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Blueprint for A Stronger Region

Why Ayatollah Khamenei mentioned Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan in pushing for regional unity?



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Iran lays out ambitious space program for second year half

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced plans to reinvigorate its flourishing space program in the second half of the Iranian calendar year.

Tehran took big strides in 2020s by launching three imaging satellites- Noor-1, Noor-2, and Noor-3- into orbit. But the country has bigger plans and is aiming to create a “constellation of satellites” in near future.

Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, The second-in-command of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, rolled out Iran’s space goals during an interview with the Fars News Agency on Wednesday. “Having a constellation of satellites is important because it allows you to meet all the country’s needs in various fields,” the commander said.

According to Fadavi Iran is now capable of making different types of satellites weighing 20, 70, or 100 kilograms.

“We need to build new satellites that are small but have the efficiency of large-scale satellites. This process has been completed and we are now at a stage where we can accomplish great tasks. We are also working on putting larger and heavier satellites into orbit by improving our satellite launchers”.

Iran’s latest space launch involved placing the Noor-3 satellite into a 450 km orbit of the earth using the Iranian Qased satellite carrier. Both Noor-3 and Qased were designed and built by the IRGC’s research units. ► Page 3

IAEA inspectors expelled for political behaviors: nuclear chief

TEHRAN – Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said on Wednesday that the inspectors of the UN nuclear watchdog were expelled from Iran for their “hardline political behavior.”

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Eslami said, “The dismissed inspectors were from three European countries that regularly demonstrated harsh political behaviors, and we removed the inspectors from those countries from the list.”

He also said that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has dozens of designated inspectors in Iran. “The Agency has 127 approved inspectors in Iran, and the people who have been fired have not come to Iran for several years; on the other hand, this number [of dismissed inspectors] is not a [big] number compared to the number of official inspectors,” he said, according to state news agency IRNA.

Eslami continued, “The kerfuffle in this case is caused by the political behavior and psychological operations of these countries, which constantly say that Iran should unilaterally implement the provisions of the JCPOA while they do nothing.” ► Page 3

Report Divisions in U.S. over Ukraine aid

By Ali Karbalaeei

TEHRAN- In a major sign of division across partisan lines, the U.S. Congress has approved no new aid for the Ukraine war in the stopgap U.S. spending bill that was passed on Saturday to avoid a shutdown of the federal government.

It all comes as NATO member Slovakia has elected a prime minister who is strongly opposed to the Ukraine war and won’t send a “single bullet” for Kyiv, reversing Slovakia’s policy toward the conflict.

There are two major factors why the U.S. Congress included no new money for Ukraine.

First is the reluctance of Republican lawmakers to provide any funds for Ukraine as they accuse the government in Kyiv of doing little to combat corruption. ► Page 5

Tehran strongly opposes proposed Zangezur corridor, Raisi says

Iran’s military chief has warned that the continuation of disputes in the Caucasus region will be detrimental to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and other nearby countries.

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has asserted that Tehran is strongly opposed to the so-called proposed Zangezur corridor seeking to link the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan, which borders Turkey, to the main territory of the country.

Raisi made the comments in a meeting with the Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council Armen Grigoryan on Wednesday in Tehran.

Reiterating Iran’s stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Raisi emphasized that the Zangezur corridor is a platform for NATO presence in the region and a threat to the national security of countries,

which the Islamic Republic firmly is at loggerheads with.

Grigoryan presented detailed reports about the Caucasus during the meeting.

Military chief says Iran ready to send observers to Armenia-Azerbaijan border

In order to ease tensions between the two northwestern neighbors, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces has also offered that Iran is ready to send observers to the border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Also, during a meeting with Grigoryan on Wednesday in Tehran, Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri also warned that the continuation of tensions in the South Caucasus region will be detrimental to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and other nearby countries.

The senior general emphasized the need to make efforts to address the conflicts and

tensions in the South Caucasus and pointed out that Iran is ready to assist in doing so.

The events and security challenges in the South Caucasus would have an impact on the entire region’s security, Major General Baqeri said, emphasizing that a country’s defensive and military capabilities should not be expanded for offensive purposes.

The Iranian general added, “Peace and calm in the region would benefit all countries. The regional security must be ensured by the regional countries, as the presence of extra-regional forces upsets regional calm.” ► Page 2

Op-ed Normalization and legalization of all sins!

By Sara Atta

TEHRAN – With the spread of the wrong and illegitimate relationship of homosexuality, marriage as one of the most important principles of human society is abandoned, and the negative results of this issue spread to society.

The Western systems, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, are trying to spread and promote strange phenomena among their own people and other nations with a very strange insistence, using the financial and human capital of the Jews. One of these cases, which has greatly interested the Western cultural system, is homosexuality. ► Page 7



© Mehr/Mohammad Javad Amini

Iran celebrates birthday of Prophet Mohammad (S)

TEHRAN- On Tuesday, multigenerational crowd gathered to commemorate the birthday of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and Imam Sadiq (AS) in Tehran and other cities across Iran.

People of all ages and walks of life attended the ceremonies, where eulogists recited and sang poems, in addition to other cultural and artistic programs.

The conclusion of Islamic Unity Week is marked by this day.

Opportunity for Tajiks to get familiar with Persian literature at 11th Kitobi Dushanbe

TEHRAN-Iran has attended the 11th Dushanbe International Book Exhibition “Kitobi Dushanbe 2023” (The Book of Dushanbe), which kicked off Tuesday in the Tajikistan capital city.

While visiting the Iran pavilion, Deputy Minister of Culture of Tajikistan appreciated Iran’s presence at the fair and said: “Visitors to the exhibition can get familiar with the modern and ancient Persian literature, Iran’s publishing industry, and the Iranian poets and writers at the Iran pavilion”.

Tajikistan was the guest of honor at the 34th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) in May. Referring to this, Davlat Safarzoda said: “I thank the Iranians for their hospitality during the TIBF.” ► Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

The gamble of normalizing relations with the Zionists

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

In a commentary, Resalat talked about the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime. It wrote: According to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the usurping Zionist regime is gradually perishing. He also compared states going for the normalization of ties with Israel to those betting on a losing horse. Today, the occupying regime of Al-Quds is being controlled by the most unstable government in its lifetime. Today, American think tanks, with the support of political and military strategists, are busy calculating the continuation of the struggle against the Iranian nation and the nations of the region, especially the axis of resistance in the region. Repeated failed sabotage attacks, the defeat of separatists, the despair of those seeking sanctions, the retreat of the White House, the acceleration of multilateralism and the fall of the bipolar system, and the world community freeing itself from the tight grasp of Washington are all telling of the fact that any potential normalization deal with Israel is doomed to fail and that seeking ties with the Zionist regime is a political gamble. The kind of gamble that might bring about the fall of governments participating in it. Governments and nations must realize that the usurping Zionist regime is going away as Ehud Barak once said "Israel is being destroyed from within."

Kayhan: We do not pay ransom, but the channel of diplomacy is open

Kayhan analyzed the contradictory signals sent to Iran by Washington and wrote: The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects direct negotiations considering the new sanctions and the illegal seizure of two Iranian oil tankers in the waters of the Persian Gulf. However, Iran has officially confirmed its willingness to continue negotiations. Currently, keeping the diplomatic channel open with America is one of the main topics in Iran's political scene. There is no official or unofficial agreement to increase Iran's oil exports, and on the contrary, the Biden government has imposed several rounds of sanctions on Iran's oil and other exports and has attempted to illegally unload a tanker carrying Iranian oil. In addition, the officials of the Biden government have repeatedly emphasized that they have not suspended any sanctions imposed on Iran. Iran has returned to the stage of international diplomacy and is expanding its diplomatic maneuvers in the form of numerous agreements and treaties. It seems to not take into consideration the agreement with Washington, which the U.S. ended up withdrawing from, in its flurry of diplomacy.

Iranian drone monitors U.S. vessel in Indian Ocean for 24 hours

TEHRAN- An Iranian Army drone was successful in keeping an American vessel under surveillance in the Indian Ocean for around 24 hours, Fars News reported on Tuesday.

The Ababil (Flock of Birds)-V drone successfully conducted the surveillance operation on an American Arleigh Burke-class warship in the northern part of the body of water on Tuesday.

Before beginning the operation, UAV is said to have taken off from a base on the southern Iranian island of Jask.

The Ababil-class unmanned aerial vehicle's body could absorb radar signals, making it difficult for reconnaissance equipment to identify it.

The aircraft is capable of transporting up to six surgical strike missiles with high-explosive warheads.

The Ababil-5 is one of the aircraft presently being deployed by the Army as part of a nationwide drone practice. Hundreds of advanced reconnaissance and combat drones are participating in the drills.

This is not the first time Iranian drones have captured precise photographs and films of American military forces at sea.

The Iranian Army utilized a new domestically-made drone called Kaman-19 in a military exercise taking place across the country beginning on Tuesday.

General Alireza Sheikh, the spokesman for the drill, stated that the Kaman-19 drone has conducted combat sorties for the first time, after joining the war games. The high-technology drone has so far been involved in electronic

Iran: Tehran is a consultation center for solving the Caucasus crisis

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the developments in the Caucasus and Iran's role in creating balance in the region. It said: Iran has been pushing for a diplomatic solution in the Caucasus region within the framework of the 3+3 negotiations. In addition, it has also been holding bilateral talks with both Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding the developments in the caucuses, sending warnings to the warring parties through several extensive military maneuvers, and tried out a number of other political trends to rein in the conflict. The current and future approach of the Islamic Republic in the Karabakh conflict is to influence regional equations, maintain the existing situation at the borders, emphasize the need to maintain peace and stability and resort to peaceful solutions and negotiations to resolve the conflict. Meanwhile, actors such as the Zionist regime and the United States are at the opposite end of the "3+3" format and are ready to increase their support for Baku so they can keep the tensions up and prepare to create a new crisis at any given moment. Iranian officials are going to hold a meeting in Tehran to reach a consensus on how they should resolve the issues plaguing the Caucasus.

Shargh: US seeking to normalize Arab ties with Israel to confront Iran

In an article, Shargh addressed the claims of a senior American official regarding efforts to normalize Saudi Arabia's relations with the Zionist regime. The paper said: Vedant Patel, the State Department principal deputy spokesman, in a press conference on Tuesday evening accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of carrying out "destabilizing and evil activities" in the West Asian region. According to the website of the U.S. Department of State, Patel said that the bilateral relations of the U.S. with the countries seeking to normalize ties with Israel are important, as all these states can help stand against Iran's actions in West Asia which he referred to as "malicious" and "destabilizer". The American diplomat believes that Iran's military cooperation with Russia and the alleged use of Iran's military equipment in the Ukraine war could lead to further actions by Tehran which will end up hurting the interests of the United States in the region. Therefore, Washington must find a way to obstruct Iran's relations with both Arab countries and Russia, in order to stop Iran from disseminating its growing influence across West Asia and potentially other regions.

warfare and aerial radar jamming operations.

