arrivals in Iran had been soaring at a faster pace even when compared to pre-pandemic levels.

"The demand for visiting Iran has been

soaring among Chinese nationals," Shalabafian said.

He made the remarks in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Lu Ying Chuang held in Tehran's Sa'dabad historical complex.

Shalabafian said some 50,000 travelers from China visited the Islamic Republic during the first seven months of the year (started on March 21).

In a comparison with the same period in the year 1398 (started in Mar. 2019), the official said: "Chinese arrivals in the current year have been higher than that in 98, though the number of flights has almost halved."

Nautical committees set to foster tourism

TEHRAN - As a substantial step to fortify nautical and coastal tourism, the Director General of Parliament Affairs of Tourism Ministry has revealed the establishment of water tourism committees in alignment with the 7th National Development Plan.

Visiting Mehr News Agency's pavilion at the Iran Media expo, Mohammad Karimi declared that water tourism committees, comprising coastal provinces, are presided over by governors in each province.

"We have been able to add some new regulations in the seventh development plan in the field of handicrafts and tourism, which was a positive development," he noted.

Karimi also underscored that despite the positive developments being underway, it is crucial that the high-level officials pay more attention in the regulatory sphere.

Regarding the extent of committees, the official pinpointed that nine provinces which are in some way involved with water tourism, are cooperating to achieve a convergence, aiming to prosper nautical and coastal tourism.

Mentioning sea-going vessels as an important part of nautical tourism, the official emphasized that these committees can facilitate taking measures through converging in making decisions.

Iran is a country that borders with Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf,



and Gulf of Oman with more than 5800 kilometers of shoreline, 890 kilometers of which are located in the northern part.

The importance of exploiting these nautical capacities is when the committees come to serve.

As mentioned by the Director General of Parliament Affairs of the Tourism Ministry, water tour-

ism committees are intended to eliminate conflicting decisions which were made by various authorities in the past.

The water tourism committees are also aimed to serve as a testament to the crucial necessity of taking measures in the wake of prospering nautical tourism in a country full of capacities, bordering three exceptional seas.

Archaeologists discover oldest known bead in the Americas

Professor Todd Surovell, an archaeologist at the University of Wyoming, along with his research team, uncovered a bone bead shaped like a tube, which is approximately 12,940 years old. This artifact, discovered at the La Prele Mammoth site in Converse County, represents the oldest bead ever found in the Americas.

Surovell's research was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Scientific Reports*. Members of the research team included people from UW, the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist, the University of Manchester, Weber State University, and Chico State University.

The La Prele Mammoth site preserves the remains of a killed or scavenged sub-adult Colum-

bian mammoth and an associated camp occupied during the time the animal was butchered.

To determine the origin of the bone bead, the team extracted collagen for zooarchaeology by mass spectrometry, also known as ZooMS, which allowed the group to gain insights about the chemical composition of the bone.

The researchers concluded that the bead was made from either a metapodial (the bones that link the phalanges of the digits to the more proximal bones of the limb) or a proximal phalanx (a bone found in the fingers and toes of humans and other vertebrates) of a hare.

This finding represents the first secure evidence for the use

of hares during the Clovis period, which refers to a prehistoric era in North America, particularly prominent about 12,000 years ago. It's named after the Clovis archaeological site in New Mexico, where distinctive stone tools were discovered.

Significance of the find

The bead is about 7 millimeters in length, and its internal diameter averages 1.6 millimeters. The research team considered the possibility that the bead could have been the result of carnivore consumption and digestion and not created by humans; however, carnivores were not common on this site, and the artifact was recovered 1 meter from a dense scatter of other cultural materials.

Additionally, the grooves on the outside of the bead are consistent with creation by humans, either with stones or their teeth. Beads like this one were likely used to decorate their bodies or clothing.

Surovell, who also directs UW's Frison Institute, is an archaeologist with a specialization in the Paleoindian period, the earliest period of American archaeology. He has worked primarily in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains but also has field experience in Eurasia. He is interested in factors that structure the archaeological record from decision-making to site formation.

