

Report

Explosion in Israeli prisons imminent

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- As Israel's fascist leaders press on with a crackdown on Palestinian prisoners, the inmates are set to escalate their response.

According to the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, the coming days will see unprecedented clashes between Palestinian inmates and the occupation forces inside Israeli dungeons.

Following a series of retaliatory Palestinian operations (in the face of the regime's daily and deadly raids in occupied towns and villages), the extremist Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has been depriving prisoners of their most basic rights.

The regime has also been cracking down on female prisoners, who have been tortured, harassed, teargassed and dragged to solitary confinement by Israeli prison guards after protesting against their cruel treatment. ▶ Page 5

Abdollahian, Borrell hold talks on Iran-IAEA co-op, human rights, sanctions, Ukraine war

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, held phone talks late on Sunday over a variety of topics, including human rights, cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, sanctions on Iran, and the Ukraine war.

During the talks Amir Abdollahian called on the IAEA to take technical and non-political approaches, pointing to a number of initiatives devised jointly by Iran and the UN nuclear agency for the resolution of disputes over the Safeguards Agreement. ▶ Page 2

Munich conference intended to appease hawks: Iran

TEHRAN - The spokesman of Iranian Foreign Ministry, Nasser Kanaani, on Monday lambasted planners of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) for not offering every member of the world community an equal opportunity to express its own opinions.

While the conference was held under the banner of security, it really advocated hardliners and war-mongers, Kanaani told a regular news briefing.

He noted that certain anti-Iran individuals were present at the MSC instead of the Iranian government's officials.

The annual gathering's organizers committed "severe miscalculation" and "undermined the conference's credibility" by trying to impose their own unilateralism on the international system, Kanaani remarked. ▶ Page 2

Esteghlal into Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals

TEHRAN - Esteghlal, the most decorated football team in Hazfi Cup, defeated 10-man Malvan to book their place in the quarterfinals round of the Iran's Hazfi Cup.

In the match held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Arsalan Motehahari opened the scoring for the Blues in the 74th minute and Arman Ramezani made it 2-0 five minutes later.

Malavan player Majid Eidi was shown his second yellow card in the 51st minute.

Elsewhere, Paykan defeated their host Navad Urmia 2-0 and Havadar defeated Mes Rafsanjan 5-4 in penalty shootout after the two teams had played a goalless draw after 120 minutes in Tehran. ▶ Page 3

100% Lying About 84% Enrichment

▶ Page 3



'Currency, gold exchange center to control market fluctuations'

TEHRAN- The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) will open a new center for the exchange of currency and gold on Tuesday in order to control the market fluctuations and determine the rates based on the economic realities of the country, the CBI Governor Mohammad-Reza Farzin announced in a live TV program on Monday.

"Unfortunately, the current rate in the market is not the rate expected and accepted by

us in the central bank", the official lamented, adding that the rate that will be discovered and announced in this center will be the base rate and pricing reference in the market.

"During the recent months, the central bank has tried to provide enough foreign currency for all the real needs of the country, according to this, in the current year, the currency provided in the NIMA System (domestic Forex Management

Integrated System) for importing all the goods needed by the country has risen 48 percent compared to last year", Farzin further stated.

Saying that in the current situation, the central bank will try to use all the past experiences in the field of currency, the CBI governor emphasized: "The use of past experiences is to minimize currency fluctuations, and God willing, we will see stability in the currency market."



Russian deputy foreign minister meets Iran FM

TEHRAN - Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko held talks on Monday with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

They both exchanged views on topics of shared interests and discussing bilateral, regional, and international issues.

Grushko served previously as the Permanent Representative of Russia to NATO (from 2012 to 2018).

Shiraz's cultural identity preserved by its people, ICOM chairman says

TEHRAN - The cultural identity of Shiraz, the capital of the southern province of Fars, has been preserved by its people, the Chairman of the National Committee of Iranian Museums (ICOM) has said.

It has been the people of Shiraz who have protected the cultural identity of the city throughout history, Mehr quoted Seyyed Ahmad Mohit Tabatabaei as saying on Monday.

When several Iranian cities during the Mongol invasion of Iran in the 13th century were destroyed forever, the people of Shiraz tried to protect their city, historical monuments, and cultural heritage, which they did very well, he added.

"Their efforts have resulted in what we have today as our cultural heritage," he noted.

Last April, a cultural heritage expert an-

nounced that the historical texture of Shiraz holds potential to be registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The historical texture of Shiraz could be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, but it has not yet been registered on the national heritage list, and that is one of the prerequisites for gaining a UNESCO tag, he explained. ▶ Page 6

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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.

Why do we publicly declare support for Palestine?

The Leader of the revolution recently announced that the Islamic Republic publicly declares that it supports the oppressed Palestine.

The Javan newspaper states the reasons for Iran's clear and explicit support for Palestine as follows: ▶ Page 2

Raisi urges authorities to implement strategic agreements with China

TEHRAN - President Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has urged relevant sectors to implement the strategic agreements that was signed with China during his recent trip to Beijing.

Raisi made the remarks at a cabinet session on Sunday afternoon.

Raisi made a three-day visit to China last week. He was accompanied by ministers of foreign affairs, economy, housing and transport, and agriculture.

During the trip 20 memorandums of understanding and cooperation documents were signed in areas of economy and trade.

Raisi emphasized the need for all-round efforts by the officials and those involved in related sectors to implement agreements as soon as possible and realize the goals of the two countries to strengthen cooperation, according to a readout released by the official website of the Iranian presidency. ▶ Page 3

Fajr Music Festival honors songwriter Hamid Shahangian

TEHRAN - Songwriter and musician Hamid Shahangian, best known for the anthem "Khomeini, Oh Imam!", was honored on Sunday by the 38th Fajr Music Festival.

He received an award from Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili at Tehran's Arasbaran Cultural Center.

Shahangian was also presented with a portrait of himself done by Ali Minai.

The honoring ceremony was held on the sidelines of the anthem competition, which has been organized at the festival for the first time.

Shahangian is famous for "Khomeini, Oh Imam!" that he composed in the winter of 1979. The anthem was performed by a choir as part of the programs arranged to welcome Imam Khomeini, ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

Why do we publicly declare support for Palestine?

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

from page 1 ► The Javan newspaper states the reasons for Iran's clear and explicit support for Palestine as follows:

- Palestine, as a part of the Islamic land, has been occupied by the enemy.
- Palestine is not occupied by a normal group or government. The occupiers are the oldest enemies of the Believers.
- From the very beginning, the Zionists announced their purpose beyond Palestine that expands from "The Nile to the Euphrates" and they practically want to dominate the whole world.
- Many experts admit that Zionism has a racist nature, and the Zionists sought to establish an apartheid regime from the very beginning.
- Palestine is right against the wrong. The Palestinian people and resistance groups are under severe oppression and have no supporters in the world.

That is why the freedom of Palestine is not a mere political and propaganda slogan but a purely human ideal.

Etela'at: All roads no longer lead to Moscow and Washington

In an article in the Etela'at newspaper, Dr. Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, the former director of the Centre for International Research and Education at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, writes: More than three decades have passed since the collapse of the bipolar system, the debate on the nature of the international system has been a serious issue in academic and diplomatic circles around the world, and interestingly, the debate continues.

Traditional centers of power have disappeared or are disappearing and new ones have emerged. Middle players have found a more effective role and position in international relations. Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil are among them.

To examine the position and role of these three actors, one should pay attention to three phenomena: "opening of the international system", "emergence of various power poles" and "definition of role and position".

Under the new condition, the old expression that "all roads lead to Rome" and that during the Cold War all roads ended in Moscow and Washington have lost their meaning.

Etemad: China and Russia not a substitute for the West

In Iran, there is much talk about "Look to the East," Etemad writes. But the newspaper says if the East refers to the geographical area, for example, South Korea and Japan, etc., these countries cannot support Iran due to their warm relationship with the United States. Therefore, it may be said that the East is the same as Russia and China.

According to the newspaper, Iran has taken steps to improve its relations with Russia and China, but not in such a way that Iran can completely end its relations with the West and rely on the East. The visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Saudi Arabia and the visit of President Ebrahim

Raisi to Beijing indicate that Iran has not been able to completely rely on the East.

Another important point is that building trust between countries is a long-term process.

In such conditions, it should be said that looking to the East or the West should be stable, premeditated and carefully planned.

In addition, after the revolution, Iran has not had a relationship with its neighbors that would lead to joint security. The other important point is that confidence building will take long years.

IRAN: Structure of Iran's foreign policy based on new world order

From the beginning of his presidency, Ebrahim Raisi used diplomacy as his priority to secure economic benefits, the IRAN newspaper writes.