The purpose of the exercise is to promote "peace and friendship" among regional countries, the spokesman added, emphasizing the importance of unity and joint action for security without the presence of external forces.

Earlier, commander of the war game Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari confirmed the drill is taking place across the country from the waters of the Persian Gulf to Iran's northern regions.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) of Iran revealed remarkably precise and extremely close footage of an American aircraft carrier obtained by the elite force's drones during an overflight of the vessel in the Persian Gulf in April 2021.

The footage, which was presumably captured by a four-strong drone squadron, gave real-time and highly precise details of every warplane, as well as other military aircraft and equipment that had been placed on the carrier's deck.

General Kenneth McKenzie, chief of the U.S. Central Command at the time, testified before the U.S. Congress that Iran's extensive deployment of drones meant the U.S. was operating without total air dominance for the first time since the Korean War.

In 2019, Iranian media outlets published high-quality, close-up footage of a Corps Ababil-III surveillance drone hovering above the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf.

Tehran strongly opposes proposed Zangezur corridor, Raisi says

From page 1 ▶ The commander encouraged the regional governments to resolve issues via negotiation, warning against the outsiders' strategy of sowing discord and causing disturbance in the region.

General Baqeri also commented on a recent joint military drill between Armenia and the United States, saying, "The presence of new actors from outside the region will add to complication and instability."

In September President Raisi assured Armenia that the Islamic Republic as a powerful neighbor opposes any alteration to the regional boundaries and is ready to play an effective role to avert regional conflicts or geopolitical changes.

The comments by Raisi came amid reports that Azerbaijan may try to link mainland Azerbaijan with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the Armenia province of Syunik.

Nagorno-Karabakh has been at the center of a bloody conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan for decades. Internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, it had been home to an ethnic Armenian population for centuries. As the Soviet Union collapsed in the late 1980s into the early 1990s, Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians tried to break away from Azerbaijan, declaring independence.

A bloody war, in which Armenia aided the separatists, saw hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians also driven out of the region and ended with ethnic Armenians controlling most of Nagorno-Karabakh with their own unrecognized state.

But Azerbaijan reopened the conflict in 2020, starting a full-scale war that decisively defeated Armenia and ended with a truce deal brokered by Russia, which deployed



Armenia's Grigoryan (L) meets Gen. Baqeri

peacekeepers to enforce it.

Two weeks ago, after blockading the enclave for nine months, Azerbaijan launched a new offensive, swiftly defeating the ethnic Armenian authorities in two days. The enclave's population started fleeing shortly afterward to Armenia.

'Caucasus dispute can be solved through 3+3 format'

In a meeting with Grigoryan on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian emphasized the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the South Caucasus countries, noting that the 3+3 format is a viable method for settling conflicts in the Caucasus region without outside intervention.

The 3+3 format includes the three Caucasian nations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia plus Iran, Russia and Turkey.

Amir Abdollahian reiterated the Islamic Republic's steadfast commitment to upholding regional nations' territorial integrity and international borders.

The senior Iranian diplomat stressed the significance of collaboration among regional nations in resolving regional concerns, referring to the 3+3 format as an "effec-

tive mechanism to resolve regional issues without the interference of foreign powers."

Amir Abdollahian also stated that Iran is prepared to deliver humanitarian aid to the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, a landlocked, contentious territory in the Caucasus that is located within Azerbaijan's boundaries.

In a report on October 2, ABC News reported that virtually the entire ethnic Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh has fled, with the last buses carrying refugees having left on October 2, according to Russia's peacekeeping force deployed there.

More than 100,000 ethnic Armenians left the enclave in the last week, according to local officials, abandoning their homes after Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, recaptured the region.

The exodus has emptied the enclave in what Armenia has condemned as "ethnic cleansing."

A television news crew from Al Jazeera showed the region's capital, known to Armenians as Stepanakert, completely deserted. The city, which had a population estimated at more than 50,000, appeared now to be a ghost town. The Al Jazeera crew

Iran calls for decisive, sensible steps to stop Islamophobia

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the foreign minister of Iran, has encouraged Muslim intellectuals all around the globe to take "decisive and wise" measures to combat Islamophobia.

The Iranian foreign minister made the suggestion during a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday with Mustapha Sano, the visiting secretary-general of the International Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence) Academy (IIFA) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Amir Abdollahian recommended consultation and cooperation among the academics in question in order to address "insidious and profane" tactics aimed at Islamic sanctities and values.

He declared that the Islamic Republic is prepared to work with the IIFA on this matter.

Since the year's commencement, the Quran has been profaned in a number of places in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark.

The blasphemous acts, which were all au-

thorized by the governments of the mentioned countries and protected by their security services, have sparked widespread outrage among Muslims throughout the Muslim world.

For his part, the OIC official emphasized the Islamic Republic of Iran's "important and influential" position in the Islamic world.

He praised the country for its "valuable efforts" to strengthen international Muslim unity and the convergence of diverse Islamic religions.

Sano also provided a report on the IIFA's operations to Iran's foreign minister and welcomed a larger participation of Iranian intellectuals and thinkers in the academy's programs.

The two officials also shared views how to improve engagement and cooperation between Iran and the Islamic Jurisprudence Assembly.

Back in June, Amir Abdollahian and OIC Secretary-General Hissein Ibrahim Taha spoke on the phone to discuss the sacrilegious burning of a



copy of the Quran outside a mosque in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden.

At the time, Iran's chief diplomat suggested that the OIC foreign ministers should convene as soon as possible to discuss the sacrilegious act. The Iranian minister also condemned the "offensive and provocative" conduct against the Quran.

The OIC chairman also praised Iran's leadership position in the organization and the importance it places on condemning the blasphemous conduct.

Afghan immigrants not a threat to Iran's security: immigration official

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's immigration organization on Wednesday rejected foreign media claims that the Afghan refugees living in Iran pose security threats to the country.

"Our understanding is that after failing to revive riots this September, foreign-based media outlets are now looking for new arenas to wrought tension. They want to create conflicts between different ethnicities in the upcoming days and months," said Abdollah Mobini during an interview with Iranian media.

The official said creating friction and dispute between Iranian citizens and Afghan immigrants is the enemy's "new project", adding that Iranians have so far been able to live peacefully alongside the Afghan people they are hosting.

"Afghanistan is in an exceptional position and is grappling with various issues. But the country is sure to reach stability and once things are safe and sound, a large number of the Afghan immigrants staying in Iran will choose to return to their homeland".

Mobini also pointed out some videos circulating online are intended to provoke anti-Afghan sentiments. One of the videos showing a number of moving military cars, claims that the Taliban is preparing to attack Iranian positions. It was later revealed the images belonged to Pakistani vehicles being operated inside Pakistan's soil.

The official concluded his remarks by cautioning the people of Iran and Afghanistan that the Israeli regime and the U.S. are behind the recent propaganda campaign which

aims to pit the nations of Iran and Afghanistan against each other.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, there has been an uptick in the number of Afghan immigrants entering Iran. Surveys show that the Afghan citizens deciding to flee the war-torn country are mostly concerned by poverty, hunger, and insecurity.

There are currently 5 million Afghan immigrants in Iran, according to the Iranian interior minister.

What is the U.S. dreaming for Iraq?

By Zahra Akbari

TEHRAN - On September 27, Foreign Affairs ran a story about Iraq titled "America Can Help the Country, Despite Iranian Influence."

The article, written by Steven Simon and Adam Weinstein, started with "What kind of relationship should the United States seek with Iraq?" and claimed "Iraq was a sanctioned pariah state, an enemy purportedly hell-bent on using weapons of mass destruction; after the 2003 U.S. invasion that toppled Saddam's regime, Iraq in turn became an experiment in nation building, a half-hearted partner in the war against terrorism, and a marionette controlled by Iran. Now, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has assigned itself the

task of moving beyond this shifting legacy and normalizing the relationship once and for all."

Iraq was invaded by the U.S. and Britain in March 2003. Other U.S. allies joined American forces in later years. The invasion left half a million Iraqi people killed and the infrastructures destroyed. Iraq, a susceptible playground for extremist forces, experienced the tragic emergence of ISIS. The Western officials who led the invasion were neither shameful nor put on trial.

In fact, considering the destructive effect of the invasion, the U.S. should apologize to the Iraqi people and compensate for the destruction it left in Iraq and the wider region; however, the United States has always pursued its interests in Iraq,

and after backing extremist groups and ISIS, it is now seeking to eliminate the main cause of its defeat in Iraq, namely the Iraqi resistance groups.

"One factor complicating progress in U.S.-Iraqi relations is the proliferation of militias that report to the prime minister but operate outside the formal command structure of the Iraqi military and, in some cases, appear guided by Iran," stated the article.

The writers pointed to Washington's temptation on the elimination of the militias as a "mistake." Yet the writers believe Iraq needs the ability to provide security for its citizens and rein in the militias on its own.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

By Sadegh Fereydounabadi

TEHRAN – With the West Asia region moving toward broader de-escalation, Iran appears to be sensing an opportunity for Muslim solidarity in the face of foreign interlopers.

In his recent speech delivered before a group of Iranian officials, and Muslim ambassadors and luminaries, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, put forth an idea that amounts to a diplomatic initiative.

He implied that the time is ripe for countries of the West Asia region to form a unity that is based on ensuring their sovereignty and fending off foreign meddling and dictates.

Ayatollah Khamenei spoke about the issue of Islamic unity, emphasizing that the unity of Islamic countries in the West Asian and North African regions will prevent theft, coercion, and interference by the U.S. "Today, the U.S. is harming the countries of the region both politically and economically. It is stealing Syria's oil and protecting and safeguarding the cruel, savage, and bloodthirsty Daesh in its camps so it can bring it back out onto the field on the day of need," he said, according to a



readout by khamenei.ir.

He said, "If we all become united and Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf countries adopt a single policy in fundamental and general issues, the oppressive powers cannot and will not dare interfere in our internal affairs and our foreign policies."

The Leader further clarified, "As we have said many times before, we do not encourage war or military action. We avoid it. So, the invitation to come together and unite is to prevent U.S.'s warmongering, since they start wars and all the wars in the region have foreign causes."

Ayatollah Khamenei's calls for unity appear to be directed against the interventions of the U.S. and its regional ally Israel as they are the

biggest enemies of unity among the countries of the region. He implied that Washington and Tel Aviv feed on regional division and discord, which pave the way for their aggression.

