Straight Truth

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Biden embrace of Israel angers Americans

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Academics free to express views as long as they don't criticize Israel

By Dr. Mohammad Mehdi Tehranchi
Chancellor of Islamic Azad University

TEHRAN – Operation Al-Aqsa Storm brewed a storm that blew away the false patina of democracy Western countries had built for themselves. The West which has been touting itself as the biggest defender of human rights, has had its true colors exposed in the past weeks as it has shown no regard for the lives of thousands of women and children getting slaughtered in the besieged Gaza Strip.

The so-called liberal democratic states in the West have been trying to portray their educational institutions as independent entities that only care about knowledge and science, and are not forced to endorse any political bias. But the events surrounding Western universities in the past weeks have debunked yet another lie often told by the West. Professors and representatives from different universities and colleges in the U.S. have been summoned and interrogated by Congress

Passing the crisis

By Ehsan Kiani, PhD in Middle East Studies

The recent Al-Aqsa Storm Operation has once again brought attention to the ongoing crisis in Palestine. The Israeli regime's continued occupation and apartheid across Palestinian lands, including the territories occupied in 1948 as well as the pre-1967 borders in the West Bank and Gaza, has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis that cannot be denied.

The Tel Aviv cabinet's crossing over the borders was authorized by the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947. Along with the legal approach, from a moral standpoint, it can be seen as an occupation.

According to UN Security Council Resolution 242, Israel must return to the borders before the 1967 war.

The Knesset adopted the Jewish State law on July 19, 2018, declaring Israel a Jewish state, which has resulted in an apartheid system.

The emergence of resistance groups against the occupation has proved that ignoring the condition of the Palestinian nation and denying the violation of the Palestinians' obvious rights will not secure Israel.

Yemeni missile hits Israeli-linked ship

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- Yemen's Ansarullah forces announced on Tuesday the implementation of a military operation against a Norwegian ship that was loaded with oil and heading to the "Zionist enemy entity" after the ship's crew rejected all calls and warnings.

The Norwegian-flagged tanker was hit by an anti-ship missile near the crucial Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The complex aerial attack caused a fire onboard the tanker, which was sailing under the Norwegian flag. No casualties have been reported.

A statement by the official spokesman for Ansarullah's Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Sare'e, said that "the naval forces of the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a qualitative military operation against the Norwegian commercial tanker STRINDA which was loaded with oil and headed to the Israeli entity, and it was targeted with an appropriate naval missile."

He stressed that the operation came as "a victory" for the Palestinian people "who are currently being subjected to killing, destruction and siege in the Gaza Strip,

▸ Page 5

Iran unveils new nuclear achievements

TEHRAN – Iran has unveiled three new radiomedicines with applications for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of a number of diseases.

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, who was present at the unveiling ceremony held in the capital Tehran, said the new drugs bring the number of the Iranian-produced radiopharmaceuticals to 50. "10 more radiodrugs will hit the production line in the upcoming months," Mohammad Eslami said on Tuesday.

Eslami also took the time to answer questions by reporters. When asked about the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) latest accusations against Iran, the official said Tehran has not expelled any of the UN agency's inspectors from the country, while emphasizing that Iran has the right to vet those seeking to enter Iranian nuclear sites.

"We have accepted about 120 inspectors, and right now, as we are speaking, two inspectors are visiting [nuclear sites] in a routine manner," Eslami stated. He said that Iran has so far rejected to provide entry for 5 IAEA inspectors, adding that none of the individuals had entered the country to begin with.

IAEA chief Rafael Grossi claimed in September that Tehran had barred several of the organization's inspectors from monitoring Iran's nuclear program. He condemned Iran for its "disproportionate and unprecedented" move.

"When they introduce inspectors, we have the right to investigate, and no authority or law can impose inspections on us. The use of the phrase 'I condemn' is legally baseless," explained Eslami.

Several of Iran's nuclear scientists have been assassinated by Israel in the past years, with the regime also attempting to carry out numerous sabotage attacks in Iranian nuclear sites. Reports by the West Asian country's intelligence agencies have shown that Israel managed to identify the scientists and nuclear facilities through spies serving as IAEA inspectors in Iran. ▸ Page 2

Israel inhuman conduct in Gaza reminiscent of Daesh: FM

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has noted that the Israeli savagery in Gaza resembles the nature of Daesh.

Upon his arrival at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, on Tuesday evening, he attended the high-profile ministerial meeting on the topic of the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Rights.

The meeting was underway with the presence of a number of foreign ministers of different countries, including some Arab and Islamic countries. ▸ Page 2

Fajr International Theater Festival to dedicate section to Gaza

TEHRAN- The 42nd edition of Fajr International Theater Festival will dedicate a special section to Gaza, the organizers have announced.

The section will feature productions centered around the resistance of the Palestinian people, IRNA quoted Mehdi Hamed Saqaian the secretary of the event as saying on Tuesday.

"Given the importance of the Palestinian resistance and recent events in Gaza, special attention will be given to the diverse works that have arrived in different sections of the festival with this theme," he added.

"In the various sections of this year's festival, including the stage, street, student, playwriting, and radio theater sections, works centered around Palestine and Gaza have been introduced, ▸ Page 8

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Iran begins trial of MEK members

TEHRAN- The first court hearing for the trial of 104 members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) took place on Tuesday with five lawyers representing the accused.

Held at the 11th Branch of the Criminal Court of Tehran Province, the trial of MEK members was chaired by Judge Dehghani, and court advisors were Morteza Tork and Amin Naseri.

The judge stated that the court oversees a case received from Tehran's General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. The case involves the indictment of the terrorist group known as the Mojahedin Khalq, as well as 104 individuals from the group's central cadre and its main agents. ▸ Page 3

Foreign arrivals in Iran reach 4.4 million in 8 months, up by 48.5% y/y

TEHRAN – The number of foreign arrivals in Iran reached 4.4 million during the first eight months of the current Iranian year (started on March 21), which shows 48.5 percent compared to that of the last year.

"Iran's tourism experienced a growth of 48.5% in the first eight months of this year, attracting 4.4 million and 400 thousand visitors motivated by trade, medical treatment, pilgrimage, and tourism," Moslem Shojai, who presides over the ministry's foreign tourism marketing and development office, said on Tuesday.

Data compiled by the tourism ministry suggests that 1.8 million visitors from West Asia traveled to Iran in the first seven months of this year, showing a growth of about 31% compared to the same period last year. This growth surpassed that of Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. ▸ Page 6

TEHRAN PAPERS

Isolation of separatists in the opposition campaign

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

The Iran newspaper analyzed the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize awarding ceremony and wrote: This ceremony has become a place to renew the agreement of anti-Iranian figures against the territorial integrity of our country. Golshifteh Farahani, one of the anti-Iranian figures, said to Abdollah Mohtadi, who was present at the event on behalf of the Komala separatist group: "We are confederate forever!" However, the separatist project failed. However, the recent movements of the opposition show that with the weakening of the monarchist faction and the change of the employers of some media outlets, the approach of the union of the MKO group and the separatists has attracted relatively more foreign support. The monarchists and other anti-Iranian groups and figures have been sidelined, and the attention of foreign intelligence services' think tanks has focused on strengthening the separatists.

Siasat-e-Rooz: What are beggars looking for?