(Source: SciTechDaily)

Iran calls for expanding co-op with WHO EMRO

TEHRAN – Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has announced the country's readiness to foster cooperation with the World Health Organization's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

On the sidelines of the international conference on quality and safety in healthcare in Doha which was held from February 21 – 25, Einollahi held a meeting with Hanan Balkhi, the newly appointed WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, the health ministry's website reported.

During the meeting, Balkhi lauded the health ministry for remarkable achievements and commendable progress. She went on to say, "I am trying to focus on three issues in the Eastern Mediterranean region: empowering human resources in the field of health, improving self-sufficiency in the production of medicine and medical equipment, and fighting against narcotics and treating addicts."



She further noted that it's essential to hold talks with the member states to solve the problems of the Eastern Mediterranean region.

In the end, she expressed hope to travel to Iran to learn more about the implementation of the Family Physician Program in Iran.

Einollahi, for his part, referred to the country's achievements in the field of the health system, saying,

"The Family Physician Program is a preventive health program that is being implemented in 195 cities of the country."

In addition to delivering a speech at the forum, Einollahi held a meeting with his Qatari counterpart Hanan Mohammad Al-Kuwari.

Exchanging medical science professors to improve public health and medical knowledge, and facilitating

health tourism as one of the other areas of strengthening the relations between the two countries were stressed by Al-Kuwari.

Einollahi, for his part, underscored the need for regional cooperation to address health concerns. "We can help to protect many countries in the region from infectious diseases."

Intl. congress on family health

Iran will host an international congress on family health from March 5 to 6 with a focus on the significant role of mothers in the family's well-being. In this regard, health programs to promote mothers' health are planned to increase in the next Iranian calendar year, starting on March 21, ISNA quoted Hossein Farshidi, an official with the Health Ministry, as saying.

Experts from the World Health Organization and some of the health ministers of regional countries are expected to participate in the event, Farshidi noted.

More than 440 rare diseases identified in Iran



TEHRAN – A total of 442 rare diseases have been identified in the country according to a recent report by the Rare Disease Foundation.

The incidence of rare diseases is very low to the extent that maybe one or two people with a certain rare disease are present in the country. Some rare diseases such as 'butterfly skin or EB', 'Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)', 'Metabolic diseases', 'Autism', and 'Dystrophies' are among the most common cases in the country.

In this regard, the National Rare Disease Day is held annually on the eighth day of Esfand (the last Iranian calendar month), which falls on February 26, to raise awareness and generate support for individuals with rare diseases and their families.

The Day was approved to be designated as the national day of rare disease in the national calendar in May 2021.

Rare diseases are associated with a high psychological burden for the patient but they can also have a major impact on a patient's family. In addition to the health burden on patients, few of these diseases have effective drug treatment available.

According to WHO, rare diseases are often serious, chronic, and life-threatening. The European Union (EU) definition of a rare disease affects fewer than 5 in 10,000 people. Around 80 percent of rare diseases are genetic disorders and half of them occur during childhood.

Out of a thousand population, 2 people get a

rare disease, while the prevalence can be curbed by changing people's culture, screening, identifying, preventing births, and raising awareness.

Since it takes approximately eight years for a rare disease patient to receive an accurate diagnosis, the medical houses and medical science universities have been provided with a book on rare diseases to help them diagnose people affected by rare diseases or those suspected of having one.

Once identified, the patients are referred to a specialty clinic, and their information is recorded to be introduced to the Health Ministry and Food and Drug Administration to provide their needed medicines. Thanks to the efforts of the Rare Disease Foundation, patients with rare diseases are covered by health insurance.

Every year, a scientific congress on rare diseases is held by medical science universities. This year's congress on 'Rare kidney patients' will be held in Tehran on Thursday, February 29.

Over 3,700 people receive rescue services in two days

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) rescued 3,753 individuals trapped in blizzards and floods in 23 provinces over February 24-25.

A total of 87 relief teams with 320 rescuers have helped affected people. They provided emergency shelter accommodation for 1,973 individuals and took 45 others to safer places, ISNA quoted Babak Mahmoudi, an official with the IRCS, as saying.

Also, 405 vehicles that were trapped in the snow were pulled out.

Joint workshop

A training workshop focusing on lowering harms caused by drug addiction was held with the cooperation of the IRCS and Villa Maraini Foundation of Italy in Tehran in December 2023.

Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, and Massimo Barra, the head of the Villa Maraini Foundation, met on the sidelines of the event.

Kolivand stated that drug users encounter severe health issues, suffering from an identity

crisis which leads to their exclusion by both their families and society, the IRCS website reported.

However, initiative projects, such as Harm Reduction pertaining to Drug Addiction, serve the purpose of educating and offering healthcare to these individuals, enabling them to reintegrate into society, reunite with their families, and restore self-esteem.

Barra, for his part, emphasized the significance of the problems resulting from drug addiction. Since a large number of individuals are globally affected by addiction, it is crucial to provide them with additional support through greater cooperation, he added.

In December 2023, volunteer physicians were sent to provide free health and pharmaceutical services to people in deprived areas, an official with the IRCS said.

The program was implemented on the occasion of World Volunteer Day, commonly known as IVD, which is celebrated on December 5 every year.

It's a day where volunteers are acknowledged and the spirit of volunteerism is promoted at the local, national, and international levels.

"Volunteer physicians would be sent to deprived areas from Ilam, Kermanshah, Yazd, Bushehr, Markazi, West Azarbaijan, and Kerman provinces to serve the people in these areas," Vahid Salimi said.

They would provide free health and pharmaceutical services, including visiting patients, dental and midwifery services, and traditional medicine and acupuncture consultation.

They would also check people's health, blood pressure, height, and weight.

Moreover, oral and dental health care would be taught to the students of the villages.

The main objective of dispatching volunteers was to improve the health of the villagers due to the unavailability of specialist doctors in these areas and reduce medical expenses.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iranian zoos to be monitored online

The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

"Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible," IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

باغ وحش های کشور آنلاین پایش می شوند

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: پایش آنلاین باغ وحش های کشور جزو برنامه های سازمان است و در حال تهیه زیر ساخت برای اجرای آن هستیم. علی تیموری روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا افزود: باغ وحش هایی که جدید احداث می شوند باید حتما سیستم پایش آنلاین داشته باشند، مجموعه های قدیمی نیز باید هر چه سریعتر این سیستم را راه اندازی کنند.

وی اظهار داشت: باید تمام ادارات کل استان ها آدرس سیستم آنلاین باغ وحش ها را دریافت کنند تا ورود و خروج گونه ها از باغ وحش، ورود گونه های جدید، تلفات و دلایل آن را ثبت و به صورت آنلاین در جریان قرار گیرند.

تیموری گفت: زیر ساخت های این کار تا حدودی آغاز شده و دو مجموعه کار زیر ساخت را شروع کرده اند و بقیه باغ وحش ها هم به مرور انجام خواهند داد.

Geo-environmental hazards and disasters affect Persian Gulf coast

By Mehdi Zare

TEHRAN – A review of the earthquake risk and the possibility of a tsunami caused by it should be carried out on the coasts of the mainland and the islands of the Persian Gulf.

The Persian Gulf coast is a region that faces various natural hazards, one of the most important of which is tsunamis and earthquakes.

In the Persian Gulf, the probability of a tsunami is less compared to the Oman Sea. Large landslides can cause tsunamis if they occur on the sea floor.

The severe earthquakes of 978 and 1008 AD that happened in the Siraf region, near the current Taheri port and Asaluyeh, were accompanied by a tsunami. Historically, some evidences indicate the occurrence of tsunamis in the Persian Gulf region.

The Tsunami phenomenon (Soo-nah-me) is long-wavelength waves that are generally caused by submarine earthquakes (subduction zones).

Tsunami waves are produced by a sudden impact in the deep ocean, such as an earthquake, sliding parts of the earth's crust, volcanoes in the depths of the seas, atomic explosions, etc., but the most important cause of this phenomenon is the movement of plates and the creation of a step-like vertical displacement in the bottom of the sea.

The coasts of the Persian Gulf are prone to tsunamis due to being located along active faults such as the Zagros pit fault and the curvature of the Zagros mountain front.

Qeshm Island is 110 km long, 10 to 35 km wide, and stretches east-northeast, northwest of the Strait of Hormuz, on the southern edge of the Zagros continental collision zone, and is the largest island in the Persian Gulf.