In recent years, Israel and the U.S., through media propaganda, sought to portray Iran as the leading destabilizing force in the region. The Leader's initiative, however, indicates that Iran is not only a force for good but is also extending its hand for peace and prosperity in the region.

It also indicates that no other countries are as upset at the resumption of Iran's relations with Arab countries as Israel and the U.S.

Expatriating on his initiative, the Leader called on the leaders of Muslim countries, thinkers, and

luminaries in the region to ponder over Iran's offer.

The Leader's mentioning of the three key countries of the region – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan – as the target countries for the unity initiative is also interesting. The countries in question have all been in the crosshairs of Iran's de-escalatory efforts, with Saudi Arabia officially restoring ties with Iran and Egypt and Jordan in the process of patching up ties relations with Tehran.

Ayatollah Khamenei has long supported the restoration of Iran's relations with these countries. When Sultan Haitham of Oman visited Iran recently in a bid to convey a message from the Egyptian leadership regarding the restoration of ties with Iran, the Leader unequivocally said that Iran welcomes such a step.

The idea of advancing unity among the countries of the region, observers say, would bring about enormous benefits for these countries. It will immunize them against foreign meddling. Furthermore, it will obviate the need for normalization with Israel, which the Leader likened to placing a bet on the wrong horse. In general, the Iranian unity initiative could be indicative of a new conciliatory trend in the region aimed at fostering cooperation and prosperity.

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Straight Truth
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SPORTS

Iran suffer third loss in Volleyball 2024 Olympic Qualifiers



TEHRAN – Iran suffered a 3-1 (25-17, 25-22, 21-25, 25-20) loss against Czech Republic in the Volleyball Olympic Qualifying Tournament Pool A in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Wednesday.

Iran's Saber Kazemi scored 19 points, while Vasina Lukas collected 26 points.

Team Melli had previously lost to Germany 3-1, Ukraine 3-0 and defeated Qatar 3-1.

Iran are scheduled to meet Italy on Friday.

The 2023 FIVB Volleyball Men's Olympic Qualification Tournaments, alternatively the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup (for the tournament held in Japan) and also known as FIVB Road to Paris Volleyball Qualifier, are the three volleyball tournaments to be contested by 24 men's national teams of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), where the top teams will earn a place in the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Al Hilal victorious over Nassaji in 2023/24 Matchday 2

TEHRAN – Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia defeated Iran's Nassaji 3-0 on Matchday 2 of the AFC Champions League (ACL) on Tuesday.

Aleksandar Mitrovic opened the scoring for the visiting team with a header in the 18th minute.

An altercation between Wahid Mohammadzadeh and Mitrovic following an aerial duel developed into a brawl which prompted the referee to send off Al Hilal captain Salman Al Faraj and Nassaji's Amir Houshmand seven minutes before the interval.

Neymar scored Al Hilal's second goal in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in the 58th minute and Saleh Al Shehri scored the third goal in the added time.

Al Hilal will next host Mumbai City, while Nassaji look to make amends when it travels to Uzbekistan to face Navbahor on Matchday Three.

Kabaddi teams into 2022 Hangzhou

TEHRAN – Iranian women's and men's kabaddi teams advanced to semifinals of the 2022 Asian Games on Wednesday.

The women's team beat Bangladesh 54-16 in Group B. Team Melli had already defeated Nepal 43-19 in the group to win the group. They are scheduled to play second-placed team of Group A on Friday.

The men's kabaddi team also defeated South Korea 64-23 in Group B.

They had previously defeated Pakistan 43-16 and Malaysia 53-23 in their previous matches and will play Group A's second-placed team in the semifinals on Friday.

Iran's men's and women's team won their first ever gold medals in the previous edition held in Jakarta, Malaysia.

Rahmati happy for Nassaji's performance against Al Hilal

TEHRAN – Nassaji football team head coach Mehdi Rahmati is satisfied with his team's performance against Al Hilal in Group D of the

AFC Champions League 2023-24 at the Azadi Stadium on Tuesday.

Nassaji suffered a 3-0 loss against the Saudi Arabian giants.

For continental debutants Nassaji, defeat meant they remained on three points, one adrift of Al Hilal and Navbahor but head coach Seyed Mehdi Rahmati said he couldn't fault the effort of his players.

"I have to thank my players because in their first Asian experience against Al Hilal, they didn't back down, they fought and competed with this team, they were able to create scoring chances," said Rahmati.

"Al Hilal is four-time Asian champion and we will learn from matches like this. I believe that gradually these conditions and its character will fit into the team so that we can be present in Asia every year," Rahmati.

Nassaji face a crucial tie against Navbahor away on October 23.

Iran basketball beat South Korea

TEHRAN – Iran's men's basketball team defeated South Korea 89-82 in the 2022 Asian Games in the 5th-8th classification on Wednesday.

Sajad Mashayekhi led Iran with 19 points, while Guna Ra collected 23 points for South Korea.

Team Melli will play the winners of Japan and Saudi Arabia on Friday for the fifth place.

With more than 12,000 competitors from 45 nations and territories, the Asian Games has more participants than the Olympics.

Iran has sent 289 male and female athletes to the Games in 34 sports events.

Iranian wrestlers Kaviyaninejad, Alizadeh win silver

TEHRAN – Greco-Roman wrestlers Naser Alizadeh Amin Kaviyaninejad won two silver medals in the 2022 Asian Games on Wednesday.

Kaviyaninejad started the men's Greco-Roman 77kg with a 9-3 win over South Korea's Hyeonwoo Kim and then defeated Uzbekistan's Dilshod Omongeldiyev in quarterfinal and China's Rui Liu in semifinal.

Kaviyaninejad was defeated against Kyrgyzstan's Akzhol Makhmudov in the final bout.

Alizadeh also lost to Uzbekistan's Jalgasbay Berdimurtov 7-4 in the final bout of men's 87kg weight class.

He first defeated Kyrgyzstan's Atabek Azisbekov 7-1 and then emerged victorious over Turkmenistan's Azym Annamammedov 7-1 and Indian Sunil Kumar 5-1 before reaching final.

Daniyal Sohrabi also won a bronze medal in the men's Greco-Roman 67kg.

Sohrabi beat his North Korean rival Yongjin Ro 5-2 and also beat South Korea's Hansu Ryo 9-0 in the quarterfinal but failed to book his place in the final after losing to Kazakhstan's Meirzhan Shermakhanbet.

Iran water polo lose to China

TEHRAN – Iran's men's water polo team lost to China 15-7 in the 2022 Asian Games on Wednesday.

Team Melli had defeated South Korea 15-4 and Thailand 26-7 in their previous matches in Group A.

Iran advanced to the next stage as the second-placed team.

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IAEA inspectors expelled for political behaviors: nuclear chief

IAEA has 127 approved inspectors in Iran

From Page 1 ▶ The Iranian official also commented on the current differences between the IAEA and Iran regarding the alleged undeclared activities in the past. "That now they once again extract some cases and information from within the JCPOA and put pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran derives from the same political current of pressure to create disturbance and get concessions and this is an illegal and oppressive act."

Iran plans to hold international nuclear meeting in Isfahan in May 2024

Eslami also said that Iran intends to hold an international nuclear conference in Isfahan in May 2024. "Last March, during Grossi's trip, we informed him that starting next year, we want to make this conference international with the

participation of the Agency, and he also clearly stated that they will cooperate," Eslami said.

He added, "Next year, we will hold this conference as the first international nuclear conference of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Isfahan for three days."

Earlier, Eslami said the nuclear achievements of Iran serve humanity. He made the remarks at a meeting with the guests of the 37 International Conference of Muslim Unity held in Tehran.

Eslami said Iran does not seek nuclear weapons and has always pursued peaceful nuclear energy, according to state news agency IRNA.

He also said Iran is ready to share its nuclear achievements with non-hostile countries around the world.



"Iran's nuclear technology achievements are in line with peace and service to humanity, and all of these activities are carried out based on the standards and regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and within the framework of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and NPT and are pursued with the Agency's continuous inspections," he explained.

Iran lays out ambitious space program for second year half

From Page 1 ▶ Also earlier, the head of the Iranian Space Agency, declared Iran will be launching a space capsule within the next six months. Space capsules are used to transport

cargo, scientific experiments, or astronauts between the earth and the space.

"In the first six months of this year, we also began to design several micro and mini satellites

"Also, the construction of Pars-2 and Pars-3 satellites has begun in collaboration with Sa-Iran Complex and the Space Research Institute. In this regard, the construction phase of Pars-2

satellite has started and Pars-3 is in the preliminary design stage," explained Hassan Salarieh.

Iran is among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites.

President Latif says Iraq's ties with Iran of great importance

TEHRAN – Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid on Tuesday hailed Iraq's friendly ties with Iran on Tuesday, deeming them important for the government of Iraq.

Rashid made the remarks during an interview with Iraqi media.

"Our relations with Iran are important as we share a 1400 km border with each other," the official said.

He also stressed that Baghdad will not allow any force to use its soil to harm Iraq's

neighbors. His words come after some Iraqi officials claimed they had stayed committed to a security deal signed with Iran in March, and expelled all separatist militant groups residing in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The terrorist bases that have reportedly been dismantled belong to the Komalah, Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

During the interview, Iraq's president also announced that Baghdad is looking to reach

a similar deal with Turkey. "We are seeking to reach an agreement with Turkey to solve the current problems, as happened with Iran," he said after condemning Ankara for its repeated attacks on the northern regions of Iraq.

Turkey frequently launches airstrikes on northern Iraq, claiming to target the PKK Kurdish group, which it has listed as a terrorist entity. The Turkish raids have sometimes led to civilian deaths and drew angry reactions from Baghdad. Iraq accused Turkey of breaching its sovereignty and national integrity.

Iran rejects EU allegations on Ukraine conflict

TEHRAN – The Iranian mission to the UN has reacted to allegations by the EU and other delegations that tried to link the alleged use of drones in the Ukraine war to Security Council resolution 2231 endorsing the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

"First and foremost, we categorically reject the attempt by these delegations to establish a link between the alleged use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the Ukrainian conflict and Security Council resolution 2231. These allegations lack any foundation and have been consistently refuted by Iran. In our communications to the Security Council and the Secretary-General, including our letter dated 17 August 2023 contained in document (S/2023/610), we have reiterated the baselessness of these desperate attempts, and rejected the baseless accusations of Iran's involvement in this

conflict. The purported evidence is entirely fabricated and lacks any legal validity. Instead of making unprofessional, provocative, and irresponsible baseless allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), the respective delegations should fully and genuinely comply with all of their respective legal obligations under that resolution, including refraining from any actions that undermine its implementation, particularly its annex A," the Iranian mission said in a statement on Tuesday.