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the sanctioning of six Iranian citizens and five Iranian companies by the European Union and said: In a thought-provoking action, the European union has sanctioned 6 citizens and 5 Iranian companies with the baseless accusation of Russia's use of Iranian drones in the war with Ukraine. However, this claim has been repeatedly denied by Russian and Iranian authorities. They claimed that the drone's development and production program supported by the Iranian government violates the United Nations Charter and the basic principles of international law. Europe and the United States are seeking to maintain Iran's missile and drone sanctions with false claims, in order to prevent Iran from entering the market of selling these weapons, which will reduce the profits of the West. But according to Westerners, the Ukraine war is on the way to Russia's victory, which will result in the collapse of NATO. Based on this, it can be said that Europeans have added false claims against Iran and sometimes China regarding cooperation with Russia along with this begging.

Sobh-e-No: The intention of the West in supporting the separatists

In a note, Sobh-e-No discussed the purpose of the West in supporting separatists. It wrote: The presence of separatists in official ceremonies such as the Nobel Peace Prize creates in them the mentality that the West supports this separatism. There have been examples where the West used groups to separate them from a nation and then impoverished and starved that group and attacked it. This shows what plan they have for Iran. Now, the Islamic Republic is the only movement that stands to protect Iran against the world and the West. They intend to divide Iran and they followed this plan throughout history. They act based on their interests and Iran is dangerous for them; because it has the capacity to offer political, economic, and civilizational alternatives to the world. Iran is dangerous for the Western lifestyle and their attention to the separatists is a way that they want to weaken Iran. In a sense, they are together with the Israelis.

Javan: If you can, implement this JCPOA

In a commentary, Javan addressed the statements made about the need to revise the JCPOA and create JCPOA II from the West and said: Ideas under the title of JCPOA II are usually proposed by those who have refused to fulfill their obligations regarding the JCPOA agreement and have not implemented it. Now, they are trying to shirk their responsibility and to justify their disloyalty by saying some deflective ideas. According to Nasser Kanaani, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran does not believe in another JCPOA and does not consider it necessary. Evidence shows that the party that has fulfilled its obligations in this agreement is Iran, and those who have not fulfilled their responsibilities and obligations have no right to talk about deflective issues such as JCPOA II. Also, in the JCPOA, due to the fact that Iran's red lines were not accepted by the other side at times, today Iran is not on the path of signing an agreement on the JCPOA. However, this does not mean setting aside the JCPOA, and the further we go, the JCPOA becomes more meaningless.

U.S., Israel regime unable to wipe out Hamas, Amir Abdollahian warns

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has warned Israel and the United States that even if they spend a decade fighting Hamas, they would never be able to achieve their aims.

Addressing the Doha Forum in Qatar via video conference on Monday, he said that "neither Israel nor the U.S., even if they spend another 10 years in Gaza, will be able to obliterate Hamas."

Amir Abdollahian continued that it was incorrect to believe that the Israeli assault on Gaza was brought on by the military operation launched by Hamas on October 7. Rather, it was a continuation of Zionist aggression against Palestinians that had been going on for 75 years.

He stressed that it is evident that the conflict has already spread to the Lebanese and Yemeni fronts, alluding to operations carried out by the Yemeni military and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement in retribution for the Israeli killing in Gaza.

Elsewhere in his address, Amir Abdollahian underlined Iran's opposition to the so-called two-state solution to the Palestinian issue, noting that it would not aid in the settlement of the conflict.

"Israel has occupied the Palestinian land and we believe that a two-state solution will not help resolve the Palestinian issue. In the Palestinian land, only a Palestinian government should be formed based on a referendum," Amir Abdollahian said, noting that such a referendum should be held with the participation of the original inhabitants of Palestine, including the Jews.

The U.S. decision to block a UN resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza was also criticized by the top Iranian diplomat.

Amir Abdollahian emphasized that Washington's use of its veto power to uphold Israel's ongoing atrocities in Gaza demonstrates the U.S.' steadfast, unshakable support for an authoritarian regime.

A draft resolution in the UN Security Council that called for an urgent humanitarian truce in Gaza was blocked on Friday by the U.S. using its veto power.

Amir Abdollahian meets Syrian PM Arnous (R) in Tehran

Thirteen Security Council members voted in favor of the resolution, put forward by the United Arab Emirates, while the United Kingdom abstained.

The General Assembly, where the U.S. has no veto power, overwhelmingly supported a humanitarian ceasefire. On October 26, the assembly approved the ceasefire with 120 votes in favor and only 14 against the non-binding resolution.

On Sunday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi condemned the U.S. as "the main supporter of the massacre of innocent Gazan women and children," alluding to Washington's veto of the UN Security Council ceasefire resolution.

Following the Palestinian Hamas resistance group's Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying regime in retribution for the its escalating atrocities against the Palestinian people, Israel launched an offensive on Gaza.

The health ministry in Gaza reported that over 49,645 Palestinians have been injured and 18,205 Palestinians were killed since Israel began its ruthless onslaught. The majority of the dead are women and children.

In Gaza, which Israel is putting under complete siege, numerous additional individuals are also missing and thought to be dead beneath the rubble.

Plan to crush Gaza collapsed by resistance front unity: Syrian PM

In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, held in Tehran on Monday, Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous said that the U.S. and Israeli regime's plan to split up the Gaza Strip, compel its people to relocate, and destroy the resistance was foiled by the resistance front's coordination and unity.

The Syrian prime minister praised the outcome of his trip to Iran and said that his discussions with the first vice president of Iran and other authorities were constructive.

Arnous emphasized the necessity for Tehran and Damascus to deepen their bilateral ties by pointing to the agreements they have struck.

For his part, Amir Abdollahian cited the meeting between the presidents of Iran and Syria, noting that the prime minister of Syria's visit is undoubtedly a significant advancement in bilateral ties, with the goal of pursuing and carrying out the bilateral accords.

Referring to the developments in Gaza and Palestine, Amir Abdollahian described the full support of the U.S. for the Zionist regime as the most important factor in the continuation of the regime's aggression against the defenseless people of Gaza.

In a meeting with Arnous in Tehran on Saturday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi noted that terrorist-Takfiri groups were vanquished and U.S. and Israeli schemes were prevented by Syria's resistance.

"The enmity of the U.S. and Zionist regime towards Syria was rooted in resistance of the Syrian government and nation and the defeat of their plots, particularly regarding the collapse of the terrorist-Takfiri groups," the Iranian president stated.

"If it were not for the intelligence, military, security, financial and media assistance of the U.S., the Zionist regime would have collapsed by now," Raisi underlined.

He said that Iran's position for the last 43 years on the fraudulent and criminal nature of the Israeli regime has been validated by the tremendous outrage and animosity that the world›s public opinion has shown toward Israel and its allies.

The president of Iran stressed that the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas, has extended its frontiers beyond the region to the entire world through its operation against Israel.

In a meeting with Arnous on Sunday, Ali Akbar Ahmadian, the secretary of Iran›s Supreme National Security Council, expressed hope that the axis of resistance can improve and expand the level of their cooperation in the economic fields appropriately just like the unique cooperation and coordination at the political, defense, and security levels.

In a meeting between Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of Iran›s Parliament, and Arnous on Saturday, they reviewed ways to augment ties especially in the economic and commercial fields.

Iran and Syria have close and fraternal ties, according to Ghalibaf, who also expressed hope that the arrival of a delegation from the Syrian government led by Arnous will improve ties on all fronts.

Noting the significance of the agreements made during the visit of the Syrian government delegation, he added, "Opportunities must be taken advantage of to enhance economic and trade cooperation."

Iran warns of negative impact of new EU sanctions on bilateral ties

TEHRAN- The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry has denounced the "destructive" move made by the European Union Council to impose further sanctions on Iranian people and organizations based on false accusations, noting that the politically driven measure will only exacerbate barriers to collaboration.

