

From Inside



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Tehran Papers



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

## Reasons for cutting US-Iran ties

Javan writes: Since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution (1979), some said the cause of Washington's enmity toward Iran is Tehran's actions and claimed that if there were no anti-American policies in Iran, the U.S. would not have a reason for enmity. **► Page 2**

Report



## A look at Iran's space technology achievements

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN – Iran is the ninth country in the world after the Soviet Union, the United States, France, Japan, China, the United Kingdom, India and the Zionist regime that has successfully launched a satellite independently.

Since 2005, Iran has joined the club of space countries by sending the Sina 1 satellite, which was sent into orbit with the help of Russia. Since then, the Iranian Space Agency has put planning for the use of space and the expansion of space technologies in the country using local knowledge and international cooperation on the agenda. **► Page 3**

## Kurdish groups involved in Isfahan attack: report

TEHRAN – An Iranian media outlet linked to Iran top security council said "counterrevolutionary Kurdish groups" played a logistical role in the attack that targeted a military facility in Isfahan.

Nour News, which is close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said the Kurdish groups smuggled the equipment used in the attack from Iraqi Kurdistan. **► Page 3**

## Iraqi play "Amal" scores big win at Fajr theater festival

TEHRAN – Iraqi play "Amal" was the big winner of the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival by garnering awards in three categories, including best director and best play, at the Iranian event on Tuesday.

Written and directed by Jawad Al-Assadi, the play focuses on the hardship of wartime and the question arises as to whether it is right to invite someone else into this world under these conditions. **► Page 8**

## Iran adamant to advance despite foes' attempts: Raisi

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has stated that despite the enemies' attempts to halt the nation's advancement, the people remain enthusiastic to moving forward.

The president made the remarks in a special televised interview on Tuesday night.

Raisi said the recent riots in Iran were planned by the Islamic Republic's adversaries in retaliation for their sanctions failure to obstruct the country's economic advancement.

He added that the foreign-backed uprisings and the sanctions were two sides of the same coin.

The president emphasized that the sanctions have been unable to halt production, impede the country from witnessing 5% economic growth, or the creation of over one million jobs across the country.

"Whatever the enemy was after, has been contrarily realized thanks to the nation's will and the government's intention to serve the people," Raisi underlined, adding, "Therefore, it is natural that the enemy should be angry at us." **► Page 2**

Report



## Strikes paralyze France and UK

TEHRAN-As NATO members – France and Britain – spend fortunes on the Ukraine war, workers at home bear the brunt and this has triggered mass protests and strikes.

The second round of industrial action in France has brought the country to a standstill.

According to unions and organizers of the protests, the first round of industrial action and protests in January against the government's pension reform plans saw the participation of two million people.

The second round on the last day of January also saw a million-man march across the country.

As France and other countries spend a fortune on Ukraine, it's the people back home that are footing the bill for the expenses. **► Page 5**

## IHF World Championships like a school for Iran players: Vujovic

By Farrokhesab

TEHRAN – Veselin Vujovic, head coach of the Iran national handball team, talked about his side's performance in the 2023 IHF Men's World Championship, believing that they could have performed better in some matches.

Iran earned a single win in six matches in the competition. They finished 24th in the tournament, a new low after finishing 21st in the previous edition in 2015 – with five losses against European sides like France, Spain, Montenegro, Poland and Slovenia.

"We didn't have the experience of playing in such a big tournament," said the Montenegrin coach in his recent interview with reporters.

"Some of our players were nervous in this event, and others showed their quality in the games. Generally, I think we could have performed better in some matches and get more in the World Championship," he added. **► Page 3**

## Ten-day dawn festivities marking the revolution start



© Mehr / Saeed Reza Razavi

TEHRAN – February 1st marks the beginning of the ten-day festivities, officially known as the 10-day dawn, celebrating the return of Imam Khomeini to Iran in 1979.

Millions of Iranians have commenced the ten-day celebrations to honor the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, which ended the U.S.-

backed Pahlavi monarchy in the country.

The enormous mausoleum hall was crowded with people from all walks of life.

In western Tehran, near Azadi (Liberty) Square, motorcycle riders also participated in a procession to commemorate Imam Khomeini's return to the

country in 1979.

Additionally, school bells sounded across the nation to serve as a reminder to pupils of the moment when Imam Khomeini entered Iran.

Ships also honk their horns in jubilation in southern Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas.

## Iran registers highest production growth among world's top steelmakers: WSA

TEHRAN – Iran's crude steel production increased by eight percent in 2022 when the production by the world's top 64 steelmakers declined by 4.2 percent, according to the World Steel Association (WSA)'s latest report.

Based on the WSA data, Iran was ranked first among the world's top steel producers

in terms of production growth in the previous year, IRNA reported.

Based on the report, Iran produced 30.6 million tons of crude steel in the mentioned year.

Meanwhile, WSA stated that crude steel

production by the world's top 64 producers fell 4.2 percent to stand at 1.787 billion in 2022.

Production by Europe's major steel producers also declined significantly last year so that Germany's production declined by 8.4 percent, **► Page 4**

## Illegal wells are a blight on wetlands

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN – February 2nd marks World Wetlands Day. Wetlands cover around 6 percent of the Earth's land surface and 40 percent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.

They play an important role in coastal environments and economies, health, food supply, tourism, and jobs.

Wetlands are providing essential ecosystem services such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification.

More than a billion people across the world depend on wetlands for their livelihoods – that's about one in eight people on Earth.

Managing wetlands is a global challenge and the Convention presently counts 172 countries as Contracting Parties, which recognizes the value of having one international treaty dedicated to a single ecosystem. **► Page 7**



## Imam Ali holy shrine decorated with flowers

The holy shrine of Imam Ali (AS) in Najaf, Iraq, was decorated with flowers on Wednesday, marking the auspicious birth anniversary of the first Shia Imam which will be celebrated on Saturday.

## Russian arrivals in Iran soar in the face of sanctions

TEHRAN – Russian tourists are increasingly choosing Iran as a vacation destination these days.

There has been a surge of Russian tourists in Iran as a result of international sanctions against Russia, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Several factors have contributed to Russia's limited domestic and foreign tourism these days, including a recent war with

Ukraine that has adversely affected the Russian tourism industry.

Travel restrictions to China, sanctions by the European Union, a negative image of Russia being presented in different countries and the ban on international cards such as Visa prevent Russia from expanding its tourism.

This has prompted Russian tourists to visit Asia and the Middle East instead, especially

Iran. This is due to the visa waiver between Iran and Russia that has increased for Russian tourists visiting Iran.

Russia's outbound tourism market was impacted by the coronavirus outbreak until months ago, but it is now growing and has a completely new outlook, and Iran remains a popular tourist destination for Russians despite negative advertising. **► Page 6**



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Reasons for cutting US-Iran ties

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

from page 1 ► If these claims are true, why didn't America become hostile to Turkey, which after the coup, President Erdogan pointed the finger of accusation at America and made the harshest words? Or Saudi Arabia, which dismembered an American citizen in its consulate in Istanbul?

So, the reason for America's enmity with Iran is not Iran's anti-American positions.

In breaking the relationship between the U.S and Iran, firstly, Iran was never the initiator, and secondly, America's hostility with Iran is due to several major factors, including colonial interests of the liberal democratic system; arrogant spirit and superiority feeling; confrontation between the right and the wrong; constant failures of the West against Islamic civilization; and the identity of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

#### Arman-e-Melli: JCPOA died, long live JCPOA!

Arman-e-Melli writes: Iran adopted diplomacy in 2003 when the Westerners were moving toward confrontation, and this approach led to an agreement in Vienna in 2015.

Nevertheless, Trump chose another path and once again created grounds for tension between Tehran and the West. Trump set the stage for tension by withdrawing from the JCPOA.

While some U.S. officials say that returning to the JCPOA is not currently on their agenda, news are coming of their desire to continue consultations with Tehran.

The JCPOA is dead because no one is trying to revive it, but many believe that the deal is still the best option to solve the nuclear challenge between Iran and the West, and efforts should be made to revive it.

From this point of view, although the JCPOA is dead. Considering that the parties still talk about diplomacy and consider it the best solution, we can hope for its revival. But this hope is reasonable just for a short period of time. In other words, although the JCPOA is dead, there is no other choice but chanting 'long live the JCPOA'.

#### Aftab Yazd: White House does not want Al-Sudani

Aftab Yazd wrote: Although volatile developments in a year finally pushed Iraq toward peace, it did not satisfy the Westerners and the Arab governments of the region. That's why some factions are not happy with the reforms initiated by Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, the prime minister of the Republic of Iraq.

By putting pressure on Iraq's financial system, the Americans have put the country in trouble.

Hassan Hanizadeh, a political analyst on West Asian affairs, said in an interview with Aftab Yazd that since 2003, America's interference in Iraq has been quite obvious.

America's view of Iraq since the fall of Saddam has been completely colonialist, and whenever the elected prime minister does not agree with the policies of the United States, he faces problems.

Newly-released reports show that the U.S. Treasury has blocked a large sum of Iraq's oil revenues.

Therefore, Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani has had a

serious challenge with the U.S. after he took over as prime minister, and the Americans may not even allow Al-Sudani to continue his job.

#### Resalat: JCPOA nature has changed and value of negotiations has decreased

Analysts believe that the recent action of the European Parliament has changed the nature of the JCPOA.

Also, recently former U.S. President Barack Obama's special representative for the Middle East has said that the revival of the JCPOA would be costly for the Biden administration and emphasized that Washington is currently looking for a new agreement with Tehran.

Regarding the recent action of the European Parliament against the IRGC and its impact on the JCPOA, Fouad Izadi, a political analyst on international relations, told Resalat: the JCPOA negotiations do not have equal value for the public opinion, officials, and experts.

For some the JCPOA is very valuable but for others not, he added.

Due to the recent moves of the European Parliament and the United States, the nature of the JCPOA has changed, the university professor argued.

Izadi further added: The recent move by the European Parliament was not against the IRGC. The parliament was about to reduce the benefits of the JCPOA for the Islamic Republic.

#### Etemad: Regional JCPOA is a strategic priority

The Etemad newspaper writes: It seems that revitalizing the JCPOA with the participation of the U.S. is not a priority for the time being. In the current situation, in order to revive the JCPOA, smaller parts must be connected together to revive the deal. One of these smaller components in the Middle East is a comprehensive security and economic agreement with the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf in the form of a "regional JCPOA".

Obviously, the prerequisite for achieving the "regional JCPOA" is to accept it as a strategic priority in Iran's foreign policy.

The "regional JCPOA" requires acceptance of interest-oriented and development-oriented foreign policy (i.e., a foreign policy based on national interest and development), acceptance of military, non-military and security-based deterrence to achieve the goals.