It added, "Regarding Iran's peaceful program, it's important to note that the IAEA conducts robust and continuous verification and monitoring activities in Iran's nuclear facilities. We expect that such continuous and deep cooperation with the IAEA by the Islamic Republic of Iran in good

faith is duly recognized. It should also be emphasized that Iran is entitled to utilize its rights as outlined in our Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA concerning the admission of inspectors and other related issues. We maintain a constructive relationship with the IAEA and its secretariat, aiming to resolve any outstanding issues."

The statement continued, "However, it is crucial to underscore that when addressing Iran's peaceful nuclear program, the facts should not be distorted or presented selectively. Of particular importance is the illegal withdrawal of the US from the JCPOA in 2018, which the mentioned delegations seem to overlook. As we have consistently pointed out, there must be a clear distinction between the legal obligations of Member States under their respective safeguards agreements and their voluntary

commitments. The verification and monitoring activities related to the JCPOA are voluntary and are not linked to the CSA. Therefore, it is entirely baseless and unacceptable to repeatedly attempt to connect them to alleged issues."

It noted, "Another important fact is that all of Iran's nuclear materials and activities have been fully declared and verified by the IAEA. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with the highest number of safeguards inspections of its peaceful nuclear program, has a commendable record of cooperation with the IAEA."

The statement also emphasized that Iran's missile program is a domestically developed and defensive capability that fully aligns with our international commitments.

This is not the first time Iran has repudiated allegations regarding its alleged involvement in the Ukraine war. It has long said that it does not side with any party to the war.

Annual export from textile industry stands at \$560m

TEHRAN – Secretary of the Association of Iran Textile Industries Shojaeddin Emami Rauf has said annual export from the country's textile industry stands at \$560 million, while the imports are currently about \$1.880 billion, IRIB reported.

"The imports in the textile industry are currently \$1.880 billion, which includes the import of yarn, clothing, fabric, etc.," Emami Rauf said.

According to the official, approximately \$680 million of the above-mentioned figure is related to the imports of fabrics.

"We have a big gap in the weaving industry and investment should be made in this field; with a small investment we can reduce the imports in this sector and turn raw materials into domestic products," the official said.

"If the government supports weaving units, we can also invest in the spinning and dye sector and increase exports while preventing currency outflow," he added.

According to Emami Rauf, the Iranian textile industry has the capacity to increase exports by 3-4 times.

IRISL net profit increases significantly in last 4 years

TEHRAN – Managing Director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) Mohammadreza Modares-Khiabani said his company's net profit has increased significantly over the past four years, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Speaking at the IRISL annual assembly, Modares-Khiabani said expanding and renewing the fleet is the company's main priority in the coming years.

"Considering the average age of the fleet which is 18 years, it is necessary to modernize it, and for this reason, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines has ordered the construction of four multi-purpose vessels to the 'Sadra Neka' shipbuilding company in north of the country," the official said.

He put the approximate value of the contract for the construction of the mentioned vessels at \$55 million.

Export from Golestan province rises 37% in 6 months on year



TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 37 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Darvish-Ali Hassan-Zadeh, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that 259,000 tons of non-oil goods worth \$141 million were exported from the province in the six-month period of this year, with a 52-percent growth in weight, year on year.

He named ironware, eggs, polystyrene, cheese and other dairy products, fish food, and polyethylene compound as the main exported items, and Turkmenistan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Romania, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Armenia, and Romania as the major export destinations.

As previously announced by the official, the value of export from Golestan province increased by 26 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

He said that non-oil commodities worth \$235 million were exported from the province to 33 countries in the previous year.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported 67.7 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$24.144 billion

TEDPIX gains 2,200 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), gained 2,263 points to 2,069,800 on Wednesday.

As reported, over 6.042 billion securities worth 43.376 trillion rials (about \$88.5 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).

Loading, unloading of goods in Iran's ports up 3% in H1

TEHRAN – The loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran increased by three percent in the first six months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) reported, 111,806,313 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports in the first half of the current Iranian year.

Of the mentioned figure, 74,415,327 tons were related to loading, and 37,392,654 tons were related to unloading.

The loading of goods in the mentioned period also increased by nine percent as compared to the figure for the previous year's same six months.

During the said period, loading



and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,432,672 TEUs, which was five percent more than the 1,284,604 TEUs in the first six months of the past year.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its

economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the

government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in the course of five years.

According to the PMO, the capacity of the country's ports has increased from 180 million tons in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (ended in March 2014) to 250 million tons in 1399 (ended in March 2021).

New free zone at border with Iraqi Kurdistan region to be established soon

TEHRAN - The Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council announced that the Baneh-Marivan Free Zone located on the border with Iraq's Kurdistan Region is going to be opened in the coming weeks.

As the Iranian Free Zones News Agency (Freena) reported, Hojatollah Abdolmaleki made the announcement in a press conference on the sidelines of Iran's exclusive exhibition in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan region.

"The establishment of this free zone will play a special role in the development of cooperation between Iran and Kurdistan," Abdolmaleki said.

Stating that the Baneh-Marivan Free Zone has been legally approved and the members of the board of directors have also been elected by the cabinet, Abdolmaleki added: "This zone is an opportunity for boosting joint economic activities between Iran and Iraq, and businessmen and economic operators of the region can benefit from the potentials of this free zone."

The exclusive exhibition of Iranian products kicked off in Sulaymaniyah of Iraqi Kurdistan on Tuesday.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by senior officials from both sides including Abdolmaleki, the secretary general of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, the Iranian envoy in Sulaymaniyah, and the head of the Union of Exporters and Importers of the Kurdistan Region.

In late July, Abdolmaleki announced the desire of Iraq to establish a joint free zone with Iran and said the first joint free zone of the two countries will be set up by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024).

The prime minister of Iraq has considered an area in Iraq's Wasit province near the Mehran border for the creation of a joint Iran-Iraq free zone, the studies of which are underway, the official announced.

Restating that the first joint free trade zone between Iran and Iraq will enter the operational stage by the end of the year, he added: "Iraqi investors are interested in exporting their goods to other places in order to meet their needs and develop trade by passing through Iran and accessing the Indian Ocean and open waters from Iran's free and special economic zones."

In an exclusive interview conducted by the Tehran Times in mid-June, the official said: "We

have negotiated to set up joint zones with 18 neighboring and non-neighboring countries. These are the new generation of free zones in the world."

Most of the countries are neighbors and some are non-neighbors like China and Uzbekistan, he added.

In relation to these zones, there are two main things: First, the rules of work for the entrepreneurs of the two countries will be the same there; and second, all laws of free zones will be according to international standards, the official stated.

Meanwhile, exchanging land and services is possible according to the laws, he added.

First of all, this work is an important model in nullifying the sanctions and secondly, it greatly facilitates the trade between Iran and those countries, Abdolmaleki further noted.

Three or four joint free zones will probably be established by the end of this year, the official announced.

Abdolmaleki also negotiated with the officials of the free trade and special economic zones of Uzbekistan about the establishment of a joint free zone between the two countries, during a two-day visit to Tashkent in late April.

He participated in the international investment meeting of Uzbekistan, which was held in the presence of the president and other high-ranking officials of this country and heads of international and regional financial organizations and institutions.

By visiting several free and special zones of Uzbekistan, the Iranian official discussed the benefit and use of joint capacities and opportunities for investment and trade between the two countries.

The establishment of free trade zones (FTZs) in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989 - March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote non-oil exports.

The first two free trade zones of Iran were established in the south of the country. The first one was Kish Free Trade Zone established in 1368 on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf and the second one was Qeshm Free Trade Zone established the year after on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz.

Some five other free trade zones have been



Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki (C) talks to the press on the sidelines of Iran's exclusive exhibition in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, on Tuesday.

also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azərbaycan Province and Maku in West-Azərbaycan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

The development of existing free trade zones and the establishment of new FTZs has become one of the major economic approaches of the Iranian government.

Last December, the secretary of the Free Zones High Council said that this council is seeking to modify the country's free trade zones (FTZ) comprehensive law.

Speaking in a TV program, Abdolmaleki said, "The good news for the entrepreneurs of the regions, both the current ones and those who, God willing, will soon join us, is that we are looking for the modification of the so-called comprehensive law."

"The free zones have been relatively successful, although they also had failures; What is our main goal is to guide the free zones to that main path and those goals that are considered in the resistance economy are the increase of exports and foreign investment and the transfer of technology and also meeting the country's needs," the official stated.

"We follow two approaches or two general strategies in the new period of management in the free zones. Our first approach is to popularize the free zones and our second approach is to globalize these zones," he added.

Tehran hosting MINEX 2023



across the country.

According to GSI Head Alireza Shahidi, the mentioned zones have been identified under the framework of a program called "geological transformation and exploration of mineral reserves".

This program has been carried out with the aim of developing unprivileged areas, creating productive employment with a special focus on the local expert workforce, collecting infrastructural information in accordance with land use, and finally discovering new reserves through aerial geophysical surveys, the official said.

Shahidi noted that the identified

zones include 17 promising new gold zones, 60 copper zones, 25 nickel zones for the first time in eastern Iran, nine magnesite zones, and six lead and zinc zones.

According to the official, the necessary funding for the mentioned program has been supplied by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the GSI, and the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry under the framework of a trilateral agreement signed in 2021.

In this program, 60 geological and exploratory projects were implemented in an area of more than 37,500 square kilometers, Shahidi said.

Having 81 different types of minerals, Iran is one of the top 10 mineral-rich countries across the globe. In this regard, the Iranian government has been seriously pursuing several programs to promote the mining sector as a major contributor to the country's

economic growth.

The total proven reserves of Iran's mines are expected to reach more than 100 billion tons with the implementation of the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's exploration programs over 500,000 square kilometers of new mineral zones.

Despite the country's huge potential in this area, due to some issues like the lack of necessary machinery and equipment and the lack of access to financial resources and foreign investment because of the U.S. sanctions, the Iranian mining sector has been struggling to operate at its maximum capacity over the past few years.

So, the government programs for promoting this industry are mainly focused on relying on domestic sources to help the mining sector overcome its current problems and hit its ideal targets.

Divisions in U.S. over Ukraine aid

Republicans oppose money sent to Ukraine amid "corruption" concerns

From page 1 ▶ This is an allegation that the Ukrainian government has dismissed.

The same Republicans in Congress also argue that as the United States faces heavy budget deficits, the federal government should be spending this money domestically or to raise Washington's ability to compete with China's broad development.

In the lead-up to the stopgap U.S. spending bill vote, it was evident that opposition to the military assistance for Ukraine was growing across partisan lines, amid different amendments to a bill mainly focused on prohibiting all military assistance to Ukraine, gaining more votes and breathing new life into a process that threatened a federal government shutdown.