Nasser Kanaani sternly slammed in a statement on Tuesday the counterproductive action taken by the EU Council to impose penalties on Iranians based on the unfounded accusation that they were involved in the Ukraine conflict.

The EU Council imposed penalties on Monday on five Iranian firms and six Iranian individuals for allegedly being involved in Iran's research and manufacturing of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which are being allegedly utilized in the conflict in Ukraine.

Kanaani warned the EU that the desperate attempts by certain destructive currents with specific political objectives to release false information and resort to futile sanctions would provide no benefit for those imposing sanctions but would "only add to the self-created obstacles in the way of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Europe."

He continued that the European Union talks about international law and the UN Charter, but it has turned a blind eye to the egregious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Gaza and the West Bank, where the Israeli regime is carrying out ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Kanaani reaffirmed Iran's opposition to war while scolding the EU for not doing enough to halt the Zionist regime's ruthless attacks on Gaza.

He emphasized that the disputes between Russia and Ukraine must be resolved peacefully and said that there is no justification for the restrictions imposed on Iran's military industry since Tehran has the right to retaliate.

On October 04, the Iranian mission to the UN 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 which endorsed the 2015 Iran 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 statement reads.

It also said, "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 statement 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."

Iran unveils new nuclear achievements

From page 1 ▸ Iran's nuclear chief also pointed out that Grossi expects Iran to abide by all limitations imposed on the country's nuclear program based on the JCPOA deal, while the other signatories have so far failed to keep their side of the bargain.

"The agency's report is based on the JCPOA, and this is clear, but when the other parties did not fulfill their commitments, it is not right to put political and psychological pressure on Iran to act exactly like the JCPOA,"

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the JCPOA, was a deal signed between Iran and the 5+1 group of countries (Russia, the U.S., UK, France, Germany, and China) in 2015. The deal limits Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the termination of economic sanctions against the country.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018 and ire-imposed sanctions on Iran. Germany, UK, and France while officially remaining in the deal, have so far failed to take out the sting of sanctions. They, however, expect Iran to continue abiding by the deal while it continues to suffer under crippling U.S. sanctions. Iran's Foreign Minister recently warned that the JCPOA is losing its value and effectiveness as time goes by.

Eslami also called on the UN nuclear watchdog to be weary of recent incendiary remarks by Israeli officials who have been threatening to use nukes on Gaza as well as Iran.

"Not only did the Israeli minister threatened to use nuclear bombs against Gaza, but also the Prime Minister of the Zionist regime threatened to use nuclear weapons against Iran at the United Nations. We reminded the Agency of these issues in a letter, and the IAEA chief must fulfill his inherent duty," stressed Eslami.

There are currently no official inspections of Israel's nuclear sites and its potentially vast arsenal.

Iran dismisses IAEA concerns over undeclared sites

The Iranian nuclear chief had stated earlier that the files on two of the four alleged undeclared locations in Iran have been closed since two of them turned out to be abandoned mines, refuting the false allegations made by the Zionist regime and the MKO terrorists.

Eslami pointed out in a speech at a Tehran university on Monday that the International Atomic Energy Agency's suspicion that Iran's nuclear activities may have had possible military dimensions (PMDs) has already been dismissed in the case of the so-called undeclared locations.

He continued that the Zionist regime's espionage service and the terrorist group Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) had concocted a lie about the undeclared locations in Iran.

According to Eslami, the IAEA confirmed that it had no further questions on two of the four purportedly undeclared locations, and the file on those locations was closed in March.

The disputed location in Marivan and another site in Abadeh were nothing but desolate mines, he stated, saying another place defined as an undeclared

location was used for the sale of scrap iron.

He emphasized Iran's extensive collaboration with the UN nuclear agency, emphasizing that all of the country's nuclear operations are in accordance with IAEA regulations, the NPT, and the Safeguards Agreement.

Last month, Eslami responded to the nuclear threats of the Israeli minister, pinning the responsibility for any incident in the enclave on the IAEA.

Upon the start of the ground invasion of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Army, Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu considered atomic bomb as an "option" for the Zionist Army.

On the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, Iran's nuclear chief told reporters that the responsibility for any incident lies with the International Atomic Energy Agency, adding that the Zionist regime has not signed the NPT and today, the regime threatens the world with an atomic bomb.

Israel inhuman conduct in Gaza reminiscent of Daesh: FM

From page 1 ▸ During his speech, Amir Abdollahian expressed Iran's positions and viewpoints on the situation of the Palestinian crisis and the alarming humanitarian conditions in Gaza and the West Bank as a result of the ongoing criminal attacks of the Zionist regime.

The Iranian top diplomat regarded the ruthless crimes committed by the Zionist regime against the people of Gaza in the last two months represent unenviably instance of war crimes and genocide as well.

Amir Abdollahian also considered effective measures to immediately stop the attacks of the Israeli regime against Gaza and spell the end to the crimes of the criminal regime in the West Bank as well as send humanitarian aid as an urgent task of the international community, the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council.

Additionally, he underscored that the failure to take immediate action to thwart the brutal attacks of the Israeli apartheid regime against the citizens in Gaza will lead to the expansion of the scope of the war beyond the current conditions in the region.

Also, other senior diplomats participating in the meeting expressed viewpoints and stances on the current Palestinian crisis and ways to end the brutal attacks of the Zionist regime against the people in Gaza and the West Bank.

Amir Abdollahian has traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, to attend a meeting of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

According to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Amir Abdollahian departed Tehran for Geneva on Tuesday morning and is set to give a speech at the UNHCR conference.

During his stay, he will also meet with counterparts from other nations and take part in an UN-sponsored conference on Palestine that will take place in Geneva alongside the UNHCR event.

Iran begins trial of MEK members

Frome Page 1 ▸ After studying the indictment and following the principles of criminal procedure, including articles 7, 296, and 382 of the law, the 11th Branch of the Criminal Court of the Tehran Province has declared its jurisdiction to deal with the charges. This decision was made under the procedural law and the Islamic Penal Code, and it is equivalent to judicial notices, according to the judge.

Judge Dehghani stated that following the legal charges, the court conducted a comprehensive investigation into the case. A detailed report has been prepared, and per Article 389 of the Criminal Procedure Law and Article 391 of this law, the head of the branch responsible for investigating the case has acknowledged that the investigation is complete and ready for trial. As a result, an order has been immediately issued to determine the hearing time.

MEK in a glance

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Marxist cult and terrorist group, which claimed it had played a major role in the victory of the Islamic Revolution, launched a campaign of terror against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Finally, in 1981 the MEK operatives took up arms and carried out large-scale terrorist operations, assassinating more than 17,000 Iranians. The most important of these actions were the bombings of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Islamic Republic of Iran Party. The president, prime minister,

and head of the Supreme Court were brutally killed in the bombings.

When the MEK escaped from Iran, they went to Iraq and collaborated with Saddam Hussein in his war against Iran in the 1980s. They took up arms against their own country and participated in two operations against the Islamic Republic.

After Iran and Iraq accepted a ceasefire, the NLA (National Liberation Army), MEK's military branch, with financial and logistical support from Saddam Hussein attacked Iran with the hallucination of conquering Tehran in a few days. As soon as they set foot on Iranian soil, they committed heinous actions such as setting people on fire and hanging them.

The terrorist organization considered itself an alternative to the Islamic Republic of Iran and was doing its best to attack the Iranian people and government in any way possible.

After about 25 years of presence in Iraq, the MEK was expelled at the end of Saddam Hussein›s rule and settled in Albania with the financial support of some Arab countries and the direct support of the Americans.