The trip to China takes place a year after the Islamic Republic became an official member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an organization whose members are trying to be outside the economic hegemony of the United States.

The world is experiencing a new stage, where the new world order replaces the American order.

In such a situation, with the start of the 13th government, the priority in foreign policy was given to neighbors and allied countries in confronting the hegemony and dominance of the United States.

The visit of the president to China can be analyzed in this framework. Although the trip had an economic agenda, its basis was on reconstruction and modernization of Iran's foreign relations, which were severely hurt in the 2010s.

Arman-e-Melli: We must act pragmatically

Arman-e-Melli writes it does not seem that the agreements between Iran and China can improve Iran's economic situation in the short term. For Iran, Raisi's visit to China has more political and propaganda dimensions than economic achievements.

Refusal to invite Iran to the Munich Security Conference shows that the opposition is implementing Iranophobia and Plan B of the Western governments.

It is very clear that the views of the U.S. and European governments have become very close to each other and we are witnessing a consensus among them.

Arab governments are also under a lot of pressure to prevent transfer of dollars to Iran.

It seems that in such a situation, the European governments do not need to launch the trigger mechanism.

Before they want to launch the trigger mechanism, they will continue the same Iranophobia and psychological war against Iran and will put the Islamic Republic of Iran under more economic pressure.

It seems that we should be pragmatic and take more active diplomacy toward the policies of Western governments.

Third trial session for Shah Cheragh terrorist attack held

TEHRAN- The Islamic Revolution Court of Shiraz on Monday held the third trial session for perpetrators of the Shah Cheragh terrorist attack.

The trial meeting was held at the presence of the defendants and their lawyers, parents of the victims and a group of witnesses of the horrible incident.

On October 26, 2022, a gunman entered the Shah Cheragh shrine and mowed down at visitors, leaving 13 people dead, including children, and 30 more injured. The gunman and his accomplices come from the neighboring countries.

Fars province's head of justice department stated that 5 persons have been indicted in the terrorist attack, underlining that those responsible for such a devilish act are linked to the Daesh terrorist group.

He said they had formed a group when they were locked up in Bagram prison in Afghanistan.

During the first trial session, the



mastermind of the incident and the first defendant, Mohammad Ramez Rashidi, was summoned to detail about how he alongside with the other accomplices moved to the city to launch the terrorist attack.

The prosecutor's representative listed the charges before the de-

fendants as corruption, sedition, membership in Daesh, as well as gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the country's security.

In response to the court's questions, Rashidi appeared on the stand to point out that he received military training in Jowzjan Prov-

Abdollahian, Borrell hold talks on Iran-IAEA co-op, human rights, sanctions, Ukraine war

FM says EU repeating American ineffective sanctions policy, following double standards on human rights

from page 1 ► Highlighting the dialogue that has taken place between Iran and the IAEA in regards to the Safeguards Agreement, Amir Abdollahian said, "We are making arrangements for the (director general of the International Atomic Energy) Agency's visit to Tehran and have joint initiatives on the agenda."

The top Iranian diplomat underlined that if the UN nuclear agency acts in a technical and non-political manner, a framework for dealing with the issues may be achieved.

Amir Abdollahian also criticized some European countries for supporting pro-terrorist organizations living outside Iran, saying the overwhelming participation of Iranians in the Feb. 11 demonstrations marking the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution is an indication that the Islamic Republic enjoys public support.

Referring to the U.S.'s torn and out-of-date policy of sanctions against Iran, he added, "The European Union's conduct in recent months is the repeat of the ineffective policy of ex-U.S. president Trump which indicates the resumption of the double and implausible standards accompanied with instrumental use of human rights principles."

Amir Abdollahian also emphasized that Iran has consistently advocated for a truce and diplomatic solutions to the Ukrainian conflict as he further emphasized the need to put an end to the violence in Ukraine.

"From Iran's perspective, preserving countries' territorial integrity would ensure enduring peace, like in Ukraine, and we have spared no effort to pursue a truce and achieve peace," he said.

Borrell, for his part, voiced doubt that a truce can be reached in Ukraine in the upcoming weeks or perhaps months.

The EU foreign policy chief emphasized the necessity of continuing the conversations in order to advance the topics under discussion while highlighting the optimism for progress made in the course of collaboration between Iran and the IAEA.

Writing on his Twitter account, Abdollahian said, "Tonight on telephone with @JosepBorrellI discussed Iran-EU ties, JCPOA, Iran-IAEA cooperation and Ukraine developments. Emphasized that I.R. Iran relies upon its people and this was proven once again on February 11th (national day

this year."

Borrell and Amir Abdollahian also spoke about other topics, including the negotiations to end sanctions against Iran and cooperation between Iran and the European Union.

Iran and the IAEA are now at odds over the Agency's claims against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activity.

These accusations came just as the Islamic Republic and other signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and the U.S. looked to be close to reaching an agreement on renewing the pact.

Iran has asserted that reaching an agreement on the resurrection of the nuclear accord is contingent upon the IAEA to abandon unsubstantiated claims over Iran's nuclear program, insisting that without doing so, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has no purpose.

Furthermore, due to Washington's staunch insistence on maintaining its headline position of not agreeing to lift all the sanctions that were placed on the Islamic Republic by the Trump administration, the talks to save the JCPOA have been at a stalemate since August 2022.

Munich conference intended to appease hawks: Iran

from page 1 ► Kanaani also said, "The Islamic Republic is one of the most significant nations with an undeniable contribution to deepening and solidifying regional security, and it is one of the powerful nations that contributes to bolstering world security."

"The summit was conducted in the name of security, but it did not include significant nations such as Iran and Russia," he underlined, adding, "That means that the conference provided a chance for parties and currents seeking to entrench unilateralism in the international arena to express distinct multilateral perspectives on international order and security."

Kanaani added Iran has significantly improved regional and European security by launching serious fight against terrorist groups such as Daesh.

This year's conference wasn't really designed for security but more for the benefit of warmongers and hawks, he pointed out.

Kanaani calls on IAEA to "act

professionally"

Kanaani also reaffirmed Iran's dedication to technical collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), expressing hope that the UN nuclear watchdog would compensate by treating Iran's peaceful nuclear programs with professionalism.

"Technical collaboration between the Islamic Republic and the IAEA is a core value for our nation. In return, we anticipate the agency to conduct properly with regard to Iran's lawful nuclear activities and abide by the standards and guidelines for expert and professional collaboration with all member states, including the Islamic Republic," he pointed out.

Kanaani also emphasized Iran's compliance to the safeguards accords and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"Zionist regime addicted to concocting claims"

The spokesperson flatly denied Israel's charge that Iran was responsible for an alleged attack on an IS-

raeli-linked oil tanker.

Like the U.S., the Israeli regime is accustomed to fabricating charges against the Islamic Republic, Kanaani said.

He added, "Tehran continues to make efforts to safeguard the security and freedom of navigation in international seas, playing a key role in this regard."

"Iran, U.S. hold indirect talks to swap prisoners"

Kanaani also indicated that Qatar served as a mediator in indirect negotiations between Iran and Washington to exchange prisoners.

"The exchange of prisoners was in process, but was not completed because of the U.S. lack of good faith," he said, noting, "The majority of the inmates were taken into custody for dodging embargos. We appreciate the Qatari government's contribution, which is being made through overcoming the technical issues."

"Tehran ready to reopen embassy, consulate in Riyadh"

Kanaani also said Iran has repeat-



edly stated that if Saudi Arabia is sincere about moving forward with the reconciliation talks, Tehran will be prepared to do the same and advance the conversations to political level and at the level of the foreign ministries of the two states.

The Islamic Republic is also ready for the talks to culminate in the re-opening of the diplomatic and consular offices of Iran and Saudi Arabia in the two nations, he continued.

The official emphasized that Iran is ready to mend relations with Saudi Arabia and is eager to shake hands with anybody who extends a friendly hand.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



VP visits Tehran Times, Mehr News Agency

TEHRAN- Ensieh KhazAli, the Iranian Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, paid a visit on Monday to the Tehran Times and Mehr News Agency.

With an official invitation from the Tehran Times, she toured the powerhouse of the leading Iranian English newspaper.



TEHRAN- Salah al-Zawawi, a former Palestinian ambassador to Iran, died at the age of 85 in a hospital in Tehran on Monday.

Al-Zawawi passed away due to sickness, the Palestinian embassy said.

The embassy is scheduled to make announcement regarding the funeral service.

Early in January 2022, al-Zawawi retired as ambassador to Iran, abdicating four decades of his diplomatic mission.

Al-Zawawi was the second Palestinian ambassador to Tehran following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. He was one of the founding members of the Fatah political party.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian delivered a message of condolence over his death.