The mechanism of earthquakes whose faults have a northeast-southwest trend is usually left-lateral strike-slip compression. In the vicinity of salt domes, such as the Qeshm salt dome and Gachin salt dome, strong earthquakes (with a magnitude of about 6) are quickly reduced by shaking a wide area.

However, the earthquake of September 10, 2008, in Qeshm with a magnitude of 6.0 resulted in the death of seven compatriots and the injury of around 46 people.

Two strong earthquakes in the evening of November 14 2021 in the north of Bandar-Abbas (Fin) also occurred within a minute of each other, but they left little damage and casualties, because the epicenter of the two events was uninhabited or sparsely populated, therefore only one person was killed and a few injured.

Whereas, if the epicenter of the earthquakes was in the densely populated urban areas, it would leave a lot of damage and casualties like the 2003 Bam Iran, Mw6.5 earthquake.

Strait of Hormuz, Qeshm and Bandar Abbas region experienced the Sarkhoon earthquake on March 16, 1975, the Khorgo earthquake on March 21, 1977, a magnitude 6 earthquake on November 27, 2005, and a magnitude 6 earthquake on September 10, 2008, in Qeshm Island.

Development of the local seismographic network called the early warning system is needed for coastal areas that can be equipped for tsunami warning, which unfortunately has not happened yet.

Although there is a seismograph and accelerometer station in Hormozgan, the early warning system has not been installed yet. On the other hand, there is no tsunami system in any region of Iran.

Basic infrastructures such as hospitals, power plants, refineries, and ports must be rebuilt, retrofitted, and modernized, and their resilience against severe earthquakes must be increased.

Previous experiences and documents show that there is a possibility of stronger and more intense earthquakes in the region because the region is prone to earthquakes, but to predict closer to reality and with stronger possibilities, the seismological infrastructure should be strengthened and the scientific and research infrastructure should be developed in the region.

Earthquake rapid response systems with reliable and near-real estimates of ground motion and post-earthquake losses help officials to take appropriate measures in the event response phase if needed.

Kish Island is also in the vicinity of the bending fault of Zagros mountain front, which is a compressional fault with a slope towards the



north and in this area with an east-west trend, according to history, the earthquake of 1703 AD, Qays (Kish) at the end of the Safavid period with an estimated magnitude 6.8 has destroyed Kish and Hengam islands.

After the earthquakes of 978 AD and 1008 AD of Siraf (Taheri Port - Asaluyeh), the destruction of Siraf and its decline in prosperity caused many merchants to migrate to Kish, and thus Kish has prospered.

In addition, there are speculations about the destruction of the historical port of Harira in the historical earthquakes of Kish (especially the earthquake of 1703 AD).

The coast of the Persian Gulf is home to a large and growing population, with many cities and towns located in low-lying areas, making them more vulnerable to tsunamis.

To reduce tsunami risks, several countries in the region have implemented earthquake and tsunami early warning systems, evacuation plans, and public awareness campaigns. The purpose of these measures is to reduce human and financial losses in the event of a tsunami.

Floods due to rainfall and storms caused by tropical storms affected the Persian Gulf coastal region in February 2024. Typhoon Gonu reached Kalba city in 2007 and caused serious damage.

The height of the wave attributed to this storm reached 1.8 meters. Water covered many areas of the city. In 2021, a breakwater project was inaugurated to protect Kalba Beach from monsoons.

It is recommended that any construction on the east coast of the UAE, including the cities of Fujairah, Diba, Sharm, and Dadaneh, should include flood and tsunami reduction planning along with public awareness and education to deal with disasters.

The coast of the United Arab Emirates is 644 km in the Persian Gulf and 90 km in the Gulf of Oman. Big cities like Abu Dhabi and Dubai are located along this coast.

Therefore, any rise in sea level will have a significant impact on the United Arab Emirates; Because about 85% of the population, more than 90% of the infrastructure, sensitive environmental subsystems, and the main population and social gatherings are located in the coastal area.