The MEK was trying to rebuild and portray its new face from a terrorist face to a democratic one by taking measures such as holding political and annual gatherings. To achieve its vicious goals, the MEK kept inviting famous and controversial political figures to its summits.

Yet, the report issued by Human Rights Watch in May 2005, once again revealed the inhumane nature of the terrorist group. The report was issued on alleged human rights abuses committed by MEK.

In 2016, the United States brokered a deal to relocate the MEK to Albania. About 3,000 members moved to Albania, and the U.S. donated $20 million to the U.N. refugee agency to help them resettle.

On 9 September 2016, more than 280 remaining MEK members were relocated to Albania, where they have been protested by the locals.

On June 20th, 2023, the Albanian police launched an operation at the MEK camp in Manez, Durres, on the orders of the Albanian judiciary due to the "violation of agreement and commitments."

The conflict between police and the MEK left one dead and 36 other camp residents injured.

The state police said that the police didn›t use any deathly means.

The MEK ringleaders have reportedly decided to relocate their base to Canada following the Albanian government's intense pressures and after the failure of their negotiations with the Paris government over relocation to France.

An informed security source told Tasnim that the MEK terrorists have come up with the relocation plan after the government of Albania and its counter-terrorism court imposed restrictions on the terrorist group following the discovery of incriminating evidence from their Ashraf-3 camp near Manez, a small hill town 30 kilometers west of Albania's capital Tirana.

"The MEK heads are making preparations for the gradual pullout of their members (from Albania)," the source said.

The source noted that the MEK terrorists have failed to obtain France's consent for the relocation of a number of their elements to a camp in Auvers-sur-Oise on the northwestern outskirts of Paris.

Amir Abdollahian slams U.S. veto of UN resolution in phone call with Chinese counterpart

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has expressed discontent over the U.S. veto of a UN resolution overseeing the cessation of hostilities in Gaza, during a phone call with his Chinese counterpart.

The phone call is the two foreign ministers' second since the outbreak of the Israel-Gaza war – as fears persist that a second front could open along the Lebanon border.

Reiterating hopes for ceasefire in Gaza, the top Iranian diplomat underscored China's constructive efforts toward fostering peace and stability in the region. He emphasized the urgency of taking an active role in putting an end to the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

"Regional security is crucial for all of us," stated Amir Abdollahian, highlighting Iran's active engagement in various consultations with neighboring countries. This underlined the nation's commitment to collaborative efforts aimed at addressing regional challenges.

Raising concerns about the escalating scope of conflict in the region, the Iranian Foreign Minister stressed the imperative of immediately halting attacks on Gaza. He warned of a potential explosion in the region beyond anyone's control if swift action is not taken. Amir Abdollahian lamented the apparent lack of understanding on the part of the United States regarding the dangers associated with further escalation of conflict. Notably, he pointed out that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, aligned with the White House, appears solely interested in perpetuating war and genocide, asserting that the regional situation is on the brink of transformation.

Chinese Foreign Minister echoed these concerns, expressing regret over the U.S. veto of the ceasefire resolution in Gaza. He emphasized the critical importance of promptly establishing a ceasefire and facilitating humanitarian aid—a stance crucial for China.

Looking ahead, the Chinese Foreign Minister expressed hope that the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session would serve as an opportune platform to broker a ceasefire in the region.

Amir Abdollahian also called for strengthening communication, mutual trust and cooperation with Beijing following the agreements reached between the two state leaders in February and August.

Iran, Russia FMs hold telephone conversation on Gaza developments

The Iranian Foreign Minister also discussed with Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, and delved into various topics concerning bilateral and regional relations, including the recent developments in the war against Gaza.

During this telephone exchange, Amir Abdollahian, expressed regret over the U.S. veto of the United Nations Security Council resolution and evaluated this action as permission for the continuation of the genocide against the residents of Gaza by the United States. He underscored the necessity of immediate action to halt war crimes and increase humanitarian aid to the narrow strip of Gaza.

Lavrov, expressing satisfaction with the ongoing bilateral cooperation, emphasized the need for continued international efforts to achieve a ceasefire, increase humanitarian aid to the residents of Gaza, and establish an independent Palestinian state in light of the current developments in the occupied territories of Palestine.

Iran's Foreign Minister, referencing the recent meeting between the presidents of Iran and Russia in Moscow and the review of the agenda for bilateral cooperation, emphasized the importance of continuing negotiations and contacts between high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

Amir Abdollahian stresses need for concerted effort to stop Gaza war

In a telephone discussion with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Amir Abdollahian particularly addressed the ongoing Zionist atrocities against the people of Palestine in Gaza and the West Bank.

During this conversation, Iran's Foreign Minister expressed concern over the unequivocal support of the United States for the Zionist regime.

He emphasized the need for maximum efforts to halt these atrocities, cease the genocide in the narrow strip of Gaza through diplomatic initiatives, and urgently provide assistance to the Palestinians to alleviate their suffering.

Amir Abdollahian underscored the paramount importance of deepening and expanding relations between Iran and Turkey. He also highlighted the significance of the upcoming meeting between the Presidents of the two countries.

The Foreign Minister of Turkey acknowledged his country's diplomatic efforts aimed at establishing a ceasefire in the war against Gaza, emphasizing that Palestine is currently the focal point of the Islamic world.

Both Iranian and Turkish Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of continuing and expanding negotiations and diplomatic efforts at the regional and international levels to exert pressure on the Zionist regime. Their goal is to secure acceptance of a ceasefire and the cessation of the war in Gaza.

Mass production of Yasin jet to kick off soon: defense chief

TEHRAN- Iran's Defense Minister, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiyani, visited the stages of the flight tests of the Yasin jet, underlining that the mass of production of the jet trainer would start soon.

"This jet trainer is fully supported by the Ministry of Defense and it will soon reach mass production," he said.

During the visit, Iran's Defense Chief stated that Yassin›s main mission is to reduce the duration and increase the quality of the pilot training process.

Improving pilot training in the mastery of different fighter planes is one of the concerns of the armed forces, according to General Ashtiyani.

He noted that the pilots who are trained with this aircraft can fly new-generation fighters, emphasizing that Yasin aircraft reduces the duration of pilot training and improves this process.

He mentioned that Yasin would be able to use weapons with optical and thermal guidance in close air support missions.

SPORTS

Daunting task ahead of next president of Iran volleyball: expert

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Mahmoud Afshardoost, a respected volleyball expert, believes that Iran volleyball faces the most important challenge for the next president of the volleyball federation.

On Saturday, Vahid Moradi was named caretaker of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF) after Mohammadreza Davarzani, former president of IRIVF, stepped down due to reaching retirement age.

"Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Moradi on his appointment as the acting president. He has a daunting task ahead of him during this period, and I am thankful for his acceptance of this immense responsibility," said Afshardoost in his exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

Moradi must organize the presidential and federation's board elections without delay.

When questioned about the major challenge for the next president of the volleyball federation, Afshardoost said, "The future president of the volleyball federation faces a crucial challenge with the senior national team, for two reasons: Firstly, it is crucial to select the new head coach of the national team promptly. Secondly, the upcoming FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League (VNL) matches are of great significance, as the Iran national team have a slim opportunity to qualify for the Olympics.

"Another crucial duty of the next federation's president is to thoroughly analyze the Iranian Volleyball League and select the top players to support the national team," he added.

Afshardoost also discussed the qualities of the future IRIVF president.

The president of the IRIVF should possess experience in both domestic and international divisions and carry out significant responsibilities. Having a long-term and short-term plan is vital in the domestic sector, along with generating income for the federation.