In other words, reaching a collective agreement with regional actors, first of all, requires determining the spheres of influence, proxy forces, and security arrangements through trust-building.

Military must necessarily be in the direction of economic strengthening and development of the country.

Therefore, the first condition for success in any negotiation and agreement is a strategic view toward building stable trust between actors and realizing development goals. This is important because the current negotiations with Saudi Arabia and the regional agreement cannot be viewed as a mere tactic and a solution only to solve foreign policy problems.

The senior Iranian diplomat complimented the president of Mauritania for his efforts in battling terrorism and advancing stability and security in the Western Sahara region, calling them of utmost importance.

Amir Abdollahian also delivered a message from Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Ghazouani. The message focused on several areas for collaboration, including technology, culture, economy, and business.

Additionally, the two sides spoke about crucial regional concerns including advancing Palestinian rights and fostering connections between Muslim countries.

They also discussed how they see the two nations' bilateral relations evolving.

Ghazouani welcomed Iran's contribution to the battle against terrorism and described the ties between Iran and Mauritania as long-standing and stable.

He also emphasized the need to strengthen partnership while highlighting Iran's advances in science and technology.

# Iran adamant to advance despite foes' attempts: Raisi

from page 1 ► The president went on to say, "One of the causes behind the enemy's instigation of the recent riots was the precise fact that it was watching the neutralization of their sanctions owing to the work of our statesmen and the perseverance of the people."

He declared that the country's development will gain more impetus every day because of the nation's willpower and the government's desire to be at the nation's service.

"While the adversaries are trying to hinder the country's growth, our people have determined to march forward," he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the president listed the accomplishments of his administration, including reducing the country's



60 percent inflation rate to 40 percent, ending budget deficit, and raising economic growth rate

from 4 percent to 4.4 percent in just six months after taking office. The administration was also

attempting to 'de-dollarize' the staples so that a prospective increase in the value of the dollar would not have a negative impact on the price of the commodities, he pointed out.

Raisi also cited smuggling and under-provision of basics by suppliers as two major factors for the price hike.

He noted that the recent riots had reduced revenues across the country, raised the dollar's exchange rate, but assured the people that the government's foreign exchange reserves were now at a "proper and reliable" level.

Raisi also called on exporters to bring their foreign exchange earnings back home so that the Central Bank could have more control over foreign reserves.

## Russia and Iran in the energy market: Competition or cooperation?

By Mehdi Soltani

Many observers believe Moscow is behind every significant international development or organization, be that the results of the US Presidential elections or the decisions of the European Parliament. That is rooted in lack of systemic understanding of international relations and sovereign motivation of its actors. A similar approach is taken with regard to Iran's policy in the Middle East. Where a Shiite individual or movement makes a step, Iran's opponents see footprints leading to Tehran. Neither of the two capitals has both motivation and capabilities to control such developments abroad, so before ascribing any role to Moscow or Tehran, one should better study how things work in reality, rather than according to their imaginary schemes, even if such schemes make sense to the public.

one of these approaches, which is rather similar to the conspiracy theory, is to blame Russia of taking deliberate actions to strain the relations between Iran and Europe, and subsequently, targeting Iran in the energy market as a potential actor to replace Russia in Europe's energy supply. The global developments that have turned up in the last few years have caused Iran-Russia relations to enter a new, comprehensive and rather strategic phase. Despite the unprecedented violations and sanctions imposed on Iran by Western countries, the evidences of new cooperation between Iran and Russia show that the recent alliances are on the path of comprehensive development. Cooperation in the field of advanced technologies (Khayyam remote sensing satellite that lifted off from the Baikonur Commodore), unprecedented trade volume up to 4 billion dollars in 2022, bilateral military collaboration, gas memorandum between Iran and Russia's Gazprom and also, Russia's support for Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization shows the remarkable expansion of strategic relations in recent years, especially after the intensification of Western sanctions on both countries.

In a completely simplistic judgment, some analysts believe in Russia's pre-planned strategy to completely eliminate Iran from global equations, especially by preventing the restoration of this country's relations with the European Union in the field of energy exports as an alternative to the sanctioned Russia in this market. In order to justify their claim, they pointed to the military cooperation between Iran and Russia, which became an excuse

to intensify the sanctions of the European Union against Iran, as well as diminishing the possibility of revitalizing the JCPOA, and they consider it as a scheme by Russia.

Spreading such pessimistic views lead to questions that can invalidate such views to some extent. Considering the disconnection between Russia and European countries in the field of energy trade, how Iran is able to supply the amount of energy needed by Europe as an alternative to Russia in terms of production infrastructure, production volume, export capacity, as well as logistical ability?

### Agreement between Iran and Russia's Gazprom is concluded with anticipation of the infrastructure expansion, which is a manifestation of Russia's willingness to strategic cooperation with Iran.

A detailed examination of Iran's production and export capacities and capabilities in the field of energy such as oil, gas and even petrochemical products can well answer the above question and negate the mentioned point of view.

According to the gas crisis occurred in Europe during the last year, many suppose that Iran will be the best option to compensate for the shortage of gas in Europe. Declaration of such a proposal shows that some analysts are not informed about the production capacity and conditions of facilities and infrastructure of Iran's gas fields.

According to statistics, the average gas consumption in the country is 250 billion cubic meters per year, and the total gas production in 2021 was about 269 billion cubic meters. Moreover, Iran's total gas exports to Iraq and Turkey are 17 billion cubic meters annually. Therefore, if we consider consumption and export to Turkey and Iraq, the amount of production is almost equal to both consumption and exports. Therefore, considering gas export, Iran will need a large investment for development of production infrastructure, that the recent agreement between Iran and the Russian company Gazprom is concluded with the anticipation of the infrastructure expansion, which is a manifestation of Russia's willingness to strategic cooperation with Iran even in the field of energy.

## U.S. slaps fresh sanctions on Iranian drone producers

TEHRAN- New penalties have been imposed by the United States against Iran, targeting drone producers who are allegedly responsible for developing the drones used by Russian forces to attack Ukrainian targets.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Commerce imposed fresh trade sanctions on seven Iranian businesses and organizations under the unfounded and demonstrably false pretense that the Islamic Republic had given Russia the UAVs that Moscow is using against Ukraine.

## Iran condemns 'despicable' attack on female Palestinian inmates

TEHRAN- The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry has sharply denounced Israeli troops' barbaric aggression against Palestinian women in the Damon Prison in the occupied territories, following reports that the female detainees were abused and beaten mercilessly.

"Beating female Palestinian inmates in #ZionistRegime's Damon Prison is abhorrent," Nasser Kanaani tweeted late on Tuesday.

"Do self-proclaimed rights defenders in Europe & U.S. believe #HumanRights and women's rights apply to Palestinian prisoners in Israel's horrifying jails?" he strongly asked.

## Any wrong move can trigger full-fledged war, Iran warns U.S.

TEHRAN- Iranian authorities have told Newsweek that any military action by the United States against the Islamic Republic will end in an all-out confrontation with regional repercussions. The warning followed a drone attack on at least one defense complex in the central city of Isfahan.

"In Iran's perspective, the use of the military option at any level means U.S. entry into the war," Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN noted.

"For now," the mission noted, "Iran considers such a possibility to be weak."

## Iraqi official urges concluding probe into Gen. Soleimani assassination

TEHRAN- Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, the first deputy speaker of the Iraqi parliament, on Tuesday underscored the need to finalize the investigations related to the abhorrent assassination of Gen. Qassem Soleimani and PMF deputy chief al-Muhandis in Baghdad.

Al-Mandalawi made the remarks while receiving an Iranian delegation led by Kazem Gharib Abadi, the Judiciary deputy chief for international affairs and secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights. The Iranian team had visited Iraq to demand the conclusion of the investigations into the assassinations of the anti-terror heroes.

## Abdollahian says Tehran backs African security measures to safeguard peace



TEHRAN- During a meeting with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian emphasized the Islamic Republic's support for initiatives to safeguard peace and security in Africa.

During a visit to Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, Amir Abdollahian had fruitful discussions with both the country's president and foreign minister.

During the talks, they discussed a wide variety of bilateral, regional, and global concerns.



# Baku should not take orders from Tel Aviv

TEHRAN – In its latest inconceivable move, Azerbaijan appealed to international organizations for a condemnation of an embassy attack that Iran says is not terrorist but Azerbaijan insists on calling it a terror attack.

The attack that took place on Friday morning continues to strain Tehran-Baku relations for no good reason. The attack was condemned in the strongest terms by Iran and the perpetrator was quickly arrested. Investigation into the attack is underway. According to early confessions by the assailant, he stormed the Azerbaijani embassy in Tehran for personal reasons. His wife has gone missing and he believed that the embassy was to blame.

Azerbaijan, however, continues to ratchet up tensions against Iran by describing the attack as terrorist. Baku has taken a set of measures that effectively brought bilateral relations to a historical low level. Azerbaijan evacuated its embassy and withdrew its ambassador.

This is while Iran has done everything in its power to address Azerbaijan's concerns. Pundits believe that the Azerbaijani approach is clearly under the influence of Israel, which happens to be in the process of inaugurating the Azerbaijani embassy in Tel Aviv.

Observers have compared Azerbaijan's measures to those of Iran after the Shiraz terrorist attack, which claimed the lives of more a dozen. And nationals holding Azerbaijani citizenship were involved in orchestrating the attack. But Iran refrained to put the finger of blame at Azerbaijan.

In its latest move, Azerbaijan appealed to international organizations for condemning the



embassy attack. The foreign ministry of the Republic of Azerbaijan said it had submitted a set of documents containing calls for international condemnation of the recent attack on its embassy in Tehran.

“On January 27, documents containing calls for international condemnation of the terror attack against the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the identification and prompt punishment of the organizers and perpetrators of the terror act, as well as for the fulfillment of obligations arising from the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, were submitted to relevant international organizations and platforms for adoption,” the Azerbaijani foreign ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The appeal was submitted on the same day the Azerbaijan embassy in Tehran was stormed by a gunman on personal grounds. On January 27, a man who later said he was looking for his missing wife attacked the embassy, killing one security guard and injuring two others. Iran said the attack was motivated by personal problems of the assailant. But Azerbaijan insists that it was a “terror attack.”

Azerbaijan evacuated its embassy staff in Tehran, including Ambassador Ali Alizade.

“It should be noted that, since the terror attack was committed and until now, the armed attack against the Embassy of Azerbaijan has been condemned by about 100 countries and the secretariats of a number of international organizations, and the necessity of punishing the perpetrators of this act has been emphasized in the statements,” the Azerbaijani statement added.