The main driving force behind sea level rise is global warming (mainly attributed to carbon emissions). The sea level rise due to climate change shows a range of sea level rise between 0.37 and 0.59 meters by the year 2100. Experts predict with a probability of five percent that the rise of the sea level will exceed two meters by the year 2100. With this scenario, rising sea levels could cause the UAE to lose six percent of its current coastline.

As a result, the coastline can move about 25-30 kilometers to the south and has the potential to inundate an area of 1,155 square kilometers to almost 5,000 square kilometers.

For geomorphological reasons, the desert is considered a hazard; Because, unlike other hazards, it can affect residential areas due to the expanding land area.

The Arabian Peninsula is listed as one of the five main dust-producing regions in the world. A dust storm can raise more than 200 tons of dust and eventually deposit it.

As a large part of the UAE is covered by desert, movement of sand is very likely. Between 1994 and 2003, 173 dust events and dust storms were reported. Sand accumulates on the roads and causes accidents and fatalities.

The UAE spends millions of dollars annually on road cleaning to minimize accidents and prevent road burying.

Coastal flooding is also possible due to tsunamis caused by earthquakes. Makran earthquakes (magnitude 8.1) in 1945 and Banda Aceh in western Indonesia with magnitude 8.1 on December 26, 2004, were both accompanied by tsunamis, on the northeast coast of UAE.



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Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



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

FEBRUARY 27, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Like your body your mind also gets tired so refresh it by wise sayings.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:17 Evening: 18:15 Dawn: 5:13 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:37 (tomorrow)

Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform “Magic Flute Overture” at Vahdat Hall



influential composer of the Classical period. Despite his short life, his rapid pace of composition resulted in more than 800 works of virtually every Western classical genre of his time.

Many of these compositions are acknowledged as pinnacles of the symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral repertoire.

He is widely regarded as among the greatest composers in the history of Western music, with his music admired for its “melodic beauty, its formal elegance and its richness of harmony and texture”.

Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was the first Russian composer whose music would make a lasting impression internationally. He wrote some of the most popular concert and theatrical music in the current classical repertoire.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1933, is Iran’s oldest and largest symphony orchestra. During the years, celebrated musicians including Rubik Gregorian, Morteza Hannaneh, Haymo Taeuber, Heshmat Sanjari, and Farhad Meshkat took over as the conductor of the orchestra.

TEHRAN-Tehran’s Vahdat Hall will host a concert by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra (TSO) conducted by Manouchehr Sahbai on March 7.

The TSO will perform a repertoire of pieces by Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in its upcoming concert, IRNA reported.

Mozart’s pieces selected for the performance include “Magic Flute Overture” and “Concerto for Flute and Harp in C Major”. Junior soloists Farzaneh Assadi and Diba Vali will accompany the orchestra with flute and harp respectively, in the latter. The TSO will also perform “Symphony No. 5” by Tchaikovsky.

Mozart (1756–1791) was a prolific and

“The Creature” to go on screen at Media Fright Fest

TEHRAN- Iranian short movie “The Creature” by Mohammadreza Yarikia will go on screen at the 13th edition of Media Fright Fest, which will take place in the U.S. on April 5.

The movie follows the story of a couple, who goes to a forest to sacrifice an animal to the goblins in order for their child to be born healthy, but they are not alone in this forest. The woman considers this a superstition until she believes it herself.

Media Fright Fest is an initiative organized

by the Media Arts Council in Media, Pennsylvania.

Established in 2010, the festival aims to exhibit top-quality short films spanning the genres of horror, dark fantasy, science fiction, and thriller, sourced from local, national, and international filmmakers.

Held biannually, Media Fright Fest presents two distinct events, one in the spring and another in the fall, each featuring a diverse selection of films tailored to its unique lineup.

Cartoon of Day



Starving Gaza

Cartoonist: Ahmad Qaddura from Sweden

Intl. children’s theater festival wraps up in Ardakan

TEHRAN- The International Theater Festival for Children and Young Adults in Ardakan concluded its 28th edition with a grand ceremony on Sunday.

The festival came to an end by honoring the winners in various categories, Mehr reported on Monday.

Among the highlights of the festival was the play “The Dream of a Horse Named Shabarang” directed by Mohammad Jahampa, which received the best theater award. Jahampa also took home the best director award, while Mehdi Simriz was recognized for the best screenplay.