"In the international section, it is crucial for him to cultivate strong connections with the FIVB, the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC), and the presidents of other countries' federations. Furthermore, he should actively pursue opportunities to secure seats in the FIVB and AVC boards, using them strategically to elevate Iranian volleyball," Afshardoos concluded.

2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand: Iran seeded first

TEHRAN - Asia's best futsal sides will learn their route to glory for the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024 at the official Final Draw ceremony on Thursday, December 14 at 3pm at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

The 17th edition of the tournament will be held from April 17 to 28, 2024 and is set to feature 16 teams including Thailand, who automatically qualified as hosts and are staging it for a third time. The rest of the cast was determined after a qualifying campaign in October that featured 30 teams.

Japan are the reigning champions, having won their fourth crown after defeating record 12-time winners Iran in 2022; both teams, along with Uzbekistan and Thailand, are the only four sides to qualify for every edition to date.

At the other end of the spectrum, Afghanistan succeeded in their fifth qualification attempt and will become the 36th different side to appear at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup when they make their Continental debut on the court next year.

As the Host Association, Thailand will be seeded first for the draw, with the remaining teams ranked by their performances at the previous edition in 2022. The 16 teams will be divided equally into four groups to contest a one-round league format, with the top two finishers in each group qualifying to the Quarter-finals. The seedings are as follow:

Pot 1 (Ranked 1st to 4th): Thailand, Japan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Uzbekistan

Pot 2 (5th to 8th): Tajikistan, Kuwait, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia

Pot 3 (9th to 12th): Iraq, Bahrain, Korea Republic, Myanmar

Pot 4 (13th to 16th): Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Australia, China PR

The top four finishers at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024 will qualify for the FIFA Futsal World Cup Uzbekistan 2024, which will take place between September 14 and October 6, 2024, marking the first time the global showpiece will be held in Central Asia.

As Uzbekistan have automatically qualified as hosts, the fifth-placed team will be determined via Play-off matches if the Uzbeks progress to the Semi-finals of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Thailand 2024.

Petty joins Mahram basketball team

TEHRAN – Mahram basketball team completed the signing of American point guard Perry Petty. Petty, 35, has most recently played for Ugandan champion City Oilers.

Petty has previously played for another Iranian team Shahrdari Gorgan from 2018 to 2023.

He helped the Oilers qualify for their second consecutive Basketball Africa League (BAL).

Petty has participated in Mahram's training and could accompany the team on Thursday against Palayesh Naft Abadan in the Iranian Basketball Super League.

Habibi named Los Angeles Team Handball head coach

TEHRAN – Former Iran national handball team head coach Alireza Habibi has been named as the new head coach of Los Angeles Team Handball.

The Iranian coach led the Iranian national team in the 2020 Olympic Games qualification, where Team Melli failed to secure a place in the Games.

Ex-Iran goalkeeper Mohsen Babasafari has also joined the American team.

The 36-year-old goalie has most recently played for Romanian team HC Buz?u.

Palestine to hold camp in Algeria

TEHRAN - The Algerian Football Federation revealed that it will host a training camp for the Palestinian national football team.

The camp, slated for December 12 to 22, serves as a crucial preparation for the upcoming 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

The Algerian federation has selected the city of Annaba for this camp, committing to provide all necessary facilities to ensure the camp's success.

Palestine is in Group C along with Iran, Hong Kong, and the UAE. This will be the second consecutive participation for the Palestinian team after its debut in the 2019 edition.

Vafaei defeated by Wells at Scottish Open snooker 2023

TEHRAN - Iran's Hossein Vafaei has conceded defeat against his Welsh rival at Scottish Open snooker 2023.

Vafaei was defeated by Welsh snooker player Daniel Wells 4-3 in the preliminary stage and was eliminated from the sporting event.

The Scottish Open main event gets underway at Edinburgh's Meadowbank Sports Centre, as reigning champion Gary Wilson aims to defend his title against a stellar cast of the sport's biggest names.

SATBA calls on private investors to partake in building solar farms

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) has called on the country's private investors to participate in the construction of 4,500 megawatts (MW) of solar power plants over seven months.

"The construction of 4,500 megawatts of solar power plants can be carried out by investors within seven months because the necessary infrastructure has been provided and the government supports the plan," Mahmoud Kamani said in a meeting with the private companies active in the energy sector.

Emphasizing that the construction of 11,000 MW of renewable power plants has been put on the agenda for the next two years to solve the problem of fuel and electricity imbalance in the country, he continued: "A special work is being done and the top authorities of the country are collaborating to facilitate the construction of renewable power plants in the country."

TCCIMA hosts meeting to explore ways to boost co-op with Syria

TCCIMA Secretary General Bahman Eshqi (R) and Iran's Ambassador to Syria Hossein Akbari

TEHRAN - The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) hosted a meeting between the representatives of the private sector and Hossein Akbari, the ambassador of Iran in Syria, to explore the opportunities for cooperation and ways of strengthening the presence of Iranian companies in Syria.

The meeting was attended by the TCCIMA Secretary General Bahman Eshqi, the head of the Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce, the ambassador of Iran to Syria and the representatives of some economic organizations, the TCCIMA portal reported.

This gathering was held a few days after the presence of a business delegation from Syria in the Tehran Chamber and holding a conference on the development of Iran-Syria relations.

During this meeting, the representatives of the Tehran Private sector introduced their potentials as well as their concerns and challenges regarding the presence in the Syrian market.

Also, in a meeting between Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi with Chairman of the board of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce Mohamed Abou el-Hoda el-Lahham, at the place of the ICCIMA in Tehran on Sunday (December 10), the two sides emphasized that the private sectors of the two countries are ready to establish joint ventures to boost trade exchanges.

The officials noted that the mentioned joint companies can be formed in various fields including energy, food, and agriculture industries, as well as technical and engineering services.

Speaking in this meeting, Selahvarzi said the low level of trade between Iran and Syria is due to the non-implementation of the free trade agreement between the two countries, as well as sanctions and the lack of banking relations between the two sides.

Considering the recent agreements reached between the governments of the two countries most of the mentioned obstacles have been removed and the condition is ripe for increasing trade between the two sides, he said.

Iran and Syria signed six memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on economic and trade cooperation on Saturday (December 9).

The MOUs were inked by Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and Syrian Prime Minister Hussein Arnous in a ceremony at the end of the meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

As reported, Iran's ministers of industry, mining and trade, energy, finance and economic affairs, sport and youth, agriculture, oil, and culture, as well as the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) were present in the signing ceremony of the mentioned MOUs.

Addressing the meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, who is the co-chairman of the Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee has announced that the two sides will soon begin establishing joint insurance and banking institutes as well as free trade zones.

The official expressed satisfaction with the implementation of previous agreements between the two nations.

He also said that the pace of implementing bilateral agreements has sped up in recent months and that the two sides will introduce joint economic zones soon.

Iran and Syria are accelerating operational measures to implement bilateral accords, he said, proposing the formation of a permanent joint energy committee between the two countries to follow up agreements concerning gas and electricity cooperation.

The Iranian minister also underlined the need for finalizing the Tehran-Damascus railway project, noting that the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways is fully prepared to study the reconstruction of damaged railroads in Syria.

Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer Khalil, who co-chairs the Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee, declared both parties' plans to pursue joint ventures such as setting up free trade zones and joint insurance and banking institutes.

The Syrian official also said the two sides have reached a good consensus regarding the guidelines of the free trade agreement, and the framework of cooperation between central banks, as well as tourism, and transportation sector.