Highlighting the sensitivity of the matter, Republican senators led by Florida Representative Matt Gaetz accused Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy of striking a deal with President Biden to approve the last-minute government spending deal that did not include the Ukraine money, which Biden had been seeking, in exchange for McCarthy agreeing to hold another vote on the matter later.

During a speech on the House floor addressed at his fellow Republican McCarthy, Gaetz angrily asked: "What was the secret side deal on Ukraine?"

However, by Tuesday night the Republicans ousted McCarthy as the speaker amid infighting within the GOP.

"Kevin McCarthy is a creature of the swamp. He has risen to power by collecting special interest money and redistributing that money in exchange for favors. We are breaking the fever now," Gaetz told reporters after the vote.

He had earlier pointed out that the U.S. "must suspend all foreign aid for the war in Ukraine and demand that all combatants in this conflict reach a peace agreement immediately."

The White House had said that an additional \$24 billion in military assistance was needed for the Ukraine war.

On Wednesday Republican front-runner for the presidential election Donald Trump accused President Biden of putting "Ukraine first" and



"America last".

Whether this policy is playing with voters' minds ahead of the presidential election or if the statements of Republicans are genuine is something that remains to be seen.

The second major element against the surprising suspension of further military aid to Ukraine is the polls among the American public.

Surveys show that U.S. support for Ukraine among Americans is slowly eroding away amid a war that they do not understand.

This may prove critical in the election time as the much anticipated and strongly publicized Ukrainian spring counter-offensive to recapture territory captured by Russian forces in eastern Ukraine has only made very little progress despite the vast amount of sophisticated weapons shipped to Ukraine, especially by the U.S.

This has played a role in the minds of American voters and with the winter season approaching along with Russian troops strongly fortifying their positions, Western military experts have admitted the winter conditions, in particular the heavy mud, will not enable Ukrainian forces to break the Russian lines.

On Tuesday, the White House said that Biden had spoken with the leaders of the U.S. allies, the European Union, and the NATO military alliance on how to coordinate support for Ukraine.

Amid concern that support for Ukraine is fading, Biden's call included the leaders of

Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, Britain and France, as well as the heads of the European Commission and the European Council, the White House said in a statement.

Democrats, who strongly support military aid to Ukraine, insist that Congress will back continued assistance.

In the House of Representatives, where Republicans hold a majority, there are indications that votes on more military aid to Ukraine will be blocked.

The U.S. has sent tens of billions of dollars worth of military assistance to Ukraine, which critics say is only prolonging the war and suffering of Ukrainians.

Some experts argue the U.S. is fighting Russia with Ukraine being used as a proxy.

Russia says the congressional vote was a sign of increasing division in the West.

"We have repeatedly said before that according to our forecasts fatigue from this conflict, fatigue from the completely absurd sponsorship of the Kyiv regime, will grow in various countries, including the United States," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

This comes as Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador denounced as "irrational" U.S. military aid to Ukraine and called on Washington to allocate more resources to help Latin American countries instead.

"...How much have they destined for the Ukraine war?"

30 to 50 billion dollars for the war," he told reporters. "Which is the most irrational thing you can have. And damaging."

Analysts say that despite the Western media propaganda campaign against the Ukraine war, the people are questioning their governments' statements on the war.

In Europe, former prime minister Robert Fico won the most votes in Slovakia's election and has now been given a mandate to form a government.

His campaign slogan had called for "not a single round" of ammunition from Slovakia's reserves to be sent to Ukraine.

Speaking at a press conference, Fico said, "We are not changing that we are prepared to help Ukraine in a humanitarian way. We are prepared to help with the reconstruction of the state, but you know our opinion on arming Ukraine."

It's a major turnaround for Slovakia as a NATO member that borders Ukraine and has taken in Ukrainian refugees since the war erupted in February 2022.

Slovakia's outgoing government had delivered a major amount of weapons and other military assistance to Kyiv, most notably being among the first NATO members to send fighter jets to the Ukrainian Air Force.

Now Fico has said he will not send "another bullet" to help Ukraine fight Russia, whilst previously, during his campaign, described the Western sanctions against Russia as "useless" and pledged to veto a Ukrainian application to join NATO.

Former envoy:

Baku, Yerevan should fulfill their commitments

Former Iranian ambassador to Baku says Azerbaijan and Armenia should not pave the way for the presence of transregional powers in the Caucasus by fulfilling their commitments towards each other.

Referring to the South Caucasus crisis, Mohsen Pakaein in an interview with Mehr News agency said, "The two main actors in this conflict are Azerbaijan and Armenia, and if these two countries fulfill their commitments, other countries cannot affect the peace process in the Caucasus."

He stated that Azerbaijan and Armenia had committed to accepting each other's territorial integrity, adding that the Republic of Azerbaijan had agreed to accept the territorial integrity of Armenia and Sivnik province of this country, and due to this acceptance, the shadow of war would be removed from this province and Zangzor Corridor. Therefore, the acceptance of obligations by the two countries will ensure the stability of peace.

The former ambassador of Iran to Azerbaijan also said that the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to recognize the territorial integrity of countries, not to change the international borders and to protect the rights of Armenians in Karabakh.

Referring to the role of the West, especially the United States, in the Caucasus crisis, Pakaein said that second players like the United States cannot oppose the acceptance of the territorial integrity of the



countries by each other. They act neither in the interest of Azerbaijan nor Armenia and in fact, they want to enter the Caucasus under this pretext to isolate Russia.

He noted that the transregional countries are seeking to turn the Caucasus into a place of competition and conflict between America, Europe, and Russia, and in fact, since Russia is engaged in a war in Ukraine, they want to push Moscow into another problem as well.

The former ambassador said, therefore, the current situation is not in the interest of the region. It seems that Azerbaijan and Armenia think wisely and try to resolve the issues through negotiations so that there is

no need for the presence of transregional countries.

He added that Mr. Ilham Aliyev and the authorities of Azerbaijan have clearly stated that they do not intend to attack the Armenians of Karabakh and are not looking for another war in the region.

Pakaein pointed out that Armenia has also announced in the same framework that it will not interfere in the internal affairs of Karabakh and considers it to be the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Therefore, if the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia can stick to their commitments, the transregional countries will not have an excuse to be in the Caucasus.

WORLD HEADLINES

McCarthy will not run for speaker again after House votes to oust him

Kevin McCarthy will not run for speaker again after the House ousted him from the top leadership post in a historic vote on Tuesday, a move that threatens to plunge House Republicans into even further chaos and turmoil.

The House will now need to elect a new speaker. There is no clear alternative to McCarthy who would have the support needed to win the gavel, but the race for a potential successor is already underway.

The vote to oust McCarthy and his decision not to run for the speakership again marks a major escalation in tensions for a House GOP conference that has been mired in infighting – and it comes just days after McCarthy successfully engineered a last-minute bipartisan effort to avert a government shutdown. No House speaker has ever before been ousted through the passage of a resolution to remove them.

"I don't regret standing up for choosing governing over grievance. It is my responsibility. It is my job. I do not regret negotiating. Our government is designed to find compromise," McCarthy said at a wide-ranging press conference Tuesday evening.

Dozens of his staffers were in the room listening with many emotional and hugging each other.

McCarthy told CNN's Manu Raju he "might" endorse a successor and did not say whether he would remain in Congress. "I'll look at that," he said when asked.

South Korea warns North Korea against using nuclear weapons

South Korea's Defense Ministry warned Wednesday that North Korea will witness the "end of its regime" if it makes any effort to employ nuclear weapons.

"Our military is equipped with a combined South Korea-US readiness posture that can overwhelmingly respond to any attack from North Korea.

"If North Korea attempts to use nukes, it will face the end of its regime," the ministry said in a statement, the Seoul-based Yonhap News Agency reported.

The statement comes in response to Pyongyang's recent revision of its constitution to firmly establish its nuclear stance.

Membership for Ukraine would cost EU 200\$ billion – FT

Ukraine could receive billions of euros in subsidies from the EU upon the country's accession to the bloc, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday, citing an internal study by the secretariat of the EU Council.

According to the report, Kiev would be entitled to €96.5 billion (\$101 billion) in payments from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Ukraine would also be eligible for €61 billion (\$64 billion) in subsidies from the EU's cohesion funds, dedicated to improving infrastructure in poorer member states. In total, the bloc may have to allocate roughly €186 billion (\$195 billion) for Ukraine in the seven years following its entry.

The paper notes that this would greatly affect the EU's agricultural subsidy regime. According to calculations, Ukraine has 41.1 million hectares of utilized agricultural area, and would become the bloc's largest recipient of subsidies. This would force a cut in payments for existing recipients by some 20.3% per 1 hectare of farmland. Experts say the changes may be too high a price to admit Ukraine as a member, unless adjustments are made to the EU budget.

"These numbers aren't going to work for anyone. They make clear that root and branch reform of the EU budget and its major policies will be needed if Ukraine is to ever join, or that the entire Ukraine question will have to be dealt with innovatively and outside of existing EU budget structures," Mujtaba Rahman, managing director for Europe at the Eurasia Group, told the news outlet.

The EU Council based its study on the bloc simultaneously accepting nine additional members: Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and six western Balkan states. According to the analysis, the cost of adding them all to the EU's existing budget would amount to roughly €256.8 billion (\$269 billion). The study warned that the entry of new members would cause a drastic redistribution of funds within the union. For instance, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta would no longer be eligible for cohesion funding.

BJP is 'legitimizing' hate speech: Indian Muslim MP

On September 21, Kunwar Danish Ali, an Indian Muslim member of parliament with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), was subjected to Islamophobic comments and communal slurs by a legislator from India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri called Ali a "pimp," a "terrorist" and used the pejorative "circumcised" among other derogatory remarks inside the Indian parliament.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Kunwar Danish Ali said, "I have given my complaint to the speaker of the Lok Sabha [lower house of parliament]. [There has been] no action from the [ruling] party's side. I wrote a letter to the prime minister to at least make a statement to condemn this type of behaviour – otherwise, you are legitimizing this."

After this incident, Bidhuri was appointed BJP head of Rajasthan's Tonk district.

Ali said on that, "Instead of expelling Bidhuri from the party and taking action, they are promoting him as a star campaigner. So what does it [signify]? That the party is legitimizing the hate speech which he delivered in parliament."

S. Arabia to continue voluntary cuts of oil production by year-end

Saudi Arabia made the decision to continue implementing measures of voluntary oil production cuts by one million barrels daily until the end of 2023, the Saudi Press Agency said, citing an official source in the Energy Ministry of the Kingdom.