It also leveled accusations against Iran. “Iran has tried to prevent the terror attack from being widely exposed at the international level in the international organizations which it is a member of and in which decisions are consensus-based. In this regard, Iran objected to the draft communiqués and statements submitted by Azerbaijan to the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) immediately after the attack. In addition, Iran has appealed to numerous countries for the support of its position in the aforementioned organizations, but support to Iran’s

position was given only by Syria and India among the 120 countries in the Non-Aligned Movement. The main claim voiced by these three countries in opposition of the adoption of the aforementioned documents was that terror attacks in individual countries were not condemned in the Non-Aligned Movement before and bilateral issues between these countries were not brought to international platforms such as the Non-Aligned Movement. However, the Non-Aligned Movement has, in many cases, adopted a number of documents condemning the terror attacks that have occurred in its member states and emphasizing the protection of diplomatic missions.”

Azerbaijan’s accusations against Iran comes amid intensified Iranian efforts to soothe tensions and address the situation professionally. But Azerbaijan’s approach toward Iran has raised eyebrows in Tehran and beyond as Iran did everything to professionally deal with the attack.

While Iran adopted a low-key approach, Azerbaijan worked to internationalize the attack and went so far as to caution its citizens against travelling to Iran.

## A look at Iran’s space technology achievements

From Page 1 ▶ Then, Iran was able to move towards launching satellites in addition to designing and building them by creating scientific infrastructures which were achieved by developing space launch terminals.

In addition to the development of space launch terminals, the development of satellite carriers has also been effective in achieving the country’s cycle of designing and producing indigenous satellites.

The ‘Safir’ satellite carrier was designed and built in 2008 and the ‘Simorgh’ satellite carrier was in 2017. ‘Sarir’ and ‘Soroush’ satellite carriers also added to the space technology of the country.

Iran managed to launch several satellites with this equipment, some of which were successful and some of which were unsuccessful.

‘Sina-1’ was the first Iranian artificial satellite, launched at 6:52 UTC on October 28, 2005, on board a Cosmos-3M Russian launch vehicle from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome. Remote sensing, receiving, storing and sending telecommunication data were the two missions of this satellite.

Iran launched its first homemade satellite, ‘Omid’ (Hope), in 2009. After being launched by an Iranian-made carrier rocket, Safir 1, the satellite was placed into a low Earth orbit. Omid was a data-processing



satellite for research and telecommunications. The launch, which coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution was also verified by NASA the following day as a success. The launch of Omid made Iran the ninth country to develop an indigenous satellite launch capability.

‘Rasad’ (Observation) was another Iranian satellite which was launched in 2011. The third Iranian satellite, and the second to be launched successfully using an indigenous rocket, Rasad was Iran’s first imaging satellite. Launched aboard a Safir-B carrier rocket, it was successfully placed

into a low Earth orbit at an altitude of 236 by 299 kilometres (147 by 186 mi), inclined at 55.7 degrees. It made approximately fifteen orbits per day. The launch occurred at approximately 09:14 UTC on 15 June 2011 with the spacecraft reaching orbit several minutes later.

The satellite had a mass of 15.3 kilograms (34 lb) and returned images with a resolution of 150 metres (490 ft). It was equipped with solar panels to generate power. The satellite decayed from orbit three weeks after launch, on 6 July 2011.

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

## Kurdish groups involved in Isfahan attack: report

From Page 1 ▶ “Parts of the quadcopters used in the recent act of sabotage against the workshop of the Ministry of Defense in Isfahan and the explosive materials have been brought to Iran with participation and direction from counterrevolutionary Kurdish groups based in Iraq’s Kurdistan region,” Nour News said.

According to Nour News, these groups received the parts of the quadcopters and the explosive materials by orders of a foreign security service and then smuggled them through Iran’s northwest porous borders. They then delivered the contraband to the security service agent in one of Iran’s border cities.

The parts and materials were assembled in an equipped work-

shop using trained forces in Iran, Nour News added.

This is the second time Kurdish groups get the blame for an act of sabotage orchestrated by Israel. In last August, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence announced that it arrested members of a Kurdish group trained by Israel’s spy agencies to target an important military facility in Isfahan.

Nour News said Iran repeatedly told the Iraqi government to prevent such subversive acts by Kurdish groups but the Iraqi government has failed to abide by its legal obligations in this regard.

The Iranian Defense Ministry said in an early Sunday statement that the Iranian air defense forces repelled a drone strike on a military workshop in the central city

of Isfahan on Saturday night.

The ministry said one of its workshop complexes had come under attack from a number of micro aerial vehicles (MAVs), but the complex’s air defenses successfully repelled the attack.

“One of the MAVs was downed by the complex’s air defense fire, while the other two were caught in its defensive traps and exploded,” the statement added, according to Tasnim.

Israeli and Western media attributed the attack to Israel. “The Isfahan attack was not successful, and the words of the Israeli sources are just propaganda to cover up the failure,” an Iranian official told Al Jazeera on Monday.

The official added, “Preliminary

practical indications point to Israel’s involvement in the Isfahan attack, and the investigation must be pursued. It is likely that the drones were launched from inside Iran and close to the target site.”

The official warned, “Israel knows very well that it will receive a response, and this is what happened previously, far from the noise and the abundance of statements. Washington distances itself from the attack because it knows it is a failure and will not push Tehran to change its policies. There are those who play with fire, and we have no doubt that they will be the first to burn if they decide to start a regional war.”

Iran’s parliament is set to dispatch a committee to Isfahan to investigate the attack.

## SPORTS

### IHF World Championships like a school for Iran players: Vujovic

From Page 1 ▶ “It is true that we achieved our initial goal of qualifying for the main round instead of playing in the President Cup, but I always look for a better results and higher positions.

“Of course, you should not forget that it is not easy to play against strong teams like France, Spain and Slovenia. This event was like a great school for Iranian national players. From the day of signing my contract with the Iranian Handball Federation until the start of the IHF World Championship, I tried to prepare the players mentally and tactically for what awaited them in such prestigious tournament, but it seemed to me that some people did not take my words seriously until the start of the matches of the national team in the World Championship,” added the 62-year-old coach.

The 2023 IHF World Men’s Handball Championship was the 28th such event held in Poland and Sweden from 11 to 29 January 2023.

Denmark became the first team in history to secure the trophy at the IHF Men’s World Championship three times in a row with an excellent win against France (34:29).

### Mohammad Amini to compete at NBA Without Borders

TEHRAN – Considered one of his country’s greatest hopes, young Iranian Mohammad Amini will play compete in the NBA Without Borders in February.

The 2.01m point guard currently plays for French side AS Monaco.

It is very rare for an Iranian to play in a European league. In Germany, there was recently Behnam Yakhchali in Rostock and MBC. Samad Nikkhah Bahrami also played for French basketball team Pau-Orthez in 2008/09 season.

“Air Amini”, who is aiming for the NBA Draft in 2025 while aiming to become the first Iranian player to play in the Euroleague, has interviewed with [basketeurope.com](http://basketeurope.com) about his goals.

“When I was younger, my parents made me try several sports. I tested gymnastics, taekwondo and basketball with my brother. So, I started this sport in my home region Bandar Abass. The first game I played at 14 we won 52-50 and I scored 49 points. So, I told myself that I had to continue in basketball (smile).

“I’ve only been in France for a few months but I have fully adapted to the European game. I want to be one of the best players in the U23 championship. And I tell myself every day that I want to go to the NBA in 2025,” the 17-year-old said.

Basketball Without Borders (BWB) is a premier opportunity for elite players to learn the game from world-class players and coaches; showcase their skills in front of NBA, WNBA and FIBA coaches, players and scouts; and compete against the top talent in the world.

Players enhance their basketball and life skills during four-day BWB camps and have the opportunity to return years later as a coach when they are leaders in the NBA or WNBA to inspire future basketball stars.

It’s a dream for any basketball player to play in the NBA, it’s my goal for 2025. But to get there, I chose the path of European basketball. Monaco can help me discover the top level, the NBA or the Euroleague, which is the second-best basketball league in the world.

“I worked hard to be named in the top 40 players of my generation. But that’s nothing compared to my goal of being drafted in the NBA or playing in the Euroleague,” Amini stated.

### Taj remains AFC vice president, Sheikh Salman wins election

TEHEAN – President of Iran football federation Mehdi Taj remained vice president of Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The 33rd AFC Congress concluded in Manama, Bahrain on Wednesday, with the AFC’s Member Associations electing a new-look AFC Executive Committee for the term 2023 to 2027.

The five vice presidents, namely Hachem Haidar (Lebanon, representative of West Asia), Mehdi Taj (Iran, representative of Central Asia), Ugen Tsechup (Bhutan, representative of South Asia), Zaw Zaw (Myanmar, representative of Southeast Asia) and Ganbaatar Amgalanbaatar (Mongolia, representative of East Asia region) retained their position.

Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa officially retained his role as president for a final four-year term.

### Persepolis held, Sepahan move IPL top

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team were to a goalless draw against Aluminum in Iran Professional League (IPL) on Wednesday, while Sepahan defeated Gol Gohar 4-1 to move top of the table.

In the match held in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium, Persepolis were reduced to 10 men in the 42nd minute after goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand fould on Aluminum winger outside the area.

The Reds were dominant in the second half but failed to find back of the net.

Earlier in the day, Sepahan defeated Gol Gohar 4-1 in Isfahan.

Shahriar Moghanlou scored a brace, Farshad Ahmadzadeh and Ramin Rezaeian were on target in the match.

Omid Noorafkan was sent off in the 48th minute.

Gol Gohar striker Kiros Stanley scored a consolation goal in the 81st minute.

Malavan defeated Nassaji 1-0 and Tractor earned a late 1-0 win over Foolad.

On Thursday, Paykan will host Naft Masjed Soleyman, Esteghlal to play Mes in Kerman, Sanat Naft meet Havadar and Mes Rafsanjan play Zob Ahan.

Sepahan managed to move ahead of Persepolis on goal difference with 36 points.

### World’s oldest surviving Olympian dies aged 107

TEHRAN – The world’s oldest surviving Olympian has died at the age of 107.

Felix Sienra passed away in his sleep, his family confirmed.

Sienra, also a doctor of law, was a legendary sailor for his native Uruguay.

And he represented his country at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, coming second in Race 2 of the Firefly class and sixth overall.

Daughter Magdalena said: “He took off the captain’s armband and got out of the boat.”

Sienra only turned 107 on January 21st.

And at the start of the year he gave an interview declaring he still felt in good health.

Sienra said: “I feel good, I feel fit. But I don’t get into a sailing boat anymore.

“The last time I did that was when I turned 100. At that time, we made a multi-day trip to a paradise island.”

Tributes have now poured in, with one person saying: “A friend tells me that Dr. Felix Sienra, a Uruguayan sailor who finished 6th in the 1948 London Olympics, died at the age of 107. RIP”



## Iran registers highest production growth among world's top steelmakers: WSA

from page 1 ► Italy experienced negative growth of 11.6 percent, France's output declined by 13.1 percent, Spain registered a negative 19.2 percent growth and the UK a 15.6 percent decline in steel production.