Zawawi's daughter, Salam al-Zawawi, who took over as Palestinian ambassador to Iran in 2022, received particular condolences from Iran's top diplomat.

The foreign minister expressed sympathy over his passing and asked God to grant him eternal peace.

%100 lying about %84 enrichment

By Faramarz Kuhpayeh

TEHRAN – In a sign that the West is willing to intensify its propaganda against Iran, Bloomberg claimed that the UN nuclear watchdog's inspectors found uranium enriched to purity just short of weapons-grade levels.

According to Bloomberg, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency found uranium materials in Iran that are enriched up to 84%.

“Inspectors need to determine whether Iran intentionally produced the material, or whether the concentration was an unintended accumulation within the network of pipes connecting the hundreds of fast-spinning centrifuges used to separate the isotopes,” Bloomberg said.

Iran has unequivocally denied the report that it had enriched uranium to levels higher than 60 percent purity, asserting that the nation's nuclear facilities have never breached the level.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, the AEOI's spokesperson, made the comments on Monday in response to a Bloomberg article that claimed “the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is seeking to understand how Iran acquired uranium enriched to 84% purity.”

It was also purportedly said that highly enriched uranium particles had been discovered by IAEA inspectors “inside the network of pipelines linking centrifuges used to segregate uranium isotopes.”

Speaking to the Iranian state-run IRNA, Kamalvandi said that Bloomberg's article was an attempt to falsify the facts.

He continued by saying that, throughout the enrichment process, the mere presence of uranium particles with purity levels exceeding 60% does not indicate



that uranium is being enriched at levels above 60%.

The official also said that the presence of such particles is a completely typical problem during the enrichment of uranium and may occur even if the feedstock entering centrifuge cascades temporarily decreases.

He underlined that “what matters is the final product and Iran has never started uranium enrichment at a level above 60 percent”

“The IAEA is well aware that such issues happen during the nuclear work. In various cases in the past, different levels of enrichment have been observed and have been accounted for, and this latest issue will be definitely clarified as well,” Kamalvandi added.

In response to the fact that the IAEA often does not tell its members of such matters, he stated, “Publicizing these matters through Western media once again proves that, regrettably, the IAEA has abandoned its professional and unbiased position since a long time ago. It purposefully shares technical material with Western media, and this behavior will undoubtedly further taint the image of this significant international body.”

The head of the AEOI derided the UN nuclear watchdog for disclosing details about Iran's nuclear energy program to those who opposed diplomatic efforts to revive the nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in an interview with Russia's Sputnik news agency in early February.

The JCPOA revival talks are hindered by those who get information on Iran's nuclear program from the International Atomic Energy Agency, according to Mohammad Eslami.

He also voiced sorrow for the IAEA's “political, unprofessional actions” in disclosing sensitive JCPOA data to those who obstruct the talks aimed at resurrecting the 2015 agreement, which the U.S. unilaterally departed in 2018.

The Bloomberg report comes at a time when Iran is trying to boost cooperation with the IAEA. In a phone conversation with the EU's foreign policy chief on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said plans are afoot in Tehran for a visit by IAEA Director-general Rafael Grossi.

“We are planning for an IAEA delegation visit to Tehran and we have common initiatives on our

agenda,” Amir Abdollahian said, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

He added, “If the agency acts based on a technical and non-political viewpoint, attaining a framework for the resolution of the issue is possible.”

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, in turn, expressed hope for the continuation of progress in the path of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and underlined the necessity of continuation of talks to advance the topics that are on the agenda.

During the phone talks, the two sides also discussed and exchanged views on the relations between Iran and the EU, agreement for the removal of sanctions, the cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency and the developments in Ukraine.

Earlier this month, the IAEA issued an “inaccurate” report on Iran which drew criticism from Iran. The IAEA had accused Iran of applying changes to the configuration of some of its centrifuges without informing the Agency in advance.

Mohammad Eslami, chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said the IAEA inspectors' assessment of their visit to the Fordow nuclear plant was “inaccurate.”

The three European signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – E3– issued a statement on Iran and accused it of making a move “inconsistent with Iran's obligations under its NPT-required Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.”

Grossi said he is discussing the matter with Iran, which expects the IAEA to act professionally and avoid being used for political aims.

IRAN IN FOCUS

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Foolad edge Al Faisaly in 2022 ACL (West) Round of 16

TEHRAN – Foolad of Iran defeated Saudi Arabia's Al Faisaly 1-0 in the AFC Champions League 2022 (West) Round of 16 on Monday.

Sasan Ansari scored the only goal of the match in the 64th minute in Doha's Al Thumama Stadium.

The team, headed by Javad Nekounam, are only Iranian team to compete in the ACL after Persepolis, Esteghlal and Gol Gohar were barred from competing in the season after failing to complete the required licensing criteria on time.

The quarter finals will be played on February 23 and the semi-final (the regional west final) on February 26.

Awaiting the winner of that match is Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds who beat Korea's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors on penalties in the East zone semi-final back in August last year.

The final will be played over two legs. The first will be in the West Zone on April 26 with the second in Saitama, Japan, on May 6.

Esteghlal coach Ricardo Sa Pinto apologizes for his unpleasant words

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team head coach Ricardo Sa Pinto apologized for using unpleasant words after the Paykan match.

The Portuguese coach was handed a four-match ban by the Disciplinary Committee of the Iran Football Federation for his behavior.

Esteghlal defeated Paykan 2-0 last week but Sa Pinto insulted the football society of Iran.

The Organization had announced that if Sa Pinto apologizes for his behavior via official media channels, the ban on two matches will be suspended until the end of the current season.

Under his leadership, Esteghlal sits third in the Iran Professional League (IPL), three points behind leader Sepahan.

Iran U23 football team candidates revealed

TEHRAN – Six candidates for taking charge of Iran U23 football team have been confirmed by Iran football federation.

In December 2022, Habib Kashani, former general manager of Persepolis club, was appointed as director of the U23 football team but the head coach has not yet been introduced.

Mehdi Mahdaviaikia resigned from his post as head coach of the U23 team in 2022 October. Under his leadership, Iran showed a poor performance in the 2022 AFC U23 Asian Cup and failed to qualify for the next stage.

Now, the federation is going to appoint the U23 head coach in March.

Former Iran forwards Vahid Hashemian, Rasoul Khatibi and Farhad Majidi, as well as ex-Persepolis coach Hamid Derakhshan, former Paykan forward Saied Daghighi and former Sepahan coach Moharram Navidkia are the candidates who have been shortlisted to lead the team.

Foolad complete signing of Spanish forward Alex Alegria

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Foolad completed the signing of Spanish striker Alex Alegria on Monday.

The 30-year-old forward was eligible to play for Foolad in the match against Saudi Arabian team Al Faisaly in the AFC Champions League 2022 (West) Round of 16 in Doha's Al Thumama Stadium, slated for Monday.

Alegria has joined Foolad from Spanish club Mallorca for an undisclosed fee.

He has previously played in Spanish teams Levante, Zaragoza, Betis and Rayo Vallecano.

Spanish midfielder Roberto Torres had previously joined Foolad in January.

Sepahan women team to play Zenit: official

TEHRAN – Sepahan football club general manager Mohammadreza Saket says that the club's women's football team will play Zenit's women's team.

Sepahan's men's team defeated Zenit 2-0 on Friday in Isfahan's Naghsh-e Jahan Stadium in a friendly match.

Saket said the club's women's team will also meet the Russian team before the start of the new season of Iran Women League.

The original partnership agreement was signed in April 2021 as a two-year deal with the clubs agreeing to actively exchanging experience in the areas of football, medicine and training, with Gazprom Academy coaches heading to Iran to work at Sepahan and vis-versa.

A Sepahan youth team also took part in Zenit's Vladimir Kazachyonok memorial youth tournament.

Iran futsal team to play Uzbekistan in April

TEHRAN – Iran national futsal team will play two friendly matches with Uzbekistan in late April.

Team Melli will meet Uzbekistan on April 16 and 18 in Tehran, capital of Iran.

Iran will also participate at the NSDF Futsal Championship 2023 in March in Thailand.

Vahid Shamsaei's men have been drawn in Group B of the Thailand's tournament with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Iran will partake at the tournament as part of preparation for the 2024 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Table tennis players to attend Singapore event

TEHRAN – Iran's two table tennis players are to take part in the Singapore Smash 2023.

Noshad Alamian and Amirhossein Hodai who rank 81st and 137th respectively will represent Iran at the sporting event.

As many as 128 contenders are to compete at the prestigious event in Singapore.

Singapore Smash 2023 is slated to be held from 7-9 March (qualifying) and 11-19 March (main draw).

Abbasi's goal among top five in Spain

TEHRAN – The goals scored by the Iranian futsal player has been selected among the top five goals in the Spanish league.