The best actor award was shared by Alireza and Saheb Haerizadeh for their performances in “Aladdin”, and Sarina Razaqa was honored with the best actress award for “Chocolate Pudding”.

In the Children’s Theater competition, Bahram Jalalipur’s play “A Rooster Who Wanted to See the Night” was awarded the best play, with Milad Ramezani winning the best actor award. Behnaz Mahdikhah took home the best actress award for her role in “The World of One Hundred Colors”.

The Street Theater category saw Saeid Allahyari being named the best director for his play “Toranj and the Ghoul of the Tree of Wishes”.

Additionally, the organizers announced that as a result of the festival and the collaboration of



100 artists from the province, six prisoners of unintentional crimes were released.

The festival, which opened on February 20, is an annual event that has been held in Iran since 1993. It seeks to promote theater and drama among children and young adults from all over the world, providing a platform for them to showcase their talent and experience different cultures.

The goals of the festival also include realizing the social participation of children and teenagers, improving the level of public culture, strengthening

the original foundations of the family and connecting generations, teaching citizenship, and increasing responsibility by creating a platform for the active participation of children and teenagers in the production of theatrical works which is part of the rights of this dynamic and influential group of society.

This year’s edition of the festival was held with the slogan “Theater, the Pure Practice of Life” and with the aim of strengthening empathy and companionship, and growing the awareness and self-confidence of the children of Iran through theater.

The Yazd Governorate organized

the festival in the historical city of Ardakan with the cooperation of the General Department of Dramatic Arts of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Dramatic Arts Association of Iran.

During the festival, theater companies presented productions that were designed specifically for children and young adults, using a mix of storytelling, music, dance, and visual effects. A range of educational and entertaining workshops were also organized alongside the performances, offering opportunities for festival attendees to learn new skills and techniques.

IAF cinematheque to screen Bela Tarr’s “Macbeth”

TEHRAN-The cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will show the 1982 Hungarian film “Macbeth” directed by Bela Tarr, based on the famous tragedy of the same name by William Shakespeare, on Wednesday.

After screening the film at 5 p.m., it will be reviewed at a session in the presence of author, playwright, and theater critic Azadeh Fakhri, Honaronline reported.

It will be the 6th session in the program of the cinematheque dedicated to the screening of films made based on well-known plays.

“Macbeth” dramatizes the damaging physical and psychological effects of political ambition on those who seek power. It was first published in the Folio of 1623, possibly from a prompt book, and is Shakespeare’s shortest tragedy.

A brave Scottish general named Macbeth receives

a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed by ambition and spurred to action by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the Scottish throne for himself. He is then wracked with guilt and paranoia. Forced to commit more and more murders to protect himself from enmity and suspicion, he soon becomes a tyrannical ruler. The bloodbath and consequent civil war swiftly take Macbeth and Lady Macbeth into the realms of madness and death.

Shakespeare’s source for the story is the account of Macbeth, King of Scotland, Macduff, and Duncan in Holinshed’s Chronicles (1587), a history of England, Scotland, and Ireland familiar to Shakespeare and his contemporaries, although the events in the play differ extensively from the history of the real Macbeth. The events of the tragedy are usually associated with the execution of Henry Garnet for complicity in the Gunpowder

Plot of 1605.

The play has attracted some of the most renowned actors to the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and has been adapted to film, television, opera, novels, comics, and other media.

In Tarr’s movie, which is composed of only two shots, György Cserhalmi stars Macbeth while Erzsébet Kútvölgyi portrays Lady Macbeth.

Béla Tarr, 68, is a Hungarian filmmaker. He began his directorial career with a brief period of what he refers to as “social cinema,” aimed at telling everyday stories about ordinary people, often in the style of cinema vérité. Over the next decade, he changed the cinematic style and thematic elements of his films. Tarr has been interpreted as having a pessimistic view of humanity; the characters in his works are often cynical, and have tumultuous relationships with one another in ways critics have found to be darkly comic.