China, the world's largest steel producer, produced 1.013 billion tons of steel in 2022, accounting for 53 percent of the world's total steel output.

According to the World Steel Association, similar to the past two years, Iran has maintained its 10th place among the world's top steel producers, after countries like China, India, Japan, and Russia.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by external factors like the U.S. sanctions and



the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

## Export from Bushehr province increases 45%



TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, rose 45 percent in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Ali Soleymani, the director-general of Customs Department of Bushehr (the capital city of the province), said commodities worth \$11.5 billion were exported from the province in the first ten months of the present year, indicating also eight percent rise in terms of weight year on year.

He named petrochemicals, minerals, fisheries, and vegetables as the main exported items, and China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India, South Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that commodities worth \$1.6 billion were imported to the province in the first ten months of the present year, showing 44 percent rise in value, and 26 percent growth in weight, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

One of the important capacities of the coastal province of Bushehr on the edge of the Persian Gulf is maritime trade and economic connection with different countries. Bushehr province has the longest sea border with the Persian Gulf, and in this regard, various customs and port services are provided for traders and merchants on the shores of Bushehr province.

The value of export from the province rose 67 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), from the preceding year.

The worth of export from Bushehr stood at \$10.136 billion in the past year, and the weight of exported commodities, including gas condensate, at 25.78 million tons, with six percent growth year on year.

## TEDPIX rises 675 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 675 points to 1.557 million on Wednesday.

As reported, over 8.466 billion securities worth 50.063 trillion rials (about \$125 million)

were traded at the TSE.

TEDPIX lost 75,515 points to 1.611 million in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday).

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one.

### Correction

*It has come to the attention of the Tehran Times that some information provided in an article titled "Astana hosts 18th Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee meeting" published on January 23, have been incorrect. We incorrectly stated that the 18th Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Committee meeting was co-chaired by Kazakhstan Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov; in the caption of the photo provided in the article, the name of the Kazakh official was also incorrectly stated to be Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov while the person signing the document is Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin. We apologize for the error.*

# Iran's oil, gas incomes surge 40%: Oji

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji has said the country's incomes from the sales of oil, natural gas, gas condensate, and petroleum products in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023) increased by 40 percent compared to the same period last year.

Addressing an open session of the parliament on Tuesday, Oji said that 70 million barrels of gas condensate were exported in the mentioned time span, Mehr News Agency reported.

According to the official, the goals set in the current year's national budget bill for the exports of oil and gas will definitely be achieved by the yearend.

He noted that the National Iranian



Oil Company (NIOC) has already sold enough oil and gas and petroleum products to realize the budget goals by 100 percent, however collecting the revenues needs more time.

In remarks in November 2022, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi highlighted the failure of the enemy's policy of maximum pressure, saying the country's oil export has reached the pre-sanction levels.

Earlier this week, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) in a report put Iran's average oil production in 2022 at 2.54 million barrels per day (bpd), 140,000 bpd more than the previous year.

Iran's oil production in 2021 was about 2.4 million bpd.

## Bank loans to economic sectors increase nearly 42%

TEHRAN - Iranian banking system has paid 29.79 quadrillion rials (over \$78.2 billion) of facilities to domestic economic sectors in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2022), registering a 41.9-percent rise from the same period in the previous year.

According to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), over 84 percent of the mentioned facilities have been provided to owners of businesses and the rest have been paid to natural persons, IRIB reported.

As reported, 75.3 percent of the total facilities paid to the owners of businesses have been in the

form of working capital loans.

During the said period, businesses active in the mining and industry sector received over 6.93 quadrillion rials (about \$18.215 billion) in the form of working capital loans, accounting for 36.8 percent of the total such facilities.

Over the past three years, CBI has been collaborating with the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry for implementing a program based on which bank facilities are provided to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished projects.



The mentioned facilities are mainly provided for renewing machinery, equipping production units, or completing semi-finished projects

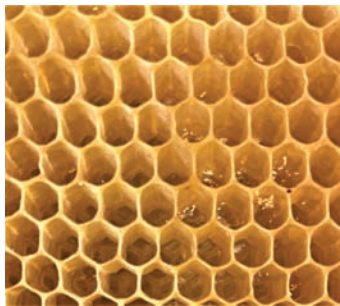
## 'Honey value-added tax should be removed'

TEHRAN- The managing director of Iran National Union of Beekeepers said that the value-added tax for honey and by-products should be removed.

Mir-Mohsen Mousavian mentioned this tax a major barrier for the work of beekeepers and said: "Unfortunately, last year, a law was passed stating that bee products will be taxed at nine percent, while the law states that agricultural products are exempt from value-added tax."

Expressing his complaint about the lack of necessary support for beekeepers, he said: "The future of the country's beekeeping industry depends on the level of government support"

The Ministry of Agriculture is expected to take time to support



beekeeping in the country and examine the problems of this sector, Mousavian added.

As stated by the chairman of the Animal Science Research Institute of Iran (ASRI), the amount of honey production in the country should be increased by three to four kilograms per colony.

Mokhtar Mohajer said, "According to the Seventh National Development

Plan (2022-2026), the amount of honey production should be increased by at least three to four kilograms per colony according to the diversity of plants and the area of pastures that we have in the country".

He announced that 112,000 tons of honey, 8,300 kilograms of royal jelly, 406 tons of pollen, 2,536 tons of beeswax, 247 tons of propolis, and 3,917 grams of bee venom are produced annually in the country.

Currently, there are about 11.8 million bee colonies in 109,759 apiaries in the country, he added.

Pointing out that Iran ranks third in the world in the number of apiaries, he said 87,932 people are working in apiaries in the country, and the output of these apiaries is honey and its by-products.

Stating that all these products are not consumed domestically, he said about 10 percent of these products are exported to countries such as Turkey and Arab countries.

Complaining about the low amount of honey production compared to the number of apiaries and colonies, Mohajer said the average production of honey in Iran is much lower than the standard, in a way that about four kilograms of honey is produced in traditional colonies, and an average of 9.6 kilograms of honey is produced in modern colonies.

He stated that the low literacy of the producers is one of the main reasons for the low production in the colonies, adding that the production potential of each bee colony in the country is more than 25 kilograms

## IMIDRO to put 29 mining projects into operation by late March

TEHRAN - Head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Vajihollah Jafari has announced that 29 major projects in mines and mining industries are going to be inaugurated

across the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

According to Jafari, nearly \$445 million has been invested in the mentioned projects in the form of 56.51 trillion rials (about \$148.34 million)

### Government puts 13-fold rise in renewable power generation capacity on agenda

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Ministry has put it on the agenda to add 10,000 MW to the capacity of the country's renewable power plants by the end of the current government's administration (August 2025), Fars

News Agency reported.

Considering the fact that the country's renewable power generation capacity stood at about 800 MW when the current

government took office in August 2021, the mentioned increase in the renewable energy capacity would mean a 13-fold rise.

Back in January 2022, the

Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the construction of new renewable power plants across the country.

## Mashhad accounts for 22% of Iran's flowers, ornamental plants export

TEHRAN- Mashhad, the capital city of Iran's northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, accounts for 22 percent of the country's flowers and ornamental plants export, according to the board chairman of the province's Union of Flowers and Plants Producers.

Mehdi Samangani said that due to the availability of suitable infrastructure and access to the market, 65 percent of Khorasan Razavi's greenhouses are located in Mashhad.

Mashhad's neighborhood with Turkmenistan and Central Asian countries has created a good capacity for exporting flowers and plants in Mashhad, he said, adding, "However, Mashhad's capacity for production and export, considering the infrastructure that this city has in the field of flower and ornamental plant production, is much more than our 22 percent share of flower and plant export in the country."

As announced by the head of the Agriculture Department of Mashhad County, 280 greenhouse units operate in Mashhad City. These greenhouses have created direct employment for 1,400 people and indirect employment for 3,500 people.

According to Mohammad Miri Disfani, 66 hectares of greenhouses in Mashhad are



related to ornamental flowers, in which all kinds of flowers and ornamental plants are produced.

Statistics show that Mashhad has a good capacity in the production of flowers and ornamental plants. Annually, 35 million cut flowers, five million flowers and plants in vases, and 50 million types of flower seedlings and ornamental plants are produced in Mashhad.

Meanwhile, as stated by Samangani, who is also the chairman of the Iranian Rose Society, Khorasan Razavi province accounts for the lion's share of rose export from the country.

Underlining that the majority of roses are exported from Khorasan Razavi, he said: "Rose is the strategic flower of Khorasan Razavi,

because the main export of roses from Iran is done from this province."

Currently, roses are one of the most popular flowers in the world and are at the top in terms of production.

The U.S., Britain, The Netherlands, Kenya, Colombia, Ecuador, South Africa, and India are the main producers of roses in the world.

Iran has 17th place in the world in the production of flowers and ornamental plants, but it is ranked 107th in terms of export.

Every year, three billion flowers and ornamental plants are produced in the country, of which only 300 million are exported. 50 percent of the produced flowers are sold domestically and the rest is thrown away.

As stated by the chairman of the Flower Retailers' Association of Tehran, flowers and ornamental plants consumption per capita in Iran is 20, while the figure is 150 to 250 in the world.

"We must have mass production to reduce the price of flowers", Gholam-Hossein Soltan-Mohammadi has stated.

According to him, to produce flowers and ornamental plants for export, it should be considered as an industry and the demands of target companies should be evaluated.



From page 1 ► The government of Emmanuel Macron has targeted pensioners, who are among the most vulnerable in society, with its plans to raise the retirement age.

That has been met with anger as French protesters and striking workers say the government doesn't care about the common people.

All major French trade unions joined hands in a show of unity.

Analysts say if the government did, it would go and target the Bank of France, the legislature, and the President's office who are the real enemies.

The only movement that resonates with the people, including the top 30% percent who are supposedly doing well is the Yellow Vest because they care about everybody in society.

The government has defended its pension reform plans with the government's finance minister Bruno Le Maire saying it is the best way to ensure prosperity and protect the French people.

Le Maire added the strikes over the unpopular plan to raise the retirement age are unlikely to affect the French economy because France has a low inflation rate and its economy is doing well.

This is while official data suggests the opposite with consumers struggling to cope amid surging inflation.

The hundreds of thousands of people who have taken part in street demonstrations across France joined transport, schools, and the energy sector which was hit by strike action. Local buses, trains, and trams in numerous cities, as well as regional and high-speed trains across the country, were "very significantly disrupted".

According to the main teachers' union about half of all school teachers went on strike as Air France said short and medium-haul services have been disrupted.

Many town halls across the country have also closed in a show of solidarity.

These are some of the biggest demonstrations over pension changes in France's history.