Saeid Ahmad Abbasi is currently playing for the Spanish team Viña Albali Valdepeñas.

The Iranian athlete found the back of the net in a match against Noia Portus Apostoli.

Abbasi's team fell short against his opponent 8-2.

The goal scored by the Iranian sportsman has been nominated as one of the top five goals of the week in the Spanish league.

Saeid Ahmad Abbasi, the Iran national futsal team player, signed a contract with Viña Albali Valdepeñas club in November 2022.

Esteghlal into Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals

Frome Page 1 ▶ On Tuesday, Esteghlal Mollasani will play Mes Kerman, while Aluminum meet Nassaji.

Nassaji are defending champions.

Hazfi Cup is the Iranian football knockout cup competition, run by the Iranian Football Federation.

Raisi urges authorities to implement strategic agreements with China

Frome Page 1 ▶ Referring to the last days of the current year, the president considered the efforts of ministers and managers as necessary to stabilize the market and control prices.

“Any decision that leads to an unreasonable increase in the price of goods and services and an increase in inflation will not be accepted, and the headquarters under the supervision of the first vice-president is obliged to monitor and control the inflation and the currency market and the prices of basic goods on a daily basis,” he stated.

Raisi wrapped up his three-day trip to China on Wednesday, which marked the first state visit by an Iranian president to the Asian economic giant in two decades. The symbolism of the visit began even before Raisi departed Tehran.

“This trip was done at the official invitation of Mr. Xi Jinping, during which we had numerous meetings and negotiations at different levels with the respected President of China,” he said upon returning to Tehran.

He added, “The strategic level of the two countries' communication had also made the negotiation situation strategic so that we could pursue the issues of interest to both sides, especially in the economic and commercial fields.”

Raisi said, “This trip was very important because it could implement agreements in various commercial and economic areas



between the two countries. Therefore, 20 memoranda of understanding were signed by the officials the two countries.”

He added, “In the meeting that was held after the conclusion of these contracts and agreements, the serious will of both sides to continue and develop cooperation in various commercial, economic, energy, science and technology fields was emphasized and we were able to make good decisions in all topics.”

Ayatollah Raisi stated, “The ministers present in this trip also had very good negotiations and made very good decisions and agreements were reached that all cooperation between the two countries

should be accompanied by transfer of technology.”

President Raisi went on to state that the other topic of the negotiations of the trip was related to the cooperation between Iran and China in international organizations

“Considering China's important and prominent role in organizations such as Shanghai and BRICS, we witnessed China's desire for the Islamic Republic of Iran to become a member of the BRICS organization, and this matter will be followed seriously by the Minister of Foreign Affairs so that the country can benefit from the capacity of effective and useful membership in this extra-regional organization,” he noted.

Iran diplomat discusses Yemen, Syria with Swiss official

TEHRAN – Ali Asghar Khaji, the senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister for special political affairs, has met with Maya Tissafi, head of Middle East and North Africa Division at the Swiss foreign ministry, to discuss issues related to Yemen and Syria.

In the meeting in Tehran on Sunday, the two sides discussed developments in Syria after the recent earthquake, the fragile humanitarian situation in the country, the course of political developments in Syria, as well as developments in Yemen, according to Al Alam.

Khaji expressed regret over the devastating earthquake in Syria, calling for more cooperation from the international community in sending humanitarian aid to Syria.

He added, “While the Syrian people are still seeking to extricate their loved ones from the rubble of buildings, the aggression of the Zionist entity on residential areas in Syria reflects the aggressive nature of this entity.”

The senior advisor to the foreign minister also touched on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, stressing the need to immediately lift the human and economic blockade on the country and administer ceasefire.

Iran has condemned Israel's recent attack on a Damascus suburb. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani strongly condemned attacks by the Zionist regime on targets in Damascus and the surroundings including residential complexes,

which led to the martyrdom and injuries of a group of innocent Syrian civilians.

He referred to the sequences of new attacks by the Zionist regime and the those of the Daesh terrorist group against the Syrian nation, saying the bonds and coordination between the two terrorist entities were natural and inherent.

The two terror entities, he said, are bent on doubling the sufferings of the Syrian nation at a time when the people are grappling with the aftermath of a devastating earthquake two weeks ago.

Kanaani described as shameful the silence of the Western countries in the face of frequent violations of Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity on the part of the aggressive Zionist regime,

according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

He called on the world community and relevant international institutions, especially the United Nations Security Council, to respond to the Zionist regime's acts of aggression against a UN member state swiftly, seriously and effectively.

Iranian Ambassador to Syria Mehd Sobhani has recently met with Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Ayman Sosan, IRNA reported.

The two sides discussed bilateral ties and the latest developments in the West Asia region and the world.

In January, Sosan traveled to Tehran where he met with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and Ali Asghar Khaji.

Drinking water supplied to over 1,370 villages in less than a year

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Ministry has managed to supply drinking water through pipeline to 1,379 villages across the country since a major program for supplying water to rural areas was implemented less than a year ago, an official with Iran's Water and Wastewater Company said.

According to Majid Aghazadeh, since the implementation of the mentioned program so far 808,000 people living in rural areas have been supplied with drinking water through pipeline, IRIB reported.

Aghazadeh noted that 18.111 trillion rials (about \$40 million) has been allocated for the



implementation of the said program which will ultimately connect 10,000 villages across the country to the national water network.

19 idle production units revived in Bushehr province since last March

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 19 idle production units were revived in Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21, 2022).

Mehdi Safavi, the director-general of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that the mentioned units returning to the production cycle, have created jobs for 93 persons.

Bushehr province was committed to revive 17 stagnant production units in the present year, and reviving 19 units during the first ten months indicates that the province's commitment has been materialized by over 110 percent, the official further highlighted.

As recently announced by the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), 1,191 idle production units have been revived in the industrial estates and zones of the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

Referring to the addition of many lands to industrial estates last year, Ali Rasoulman noted: "This year, we focused on providing infrastructure for these lands, and infrastructure was provided for 2,151 hectares of lands."

He then mentioned the establishment of joint industrial estates with other countries, and said the initial negotiations were conducted with Turkey, Iraq, Azerbaijan, and recently Armenia, but if these joint industrial estates are to be established at the border zero point, there is a need to change the laws and regulations and it

To Safeguard the Financial Institutions, IRIFIU is Expanded its International Cooperation

The Financial Intelligence Unit of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRIFIU) was established as a national center for the receipt and analysis of: (a) suspicious transaction reports; and (b) other information relevant to money laundering, associated predicate offenses and terrorist financing, and for the dissemination of the results of that analysis to the competent authorities in 2010 under the Anti Money Laundering (AML) Act. According to the Act and its By-law, IRIFIU is independent in its operations for the purpose of enforcing its powers, duties and functions, including full autonomy in decisions to receive, analyze and disseminate information related to ML and TF.

It is worth mentioning that IRIFIU has an active role in the international arena and

has taken some remarkable and concrete measures in the AML/CFT area such as concluded MOUs with 16 countries like the Republic of Armenia, Federative Republic of Brazil, Russian Federation, Republic of Korea (ROK), Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of South Africa (RSA), and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Moreover, IRIFIU is an observer member of the Eurasian Group on AML/CFT (EAG) and actively participates in its meetings and projects.

Due to its crucial geographical location and keeping the financial institutions away from abuse, one of the IRIFIU's top priorities is to expand international cooperation through bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as participate in regional and supra-regional forums.

TEDPIX jumps over 60,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 60,897 points to 1.594 million on Monday.

As reported, over 12.547 billion securities worth 74.019 trillion rials (about \$185 million) were traded at the TSE.

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

Aluminum ingot output up 17% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN – Production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 17 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, according to the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

As reported, the production of aluminum ingot stood at 528,060 tons in the ten-month period of this year, while the figure was 451,193 tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Among the country's four major producers, South Aluminum Corporation (SALCO) had the best performance in the first ten months of the present year, producing 226,467 tons of aluminum ingots, followed by Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) producing 147,560 tons, Almahdi Aluminum Company producing 123,403 tons, and Iran Alumina Company producing



30,630 tons of the product.

According to the data previously released by IMIDRO, production of aluminum ingot in Iran rose 20 percent during the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), as compared to its preceding year.

The IMIDRO's data put the

annual production of aluminum ingot at 538,633 tons in 1400, while the figure was 446,836 tons in 1399, and 278,318 tons in 1398.

Among the country's four major producers, Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) had the best performance in the previous year producing 177,058 tons of

aluminum ingots, although the figure was 185,000 tons in the preceding year.

South Aluminum Corporation (SALCO) produced 173,594 tons, production by Almahdi Aluminum Company stood at 150,738 tons, and Iran Alumina Company produced 37,243 tons of aluminum ingots in the Iranian calendar year 1400, the IMIDRO's data indicated.