TEDPIX drops 1,200 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 1,296 points (0.06 percent) to 2,161,263 on Tuesday, which is the fourth day of the Iranian calendar week.

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

'IRAN EXPO to be held with aim of changing Iran's trade direction'

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said that the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN EXPO 2024) will be held with the aim of changing the direction of the country's trade.

Making the remarks in a press conference on Tuesday, Mehdi Zeyghami also mentioned exports with a focus on knowledge-based products as the other major objective of the exhibition.

Stating that Iran will become a knowledge-based export country, the official reiterated that changing the direction of the country's trade by holding the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN EXPO 2024) is the goal of the 13th government.

Underlining that the 5th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN EXPO 2023) was a big step in the direction of expanding the country's export of non-oil products and developing trade relations with the world, the TPO head said this year's exhibition aims to target more countries especially those from Africa, East Asia, and Latin America, adding that the feedback has been very impressive so far.

The 5th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN EXPO 2023) was held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on May 7-10, 2023.

Zeyghami further mentioned foodstuffs, medicine and medical equipment, and industrial and petrochemical products as major export groups to be offered in the 6th exhibition.

TPO Head Mehdi Zeyghami (C), IRAN EXPO Organizing Headquarters Head Majid Takbiri (R), and Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari (L)

He said that the number of those invited to the event will be doubled in this edition, and it is expected that traders from 90 countries will attend the exhibit.

IRAN EXPO 2024 to discover new export markets

Addressing the same press conference, the head of the IRAN EXPO organizing headquarters, said that the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRAN EXPO 2024) will be held to discover and create new export markets, as well as promote and develop existing markets.

Majid Takbiri said that the 6th exhibition will be held as the biggest export event of the country, where more than 3,000 foreign traders and businessmen from more than 90 countries will be present.

The first step in the development of economic and trade relations is the introduction of domestic capacities and capabilities and mutual recognition of the capacities of other countries, he noted, adding,

"At IRAN EXPO 2023, we saw that those active in the economy sector welcomed this event unprecedentedly".

In this edition of the exhibit, the focus is on six domestic product groups including the food industry, agriculture, fisheries, industry, handwoven carpets, handicrafts and tourism, medicine, medical equipment, laboratory equipment, and chemical products, construction industry, and technical-engineering services, and petrochemicals, he further explained.

Annual export of knowledge-based products planned to reach $4b

Addressing the same press conference, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari emphasized the importance of increasing the export of knowledge-based products, and said that the export of such products is planned to reach $4 billion in the next Iranian calendar year 1403 (begins on March 21, 2024).

The export of non-oil products from the country is now different from 4-5 years ago, and the work is based on knowledge-based products at present, he said, adding, "According to the latest statistics, we exported knowledge-based goods worth $2 billion, which we hope will reach $4 billion next year."

"Currently, the government's policies are based on non-oil exports, especially knowledge-based goods, and we have an active presence in most countries", the official noted.

The deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy further announced that a free trade agreement with Eurasia will be signed on December 25 in St. Petersburg, adding, "Our trade with Eurasia was five billion dollars, which has increased by almost 25-30 percent."

Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) reached a preferential trade agreement in 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items became subject to preferential tariffs.

Tehran, Doha ink energy, trade co-op document

TEHRAN – At the end of the ninth Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee meeting on Monday, the two countries signed a comprehensive cooperation document in Tehran, the news portal of Iran's Energy Ministry reported.

The document was signed by Iran's Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Abdullah Al Thani as the heads of the Joint Economic Committee.

In the mentioned document, cooperation in the fields of energy (water and wastewater, electricity, oil, gas, and environment), exchanging experiences and technical knowledge, holding events, including exhibitions, specialized training courses in the fields of water and water technologies, renewable energies have been emphasized.

Exchanging private sector delegations active in the fields of consulting, contracting, and industries, production of equipment related to the electricity industry, and the readiness of the environmental organizations of the two countries to expand relations have also been covered in the document.

The document also covers cooperation in other fields including banking, insurance, customs, national development funds, technical and engineering services, trade, industries and mines, free zones, investment, and standards.

Cooperation in the fields of transportation, communication and information technology, agriculture, judicial, legal, labor and border are also among the axes of this cooperation document.

Qatar welcomes jump in economic ties with Iran

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the Joint Economic Committee meeting, Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry said that his country's economic relations with Iran have had a great jump in recent years and the country welcomes such developments in relations with the Islamic Republic.

He called the ninth meeting an important opportunity for following up on agreements already reached between the two sides to expand their relations in trade, economic, and industrial fields.

The Qatari minister also said that the sustainable ties and mutual trust between Tehran and Doha show that they have deepened relations.

He meanwhile called for cooperation to overcome the challenges the two sides face.

Mehrabian for his part called for boosting bilateral relations in the energy sector, the development of renewable energy projects as well as the connection of the two countries' power grids.

He said that the two countries reached good agreements during the latest meeting of their joint economic committee, which he expressed hope that would positively impact the bilateral economic cooperation.

Mehrabian said that the agreements reached cover cultural and social fields as well as infrastructure.

The ninth meeting of the Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee was held on December 9-11 at the Iranian Energy Ministry building in Tehran.

The Qatari delegation, that traveled to Iran to attend the ninth meeting of the Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee, visited an exhibition of Iranian products on Sunday.

The Qatari delegates got familiar with the Iranian producers' capabilities in the mentioned exhibition, which is being held on the sidelines of the joint committee meeting.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the ninth Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on Saturday, the head of the International Affairs Department of the Iranian Energy Ministry, said Tehran and Doha are determined to increase the two countries' annual trade to $1.0 billion.

Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian (L) and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Abdullah Al Thani pose with signed documents in Tehran on Monday.

Mojtaba Akbari said neighborhood-based diplomacy is one of the important principles of the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi.

According to Akbari, currently, the volume of Iran›s export of goods and equipment to Qatar is about $200 million, which is expandable to $1.0 billion.

He pointed to the history of holding the joint economic committee meeting and added that the eighth edition was held in the Qatari capital of Doha in 2022 and had positive results.

With the advancement of neighborhood-based diplomacy through cultural, social, and economic proximity with Qatar, many obstacles on the path of ties between the two countries can be removed, he added.

Many Iranian traders, industrialists, and scientists have attained considerable achievements that can be shared with Qatar, Akbari underscored.

India to expand activities in Iran's free zones

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council has traveled to India to meet and hold talks with Indian officials to develop cooperation between the two countries in free zones, Freena reported.

Hojatollah Abdolmaleki arrived in India on Monday and on the first day of his visit met with Iran's Ambassador to Delhi Iraj Elahi in which the officials explored the ways of boosting cooperation between Iran and India in the Islamic Republic's free zones.

Abdolmaleki also met and held talks with the representatives of one of India's largest steel companies, during which he invited the Indian side to invest in Iran's free zones.

Considering the low production costs and the ease of doing business, import and export, and suitable infrastructures that exist in the free and special economic zones of Iran, including the Chabahar Free Zone, the Indian production group expressed its interest in investing in the production of downstream steel products in Iran's free and special economic zones.

Last week, Abdolmaleki outlined 10 new strategies to increase investment and export in the country's free and special economic zones.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the deputy heads of the country's free zones on the sidelines of the second EAEU Exclusive exhibition in Tehran on Thursday (December 7).

Abdolmaleki stated that the mentioned strategies mainly focus on a network of cooperation among the investment and economic departments of the country's free zones.

"Joint marketing between the free zones in the fields of income, investment, logistics, and export is the main purpose of the said network," he explained.