The socialist mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, accused the government of "shamefaced lies" for arguing that pension change was necessary.

Philippe Martinez of the CGT union said that "the government has lost the ideological battle," adding that the turnout in small towns and villages showed that "politicians should listen to the people".

Polls show that a majority of French people disapprove of Macron's plan to raise the pension age to 64, with most people voicing support for the protests.

The government claims that changes to the pension system are necessary but opponents and trade unions say the system is currently balanced, pointing out that the head of the independent pensions advisory council just recently told parliament that "pension spending is not out of control, it's relatively contained".

That puts the timing of the reforms under the spotlight as France will be sending tanks to Ukraine in an effort



# Strikes paralyze France and UK

to expand its military aid.

At the same time, it is refusing to listen to the millions of people on the streets demanding they work more to pay more taxes to the government's coffers.

Across the channel in the UK, another NATO member heavily involved in the Ukraine war braced for the biggest day of industrial action in over a decade on Wednesday when teachers, university lecturers, train drivers, civil servants, bus drivers, and security guards walked out on the same day.

The British government conceded that the mass strike action will be "very difficult".

Ambulance workers are the latest to join a very long list of public sector workers to go on strike.

Unison, one of the UK's largest trade unions has announced that thousands of ambulance workers in England will walk out on 10 February over pay following double-digit inflation amid the Ukraine war that has seen waves of industrial action from different sectors resort to strike action.

The latest industrial unrest by ambulance workers has taken the British government off guard with Downing Street saying it is "deeply concerning".

Strikes will now be taking place across the National Health Service (NHS) almost every day next week.

The PM's official spokesperson said the government is planning to mitigate the disruption "but first and foremost we would ask the unions to reconsider that approach and continue discussions (overpay)".

Announcing the latest strike action, Unison urged ministers to stop "pretending the strikes will simply go away" and improve ambulance workers' pay.

This follows the first strike action by NHS nurses in British history.

The union also warned that unless the government has a "major rethink" over NHS pay, and gets involved in "actual talks" with unions, it will announce strike dates running into March.

"The government must stop

playing games. [Prime Minister] Rishi Sunak wants the public to believe ministers are doing all they can to resolve the dispute. They're not," the union's head of health Sara Gorton said.

"There are no pay talks, and the prime minister must stop trying to hoodwink the public. It's time for some honesty. Ministers are doing precisely nothing to end the dispute.

"The government's tactics seem to be to dig in, wait months for the pay review body report, and hope the dispute goes away. It won't. And in the meantime, staff will carry on quitting, and patients being let down.

"There can be no health service without the staff to run it. Ministers must open proper talks to end the dispute and put in place the urgent retention plan needed to boost pay and staffing across the NHS."

The latest strike announcement comes as members of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) voted overwhelmingly in favor of action in a ballot result announced earlier this week.

If they do go ahead, the strikes will be the first nationwide fire strikes over pay since 2003.

The FBU says it has given the government ten days to make an improved pay offer.

This is while the National Education Union (NEU) has accused the government of having "squandered" the chance to avoid a walk-out in schools in England and Wales after talks with the Education Ministry broke up without agreement.

The British Medical Association which is the country's biggest doctors' union has indicated plans for consultants and around 45,000 junior doctors to go ahead with possible strikes as well.

The NHS is already struggling to cope with the effects of the most widespread industrial action in its history.

However, British media polls show that support for trade unions is rising even though strike action brings disruption to public services.

Industrial actions are at their highest level since the 1980s, with

the UK having lost more than a million working days to strikes last year.

Despite this, sympathy for striking public sector workers has risen over the past couple of months, with the public acknowledging how much of a positive role these workers play in society.

Data by the YouGov pollster shows that NHS striking workers bring the strongest support from the public.

Despite this, the British government appears to be showing zero sympathies for workers whose pay growth is nowhere near the double-digit inflation hitting the UK.

Instead, the British government, rather than engaging with the people who keep the country running, is pushing through legislation that will make it harder for unions to take strike action.

The UK is seeing record levels of strike action as ambulance workers, nurses, transport workers, and teachers take a stand against the inflation crisis.

UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "[our] members want the government to focus its efforts on fixing the pay crisis and solving the legitimate disputes that have led to recent strike action. Only then will the crises in our public services start to be solved.

"Instead, the government is attacking workers and making it even harder for them to win fair pay."

Workers in the UK as well as the rest of Western Europe have paid the price for NATO instigating the war in Ukraine.

The war has led to record inflation levels led by an energy crisis after the West imposed sanctions on Russian gas supplies, which accounted for 40% of Europe's energy needs.

Experts say the expansion of the U.S.-led NATO military alliance to Russian borders in a bid to contain Russia triggered the Ukraine war.

Yet the Russian economy appears to be performing well, with the UK, a leading NATO member that has fueled the Ukraine war, expected to be hit worse than Russia.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), this year the British economy will fare worse than any other country in the developed world - including Russia.

In its latest report, the IMF says the UK economy would face a downgrade "reflecting tighter fiscal and monetary policies and financial conditions and still-high energy retail prices weighing on household budgets."

The UK had previously been forecast to grow by 0.3% this year and 0.6% next year.

Now, the IMF says it should expect a -0.6% drop this year.

This is what happens when a country's foreign policymakers take measures without carefully thinking about the future consequences of their actions.

While Ukraine is just the latest case under the spotlight, other examples include the disastrous 20-year invasion and occupation of Afghanistan as well as the war on Iraq, Syria and Libya that saw significant rise in terrorism.

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Haley plans to announce presidential run



Nikki Haley, a former United Nations ambassador and governor of South Carolina, is planning to announce that she will run for president.

Haley is positioning herself to be the first declared Republican challenger to Donald Trump at a time when other prospective candidates have slowed their moves.

Haley could release a video signaling her decision as soon as this week, a strategy, as described by multiple people briefed on the plans who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk publicly, intended to drive attendance and enthusiasm for an in-person announcement event in the coming weeks.

Haley plans to officially announce her run in Charleston on Feb. 15, according to one person briefed on the plans, a date first reported by the Post and Courier newspaper in Charleston, S.C. Some political advisers have been relocating to the Charleston area for the campaign.

### Turkish president rules out backing Sweden joining NATO

Türkiye rules out greenlighting Sweden joining NATO as long as it permits attacks on Islam's holy book the Quran, the country's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday.

"We will not say yes to (Sweden's) entry into NATO as long as you allow our holy book, the Quran, to be burned, torn apart, and to be done with (the approval of) your security personnel," Erdogan said, referring to the recent burning of a Quran in Stockholm, the capital.

"We closely follow developments regarding NATO's enlargement process. Our view on Finland is positive, but not on Sweden," he said, signaling a willingness to support Finland's NATO bid separately from Sweden's.

His remarks came after Danish-Swedish extremist Rasmus Paludan last week burned copies of the Quran on two separate occasions, first outside the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm and then later in front of a mosque in Denmark. Paludan also said he would burn the Muslim holy book every

Friday until Sweden is admitted to the NATO alliance.

Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO last May, a decision spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine, which started on Feb. 24, 2022.

Under a memorandum signed last June between Türkiye, Sweden, and Finland, the two Nordic countries pledged to take steps against militants to gain membership in the NATO alliance.

### China hopes NATO, Japan to avoid provoking regional tensions

Beijing hopes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Japan will refrain from provocations in East Asia that might breed tensions in the region, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said.

"We hope that the countries in question will not be inflating fears of a Chinese threat or provoking a regional confrontation," she said, when asked by a TASS correspondent for a comment on a joint statement by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who expressed concern about growing military cooperation between Moscow and Beijing.

Mao said Japan's actions in the field of military security had always attracted the attention of its Asian neighbors and the international community.

"Japan should learn history lessons, adhere to a peaceful development path and refrain from actions that might undermine mutual trust among the countries of the region and damage regional peace and stability," she concluded.

### US starts mediation to stop escalation: Palestinian official

The US has begun mediation to stop the Israeli escalation in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, a Palestinian official said.

"American security and political crews will start talking, on Wednesday, with the Palestinian and Israeli sides, separately, in order to stop the escalation," Ahmed Majdalani, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee, told Anadolu.

"The American mediation is working to identify the core issues related to unilateral Israeli measures," he said.

Al-Majdalani, who is also minister of social development, stressed that the Palestinian measures and decisions that it recently took are still in place and continuing unless a satisfactory agreement and real guarantees are reached for a specific period of time.

## Apartheid Israel's unjust reign must end - now!

**A Challenge to Media and ANC government to play their part as fearlessly as the Arch did**

Iqbal Jassat

For media to reduce Israel's bloody atrocities against Palestinians as mere "violence between Israel/Palestine" is to detract from the truth of the ugly reality of the Zionist Frankenstein.

As South Africans who were repeatedly warned by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to not be fence-sitters and "neutral" in the struggle against apartheid, it is a damn pity that some of our media houses have forgotten his bravery and sage advice.

Tutu's courage to speak truth to white supremacist power in his iconic awesome way is sorely lacking today in public discourse on Israel's self-declared Jewish supremacy.

This is particularly glaring in media especially in what can be described as "tip-toeing" in compilation and broadcast of news, suggesting "neutrality" - exactly what the Arch had rebelled against.

To make sense of what's happening in Israel given US envoy Blinken's visit, and to deconstruct a multitude of falsehoods the Netanyahu regime's propaganda units feed the world, SA Professor Usuf Chikite summarizes it succinctly:



"The United States Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken's Middle East trip, can only be described as a fool's errand as the Israeli regime bombs Iran; expands and fortifies illegal settlements; commits war crimes with impunity through its cruel practices of collective punishments, house demolitions, population transfers and ethnic cleansing; as it arms settler militias, who are illegally occupying Palestinian land, masquerading as 'civilians' as they are incited, which they hardly need, to exterminate and expel Palestinians from their lands. The two-state solution was born dead. Nobody wants this corpse. It was a fraud then and has become a farce now".

This single paragraph not only encapsulates daily horrors Palestinians are confronted with, it spells out cold hard facts corroborated by both international as well Israeli-based human rights organizations.

Fact-based evidence of gross violations by Israel of civilized values ought to allow media practitioners the ability to call out Israeli crimes, instead of shying away from what generally is perceived to be fear of being slandered as "antisemites".

Lack of biting critique allows racist right-wing perpetrators of murder, mayhem and massacres to normalize inhumane policies of the type South Africa's freedom struggle fought against.

It cannot be more starker than this, yet it appears that some of South Africa's media platforms who boast of reporting "without fear or favour", have difficulty in doing so.

Media transformation post-Apartheid required drastic changes in addition to monopoly of ownership and diversity in news rooms. One such need was to breakout of the shackles of censorship imposed and enforced back then by the white regime.