Annual production of aluminum ingot in the country had been planned to increase by 63 percent in the past year.

Iranian officials estimate the country's aluminum sector has a value of \$22 billion, which is sufficient to meet the country's aluminum needs.

At present, Iran is the 18th biggest aluminum-producing country in the world.

The country plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

'Iran, China industrial agreements to be implemented within 2 months'

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has said that the agreements reached between Iran and China during President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Beijing, are expected to be implemented within two months, Tasnim News Agency reported on Monday.

"Considering the president's emphasis, the agreements and contracts signed during this trip will enter the implementation phase in the next two months, and their positive effects will be evident in the country's economy," Alireza Peyman-Pak said.

According to Peyman-Pak, about three weeks before the President's visit, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade sent a team to China to negotiate cooperation in various fields including mining, railways, automobiles, machinery and industrial equipment.

He noted that, prior to president's visit, Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin also traveled to China and visited factories and large industrial complexes not only in Beijing but also in China's other major cities and serious negotiations took place between the two sides.

Tehran, Beijing ink MOUs worth \$8.1b in agricultural sector

Deputy Agriculture Minister Shahpour Alaei has also said that during President Raisi's visit to China, the two countries have signed two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) worth over \$8.1 billion to cooperate in various agricultural fields.

According to Alaei, an MOU worth \$3.5



billion was signed between the two sides for cooperation in the fishery sector, and for agriculture mechanization, development of greenhouse, rainfed cultivation, and exchange of knowledge.

Another MOU valued at about \$4.6 billion was inked for the funding of a major irrigation project in southwestern Iran, Alaei said.

He noted that special working groups have been formed at the Agriculture Ministry to follow up on the implementation of the mentioned agreements.

The said memorandums are expected to be implemented as of the beginning of the next Iranian calendar year (March 21), the official added.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was on a three-day state visit to China starting February 14.

During President Raisi's visit to China, Tehran, and Beijing signed a number of bilateral cooperation documents in the fields of agriculture, trade, tourism, environmental

protection, health, disaster relief, culture, and sports.

The documents include agreements in the field of transportation and industry worth \$12 billion and \$3.5 billion, respectively, the agreements cover various joint projects like the high-speed rail link between Tehran and Mashhad, and investment in the Imam Khomeini Airport City.

Investment in Iran's southeastern Mokran Coast and the purchase of Iranian oil are also mentioned in the documents.

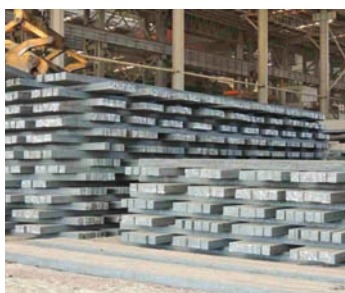
Raisi's visit serves as an example of the high level of mutual trust between China and Iran, as well as a milestone for bilateral ties.

According to Majid-Reza Hariri, the head of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, considering the opportunities presented by the two countries' 25-year strategic agreement, the trade between Iran and China can be increased three-fold.

"In the worst conditions created by sanctions, our trade with the Chinese reached about 24 billion dollars, and we can increase this figure by at least three times, Hariri said.

Member of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade Ruhollah Latifi has also said that China was Iran's top trade partner in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023) with 29.2 million tons of goods worth \$25.3 billion being exchanged between the two sides.

Over 5.7m tons of steel ingots exported in 10 months



TEHRAN- As announced by Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 5,748 million tons of steel ingots were exported in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022-January 20, 2023).

Based on the ISPA data, the 10-month steel ingot export

indicates one percent fall from the figure for the same period of time in the past year, which was 5.807 million tons.

As announced by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the country's export of steel ingots increased by 25 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), from the preceding year.

The IMIDRO's data put the country's annual steel ingot exports at 7.678 million tons in the past year, and at 6.162 million tons in the previous year.

The Iranian Steel industry has

been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

According to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), 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 WSA data, Iran was ranked first among the world's top steel producers in terms of production growth in the previous

Monthly production of industrial companies active in stock market up 7.7% yr/yr

TEHRAN – The production index of 280 Iranian industrial companies active in the stock market has grown 7.7 percent in the 10th Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22, 2022-January 20, 2023) as compared to the

figure for the same month in the previous year, IRNA reported.

According to Spokesman of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry Alireza Ghalibaf,

the increase in the production of industrial groups is an indication that the ministry will achieve its goal of an eight-percent growth in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Govt. raises tax on private companies by 120%

TEHRAN – The Iranian government has raised the tax on non-governmental legal entities by 120 percent in the national budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (starting March 21), the portal of Iran

Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

According to a report presented at a meeting of the heads of the country's provincial chambers of

commerce on Monday, this is the highest tax increase in the budget bill.

"The amount of the government's income from the tax of non-governmental legal entities has

increased 120 percent compared to last year; this figure is estimated at 2.55 quadrillion rials [about \$5.63 billion] in the budget bill," Mohammad Qasemi, head of ICCIMA Research Center said, presenting the report.

Explosion in Israeli prisons imminent

From page 1 ► Israeli violations against women's rights went a step further with punitive measures such as cutting off power, preventing family visits as well as prohibiting phone calls.

The spokesman of the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs Muzaffar Thouqan has warned the 24th of this month will be a day of prisoner anger that will peak on the first day of Ramadan which will see an open confrontation with the occupation forces.

Stressing that the confrontation will be intense, he added the prisoners are on the front line of the resistance movement.

Palestinian prisoners have continued to disobey the orders of the Israeli prison administration, for the sixth consecutive day.

They are refusing to comply with the harsh orders of Ben Gvir, who has instructed the occupation forces to attack both Palestinian male and female detainees while depriving them of their most basic rights.

According to several institutions specialized in the affairs of prisoners, the disobedience steps will remain open until the date set for the mass hunger strike, which is scheduled for the first day of Ramadan.

These steps will depend on the position of the occupation's prisons, and the developments that may occur in the coming weeks.

Reports say the Supreme Emergency Committee for Prisoners (a committee launched by the inmates themselves) will remain in a permanent state.

The initial steps of disobedience, which have been approved by the Supreme Emergency Committee for Prisoners, and which the inmates began to implement in the Nafha prison last Tuesday include objection to a newly formed so-called security check and the refusal to dress in different prison clothing.

On Friday, the prisoners staged a sit-in in the prison yards to protest against new penalties that have been imposed on them, especially depriving them of almost all means of heating and hot water in light of the bitter cold.

The Supreme Emergency Committee for Prisoners has called on inmates to declare a state of alert in all prisons, amid anticipation of a further crackdown by the prison's forces.

Just a few days ago, the Prisoners' Information Office confirmed that "the occupation prison administration is tightening the screws even further on the prisoners held in Megiddo, Gilboa, Nafha, Ramon and the Negev prisons, by imposing new penalties that affect their daily lives."

According to the Prisoners'



Information Office, among the new punishments against prisoners in the Israeli jails of Nafha, the Negev, and Ramon, were "moving prisoners around with chains, closing the washbasins, and ending any sports activities."

The Supreme Emergency Committee for Prisoners said it had taken its decision to initiate a series of steps starting with disobedience, and ending with an open hunger strike.

Number of Palestinian prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment has risen to more than 500.

In a statement, the committee stated that we "hold our only demand, which is our freedom," adding that "everyone should pick up on this message of ours, and this voice of ours. We can no longer tolerate the continued abuse of our day and night and the attack on our dignity and the dignity of our female prisoners."

The committee pointed out that "this strike, which is titled freedom or martyrdom, is a strike waged by every capable prisoner from all factions," stressing that it "will engage in this strike with unified demands and unified leadership."

And it stressed that "the scale of the aggression that we have been facing since the beginning of this year until now requires all of our people and their living forces to support us with all tools."

The prisoner's committee confirmed that it would go through all its steps with unified demands and unified leadership.

This is while the Palestinian Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Prisoners has confirmed that the prisoners' steps of escalation started in the Nafha prison and extended within days to all Israeli prisons.

The Ministry of Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners indicated that the steps are represented in disobeying the

regime's new decisions, disrupting the security check process, and wearing prisoners' clothes.

This is while Israeli media have reported on the decision of Ben Gvir, to "reduce the duration of each prisoner's shower to only 4 minutes as part of his policy of harassing the prisoners."

On the fourth of February, the Palestinian prisoners sent a message from inside the prisons, in which they called for preparations for a major battle against the oppression of Ben Gvir.

In their message, the prisoners stressed their readiness for all possibilities and that every scenario was on the table.

The message, which was handwritten inside Israeli prisons, called for readiness to wage a major battle against the regime's oppression.