"An official source from the Ministry of Energy announced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will continue its voluntary cut of one million barrels per day, which has gone into implementation in July 2023 and was later extended until the end of December 2023," the news agency said.

The country plans to hold the next review of the measure and consider an opportunity of increasing or reducing oil production next month.

India's spies infiltrated West long before Canada's murder claim

India's external intelligence service is a feared foe in its neighborhood: Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal have all accused it of political meddling and involvement with outlawed groups that have perpetrated acts of violence.

Now, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation last month that Indian government agents were involved in the June killing of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in a Vancouver suburb has thrust Delhi's secretive Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) into the global spotlight.

India angrily denied the allegations and demanded that Canada – which expelled RAW's station chief – furnish evidence. Ottawa said it shared proof with allies, but will not release it publicly.

Reuters spoke to four retired and two serving Indian security and intelligence officials familiar with RAW who said the agency was galvanized to play a more assertive international role after the 2008 Mumbai attacks that left 166 people dead. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Hearing-impaired offered sightseeing tours in Mashhad



TEHRAN—Mashhad's tourism directorate has conducted guided city tours for the hearing-impaired people.

More than 40 people, who were unable to hear, joined special sightseeing tours in Mashhad, CHTN reported on Wednesday.

The day-long tour was part of an extensive local program held to mark the National Tourism Week in Iran, which began on September 27, concurrent with World Tourism Day, the report said.

Ferdowsi Mausoleum, Khorasan Great Museum, and Mashhad Botanical Garden were among the destinations they visited, the report said.

According to official data, Mashhad, which is a prime destination for Shia pilgrims and medical travelers in northeast Iran, recorded some four million overnight stays, mainly by domestic travelers, in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

The metropolis is Iran's holiest and second-largest city. The raison d'être is the striking shrine complex of the eighth Shia

Imam that is encircled by dozens of five-star hotels and many other accommodation centers.

Every year, over 20 million pilgrims visit the holy shrine and perform a set of traditions, one of which is the upper-mentioned salutation rituals.

Mashhad's medical tourism revenues were about 1.119 trillion rials (some \$2.2 million) during the first three months of the current Iranian year, which shows 35 percent growth year on year, according to data compiled by the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences. Moreover, the statistics suggest the number of international travelers receiving medical services had increased by seven percent compared to the same period a year earlier. "A total of 13,948 foreign nationals received medical services in Mashhad this spring while the number reached 13,074 in the same period last year."

In August 2020, the spiritual tradition of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) was registered on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Iguazu National Park

Located in Misiones province in the north-eastern tip of Argentina and bordering the Brazilian state of Parana to the north, Iguazu National Park, jointly with its sister park Iguacu in Brazil, is among the world's visually and acoustically most stunning natural sites for its massive waterfalls. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1984.

According to UNESCO, across a width of almost three kilometres the Iguazu or Iguacu River, drops vertically some 80 meters in a series of cataracts.

The river, aptly named after the indigenous term for "great water" forms a large bend in the shape of a horseshoe in the heart of the two parks and constitutes the international border between Argentina and Brazil before it flows into the mighty Parana River less than 25 kilometres downriver from the park. Large clouds of spray permanently soak the many river islands and the surrounding riverine forests, creating an extremely humid micro-climate favouring lush and dense sub-tropical vegetation harbouring a diverse fauna.

In addition to its striking natural beauty and the magnificent liaison between land and water Iguazu National Park and the neighbouring property constitute a signifi-

cant remnant of the Atlantic Forest, one of the most threatened global conservation priorities. This forest biome historically covering large parts of the Brazilian coast and extending into Northern Argentina and Uruguay, as well as Eastern Paraguay, is known for its extreme habitat and species diversity, as well as its high degree of endemism.

Around 2000 plant species, including some 80 tree species have been suggested to occur in the property along with around 400 bird species, including the elusive Harpy Eagle. The parks are also home to some several wild cat species and rare species such as the broad-snouted Caiman.

Jointly with contiguous Iguacu National Park in Brazil, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986, it constitutes one of the most significant remnants of the so-called Interior Atlantic Forest. Today, the parks are mostly surrounded by a landscape that has been strongly altered due to heavy logging, both historically and into the present, the intensification and expansion of both industrial and small-scale agriculture, plantation forestry for pulp and paper and rural settlements. Jointly, the two sister parks total around 240,000 hectares with this property's contribution being c. 67,000 hectares.

A Norwegian man stumbled upon a trove of gold dating to the early Middle Ages

A Norwegian man who took up metal detecting as a hobby accidentally discovered a trove of gold treasure that date from around 500 CE.

Erlend Bore, aged 51, from the city of Stravanger, was going for a walk on the island of Rennesøy when his metal detector began beeping. Although his first thought was that he'd chance upon foiled chocolate coins, Bore alerted archaeologists who managed to locate and unearth three gold rings as well as nine gold medallions and ten gold pearls that were originally strung together on a necklace.

These flat, circular pendants are known as bracteates and are imprinted on one side with a rare motif representing the Norse god Odin healing a horse that is depicted in visible dis-

tress, with a lolling tongue and twisted legs. "The horse symbol represented illness and distress, but at the same time hope for healing and new life," said professor Sigmund Oehrl.

Altogether the hoard weighs around 3.5 ounces, making it "the gold find of the century in Norway," according to Ole Mason who directs the nearby University of Stravanger's Museum of Archaeology where the coins will now be kept. "To find that much gold all at once is extremely unusual."

It is believed that the precious jewelry, the design of which evinces considerable skill, must have once belonged to a high status individual that experts believe was most likely a woman.

(Source: Arnet News)

Huge underground shelter exposed near previously discovered one in central Iran

TEHRAN—A massive underground 'city' has recently been discovered kilometers away from another ancient one that once sheltered locals from foreign invaders in Tiran-Karvan county of Isfahan province, central Iran.

Situated in Dowlatabad village, it is the second-hand-dug underground city that is discovered in Tiran-Karvan county, Tiran-Karvan's tourism chief said on Wednesday.

The newly discovered subterranean area covers some 10,000 square meters, Mohsen Mazaheri said.

A team of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts is currently assessing the underground city to document it and determine its date, Mazaheri added.

With an area of 20,000 kilometers, the previously found area is believed to be one of the unique underground cities in the world. Named after Kord-e Olya village, where it is situated, the under-



ground city embraces mazing corridors, 80 water wells, 80 entrances for access, as well as many rooms and halls, built for military and security use during the Parthian period.

In an interview with Iran Press, the head of the village's tourism official, Ali Safari, said the architecture of the underground city has been built based on ir-

regular architecture, and due to the height of the people of the Parthian period, which was over two meters, the city was a kind of military fort.

The underground city of Kord-e Olya in Isfahan dates back to 2,000 years ago and is built on three floors and has a difference in level, he said.

The entrances and exits of the

underground city are sectioned one meter apart from each other and its doors open at sunrise.

Iran is a haven for ancient troglodytic architecture which is somewhat forgotten, though they are filled with life and creativity. The northwest Kandovan village is one of the most famous examples of troglodytic architecture in the country; its ice-cream cone-shaped homes resemble that of Turkey's Cappadocia.

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran from 247 BC to 224 CE. They largely adopted the art, architecture, religious beliefs, and royal insignia of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which encompassed Persian, Hellenistic, and regional cultures. At its height, the Parthian Empire stretched from the northern reaches of the Euphrates, in what is now central-eastern Turkey, to eastern Iran.

Khosro Mosque restoration ends

TEHRAN—A project to restore the interior spaces of the 18th-century Khosro Mosque of Ardestan in central Iran to its former glory is nearing completion.

A team of restorers have treated the mosque's plasterwork, floorings, and ceilings as well as reinforcing its load-bearing walls in two months, Ardestan's tourism chief said on Wednesday.

The three-story mosque is one of the most stunning and treasured historical and religious buildings in this city, which is of high importance when it comes to architectural splendor, the official said.

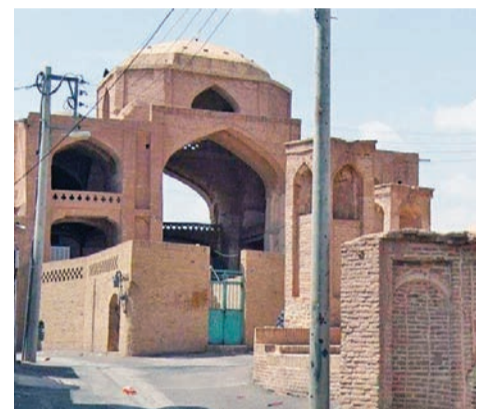
Narratives say that place of worship was built by one of the elites of the time named Khosro in 1723.

Predominantly, two main types of mosques can be distinguished: the masjid jameh, or "collective mosque," a large state-controlled

mosque that is the center of community worship and the site of Friday prayer services; and smaller mosques operated privately by various groups within society.

The first mosques were modeled on the place of worship of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—the courtyard of his house at Medina—and were simply plots of ground marked out as sacred.

Though the mosque as such has undergone many architectural changes, the building remains essentially an open space, generally roofed over, containing a mihrab and a minbar, with a minaret sometimes attached to it. The mihrab, a semicircular niche reserved for the imam to lead the prayer, points to the qiblah—i.e., the direction of Mecca. The minbar, a seat at the top of steps placed at the right of the mihrab, is used by the preacher (khatib) as a pulpit. In the early days of Islam, the rulers delivered their speeches from the minbar.



Outside the mosque stands the minaret, which was originally an elevated place but is now usually a tower. It is used by the muezzin to proclaim the call to worship five times each day. A place for ablution, containing running water, is usually attached to the mosque but may be separated from it.

Archaeologists shed new light on massive cave in northern Iran



TEHRAN—An archaeological team in northern Iran has collected survey samples from the Sepahbod-Khorshid Cave, whose arched entrance is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

"It is the first time that Sepahbod-Khorshid undergoes excavation," Mazandaran province's deputy tourism chief said on Wednesday.

So far, the cave's entrance and parts of its [inner] structure have been subject to excavations, Mohsen Bastani said.

Apart from the cave, six other archaeological sites across the province underwent archaeological work during the first half of the [current Iranian calendar] year (started on March 21), the official said.

Authorized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the excavation served as a prerequisite for a subsequent restoration project intended to help safeguard treasured elements of the cave. "To undertake restoration, it is necessary to first excavate to pro-

vide enough spaces for restorers. We should start that to see what architectural phenomena and plans we are facing in the vast cave," a local official explained earlier this year.

Measuring 80 by 100 meters, the cave's rounded entrance is said to be the largest natural one in the world.