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



Over 10,000 people have protested throughout central Brussels to demand better working conditions and more pay in the care sector which has been especially hard-hit during the Covid-19 pandemic.



## Iran received Chinese zodiac animals via the Silk Road: expert



TEHRAN — The ancient Silk Road led to cultural exchanges between China and Iran, leaving visible marks on today's Iranian cultural tradition, one of which being the 12-animal zodiac, an Iranian historian has said.

China celebrated the Year of the Rabbit on Jan. 22 according to its lunar calendar. In the Chinese calendar and zodiac, the rabbit is the fourth in the 12-year cycle of animals.

“Like in China, the upcoming new year in Iran, which will begin on March 22, is also the Year of the Rabbit,” China Daily quoted Kourosh Salehi as saying on Wednesday.

“What’s interesting is that throughout its evolution and history, the concept of the animals has entered Iran’s culture from China and East Asia,” said Salehi, who is a historian and international affairs expert at the International University of Islamic Denominations.

“Iranians, in addition to naming and enumerating the years based on their ordinal numbers according to the solar Hijri calendar, still say what animal each year represents,” Salehi explained.

The researcher believes that China’s cultural impact on Iran is also reflected in the three-hare (or three-rabbit) symbol found on different artifacts.

The circular motif is very well-known and appears on paintings and pictures, either carved on coins, trays, and metal objects or painted on clay dishes and tiles. It has been discovered all over the world, including in East Asia and West

Asia. A tray from the Middle Ages bearing this symbol was discovered in Iran.

According to Salehi, the three-rabbit carving discovered in Iran is exactly in line with the ones found in prehistoric samples discovered in China, demonstrating the influence of Chinese culture on Iranian culture during the Ilkhanate (1256–1335) era.

Salehi claims that at the time, the rabbit symbol, which can be seen on some metal artifacts and coins discovered in Iran, was thought to have been brought there by Chinese painters and artists.

Salehi says he has two very intriguing coins with the symbol in his personal collection and makes reference to other items discovered in Iran that have roughly the same rabbit-based symbol.

According to the graphological analysis of the coins and the design of the frames around the rabbits, it can be assumed that the artifacts date back to the Ilkhanate era. In Iranian culture, the subject of rabbits was often mentioned in ancient, religious, and mythological stories of Iran.

The three rabbits are depicted at the center of a round object, chasing each other in a circle, which is one of the distinctive features of the three-rabbit symbols on all the artifacts discovered in Iran so far. This suggests that the circle of life, fertility, and death is still ongoing.

According to Salehi, the rabbit represents fertility, quickness, cunning and social life from the perspectives of semiotics and mythology.

## Historical fort in Andika in need of urgent restoration

TEHRAN – Qaleh Khajeh, a historical fortress in Andika, southwestern Khuzestan province, needs urgent restoration, a local tourism official has said.

The restoration of the historical castle could turn it into a tourist destination, which could lead to a truism boom in the region, Seyyed Ali Mousavi explained on Wednesday.

The castle has a private owner, who could restore and revive the structure in collaboration with Andika’s cultural heritage department, the official added.

From ancient to modern times, defensive walls have often been necessary for cities to survive in an ever-changing world of invasion and conquest.

Fortresses were designed primarily to defend

territories in warfare and were also used to solidify rule in a region during peacetime.

Many of the fortifications of the ancient world were built with mud brick, often leaving them no more than mounds of dirt for today’s archaeologists.

Andika is a small county in southwest Iran. There was a time when this land was known as Andiko, which means the land of wonderful mountains, in the native language.

The Bardi Qaleh in this region is one of the first settlements of the Lor tribe in the southwest of Iran, and the first signs of Persian architecture can be found in this ancient castle. The nomad route (Ilrah) of this part of the country passes through Andika.

## Kermanshah to diversify rural destinations

TEHRAN – Kermanshah province plans to equip a selection of eighteen villages for rural tourism, a local official has said.

A proper fund will be allocated to the target villages to develop their tourism infrastructure, Jafar Nasuri explained on Wednesday.

Having a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers varied excursions to nature lovers. Sightseers may live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stay. The country is home to abundant historical mansions, caravanserais, bathhouses, madrasas, and other massive monuments, which can buttress its budding tourism and hospitality sectors if managed appropriately and refurbished properly.

The World Tourism Organization sees rural tourism as a type of activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling,

and sightseeing. Such tourism also possesses characteristics such as low population density, a landscape dominated by agriculture and forestry, as well as traditional social structure and lifestyle.

Needless to say that the growth of the local economy is the ultimate goal of the rise and development of the rural tourism industry, but in the long run, to enable the long-term development of the rural tourism industry, the health maintenance and growth of environmental capacity are very important.

Consequently, rural tourism is not a magic solution to the problems faced by many rural areas, but it opens up opportunities for economic progress, social and cultural development, and enhancing people’s togetherness.

Kermanshah embraces a variety of awe-inspiring historical sites, including Taq-e Bostan and the UNESCO-registered Bisotun.

From Page 1 ▶ Back in December, an Iranian tourism official announced that Iran’s tourism market is still unfamiliar to the majority of potential Russian travelers.

“Today, Russians [mainly] travel to [destinations such as] Dubai and Turkey for tourism, and one of our problems is that the Iranian market is not well known to them.”

The official expressed hope to reduce the gap by organizing FAM tours, B2B meetings, and forums to be attended by tourism insiders from the two countries.

Earlier in September, tourism insiders and officials from the two countries exchanged views on education, hotel management, holding joint exhibitions, and introducing tours and investments, among other issues.

Furthermore, they discussed prospects of a visa waiver for tourist groups, based on an agreement that former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked in 2017.

The Head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association Ebrahim Pourfaraj believes the majority of potential Russian travelers are unaware of the vast tourist attractions that exist in every corner of Iran. “The fact is that



## Russian arrivals in Iran soar in the face of sanctions

Iran’s political and economic relations with Russia are considered as good, but this has nothing to do with attracting tourists because it is directly connected with the Russian people. It is the Russian people who must choose Iran as their destination.”

Last year, an Iranian travel expert said many Russian tourists

were eager to travel to Iran, an Iranian travel expert said on Monday, recounting his Russian counterparts. “Many [potential] Russian travelers are motivated to visit novel and lesser-known destinations such as Iran that could be a safe and attractive destination,” said Mostafa Sarvari, who presided over the tourism marketing and advertising office

of the Iranian Tour Operators Association.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 26 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

## Discover an extremely deep cave in western Iran

TEHRAN – Ghar-e Parau, which is translated as “the cave full of water,” is one of the deepest known caves in the world.

It has a mind-boggling depth of 750 meters. Think of nearly twofold the length of the Eiffel Tower stacked on top of one another underground to get an idea of how big that is!

Regular tourists and even amateur cavers should avoid exploring Ghar-e Parau. You must be well-equipped, have sufficient caving knowledge, and be proficient in rappelling techniques.

It is imperative to hire a qualified guide or join a qualified group. Going alone is completely impossible and dangerous, especially if it’s your first time visiting this deep, slick cave.

Initially, a group from England explored the vertical cave. A team from Iran was able to explore the cave’s entire length of 750 meters about 30 years later.

The cave is situated on a high mountain of the same name, close to the village of Chalabeh in western Iran.

In 1971, the British Speleological Expedition headed by John Middleton first discovered

and investigated the limestone cave, which is situated high in the Zagros Mountains in Kermanshah province.

The British team enjoyed skilled cave divers. They had previously explored deep caves like Antro del Corchia in Italy, Gouffre Pierre St. Martin and Berger in France. The world depth record was already in their minds at the time, and they searched different karst regions in the Pyrenees, Italian, and Austrian Alps, as well as in Greece, Yugoslavia, the Canadian Rocky Mountains, Mexico, Peru, and the Himalayas.

In the summer of 1972, a follow-up expedition to the cave, which was led by David Judson, led to a new world depth record.

When a Polish team visited the cave in 1975, they were able to confirm once more that the cave was indeed complete after reaching the terminal sump.

The Iranian Mountaineering and Caving Clubs started going to the cave over the following year, frequently making it to the terminal sump and frequently discovering new passageways.

Yuri Evdokimov traveled to Ghar-e Parau in the winter of 2005–2006 with a small group



of Russian cavers and descended to a depth of –400 meters. Ropes were kept inside the cave, and preparations were made to return in 2006 with a larger expedition after realizing that the cave and its surroundings still held great potential.

A nearby cave was found by a group of Iranian cave divers in 2014. The cave was known as Ghar-e Ghala and was occasionally described as “the second deepest shaft” in the entire world. Less than six kilometers to the north of Ghar-e Parau and about 100 kilometers from the Iraqi border area where it is situated in the Parau massif.

## Sericulture revival to tap Iran’s silk market, expert says

TEHRAN – The revival of sericulture and silk spinning could lead to the global trade of silk fabrics produced in Iran, an expert said on Tuesday.

A vital step toward enhancing the export of silk fabrics in the country can be taken by bringing sericulture back into the spotlight as a precious art and industry with advanced global facilities, Zhila Moshiri stated.

By generating added value, the country will expand economically, and its agriculture and industrial societies will prosper and improve, she added.

Iran has long been home to silk makers, mainly in the regions of Gilan and Khorasan. For more than three millennia, silk thread



produced in Iran has been used to make clothing fabric and for weaving Persian rugs.

In 2021, traditional skills of silk spinning and keeping silk cocoons were collectively inscribed on the national heritage list.

Last year, sericulture and traditional production of silk for

weaving gained UNESCO status jointly for Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

In sericulture and the traditional production of silk for weaving, farmers care for the silkworms through their entire lifecycle, growing the mulberry trees that provide leaves upon which the worms feed and produce silkworm eggs.

As mentioned by the UN cultural body, the fibers are reeled from the cocoons, spun into silk threads, cleaned, and dyed. The threads are then used to create various types of craft products, including fabrics, carpets, rugs, and curtains.

Silk products are highly valued

by all social and cultural classes, and people use them for special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and family gatherings. Deeply rooted in the traditions of the Great Silk Road, the practice is an expression of cultural identity and centuries-old traditions. It is also viewed as a symbol of social cohesion, as the silk trade contributed to the exchange of culture and science within and across the countries concerned.

The Silk Road was a well-connected network of routes that, according to ancient maps, began in China and passed through central Asia before ending in Syria. It served as an important trade route connecting the Mediterranean Sea and China.

## Bazaar of handicrafts opened in Birjand



TEHRAN – On Tuesday evening, a sales exhibition of handicrafts was officially inaugurated in Birjand, the capital of South Khorasan province.

Tens of local officials, travel insiders and craftspeople and cultural heritage enthusiasts attended the opening ceremony of a week-long event, CHTN reported.

Performances of local music, hymns, and native sports, along with fireworks and pitching nomadic tents, were among the programs held during the ceremony.