In their message, the prisoners indicated that "Ben Gvir, is working to harass us as prisoners, by withdrawing our achievements and gains that we have achieved through great struggles and long sacrifices during which the martyrs rose, and he is taking punitive measures against us, which we will not allow."

They stated that they are currently retreating to coordinate and prepare for a battle, which will be titled "Freedom for al-Aqsa and the Prisoners."

Israel has been cracking down on female Palestinian prisoners, who have been tortured, harassed, and dragged to solitary confinement.

Ben Gvir says he has visited the Nafha prison, which is one of the most severe and cruelest Israeli prisons.

This month Israeli media reported that the regime's forces

are warning of an explosion in Israeli prisons, in light of the harsh treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

The Palestine Center for Prisoner Studies says the number of Palestinian prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment has risen to more than 500.

The Wa'ed Prisoners Association has also expressed deep concern over the recent treatment and crackdown on Palestinian prisoners, saying the raids of three prisons, Megiddo, Ofer, and the Negev witnessed the arbitrary transfer and solitary confinement of many prisoners.

The Hanzala Center for Prisoners said, "The conditions are very tense in the Ofer and Megiddo prisons, where the Israeli forces are carrying out repression against the prisoners."

The process of isolating prisoners comes within the framework of the large-scale transfer operations carried out recently by Israel, which affected more than 220 prisoners, from Hadarim, Rimon, and Megiddo prisons.

It is expected that these transfers affect several other prisons, and may continue until next March.

Other repressive measures and attacks also affected Palestinians at Hadarim prison, during their transfer to the Nafha prison last month.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Jihad movement in the besieged Gaza Strip announced a readiness to implement protest steps, in light of the prison administration's systematic policy of "deliberate medical negligence."

According to Addameer, which supports prisoners' rights, Israel holds more than 4,700 Palestinian prisoners. This figure includes women and minors as well as those held under so-called administrative detention with neither charge nor trial.

The Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs says that in January 2023, Israeli forces arrested 598 Palestinians, including 99 minors and 8 women. The highest rate of arrests occurred in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem), followed by Hebron and then Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

The arrest campaigns are increasing under the cabinet of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and are accompanied by many violations such as field executions, torture, arresting family members and field interrogation.

As the tensions escalate further, this year could see another war break out between Israel and the Palestinian resistance.

But for the first time, it could break out from the Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli dungeons.

Sources: Press TV

WORLD HEADLINES

China slams Blinken's comments on Russia-Ukraine war

Beijing has strongly denied US claims that China was considering arming Russia in its war against Ukraine, as it reiterated a call for dialogue to end the conflict.

A Chinese spokesperson said the US is in no position to make demands after US top diplomat Anthony Blinken warned Beijing against providing weapons to Russia in the war against Ukraine.

Speaking at a regular briefing on Monday, foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China "will never accept the US pointing fingers at Sino-Russian relations or even coercing us".

His comment comes after Blinken expressed "deep concerns" about the "possibility that China will provide lethal material support to Russia".

"To date, we have seen Chinese companies ... provide non-lethal support to Russia for use in Ukraine. The concern that we have now is based on information we have that they're considering providing lethal support," Blinken told CBS News after he met China's foreign minister Wang Yi on Saturday at the Munich Security Conference.

Wang Wenbin said the US was "in no position to make demands of China".

Israelis begin more major protests as the regime set to vote on judicial reform

Israelis of all ages across the occupied lands (60,000 protesters) marched on Monday in protest of the judicial reform which was set to go up for its first vote in Knesset later in the day. The protesters blocked major highways and interchanges across Israel, including the road by Ben-Gurion Airport, Ayalon Highway in Tel Aviv and other locations.

Major protests were planned by organizations across various sectors of Israeli life including IDF reservists, school kids, healthcare professionals and more.

Many parents did not send their kids to school but joined the march at 8 a.m. in a protest organized by the No Education Without Democracy movement.

"We are fighting so that the education system in Israel will stay a liberal education system, the kind that advances equality, social justice, moral norms and pluralism," said the movement in a statement

Fake sirens in Kiev during Biden's visit



Airraid sirens rang out in Kiev during US President Joe Biden's unannounced visit on Monday, but there were no reports of Russian strikes, Reuters said.

According to AFP, the alarm was heard when Biden and Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky, flanked by armed security, exited St Michael's Cathedral, where the leaders met. The siren did not cause any panic, the news agency said.

President Biden made an unannounced visit to Kyiv, Ukraine, his first time in the country since the start of Russia's invasion almost exactly a year ago as he seeks to rally allies ahead of an anticipated Russian offensive.

Biden reflected on the resilience of the Ukrainian resistance as the war enters its second year, noting how the international community

on Monday. "Harming the independence of the justice system will bring to harming the education system and the values it teaches."

Japan to invite Ukraine president to G7- online summit Feb. 24

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Monday that he will invite Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to a Group of Seven online summit on the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of the country later this week.

Kishida said at a meeting of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party that Japan will on Friday hold the G-7 video summit, in which the leaders are expected to reaffirm their unity in tackling Russia's aggression against its neighbor.

It would be the first G-7 summit hosted by Kishida. In the virtual gathering, the G-7 nations of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, plus the European Union, are likely to agree to continue supporting Ukraine.

Blinken urges Nordics' accession to NATO in Turkey visit

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has stressed Washington's strong support for Sweden and Finland's quick NATO accession, even as his Turkish counterpart stressed the need for more concrete action on the part of the Nordic countries.

Speaking at a joint press conference after meeting Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Ankara, Blinken stated that the Nordic countries have acted upon the conditions set by Turkey in June last year when it agreed to lift its veto for Sweden and Finland on joining the US-led military alliance.

The US top diplomat, who is on his first trip to Turkey since his appointment two years ago, said NATO's Nordic expansion issue was not a bilateral one with Ankara and that Washington supported their accession into the alliance "as quickly as possible".

"Finland and Sweden have already taken concrete steps to fulfil the commitments that they met under the trilateral memorandum of agreement that they signed," Blinken said.

Washington also reaffirmed its commitment to delivering F-16 jets to Turkey, despite Turkish insistence that their approval should not depend on the lifting of objections to Sweden joining NATO.

Lebanon raps Israeli Syria strikes, says Tel Aviv indifferent to human suffering amid crisis

Lebanon has strongly condemned the latest Israeli airstrikes on the Syrian capital Damascus that heavily damaged residential buildings and caused civilian casualties, saying the aggression confirms the regime's indifference to human suffering.

The Lebanese Foreign Ministry, in a statement on Sunday, denounced the "attack on the sovereignty of Syria, which is still reeling from the repercussions of the devastating earthquake that struck it" on February 6 and killed thousands.

The ministry called the airstrikes a "violation of the most basic rules of international law."

"It comes to reaffirm Israel's indifference to the human suffering resulting from its attacks on the peoples of the region in all circumstances, especially in times of tragedies, which doubles its moral condemnation," the statement read.

At least five people, including a soldier, were killed and 15 others wounded in the Israeli

airstrikes early on Sunday, the Syrian army said in a statement.

The Israeli attack was launched from the occupied Golan Heights and targeted several military sites in Damascus, including the southwestern residential neighborhood of Kafar Sousah, the statement noted.

It added that many of the wounded are in critical condition, and many residential homes in Damascus and its countryside were damaged.

The statement said Syrian air defense units intercepted most missiles before reaching the targets.

Following the attack, Syria urged the United Nations to take necessary measures to deter Israel's attacks and hold it accountable for the crime.

"When Syria was trying to heal its wounds, bury its martyrs, and receive condolences, sympathy, and international humanitarian support in the face of the devastating earthquake, the Israelis launched an air aggression targeting civilian-

populated neighborhoods," the Syrian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The Israeli regime frequently violates Syrian sovereignty by targeting military positions inside the country, especially those of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, which has played a key role in helping the Syrian army in its fight against foreign-backed terrorists.

Israel mostly keeps quiet about its attacks on the Syrian territories, which many view as a knee-jerk reaction to the Syrian government's increasing success in confronting terrorism.

The Tel Aviv regime has been a main supporter of terrorist groups that have battled the government of President Bashar al-Assad since foreign-backed militancy erupted in Syria in early 2011.

Syria has repeatedly complained to the UN over Israeli assaults, urging the Security Council to take action against Tel Aviv's crimes. The calls have, however, fallen on deaf ears.

Tourism projects to come on stream in Bushehr

TEHRAN –A total of 16 tourism-related projects are planned to be inaugurated in southwestern Bushehr province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

Hotels, apartment hotels, traditional restaurants, eco-lodge units and handicrafts workshops are among the projects, Esmail Sajadimanesh explained on Monday.

A budget of 19 trillion rials (\$475 million) has been allocated to the projects, the official added.