Situated in Savadkuh highlands, the cave was used as a shelter by Khorshid ("The sun"), the last ruler of Tabarestan, then surrounded by Arab invaders for several months and seized after poisoning its drinking water supply.

Narratives say the cave was the latest Persian stronghold against the Arab conquerors.

Access to the cave needs climbing gear and also expertise in alpinism. On the left side of the cave, a four-story-high castle was built; made of stones and mortar, it is the masterpiece of architecture of its time. On the right side, numerous trenches

and defensive buildings were built, all of which remained firm and intact after centuries.

These two parts were connected through a road made of stones and mortar. Two meters wide, this road was built 50 meters above ground level. Today, only traces of it remain. The remains of a cistern, several silos, and numerous defensive monuments are located outside the cave.

Sandwiched between the towering Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran has a rich yet turbulent history. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and south-eastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

Mysterious and 'beautifully carved' life-size camel carvings discovered in Saudi Arabian desert

Archaeologists have documented a cluster of carvings depicting camels on a rock outcropping near the southern edge of Saudi Arabia's Nafud desert.

The monumental artwork portrays a dozen life-size wild camels, a now-extinct species that once roamed this swath of the Arabian Peninsula desert thousands of years ago but has never received a scientific name, according to a study published in the December issue of the journal *Archaeological Research in Asia*.

While the site, named Sahout, had been recognized by other archaeologists for some time, this

is the first time someone noticed the camel carvings on the outcropping.

"We learned about the site from another paper—but the panel was difficult to find because its location wasn't precise, and this isn't an easy landscape [to navigate]," study lead author Maria Guagnin, a postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology in Germany, told *Live Science*.

Finding the outcropping in the sand dunes wasn't the only challenge. Because the carvings have newer etchings overlapping the camels, there's an added layer of mystery surrounding which culture created the artwork and when.

"The outcroppings contain a dense cluster of rock art from many different periods," Guagnin said. "You can see that the carvings were done in various phases and are stylistically different."

It also doesn't help that most of the carvings were made inside crevices, making them difficult to access and radiocarbon date.

However, radiocarbon dating of two trenches and two hearths nearby indicate that the Sahout site was repeatedly occupied between the Pleistocene (2.6 million to 11,700 years ago) and the Middle Holocene (7,000 to 5,000 years ago), according to the study.

(Source: *Live Science*)

DOE chief attending Asia-Pacific environmental forum

TEHRAN- Ali Salajeqeh, head of the Department of Environment (DOE), is participating in the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (5th AP Forum) which is held from October 3rd to 6th in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The event is jointly organized by the Government of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Environment and the United Nations Environment Program, and attendees have the option to participate either in-person or virtually.

On October 8, 2021, Salajeqeh urged the world to avoid politicization of the environment, but to uphold the globally recognized "common but differentiated responsibilities".

He made the remarks at the 4th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, held virtually.

Pointing to the major environmental challenges, he said that "we need to synergize our efforts to achieve a better result to save the planet."

"In the region, we are facing several environmental pressing issues and problems that are ever-increasing and exacerbating. Water scarcity is among the most important ones and many member states are trying hard to catch up with it."

Expressing pleasure, he noted that "there is finally a global tendency to building back better and to formulate a balanced nature."

Also, it is good to see special attention to green recovery which will greatly help to achieve



the sustainable development goals and various international instruments' objectives to preserve and promote biodiversity and ecosystems."

This noble objective would be achieved by creating green jobs, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and a healthy circular economy.

"To address these challenges, we have to avoid politicization of the environment and we need to uphold the globally recognized 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities'."

Developed countries have to recognize their commitment to providing means of implementation such as financial assistance and transfer of technologies and the developing countries need to make the best use of their resources, he highlighted.

"Sustainable development now is at the center of the United Nations efforts; however, we need to bear in mind that devel-

opment cannot be prescribed as a global solution to fit into the local or regional policies.

By the same token, we need to address the unilateral sanctions against some countries including mine, which is an important impediment to the financial contributions of those countries to maintain the pace of conservation of nature," he further emphasized.

AP Forum

The Forum provides a platform for governments, inter-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to discuss and prioritize environmental issues in the Asia Pacific region, said a report released by the UN Environment Assembly website.

It aims to contribute to the outcome of the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) taking place from 26 February to 1 March 2024 in Nairobi, with the theme "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multi-

lateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution".

The Forum offers Member States and other stakeholders an opportunity to present an Asia Pacific perspective on discussions at UNEA-6.

Participants will review the progress of UNEA resolutions' implementation in the region, as well as the progress made in regional forums and platforms where UNEP is the secretariat.

Such forums include the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership, Asia Pacific Adaptation Network, Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia, and the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Environment and Health.

Furthermore, the Forum will identify regional priorities and emerging issues, and address challenges and opportunities to strengthen the regional environmental agenda, delivering on the environmental dimension of the SDGs, and regional commitments to multilateral environmental agreements.

Participants will contribute to the draft UNEA-6 result documents, including ministerial statements and draft resolutions, and will share their insights and ideas for achieving the environmental dimension of the 2030 SDGs.

The first Forum of Ministers and Environmental Authorities of Asia Pacific took place from May 19 to 20, 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Iran celebrating World Space Week



TEHRAN - The Iranian Space Agency (ISA) is holding different programs and scientific events to celebrate World Space Week from October 4 to 10.

The Week is celebrated in different parts of the country by setting up stalls on the streets, holding specialized conferences on space and entrepreneurship, space and sun observation workshops, as well as scientific meetings with the presence of national and international experts in astronomy, and so on.

World Space Week is an international celebration of science and technology, and their contribution to the betterment of the human

condition.

To promote and develop space knowledge, the Iranian Space Agency has named the days of the week as "Space Technology, Propulsion Industry", "Space and Development of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems", "Space, Future Economy", "Overflow of Space Technology and Entrepreneurship", and "Space and Entrepreneurial Opportunities".

Every year, the World Space Week Association (WSWA) selects a theme for the upcoming WSW to provide a focus on the activities and events that take place throughout the world, from October 4 to 10. The World Space Week 2023 theme is "Space and Entrepreneurship".

It recognizes the growing significance of the commercial space industry in space and the increasing opportunities for space entrepreneurship and new benefits of space developed by space entrepreneurs.

The United Nations General Assembly de-

clared in 1999 that World Space Week will be held each year from October 4-10. These dates commemorate two events:

October 4, 1957: Launch of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, thus opening the way for space exploration

October 10, 1967: The signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Holding World Space Week aims to provide unique leverage in space outreach and education, educate people around the world about the benefits that they receive from space, encourage greater use of space for sustainable economic development, demonstrate public support for space programs, excite young people about science, technology, engineering, and math, and foster international cooperation in space outreach and education.

The United Nations General Assembly declared in 1999 that World Space Week will be held each year from October 4-10.

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'Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average'

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

"The Hoosand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C," ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province's condition has raised concern.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند آسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمایی حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلیسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلیسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد.

Women from the Leader's point of view-38

Normalization and legalization of all sins!



From page 1 ► In fact, in Europe and the United States, the Western cultural system is succeeding and achieving its goals of transforming homosexuality from a hideous and immoral phenomenon to a normal social issue. To the extent that, now, any stance against homosexuality and homosexuals is considered a crime in the West.

In this regard in a meeting with the chairman and members of the Assembly of Experts, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said, "The West has broken all moral and human boundaries and seeks to normalize and legalize all sins that are forbidden in all religions. Prohibitions on homosexuality, etc. are not limited to Islam. These are strictly forbidden in all religions. They legalize these and are not even ashamed." (January 4, 2023)

Currently, 33 of the 50 countries and the 8 dependent territories in Europe recognize some type of same-sex union.

Same-sex couples make up about 1% of all United States households — a 30% increase since the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. Washington, D.C. has the highest overall share of same-sex households, followed by states on the East and West coasts.

In 2021, about 23.8 percent of same-sex householders in the United States were between 25 and 34 years old. A further 5.3 percent of same-sex householders were between the ages of 15 and 24 years old in that same year. [Published by Statista Research Department, Jun 2, 2023]

"Another issue is the issue of giving value to decadent practices. For example, homosexuality becomes a value in the West and opposition to homosexuality becomes an anti-value. If a person, a government official, a president, or an outstanding personality is interviewed and says that he is opposed to homosexuality, this will be

recorded as a negative point in his performance sheet. The moral environment has taken this direction in the West. Today, the situation is like this in the Western world.

Of course, it will not stop at this point and it will be much worse and much more inappropriate than what it is now. Of course, some Western thinkers and well-intentioned personalities have understood this and they constantly issue warnings, but it is of no use. When a system falls into this abyss, there is no way out and its fate will be nothing but destruction. This is one factor why Western values have been challenged," Ayatollah Khamenei noted. (September 4, 2014)

The change in the definition of family by some groups in the West has reached a surprising level. The Union of a woman and a man to procreate and keep children and raise them has been the minimum definition of a family throughout human history.

Now in the current century, the Western system is trying to transform this instinctive definition and is gradually laying the groundwork for this great distortion.

Currently, 33 of the 50 countries and the 8 dependent territories in Europe recognize some type of same-sex union, among them most members of the European Union. As of March 2023, nineteen European countries legally recognize and perform same-sex marriages: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution in one of his speeches called Same-sex families as a new challenge in the Western world, saying, "The issue of encouraging people to indulge in lust - which is centered around women - is not something of little importance. Today, you can see that the situation is getting worse in the world with issues such as homosexuality and marriages between two people of the same gender. These are great, deep, and dangerous abysses for Western civilization and for those who are managing this civilization. This is an unusual precipice and it will completely annihilate them. And they are just in the middle of the path of destruction. In my opinion, they will not be able to prevent this because their problems are far beyond these things." (May 11, 2013)



World's only habitat of Persian zebra

The Bahram-e Goor protected area in southern Iran is known as the only place in the world that has a dynamic population of Persian zebra (*Equus hemionus onager*). Measuring around 376 hectares, it was registered as a protected area in 1972.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Knowledge and wisdom are really the privilege of a faithful Muslim. If you have lost them, get them back even though you may have to get them from the apostates.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:53 Evening: 18:01 Dawn: 4:40 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:03 (tomorrow)

“Love of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)” exhibit opens in Sa’dabad Palace

TEHRAN – A collection of calligraphy and calligraphic painting works as well as portraits of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is on display in an exhibition at Sa’dabad Cultural-Historical Complex in northern Tehran.

The artworks on display span from the Zand era (1750-1794) to contemporary times, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Entitled “Love of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)”, the exhibit opened on the occasion of the prophet’s birthday on Tuesday.