Biden embrace of Israel angers Americans

TEHRAN – A growing wave of discontent is coursing through segments of the U.S. populace, driven by an escalating opposition to the substantial support that the United States provides to Israel.

What were once mere whispers of disapproval have evolved into a resounding outcry, capturing the attention of a global audience increasingly wearied by the daily tragic plight of the Palestinians.

The recent U.S. veto of the United Nations Security Council resolution, intended to halt the military onslaught in Gaza, has become a catalyst, intensifying the flames of dissent among American citizens. Many perceive this action as a tacit endorsement of Israel›s unrestrained aggression, sparking indignation among those calling for a reevaluation of U.S. policies that seemingly endorse the indiscriminate targeting of civilians in the pursuit of geopolitical alliances. It›s noteworthy that this isn›t an isolated incident; the U.S. has wielded its veto power in support of the Israeli regime multiple times. Since 1945, the U.S. has vetoed a total of 34 UN Security Council draft resolutions related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, unequivocally expressing the country's support for Israel whenever resolutions critiqued their actions in Gaza and the West Bank.

As images of civilian casualties and the devastating destruction of homes and infrastructure in Gaza flood the media, public sentiment has evolved from mere disapproval to active protest. Earlier this week, dozens of activists protested in

front of the U.S. Senate office building, demanding the United States to push for a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The demonstrators, clad in black T-shirts reading «Not In Our Name,» chained themselves to the White House fence, scattering fake money on the floor to symbolize the blood money that the U.S. is giving to Israel and holding a banner reading «Aid to Israel = Bombing Palestinians.»

Protest movements, both on social media platforms and in physical gatherings, spotlight the diverse range of concerns among U.S. citizens. Some express dismay over the perceived imbalance in U.S. foreign policy, contending that significant aid to Israel may not align with the broader interests and values of the American people. Many citizens are also questioning the substantial financial aid provided to Israel, drawn from U.S. taxpayer money, leading to heightened scrutiny and calls for transparency in how taxpayer dollars are utilized in foreign aid. This is while Israel receives more than $3 billion in military aid each year, and the U.S. Congress is now weighing a Biden administration proposal to send the occupying regime more than $10 billion in supplemental military support to continue the war against the innocent Gazan civilians.

In addition to financial aid, the U.S. is responsible for providing Israel with some of its most advanced war machinery, including a collection of U.S.-made F-35 fighter jets, which is considered the most advanced fighters in the world. Israel is now using these weapons to attack Gaza, according to open-source accounts. According to a Washington Post investigation, Israel also used U.S.-supplied internationally banned white phosphorus munitions in an October attack in southern Lebanon.

While people in the United States express growing discontent with their country›s stance on the Gaza conflict, President Joe Biden hosted a White House reception on Monday to mark Hanukkah, celebrating the Jewish festival of lights, and affirming, «I am a Zionist,» promising continued military assistance to Israel.

The unanimous backing from the U.S. political machinery for Israel, despite international pleas for restraint, has left a bitter taste for those seeking justice and an end to the suffering in Gaza. This allegiance, perceived by some as an unchecked carte blanche for Israel to act with impunity, has fueled a groundswell of dissatisfaction, not only with the policies themselves but also with the broader ethical and moral implications of such unwavering support.

Recent polling indicates that younger Americans are now taking a more fierce stance on the Gaza conflict and are more likely to support Palestinians. According to a Quinnipiac University national poll released in mid-November, 52% of younger voters, ages 18-34, said their sympathies lie more with the Palestinians while 29% said they side with the Israelis.

This discontent among the American public is now evolving into a global movement demanding accountability, transparency, and a recalibration of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, emphasizing the ethical responsibility of a nation that champions human rights but seemingly turns a blind eye to the human suffering in Gaza. Younger Americans, in particular, are more likely to support Palestinians, according to recent polling, revealing a shift in sentiments that transcends national borders.

Yemeni missile hits Israeli-linked ship

Ansarullah forces claim responsibility for targeting another ship heading to Israel

From page 1 ▸ and in response to the calls of the free people of our great Yemeni people and the people of our region."

It comes as more harrowing images emerge of the Israeli military killing Palestinian babies. To cite an example, the grandmother of Palestinian baby Idres al-Dbari, who was born after the Israeli war on Gaza, mourns over the body of the baby and his mother.

Sare'e pointed out that the Yemeni armed forces succeeded during the past two days in preventing the passage of several ships that failed to respond to the warnings of the Yemeni naval forces and they targeted the Norwegian oil tanker with a cruise missile only after its crew rejected all warning calls.

He stressed that "the Yemeni Armed Forces will not hesitate to target any ship that violates what was stated in the previous statements," adding, "the Yemeni Armed Forces confirm that they will continue to prevent all ships of all nationalities heading to Israeli ports from navigating in the Red and Arab Seas until our steadfast brothers in the Gaza Strip receive food and medicine."

Ansarullah's Armed Forces had announced on Dec. 2 that they will prevent the passage of ships heading to Israel regardless of their nationality, if the food, medicine and other vital supplies do not enter the Gaza Strip.

Ansarullah leaders explained that this decision came as a result of the Israeli regime's ongoing "horrific massacres, genocidal war and siege against the Gaza Strip".

The government in the Yemeni capital Sana'a said any ship heading to Israel would be considered a legitimate target for its armed forces, warning all ships and companies against dealing with Israeli ports.

The armed forces stated that they will implement the decision to prevent the passage of all ships to the occupation regime from the moment the statement was announced at (7pm Saturday, Sana'a time), noting that the decision to prevent the entry of foreign ships towards the Israeli occupied Palestinian territories came after the success in preventing Israeli ships from navigating in the Red and Arab Seas.

The armed forces confirmed that they are keen on the continuation of trade movement for all countries and ships, except for those linked to the Israeli regime or those transporting goods to Israeli ports.

Last month, Yemen announced that it would prevent Israeli-linked ships from navigating in the Red Sea, stressing that it would target all types of vessels that carry the flag of the Zionist entity or are operated by or owned by Israeli companies, calling on all countries around the globe to remove their citizens working as crews linked to the Israeli ships, and to avoid shipping to the regime.

It has carried out the stated mission by targeting certain ships linked to the Israeli regime.

These include the Yemeni forces announcing the seizure of an Israeli ship in a naval military operation on November 19 in the Red Sea.

On December 3, the Yemeni armed forces announced that they had targeted two Israeli ships in Bab al-Mandab after they rejected warning messages from the naval forces.

Israeli economists have revealed that the occupied Israeli port of Umm al-Rashrash, also known as Eilat, had stopped operating as a result of Yemeni threats.

The port authorities reportedly said that Yemen's threats affect all ships, whether those passing to the Mediterranean Sea or arriving to Umm al-Rashrash (Eilat).

The Zionist regime's port officials are said to have acknowledged that there are almost no ships docking at the port, indicating that the port intends to take workers out of their jobs and close the port's gates due to lack of trade.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Academics free to express views as long as they don't criticize Israel

From page 1 ▸ for merely showing support for the students who had staged protests to ask for a ceasefire in Gaza. They just didn't want to see children get slaughtered. But the U.S. government decided to crack down on them, further exposing its unequivocal support for a child-killing regime.

Liberal states can undoubtedly be considered the architects of "refined dictatorships". These are governments that have imposed the most brutal and harsh restrictions while bloviating slogans of freedom and democracy. This type of narrative has been injected and regurgitated by professors teaching in Iranian universities, who consider the West to be the epitome of freedom and democracy despite all the evidence that proves them wrong. One of these professors decided to extol American academic institutions by saying: "Look at where we stand today, look at how freely universities function in the U.S. and then take a look at our own educational centers. We have a long way to reach the standards Americans are beholding".