The projects are estimated to generate over 380 job opportunities upon their inauguration, he noted.

Earlier this month, the official announced that the implementation of 25 tourism-related projects officially started with ground-breaking ceremonies across the province on the occasion of the 44th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution (February 1 to 11).

The construction of the projects worth 17 trillion rials (\$42.5 million) has begun in different cities of the province, he added.

The projects include hotels, apartment hotels, eco-lodge units, and tourist complexes, the official noted.

The completion of the projects is expected to generate over 730 job opportunities for the locals, he mentioned.

With over 6,000 years of history and significant



monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, Bushehr province is one of Iran's most important historical centers.

Besides its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and lush palm groves make it an attractive destination for world travelers.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens.

When it comes to cultural attractions, there are many historical mounds in Bushehr including Tall-e Khandaq with Sassanid architectural style, Tall-e Marv located near an Achaemenid Palace, and Qajar era Malek al-Tojar Mansion. The Qajar-era Kazeruni Mansion, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List, is another attraction that world travelers love to see among various ancient sites.

Rashti-duzi Museum in Gilan to be equipped

TEHRAN – The Rashti-duzi Museum in Rasht, northern province of Gilan is planned to be equipped and organized, the provincial tourism chief has said.

A part of the museum is also planned to be dedicated to the handicrafts exhibitions, Vali Jahani explained on Monday.

Rashti-duzi is a crochet and sewing work traditionally practiced in Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, and its surrounding villages. Crochet and needlework were combined by the masters to enhance the beauty of their products, resulting in very elegant patterns.

The lush green province is known for its tourist attractions and warm-hearted and hospitable people. The people of Gilan from different ethnic

Ilam's development requires strong tourism infrastructure

TEHRAN – Ilam needs to improve its tourism infrastructure in order to grow, the deputy governor of the western province has said.

A significant part of Ilam's growth can be attributed to improvements in its tourism infrastructure, Mohammad Sobhan Hassani said on Monday.

In this regard, private investors should be welcomed and supported, he added.

Home to almost half of Iran's UNESCO sites, western Iran is a land of hospitable people,

wild extremes, and wilder history, and it may be an independent traveler's adventure playground. The region also witnessed the rise and fall of many great empires once bordering Mesopotamia, Ottoman Turkey, and Czarist Russia.

From the fecund Caspian coast to the stark, mountainous northern borders, and the crumbling desert ruins of the southern plains, the region hosts everything from paddy fields to blizzards to Persian gardens.

One of the most scenic railways in the world spans Iran

Part 1

Stretching between the glittering shores of the Caspian Sea and the fertile plains of the Persian Gulf, the 866-mile Trans-Iranian Railway is hailed as one of the greatest engineering marvels of the 20th century.

Experts from around the globe were presented with an extraordinary challenge: The proposed route would cross four distinct climates and connect soaring mountain ranges, deep gorges, salt deserts, old-growth forests, and plains.

Inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2021, the resulting network of 174 large bridges, 186 small bridges, and 224 tunnels was constructed between 1927 and 1938, a feat made possible by more than 70,000 workers, extensive mapping, and aerial photography. The railway knits together a striking tapestry of landscapes, from the towering buildings of the capital to the tombs and mosques of Qom to the nomadic dwellings of the Zagros

Mountains.

"When you sit on the train from Tehran to go towards the south, you suddenly change seasons in a matter of hours," says Yeganeh Morakabati, a tourism researcher and associate professor at Bournemouth University who examines the effects of political violence on tourism in the Middle East and Africa. "And not only that, but you also feel as if you have moved from one country to another because the cultures and peoples are very different—you're talking about a complete change of scenery and even languages. It's phenomenal."

Yet, Iran's image as a multifaceted tourism destination has suffered because of decades-long sanctions and negative media portrayals of Iran as an anti-Western society, Morakabati says. But as more tourists flock to the country and experience it firsthand, those stereotypes are being dispelled.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, travel to Iran was surging, and with the 2022 FIFA

Shiraz's cultural identity preserved by its people, ICOM chairman says

From Page 1 ► The historical texture of Shiraz is one of the richest in Iran and even in West Asia due to its relative coherence and unique architectural features, he mentioned.

There is a wide range of historical monuments in this area dating back to the Safavid and Qajar eras as well as the Pahlavi period, he added.

Antiquity and lack of adequate budgets have caused the historical texture to undergo a process of destruction and degradation during the past two decades, however today, with the participation of the private sector, many cases of restoration and protection have taken place, he noted.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, the southern Iranian city in Fars province has become synonymous with education, nightingales, poetry, and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent



buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital.

Eram Garden, Afif-Abad Garden, Tomb of Hafez, Tomb of Sa'di, Jameh Mosque of Atigh, and Persepolis are among the historical, cultural, and ancient sites of Shiraz that are of interest to domestic and foreign tourists.

The UNESCO-registered Persepolis, also known as

Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province.

Shiraz is also home to some magnificent historical gardens such as Bagh-e Narenjestan and Eram Garden, which are top tourist destinations both for domestic and international sightseers.

UNESCO describes the Persian Garden as an idea that combines natural elements with manmade components to materialize the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth.

The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (c. 550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

Qajar-era caravanserai in Kerman to turn into accommodation center

TEHRAN –The Qajar-era (1789-1925) Jar Caravanserai in the southern province of Kerman is planned to be repurposed into an accommodation center, the provincial tourism chief has said.

As soon as the historical inn is fully restored, it will serve as an accommodation center, Fereydon Faali explained on Monday.

The project will be carried out in close collaboration with the private sector, the official added.

Big and sprawling Kerman province is something of a cultural melting pot, blending various regional cultures over time. It is also home to rich tourist spots and historical sites including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, and ruins of ancient urban areas.

Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Dasht-e Lut.

Possible UNESCO tag for Iranian caravanserais

Iran has put forward a selection of 56 caravansaries as a candidate for collective inclusion on UNESCO'S cultural heritage list.

Last year, the tourism ministry announced that Iran was developing a dossier for a selection of its historical caravanserais for a possible inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In this regard, cultural heritage experts are assessing such monuments that are scattered across the country to make a shortlist in terms of their architecture as well as historical and



cultural values.

Caravansary (also Caravanserai or Caravansaray) is a building that served as the inn of the Orient, providing accommodation for commercial, pilgrim, postal, and especially official travelers.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, from the number of surviving caravansaries and their sizes, it is clear that in Safavid and Qajar times there was a state architectural department that was specifically concerned with the construction of caravansaries and stations on the overland routes. Furthermore, in the cities, several caravansaries were erected as lodging houses, depots, and commercial offices in the vicinity of the bazaars.

A typical caravansary consists of a square or rectangular plan centered around a courtyard with only one entrance and arrangements for defense if necessary. Whether fortified or not, it at least provided security against beasts of prey and attacks by brigands.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran were built during the Achaemenid era (550 – 330 BC). Centuries later, when Shah Abbas I assumed power from 1588–to 1629, he ordered the construction of a network of caravanserais across the country.



World Cup hosted in nearby Qatar this fall, the country is preparing for an influx of travelers. The railway—which began as one of Iran's most controversial infrastructure projects—is at the heart of the nation's continued efforts to revive tourism.

The birth of a railway

These days, the railway is celebrated as a symbol of modernity and unity, but during its construction, it was fraught with controversy.

Iran's railway took shape notably late compared to its neighbors in the Ottoman Empire, British India, and Egypt, all of which had railway networks by the second half of the 19th century, says Mikiya Koyagi, an assistant professor at the University of Texas Austin and author of Iran in Motion: Mobility, Space, and the Trans-Iranian Railway.

That's because during the global railway boom that lasted until World War I, Iran was caught between two imperial powers competing for military and commercial influence in the region: the Russian Empire, which was expanding into the Caucasus, and the British Empire, which controlled India.

"Whenever there were Russian-proposed projects to construct railways in Iran, there was British opposition, and when there were British plans, there was Russian opposition," Koyagi says.

That changed in 1925 when Iran's Qajar Empire collapsed. The new Pahlavi funded the

entire railway domestically by imposing high taxes on sugar and tea and taking out domestic bank loans. The Danish company Kampsax led the project, and over 40 companies from several countries were involved in construction. "That was quite a deliberate decision in order not to give too much power to any one particular country," Koyagi explains.

They also planned the route around national interests to optimize trade and state military access. For example, the railway connected major bodies of water in the north and south, where Iranian goods could be exported more easily. It also gave the state military access to hard-to-control parts of the country that were previously isolated by steep mountain ranges and inhospitable deserts.

(Source: National Geographic)

To be continued.

From page 1 ► The aim of the workshop is to enhance the knowledge of Member States and share information on the impacts of climate change on the marine environment.