“A River Called Time” at Iranian bookstores

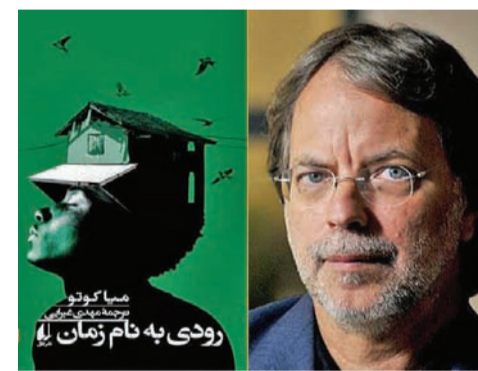
TEHRAN- “A River Called Time” by Mozambican writer Mia Couto has recently been published in Persian. Translated by Mehdi Ghabrai, the book has been published by Ofoq Publications in Tehran.

The book tells the story of Mariano, who finds himself torn between the urban world he has known for so long and the ancestral village to which he is reluctantly summoned. Upon returning to his village for his grandfather’s funeral, Mariano is faced with unexpected responsibilities as his dying grandfather entrusts him with the task of restoring peace and closure to their family affairs. Despite his initial reluctance, Mariano is compelled to navigate the complexities of traditional beliefs and the spiritual realm in an effort to lay his grandfather’s troubled soul to rest.

As Mariano delves into the past through

letters purportedly penned by his grandfather, he unravels long-held family secrets and confronts the truth about his own origins. Through this unique form of communication with the deceased, Mariano not only discovers the hidden histories and interconnected relationships within his family but also embarks on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. The novel weaves together elements of mystery, folklore, and humor as Mariano grapples with the weight of ancestral legacies and the intricacies of human connection across time and space.

Within the tapestry of picturesque and sometimes comical characters and situations, Mia Couto skillfully explores themes of identity, memory, and the enduring impact of unresolved past traumas. Through Mariano’s quest to fulfill his grandfather’s



final wishes and uncover the truth about his own origins, “A River Called Time” serves as a poignant reflection on the enduring power of family ties, the complexities of tradition, and the transformative nature of reconciling with one’s roots.

Photobook by Palestinian artist delivers harrowing meditation on documenting life in Gaza

“Disruptions,” a new book from Palestinian artist Taysir Batniji published by Loose Joints, collates two years of glitched video calls with his family in Gaza while living in Paris.

In solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian people during the latest act of devastating destruction and erasure by Israel, all proceeds will go towards the NGO Medical Aid Palestine providing critical medical care and support on the ground, 1000 Words Photography Magazine website reported.

The lives and paths of images are often elusive. We perhaps should approach them suspiciously, certainly with hesitation, wary of what they could be carrying: power,

meaning, even truth of their own. Evidence. The understanding that they actually contain none of these in themselves, but rather tend to reflect, expose and manifest the contexts, meanings and evidences that we build and consign into and about them is sometimes liberating, sometimes confusing and most regularly confronting.

Between 2015 and 2017, Batniji assembled a series of images titled “Disruptions”. Forced in a condition of displacement because of the difficulties in travelling to besieged Gaza from his Parisian residency, Batniji maintained contact with his mother and other family members via video calls on WhatsApp, which were constantly disrupted and interrupted by poor and shaky line

connections. Network issues would destructure and dismantle faces, streets and rooms into clusters of pixels, blurred lines or solid blocks of color. Initially interested in the formal phenomenon, Batniji started taking screenshots on his mobile device. Curious about these glitchy, seemingly random effects, he transformed them into an archive, noting their dates and ordering them as an inventory.

Being displaced, being exiled, being far away means, first and foremost, being absent. This condition carries a shift in time, in how the flow of life is experienced. One’s life is split in two, between the lived space, which flows through the present tense, and the other, distant space, which flows

through the narrated tense.

In Batniji’s long-distance relations, one end lives a life in waiting, split between two conditions while the other lies in an occupied and besieged land in which communication infrastructure is itself subjugated to dynamics of power, apartheid and retaliation.

“Disruption” became a series of 86 screenshots, taken between April 2015 and June 2017. In 2019, it was exhibited at MAC/VAL in Vitry-sur-Seine in the group exhibition “Lifelines – an Exhibition of Legends,” which proposed reflections on identities and their processes of construction and legitimization.