According to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Iran has 14 cities, towns, and villages registered as handicraft hubs by the World Crafts Council (WCC), followed by China with seven, Chile with four, and India with three registrations.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, Zanjan, and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC– Asia-Pacific Region, bringing the number of craft cities and towns in Iran from 10 to 14. Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts.”

Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree.” The village of Qasemabad, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts.

Due to its location, the province of South Khorasan is home to several ethnic groups, each of which has its own distinctive traditional dress. However, only a few villages in this province still wear traditional clothing today.

Numerous historical and natural landmarks, including Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Poland Desert, can be found in South Khorasan. It is also well-known for its renowned rugs, which are produced throughout almost the entire province, as well as its saffron and barberry.



From page 1 ► The Ramsar Convention uses a broad definition of wetlands. This includes all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas, tidal flats, mangroves, and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, and salt pans.

The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to become "Contracting Parties".

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

#### Blight of illegal wells

However, wetlands are among the ecosystems with the highest rates of decline, loss, and degradation.

Unfortunately, wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests and are Earth's most threatened ecosystem. In just 50 years — since 1970 — 35% of the world's wetlands have been lost.

In Iran, the excessive increase of illegal wells has endangered the life of wetlands.

Statistics show that the number of unauthorized wells has increased from 15,000 to 400,000 in the last five decades, which has caused many of the



## Illegal wells are a blight on wetlands

country's plains and wetlands to dry up, IRNA reported.

Over the past few years, we have been continuously hearing unpleasant news about the country's water situation. Drought and low rainfall have caused many problems and exacerbated the situation.

All of them indicate that the condition of reservoirs and underground water resources is not favorable.

Of course, in the past few weeks, there has been good rainfall throughout the country. According to the Ministry of Energy, about 40 percent of the country's dam reserves have been filled.

But experts believe that the drought and a lack of water in the past few years were so great and destroyed the

water resources that these rains do not compensate for all the lag.

Official data show that about 90 percent of the country's area is affected by drought with different severity and weaknesses. Also, about 270 cities in the country are suffering from water stress.

On the other hand, wear and tear of water transmission pipelines cause 25 percent of water to be wasted in the supply network, which causes 650 trillion rials (about \$1.6 billion) in the form of accumulated losses.

When this situation occurs, various measures are taken to compensate for it, such as the construction of deep wells in places where the plains are located.

The high number of these wells means that there is no more capacity

for underground water sources.

In this situation, many problems occur in different sectors, including the environment. Wetlands are one of the areas where wells endanger their life.

If we take a look at the process of drilling wells in the country, both authorized and unauthorized, we can see that the exploitation of underground water in the plains has intensified in the last four decades.

Statistics show that in the 1970s, there were about 15,000 unauthorized wells in the country, but now it has increased to more than 400,000.

The effect of this process is very dangerous for the life of wetlands and their watershed basins.

The drilling of deep wells in the plains and agricultural fields causes irreparable damage to the country's wetlands.

The impact of this process on wetlands, especially wetlands whose catchment area is closed, is much greater so it can have a greater effect on the drying of that wetland than other wetlands.

A closed basin means that water does not enter the wetland from outside the basin.

For example, Lake Urmia, Parisahan, Agh Gol, and Zaribar wetlands have closed watershed basins.

This problem may have originated from our policies in line with agricultural development and self-sufficiency in products, but we were unaware that it was not in accordance with the capacity of the lands.

In some cases, it cannot be compensated anymore, and in this situation, the wetland that was once a source of life for an area has become a center of dust.

## Iran seeking OIC Women Development Organization membership

TEHRAN – The vice presidency for women and family affairs has submitted a bill to the Majlis (Iranian parliament) for joining the Women Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

In line with regional and international capacity building in the field of women and family, and with the approach of developing interaction and also convergence in the international arena, the bill for joining the organization has been submitted to the Majlis, IRNA quoted Khadijeh Karimi, an official with the vice presidency for women and family affairs, as saying.

The bill was approved by the cabinet of ministers on January 4 and was submitted to the Majlis on January 23, she added.

Expanding Iranian women's cultural, social, and political relationships with women all over the world, developing women's international activities, strengthening the participation of governmental and non-governmental institutions and increasing their presence in international arenas, and strengthening cooperation between women in Iran and in other countries to support Islamic associations, organizations, and communities are among the highlights of the bill.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.

Founded in 1969, the Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

#### Objectives and goals

The Women Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was founded in

2009 and aimed to develop women.

According to its statute, it shall be concerned with everything necessary to meet its objectives, in particular "highlight the role of Islam in preserving the rights of the Muslim woman, especially at the international fora in which the Organization is involved."

It also aims to develop plans, programs, and projects necessary to implement policies, orientations, and decisions of the OIC in the area of women's development, welfare, and empowerment in the Member States.

Organizing conferences, symposia, workshops, and meetings in the area of women's development in the Member States, conducting courses and training programs aimed at strengthening and building capacity, skills, and competencies in the area of women's development and empowering them to discharge their mission in the family and society, are also among other objectives.

Moreover, it supports and encourages national efforts in Member States to develop human resources in the area of women's development, organize activities aimed at upgrading the role of women and ensuring women's full rights in Member States' societies, in line with the Charter and the decisions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Organization also carries out studies to enhance the role of women in Member States, activates the rights of women enshrined in the OIC Charter by working to remove the restrictions that will enable women to participate in community building, suggests ways and methods of the society's support for women, and establishes an information network that will enable Member States to identify experiences and practices regarding women, including through the cooperation with civil society

#### Advantages for Iran

The advantage of membership in the Women Development Organization for the country can lead to cooperation and transfer of experiences among Islamic countries in order to increase the participation of Muslim women in decision-making, managerial, executive, and legislative fields, Karimi stressed.

It can also lead to empowering and increasing the political development and social and economic growth of women through holding training courses and programs with the aim of improving the skills and competencies of women, she pointed out.

Explaining Islam's view on honoring women and its social role based on creating equal opportunities for growth and a justice-oriented view on the distribution of social duties, as well as explaining Islamic values and the gifts of Islamic civilization to humanity can be some other advantages, she added.

"Highlighting the role of Islam in protecting the rights of Muslim women, especially in international forums in which the member countries of the Organization participate, is another advantage of getting the membership."

Benefiting from the Organization's capacity for communication and bilateral cooperation among member countries in order to increase cooperation in the field of women's empowerment, especially among the countries that have more affinity and political and cultural harmony with each other is another advantage, she explained.

And using the Organization's capacity to help the development of women in underdeveloped member countries in various fields of economy, education, politics, and culture without the need for help from developed western countries is considered another advantage of the membership, she concluded.

## IRCS ready to cooperate for building hospitals in Baghdad



TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is ready to cooperate with the Iraq Red Crescent Society for building hospitals in Baghdad.

IRCS head Pir-Hossein Kolivand made the proposal in a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Yassin Abbas on the sidelines of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Disaster Management Advisory Group (DMAG) Annual Meeting in Beirut, Lebanon on November 24, 2022.

The focus of the negotiations was the construction of a hospital by the Iraqi Red Crescent Society in Baghdad and the provision of specialist staff, dentists, and surgical and orthopedic teams by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Mehr reported.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Disaster Management Advisory Group (DMAG), in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Lebanese Red Cross, organized the DMAG 2022 Annual Meeting.

The meeting gathered DMAG members from 14 MENA National Societies.

DMAG is a consultative coordination platform on Disaster Management technical matters in the MENA region.

It was created following a consultative meeting hosting the Secretary Generals and Presidents of the MENA Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Egypt in October 2012.

The Disaster Management Advisory Group MENA aims to support national societies in exchanging Disaster Management knowledge and experience through various capacity building, knowledge exchange workshops and enhancing policies and strategies within the DM sector, and increasing coordination and cooperation between the National Societies in the MENA Region.

## RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

#### Part 57

Bandar Kiashahr Lagoon is a bay with a broad entrance to the sea. At the mouth of Sefid Rood there are marshy grasslands and sand dunes.

The lagoon supports relatively little vegetation other than algae. Freshwater marshes at the extreme west end of the lagoon support some beds of Phragmites and Typha, while the southern and eastern shores are dominated by Juncus and grasses.

Sandy areas to the west and north-west are covered in shrub and grassland, which give way to sand-dune vegetation near the Caspian shore. Grassland along the banks of Sefid Rood floods seasonally.

The area is rich in biodiversity, there are 248 native plant species in the area, and the diversity of habitats in this area has led to a diverse collection of birds to be attracted to the area.

So far, 234 species have been observed in this area, including around 30,000 birds in different seasons of the year. Five species of reptiles and two species of bivalves have been identified in the region.

#### Social and cultural values

When the farming season starts, people guide livestock from the farms to the wetland, four months later when the farming season is finished, they return livestock to the farms.

As the local people explained, the livestock can control the growth of plants in the wetland when they use the seed of plants for feeding. This prevents growth of big trees and provides an appropriate ecosystem for water birds.

On the other hand, animal waste increases the number of insects which are a good food source for the birds.

#### Sheedvar Island

Sheedvar Island in Hormozgan Province, measuring 870 ha is a protected area, wildlife refuge, important bird area (BirdLife International).

It is a small sandy and rocky offshore island surrounded by excellent coral reefs in the north central Persian Gulf, extremely important for breeding marine turtles (Cheloniidae) and some species of waterbirds, including a breeding colony of terns (Sterna spp) and other waterbirds in internationally important numbers.

The flat area within sparsely-vegetated sand dunes is densely clad with halophytic shrubs (Atriplex sp) up to 60cm high.

Abundance of a small poisonous snake has led to the island's alternative name "Maru" (Snake Island). There are no springs or surface water on the island and rainfall is very low, and the island is uninhabited by humans and owned by the government.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued

## 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.

There are about 80 zoos, animal rehabilitation centers and bird gardens in the country, he said, adding that according to a memorandum of understanding signed between the DOE and the Veterinary Organization, the organization is tasked with monitoring animal's health and diseases in all centers.

### 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.

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید اظهار داشت: حدود ۸۰ باغ وحش، مراکز نگهداری و باغ پرندگان در کشور وجود دارد که براساس تفاهم نامه ای میان سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست و سازمان دامپزشکی، این سازمان باید بر بهداشت و بیماری ها در این مراکز نظارت داشته باشد و این مساله برای سازمان محیط زیست بسیار مهم است .



### Schools being decorated in celebration of Islamic Revolution

Students in Gazestan village in the southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, are decorating their schools and classrooms to celebrate the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.



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FEBRUARY 2, 2023

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul. To fight the evil within yourself.*  
**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times » Noon:12:18    Evening: 17:51    Dawn: 5:37 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 7:03 (tomorrow)

## Adab in Arabic Literature

**Part 3**

Being of non-Arab origin, Jahez saw the dangers threatening Islam, and this is the chief reason why he did not place the Iranian legacy in the foreground of the form of culture he advocated.