The specific objectives are to promote sharing knowledge and findings on the effects of climate change on various aspects of the marine environment and eco-system.

It also aims to enhance the capacities and skills of IORA Member States in sustainable management and conservation of marine biodiversity.

Encouraging international research partnerships to invest in the conservation and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems as an important component for mitigating the effects of climate change, and increasing awareness and resilience of IORA Member States on climate change-driven disasters and damages are some other goals of the workshop.

The event seeks to design an action plan to address the impacts of climate change on the marine environment and ecosystems, as well as its implications on food security.

Motivating researchers to assess and validate their hypothesis on climate change, leading to the promotion of numerical climate prediction, and introducing Marine and Coastal Adaptation and Mitigation Measures for Climate Change are other objectives of the event.

The Indian Ocean, as the third-largest body of water in



Tehran hosting workshop on Indian Ocean Marine Environment

the world, plays an important role in the economy, ecosystem, and weather from local to global scales.

Many properties of the Indian Ocean, can be fundamentally influenced by climate change. Climate change is rapidly impacting the weather, ecosystems, and life of more than two billion people.

The impacts of climate change are putting increasing pressure on both marine and terrestrial environments, through more extreme weather conditions that also increase the likelihood of natural disasters.

Climate change is predicted

to result in an increase in global temperatures, sea level rise, ocean acidification, more intense tropical cyclones, and an

The event aims to enhance the capacities and skills of IORA Member States.

increase in the frequency, intensity, or duration of extreme weather events.

It is predicted that climate

change-driven disturbance will have a negative effect on water supply; food security; health, industry, settlement, and society, especially for those located in coastal areas and river flood plains.

In addition, climate change would also impact natural systems and resources, infrastructure, and labor productivity which may lead to reduced economic growth and increasing poverty and inequality.

Therefore, the investigation of climate change effects from different points of view, from marine environment/biodiversity to weather variation, is significant.

To deal with sand and dust storms, positive measures have been taken inside the country.

A ten-year plan has been prepared to curb internal sources of sand and dust storms.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands.

In recent years, about €370 million has been spent by the National Development Fund to combat SDSs, which had good results, but it seems that the annual credit is declining as conditions improve.

APDIM director Letizia Rossano has said Iran is really at forefront of understanding the problem of sand and dust storms as well as dealing with it.

Letizia Rossano, the director of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), said in June 2022 that Iran is really at forefront of understanding the problem of sand and dust storms as well as dealing with it.

More than 80 percent of the entire populations of Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran are exposed to medium and high levels of poor air quality due to sand and dust storms," she noted.

Intl. conference on combating sand and dust storms to be held in Iran

TEHRAN – An international conference on combating sand and dust storms will be held in Iran, Department of Environment chief Ali Salajeqeh has said.

Based on the successful experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of combating sand and dust storms, the United Nations introduced Iran as the host of the international meeting, he added, IRIB reported.

Arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in July next year, this meeting will be held in Tehran with the presence of the environment ministers of the world countries, Salajeqeh said.

In the field of diplomacy, the Department of Environment has held meetings with neighboring countries to the extent that Egypt has also announced its readiness to attend the Tehran meeting, he highlighted.

He pointed out that a delegation from Iran will travel to Iraq in the near future to discuss the issue of sand and dust storms in order to make decisions to deal with the problem.

In July 2022, Tehran played host to a conference of ministers and officials from 11 countries, aiming to boost cooperation for resolving extant environmental problems, especially sand and dust storms.

Environment ministers of Iraq, Armenia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Syria, and Qatar, as well as deputy ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan along with delegations from Turkey and Uzbekistan, participated in the event which was held with the theme of "Environmental Cooperation for a Better Future."

Addressing the opening ceremony, President Ebrahim Raisi emphasized that the preservation of the environment is essential



and an inevitable priority.

Raisi had earlier obliged the department of environment to diligently pursue the solution of sand and dust storms through diplomacy and international forums, as well as interaction with neighboring countries.

"Conservation of the ecosystem and environment, which is a global concern, especially for countries of the region, is an inevitable priority today. If the environment is not safe and peaceful for people, the development will not be in its proper place and it will even become a threat to human health," Raisi stated.

The SDS phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces.

According to studies, eight large sand and dust storm hotspots stretching to 270 million hectares in neighboring and Persian Gulf countries are affecting Iran.

Regional maps show that Saudi Arabia produces the highest level of particulate matter, followed by Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and the UAE, respectively.

According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. "The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster," he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند. به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه ای امضا می شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص ها بود، هر چند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.

Negotiations with Taliban underway to deal with narcotics

TEHRAN – Iran is negotiating with the Taliban regarding the issue of preventing drug trafficking and production, an official with the anti-narcotics headquarters has said.

"The Taliban cooperated in some areas, and our ultimate effort is to require them to play a role in preventing the entry of drugs into the country's borders," IRNA quoted Mohammad-Massoud Zahedian as saying.

Since the establishment of the Taliban government, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been pursuing the issue of combating drugs and preventing the transfer of narcotics to the borders of Iran, he explained.

"So far, negotiations have been conducted with the Afghan side and the talks are ongoing, and we hope that the results will be successful."

The 20-year performance of Western countries in Afghanistan had no results except for increasing production, and these countries must be responsible for their performance, Zahedian highlighted.

So far, the Islamic Republic has stood alone against drug trafficking in the world with more than 3,200 people martyred and 23,000 others injured, he stressed.

Iran spends about \$700 million to \$1 billion annually to fight against drugs, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary general of the anti-narcotics headquarters, has said.

According to the reports of international institutions and organizations, about 92 percent of drug discoveries are made by Iran, he said, adding that the country is completely alone and the cost is borne by the government and the people.

Momeni emphasized that the international community should increase support to the Islamic Republic to fight against narcotics, especially to curb trafficking, IRNA reported.

"A significant part of the financial burden in the field of combating narcotics includes blocking the borders, dealing with smuggling, identifying and monitoring the transit routes, and offering treatment and rehabilitation services."

"However, Iran has not received any notable help from international organizations until today."

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime opened its representative office in Tehran in 1999, and since that year, Iran has had good cooperation with the United Nations in the field of combating drugs and related fields, he highlighted.



Iran is considered the main partner of the United Nations in the field of combating drugs, and the United Nations has repeatedly thanked Iran for its actions in this field, Momeni stressed.

Despite approving Iran's measures, the United Nations has been financially dependent on Western and European countries, he lamented.

Western countries refuse to financially support the UN for various reasons, such as politicized approaches to human rights, or cruel and unilateral U.S. sanctions, he concluded.

During the 65th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs which took place in March 2022 in Vienna, Austria, Momeni called on the United Nations to present a comprehensive and effective action plan to curb opium cultivation and production and to address the destructive problem of narcotics.

Criticizing that despite numerous UN documents and the constant emphasis on the principle of shared responsibility, Iran has had the least amount of international support, despite its global anti-narcotics actions, hosting more than a few million refugees and fighting terrorist threats in the region, he noted that it is time for the United Nations to present a comprehensive and effective action plan to curb opium cultivation and production to address the devastating problem of narcotics.

He also addressed the issue of unilateral sanctions against Iran, saying that the actions of some countries in imposing harsh sanctions against Iran, politicizing international cooperation, and disrupting Iran's relentless struggle against international drug networks is a clear violation of international law, human rights, and UN resolutions.

In the end, Momeni made suggestions to the Commission to reduce challenges and enhance international efforts to address narcotics trafficking, including, full financial, technical, and equipment support to countries at the forefront of combating international drug and psychotropic substances trafficking.

RAMSAR SITES IN IRAN

Part 70

The site hosts a wide variety of breeding waterfowl, migrant waders and migrant and wintering ducks, geese and coots.

Lake Kobi is a particularly good representative of a natural brackish lake characteristic of the uplands of north-western Iran.

The lake supports the regionally threatened species Aythya nyroca and Oxyura leucocephala and 20 other vulnerable bird species.

The area is an extremely important staging area for ducks and other shorebirds, according to BirdLife International.

It regularly supports over 100,000 birds. Large numbers of ducks stay there during mild winters.

The lake regularly supports more than 1% of 20 threatened bird species, among which Anser anser, Anas clypeata, Aythya ferrina and Fulica atra.

General location

The lake is situated 25 km northeast of Mahabad, West Azarbaijan, between the towns of Mahabad and Miandoab, 75 km southeast of Lake Urmia.

Source: Ramsar.org

To be continued



Picturesque "broken" coast, a natural wonder

Mokassar, literally meaning broken, is a coastal area in the southern Hormozgan province. It is a natural wonder with seemingly broken cliffs that attract many tourists annually.