The opening ceremony was attended by notable cultural figures and artists, including Seyyed Hossein Alavi, the director of the complex, private collectors Mehdi Atiqi Moqadam, Majid Qeisari,

and Alireza Kiakazemi, as well as renowned calligrapher Yadollah Kaboli Khansari.

The exhibition showcases a wide range of captivating artwork, including a remarkable portrait of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) created by Sana’ al-Mulk and adorned with exquisite illuminations by Seyyed Abolqasem Mozhab-Bashi.

Works of renowned artists like Mir Hossein Tork, Mirza Mehdi Sharif Shirazi, Mirza Aqa Imami, and Hossein Qullar Aqasi are also on display.

The exhibition also features masterpieces by contemporary artists such as Gholam Hossein Amirkhani, Abbas Akhavin, and the late Ali Reza Rahajiri.

The exhibition will be running for two weeks.

Tehran center pays tribute to Parviz Meshkati

TEHRAN – On the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the passing of acclaimed Iranian musician and santur player Parviz Meshkati, a ceremony was held at Tehran’s Arasbaran Cultural Center on Tuesday.

The event featured a screening of clips showcasing Meshkati’s musical endeavors, as well as speeches by music artists highlighting his life and accomplishments.

Additionally, the Iranian traditional music group ‘Qamar’ performed Meshkati’s notable works, led by vocalist Hamidreza Nurbakhsh and supervised by Navid Dehqan.

Born in Neyshabur in 1955, Meshkati began his musical training at the age of six with his father Hassan Meshkati, who was a professional tar and santur player.

He learned the radif, the total collection of more than 200 gushehs - traditional melodic entities -

in all 12 dastgahs, studying under Iranian maestros Nur-Ali Borumand and Dariush Safvat.

He was also a student of Mohammad-Taqi Masudieh, Abdollah Davami, Saeid Hormozi, and Yusef Forutan, who helped him improve his skills.

After some years, he became one of Iran’s most prominent musicians.

In 1977, Meshkati founded the Aref Ensemble with Hossein Alizadeh and Mohammadreza Lotfi. The group performed many concerts in Iran, Europe, and the Americas.

He also performed with some of Iran’s greatest vocalists like Mohammadreza Shajarian, Shahram Nazeri, and Iraj Bastami.

The collaborations resulted in the creation of the albums “Bidad”, “The Court of the Beloved”, “Mystery of Love”, “Nava”, and “Dastan”, which are all very popular in Iran.

Adaptation of “Medea” to go on stage in Tehran

TEHRAN – A loose adaptation of “Medea”, an ancient Greek tragedy written by Euripides, will go on stage at Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater in Tehran later this month.

Baran Shadpuri is the director of the play that presents a compelling and insightful portrayal of Medea’s mental state by examining her psychological and historical perspectives.

“Medea” is based upon the myth of Jason and Medea and first produced in 431 BC. The plot centers on the actions of Medea, a powerful sorceress and former princess of Colchis, who has been abandoned by her husband Jason and left to care for their two children. When Jason announces that he will be leaving her to marry Glauce, the daughter of King Creon, Medea becomes consumed with hatred and a desire for vengeance.

As the play progresses, Medea’s plans for revenge become increasingly sinister. She first attempts to enlist the help of Aegeus, King of Athens, by offering him the secret of her potion that can make any woman fertile. When he agrees to her request for asylum in Athens, she then murders her own children in order to inflict the greatest possible suffering on Jason. In the end, her actions prove tragic for both herself and those around her, as she realizes too late the terrible price of her desires.

The play also explores larger themes, such as the role of women in society and the costs of male ambition. Medea is a complex and fascinating



character, often portrayed as both a ruthless villain and a tragic victim of circumstance.

Euripides’ play has been explored and interpreted by playwrights across the centuries and the world in a variety of ways, offering political, psychoanalytical, feminist, among many other original readings of Medea, Jason and the core themes of the play.

Iranian directors have frequently referred to this play and its themes over the past few decades.

In May 2019, Ali-Asghar Rasekh-Rad directed a loose adaptation of the tragedy at Qashqai Hall. He had earlier staged “Medea” during the 22nd International Iranian Festival of University Theater in Tehran.

Iranian theater troupe Bohemi led by director Fariborz Karimi performed “Medea” at the 42nd edition of Festival of Monodrama and Mime, which took place in Belgrade, Serbia in June and July 2017.

Opportunity for Tajiks to get familiar with Persian literature at 11th Kitobi Dushanbe

From Page 1 ▶ We are trying to reflect Iran’s programs in the 11th Book Exhibition in various media and also invite university and high school student of our country to the Iran pavilion at the fair to get acquainted with the books presented here,” IRNA reported him as saying.

During the 34th TIBF, Tajikistan organized several review sessions and book launch events. In addition, groups of experts were invited at the Tajikistan pavilion and discussed the current status of literature in Tajikistan and a whole new perspective on cultural relations between Iran and the country.

A new Tajik dictionary was also unveiled and Iranian and Tajik literati organized a poetry night during the book fair.

Also visiting Iran pavilion at the Dushanbe International Book Exhibition, Russian ambassador to Tajikistan expressed his interest in getting to know the literature and publishing industry of Iran.

“The literature of resistance is



Tajik and Russian officials visit Iran pavilion at Dushanbe International Book Exhibition in Tajikistan on October 3, 2023.

common between Iran and Russia and we can cooperate in various programs related to history, culture and folklore literature,” Semyon Grigoriyev said.

Iran Book and Literature House represents Iran’s publishing industry at the fair, presenting

over 800 titles on various subjects of classic and contemporary literature including poetry and novels, and titles related to the holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH).

The international book exhibition presents books of 50 publications from Tajikistan and eight other

countries. Russia in the guest of honor at this year’s edition of the fair that will wrap up Thursday.

The books on display at the exhibition are on a variety of topics of culture, medicine, children’s literature, textbooks, cooking, and so forth.

Hurdles for Persian works to become known worldwide

Prominent translators comment on future of translation



Lili Golestan



Reza Alizadeh



Mahmoud Goudarzi

By Mohammadreza Seyyedagha

Part 2

TEHRAN – In the interview with the celebrated translators, conducted on the occasion of the International Translation Day celebrated annually on September 30, Tehran Times also asked Lili Golestan, Reza Alizadeh, and Mahmoud Goudarzi about the reason why there are fewer Persian novels and stories translated into other languages than translations of foreign works into Persian.

“Translating Persian texts into other languages is not an easy task. But in my opinion, it can be done with the help of a caring government, which unfortunately does not usually happen,” Golestan said.

“I find it difficult as an author to bring foreign translators and publishers on board. I have to sit down and write my own book. I’ve said multiple times that governments should create the necessary conditions, which they usually don’t. Otherwise, our great authors such as Ahmad Shamlou, Mahmoud Dowlatabadi, and Ahmad Mahmoud are as good as foreign writers like Orhan Pamuk or Naguib Mahfouz, and are even greater,” she asserted.

Alizadeh believes that this work can be better done by foreign translators. “I doubt that Iranians who learn English as a second language can translate Persian literary works into a foreign language like English as well as a native English translator,” he said.

“Our translators are very good at rendering foreign works to their native language and also,

they can translate other Persian texts such as news or humanities into another language but translating literature is something different and more difficult,” he stressed.

However, Goudarzi has another idea. “I guess it’s mostly because of the quality of the Persian novels. And also, I think some of the good ones are not written for all cultures, or at least they’re not well understood by other cultures,” he stressed.

“Another reason could be the scarcity of Persian-English translators or publishing houses which would risk to introduce unknown authors,” he added.

AI: threat or help?

Finally, the Tehran Times asked the translation experts to share their ideas about the future of translation and translators in light of the emergence and development of artificial intelligence.

Expressing her frustration about the issue, Golestan said: “In my opinion, it’s terrifying. These robots, these NFTs, and this artificial intelligence are frightening to me. They’re erasing and eliminating humans. I can’t digest them at all”.

However, Alizadeh and Goudarzi were more dubious about the issue. “I really have no information in this field. But I know that language is the most complicated part of human so I don’t know to what extent the AI can replace humans,” Alizadeh said.

“The fact is that one sentence can be translated into another language in various forms and structures but there will be slight differences

in meaning, since changing words and their order will lead to a change in the emphasis and message of the sentence. The AI should know all these details and make the best choice to provide a correct and accurate translation,” he asserted.

Likewise, Goudarzi believes that machines may be accurate and efficient, but they are not creative and this is while creativity is an important part of this job.

“AI may even help translators do their job better, just like software used for editing texts. But I don’t think AI can replace human translators,” he concluded.

The emergence of artificial intelligence in translation has the potential to streamline and expedite the translation process.

Considering what the notable figures have underlined about AI, it can be concluded that AI has the potential to streamline and expedite the translation process and assist translators in various ways such as aiding in terminology consistency. However, the nuanced understanding of context, culture, and creativity that human translators bring is challenging for AI to replicate fully.

Translators will likely continue to play a crucial role in complex and culturally sensitive translations. AI can be a valuable tool, but it won’t replace the need for human translators, especially in literature and other creative fields where nuance and cultural context are paramount. The future may involve a collaborative effort between humans and AI to achieve the best results in translation.

Iranian Ethnic Film Festival to hold specialized workshops

TEHRAN – The National Iranian Ethnic Film Festival, in its first edition, will host specialized workshops with the presence of distinguished filmmakers.

The festival, which will be held in Tabriz from October 31 to November 5, will organize several workshops featuring cinema figures, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

The workshops will cover a broad range of topics, including cinematography, ethnic music and cultures, the economics of cinema, attention to local and native film-making features, indigenous cinema and filmmakers, and reflecting national customs and traditions in cinema, among others, the report added.

Further details on the workshop participation

procedure and the instructors leading them will be announced on the festival’s official website.

The primary objective of the National Ethnic Film Festival is to underscore the shared cultural, religious, and customary bonds between the various Iranian ethnic communities while showcasing their unparalleled diversity in terms of lifestyle, customs, and traditions.

Moreover, the festival seeks to offer an appropriate platform for indigenous artists and filmmakers to display the socio-cultural and touristic opportunities accessible on the geographical frontiers of every Iranian ethnic group. Additionally, it aims to introduce the historical, cultural, and artistic attractions and handicraft industries uniquely embedded within

each ethnic group’s geographic range.

Furthermore, the festival’s objectives also encompass identifying and presenting the tourism sector’s potential and perceived opportunities within the ethnic groups to attract investments.

The festival is structured into three distinct sections; the main section featuring a wide range of films, including feature, documentary, animation, and music videos. Additionally, the experimental section will showcase works relating to the festival’s core themes and goals which push beyond traditional cinematic rules and norms. Finally, the side section will present films that did not meet the criteria for competition in the festival’s main sections.