He sought material which would raise the prestige of the Arabs, whose main merit lies in their skill in poetry and oratory.

He gave occupational adab a new shape, and treated traditional adab differently than his Persian predecessors had done.

Instead of arbitrarily quoting maxims, testaments, instructions, injunctions, and the like, he makes use of irony and tries to analyze such virtues and vices as generosity, justice, envy, anger, and snobbishness, so that he raises adab from a mere catechism or simple apologies to the level of rudimentary psychology and philosophical reasoning.

Moreover, the study of a trait of character, as in the case of misers, leads him to portray social classes, whose typical qualities or shortcomings are depicted in a marvelous and amusing fashion. He thus influenced the development of the maqama and the qasidasasaniya.

Jahez’s additions to adab literature chiefly consist of a cultural program and method. According to him, it was convenient to let the Muslims specialize in one or two branches of learning, but he deemed it desirable to also furnish them with that kind of adab which we may call general culture or educational background.

Such culture is not limited; a person must not take traditions for granted, but must think them over in order to reach some measure of conviction.

Moreover, every element of this culture is to be presented in a pleasant form. So, we witness the establishment of an original culture including Arab and foreign elements, and the foundation of an Arabic literature based on erudition, reason and, to a lesser extent, imagination.

From the very moment when Arabic humanities competed with cultural elements coming from outside, there had been a dilemma to solve: Was it convenient to establish a purely and exclusively Arabic and Islamic culture, or to accept some diversity and let foreign influences freely play their part at the risk of jeopardizing an uneasily achieved balance?

Jahez felt that the Muslims are the heirs of previous civilizations, but all means are good for the defense of Islam and the Arabs. Hence the significance of his manifold adab as a cultural program.

Jahez was called mo’allem al-aql wa’l-adab (“the teacher of reason and adab”), but his classroom was soon drained by another outstanding adib of Persian origin, Ebn Qotayba (d. 889).

The latter regarded the Arabs as the only holders of wisdom and conclusive evidence, since they had been given the Quran; true culture had to revolve around the holy book, the Arabic language, and poetry.

In contrast with the Jahezian restlessness and anxious state of mind, Ebn Qotayba offered a perfectly orderly syllabus to provide a good Muslim with all the cultural

information he actually needed.

His religious, political, moral, and cultural program does not include research and investigation; unlike Jahez, he tends to create a good standard Muslim by limiting inquisitiveness and issuing general, restrictive rules.

What Bacon termed memory was to remain in general the fundamental basis of Muslim education; imagination was to be used only for improving poetry or prose; and reason ought to be reserved for a small elite of thinkers and philosophers, who were no longer regarded as orthodox Muslims.

Violently reacting against kalam and Greek thought, Ebn Qotayba believed that freethinking was dangerous to the integrity of Islam; he put religious learning in the first place, and gave in the introduction to his Adab al-kateb a program of education consisting of grammar, lexicography, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, techniques of public works, rudiments of feqh, and some anecdotal history and ethics.

This is pure occupational adab in a traditional manner. The Kitab al-ma’aref (“Book of secular knowledge”) contains all the historical information needed by cultivated men.

The Oyun al-akhbar is the best representative work of Ebn Qotayba’s adab.

The main concern of mankind is to work out their salvation, but no man must neglect his interests on earth; for that purpose he has to be given some knowledge of everything.

The Oyun aimed at providing everyone with adab, i.e., what he needs to be happy. But Ebn Qotayba does not leave room for personal thinking or original research, since he is able to answer every question.

So this book is both restrictive and definitive; everybody must learn its contents, for they are Oyun, something of the quintessence of secular traditions enabling one to secure a happy life without jeopardizing salvation in the next world.

Ebn Qotayba’s different works display a preview of what was bound to happen in the history of Arabic adab; the kottab, being the true holders of culture, were to develop his Adab al-kateb into extensive handbooks and encyclopedias, and the odaba were also to compile popular and more specialized collections of traditions and verses on a given subject.

Ebn Qotayba exerted a powerful influence on Arabic literature in general and represents, in the development of the adab genre, a turning point—or rather terminus, since he tried more or less consciously to prevent further cultural growth, which Jahez had encouraged, as though Arab Islam had reached its fullness.

After Ebn Qotayba, traditional ethics as treated by Ebn al-Moqaffa seem to grow more and more islamized and arabicized in the hands of thinkers and religious men whose main aim is to educate at any cost; their writings are interesting but somewhat tedious, for they are stripped of the pleasant features of adab proper.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued.

# Iraqi play “Amal” scores big win at Fajr theater festival

From Page 1 ▶ Assadi, 76, is a leading stage director in the Arab world. He offers an innovative vision of theater, devotes energy to training young actors, and employs a unique style in directing plays by a wide range of Arab playwrights such as Saādallah Wanoos, Moueen Bessissou and Mahmoud Diab, as well as works by Genet, Chekhov and Brecht.

The play also brought Haider Juma the award for best actor, while set designer Ali Al-Sudani and actress Rizab Ahmad Hassan Al-Karkhi won honorable mentions for their collaboration in this production.

The closing ceremony of the festival was held at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall.

Asghar Khalili from Iran won the award for best playwright for “Conner under the Oak Trees”, and Marjan Aqanuri received the award for best actress for her role in the Iranian play “Aalaa”.

Iranian musician Behrang Abbasi won the award for best composer for his collaboration in “Hey Macbeth, Only the First Dog Knows Why It Is Barking”.

Director and writer Ebrahim Poshtkuhi also received an honorable mention in the best play category for this drama.

Iraqi actors perform “Amal” at Tehran’s Molavi Hall during the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival. (Theater.ir)

In this musical comedy, Shakespeare’s Macbeth is blended with the local Iranian rite Zar, commonplace in southern Iran.

The award for best costume designer went to Mahbubeh Soltani for the Iranian play “Iranians”, which also brought Alaleh Bigdeli the best makeup artist award.

Lighting engineer Manuchehr

Rahimi was also awarded for his collaboration in this play.

In the national competition, the award for best play went to “Agnitaj” written by Rasul Haqju, while the best director award was given to Mohammad-Hadi Hashemzadeh for “The Murderers’ Horses”.

“The Murderers’ Horses” and the cast also received a special jury award. Another special jury

award was given to directors Reza Mohammadian and Hossein Qasemi for their play “Champion Qelich”.

Maryam Dehqani was selected as best actress for her role in “Harakiri”, and Farshid Salamat was picked as best actor for his role in “Shah Ismail”.

In the street theater section, “Plasma” by Saeid Badini was named best play.

## Artistes to raise funds for Khoy quake victims

A man cries in his destroyed house after an earthquake struck the Iranian town of Khoy in West Azerbaijan Province on January 28, 2023. (IRNA/Ali Hamed-Haqdoost)

TEHRAN – Pop singer Reza Sadeqi, stage director Mehdi Mohebbali and producer Hashem Moradi have announced their plans to raise funds for the victims of an earthquake in Khoy.

The earthquake with a magnitude of 5.9 struck northwest Iran near the border with Turkey on Saturday, killing at least three people and injuring more than 300.

“Now we are with the honorable people of Khoy,” Sadeqi said in a statement published on Tuesday.

“We will make the cold winter nights warm for them with our sympathy during a concert from people and for people,” he added.

The concert will be performed on February 14 and the venue for the performance will be announced later.

All the money raised by the concert will go to the quake victims’ charity.

Wearing black clothes is Sadeqi’s band trademark. He won fame as a pop singer in 2003 with his hit “Black Is the Color of Love”.

Mohebbali, whose troupe is performing “Being Killed Like Mice” at the Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran, said on Tuesday that they would donate all the box office receipts on Wednesday to quake victims.

Mohebbali wrote the play based on a true story. On the eve of his 60th birthday, a famous novelist is made aware of his son’s plan to leave him alone to continue his study in a big city. To thwart the plan, the novelist imprisons the son in the basement of their house, where his dark secret concerning a crime is uncovered.

Moradi has also said that he donated part of the box office receipts from his documentary film “Imo” to the quake victims.

The film is currently on screen at the country’s Art and Experience Cinemas, which are dedicated to screening art films.

“Imo” tells the story of a naive rural man who tries to improve his life, so he comes to the capital Tehran. But the crowded confines and hassles of urban life cause him to change his mind and choose to live a simple life in the village.

## Myra Immell’s book on Cuban revolution published in Persian

TEHRAN – “The Cuban Revolution” by Myra Immell has been published in Persian by the Tehran-based publishing house Qoqnus.

Sima Molai is the translator of the book originally published in 2013.

Like all the other books of the Perspectives on Modern World History series, this book goes one step further than providing a concise history on its topic.

It shares actual stories of those

Front cover of the Persian edition of Myra Immell’s book “The Cuban Revolution”.

who witnessed and lived through the Cuban Revolution.

Readers will hear from a rebel leader who recalls the first

## A Heart is Beating for You

**An interview with Kosar Sharifinasab**

The story “A Heart is Beating for You” was written by Kosar Sharifinasab and is based on the life of Ruhollah Mehrabi, the martyred shrine defender.

**\* What is the topic and content of “A Heart is Beating for You”?**

When Islamic countries became involved with ISIS, Ruhollah Mehrabi, who possessed the requisite expertise and ability, opted to assist his Muslim brothers. So, he volunteered to be sent to Iraq and was sent as a combat equipment technician to the operational area.

When he had been stationed in Iraq for forty days and was prepared to come home, he observed that some military property in an operational area need renovation. He voluntarily went to the operating area with his comrade Hamidreza Moradi, and on November 2, 2012, while on a mission, he was martyred at the age of 32 by an ISIS explosive device that was installed in the Jarf al-Sakhr region of Iraq.

**\* Has this book looked at his life from the beginning or only a certain period?**

This book tells the story of Ruhollah Mehrabi’s life, which was filled with ups and down, from the perspective of his wife, Zohreh Shahrizadeh. The eleven years of Ruhollah and Zohreh’s marriage are chronicled in this book.

**\* Did you expand on the story when you first started writing about him?**

In order to keep it engaging and make readers like it more, I generally tried to use the storytelling technique, but I did not add anything. Even so, I only made an effort to provide details where there was a lack of information regarding the location and ambience of the events.

**\* Did his wife find it difficult to share her memories and her life with him?**

Undoubtedly, she found it to be extremely difficult. Nearly 6 years had gone since his martyrdom when we began writing the book, but every time she wanted to share a memory, she was anxious and uneasy. It was as if she were

reliving all the events, and it was tough for her.

**\* In your opinion, what makes this book unique?**

The unique quality of Martyr Mehrabi was his love and battling spirit. This characteristic of his is what distinguishes this book from others.