There are countless more academics and professors, as well as others considered to be part of the pantheon, that have expressed disbelief at the alleged independence of American universities and how these entities are supposedly allowed to speak on any matter completely unfettered. Recent developments, however, showed that all these verbose praises of American universities have been nothing but empty assessments influenced by lie-ridden books written by U.S. lobbies.

The elite in Iran have for the longest time been largely affected by the false picture the West has put up of itself. Our people have not been able to see the West for what it really is and some of them even refuse to open their eyes to the reality at hand despite all that's happened in the past two months.

A while ago I spoke extensively about the uprising of universities against Western atrocities during a university summit I had attended. I spoke about how the academics in the West have changed the history of their universities forever by showing support for the dying masses in Gaza.

Now, the president of Harvard University has been summoned to U.S. Congress and is forced to come up with explanations for the Education Committee. In addition to Harvard, the presidents of the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have also been summoned, and are on the verge of losing their jobs. These events are undoubtedly seen as a trial of the scientific society.

Although liberal governments have always tried to show a democratic face and emphasize independence in science and scientific institutions, these events have clearly revealed what is happening behind the scenes.

Dictatorship is not only defending Zionism but also imposing the regime's system and understanding of science on others, ridiculing and even assassinating those who do not accept this understanding and system. The martyrdom of university professors in

Islamic Iran, such as Shahriari and Ali-Mohammadi, and the sanctions against Iranian universities were clear examples of the West's disregard towards science and its untrammeled support for an illegitimate cause. But those deeply influenced by Western propaganda refuse to acknowledge these facts no matter what happens.

Today, in this ongoing battle, the true nature of the West and its conduct in universities have been revealed, and those who are seriously concerned about respect for the university are expected to boldly scrap their past false beliefs and simplistic attitudes and condemn this behavior.

Years ago, I told an ambassador from a European country that the shame of assassinating a scientist in Iran would not be wiped away from your history just like what happened in the Middle Ages, and today I emphasize that the end of academic governance in Western liberal democracy has arrived and a new plan should be launched.

Passing the crisis

Evaluating the ways out of the dead ends in the Palestinian crisis

From page 1 ▸ The ignorance of the Palestinians' rights has also proved that the interests of the West will not be met in the region as well.

Given that the Palestinian issue will not be tackled militarily, the lack of a political solution by Israel›s allies has left no option except armed resistance from the Palestinians.

Which solution?

Forming an independent Palestinian state on the pre-1967 borders is the oldest solution, verbally supported by the US, EU, and some Arab states.

The proposed solution did not take serious action to force Israel to withdraw from the occupied lands, yet the supportive sides of the solution remained silent against the continuous occupation of the West Bank and the continuous killing of the Gazans.

As a result, evaluating the possibilities of the two-state solution and other solutions can pave the way for finding ways for the Palestine crisis.

The two-state solution

This solution dates back to the plan approved by the United Nations in 1947, which allocated 55% of Palestine to the Jews and 45% to the Palestinians.

The plan was accepted by the Jewish Agency, but the Arab League opposed it because Palestinians made up more than two-thirds of the Palestinian population compared to Jewish immigrants. Accordingly, the division of Palestine was declared contrary to the principles of the UN Charter.

With the continuation of the occupation of Palestine by Israel and the lack of a clear understanding of the borders between Palestine and Israel, the Palestine issue has turned out to be the biggest challenge for the implementation of a two-state solution.

The Palestinian Authority›s government is attempting to find a resolution based on the Oslo agreement. Hamas has also expressed its willingness to accept the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders, with Bait al-Muqaddas as its capital.

The extremist faction in Israel asserts that the West Bank, known as Judea and Samaria, rightfully belongs to Israel. Additionally, Netanyahu›s cabinet has shown intentions of incorporating this region into the occupied territories.

The inflexibility of Tel Aviv has been the reason for the collapse of multiple negotiations between the two parties, starting from the Camp David talks in 2000 up to the Annapolis Conference in 2007. Eventually, Netanyahu declared that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state would not be pursued.

Referendum

The Islamic Republic of Iran has offered a referendum as a solution for the Palestine crisis. According to this proposal, Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Palestinian refugees, will all determine the fate of Palestine in a referendum, which is in line with the right to self-determination within the United Nations Charter.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Palestinian fighters say seven Israeli military vehicles targeted; 11 soldiers killed

The armed wing of Hamas, the Qassam Brigades, says it targeted seven military vehicles with shells and anti-armor devices in the Shujayea neighborhood of Gaza City.

The group said that its fighters were engaged in fighting with Israeli soldiers in several areas and confirmed the killing of 11 of them.

It targeted a troops carrier and killed three crew members. There was a clash with the rescue team soldiers who tried to recover a tank crew, which resulted in the deaths of a "number of them".

An Israeli sniper was also targeted with an RPG.

Canadian official backs Israel's actions no matter how many children die

The mayor of the Montreal suburb of Hampstead Jeremy Levi has said that, regardless of the number of children's lives taken, he would continue to support Israel in its ongoing offensive in Gaza.

More than 18,200 people have so far died in the nine-week bombardment of Gaza, health officials in the besieged enclave said on Monday.

But as international condemnation of Israel's siege of Gaza swells, Levi – who was elected last year to govern the predominantly Jewish Hampstead community – has said that Israel's military offensive must continue until "good" prevails over "evil."

Asked if he would continue to support Israel if 100,000 children were killed, Levi said: "You can give me all sorts of numbers, my answer is going to be the same: Israel needs to eradicate Hamas."

Last month, Levi imposed a bylaw in the Hampstead community which would see anyone who tore down a poster of missing Israeli citizens fined CAN$1,000 – with the money being donated directly to Israel.

Human rights advocates to UNGA: Recognize Gaza war as 'genocide in making'

The experts from across the Middle East and North Africa have written to the president of the UN General Assembly for action to recognise and declare "Israel's atrocities during its military assault on Gaza as constituting a genocide in the making".

"As members of the United Nations General Assembly, you have the duty to uphold the UN Charter and fulfill its mandate through the prevention of actions that aim to destroy the existence of a group of people in whole or in part," the signatories from Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain and elsewhere wrote in their letter.

"The events transpiring in Gaza align with the two of criteria outlined in the [UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide], indicating a pressing need for the international community to address this crisis urgently."

The signatories identified the criteria as "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group" and "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

They also cited mass killing, forced displacement, deliberate mass starvation, destruction of vital infrastructure and the large volume of children killed, among others, as "clear and unquestionable features of Israel's genocidal action in Gaza".

13 Israeli soldiers killed by friendly fire

The death toll of Israeli soldiers in Gaza has surpassed 100, and 20 of those killed were victims of friendly fire or other accidents, the Israeli military said Tuesday.

Thirteen of the deaths were from friendly fire due to mistaken identification during shelling, gunfire and airstrikes, the Israeli military revealed to multiple Israeli media outlets. Most of the other deaths involved weapon misfires.

Iran set to showcase unique cultural offerings at Souvenir Expo Turkey

TEHRAN – Iran has confirmed its participation in the Souvenir Expo Turkey, marking a significant moment for cultural exchange and trade relations between various nations.

Scheduled to commence on 14 Dec. in Istanbul, the four-day expo promises to be a melting pot of diverse heritage, craftsmanship, and tradition.

The country's pavilion, which is set to cover 80 square meters in area, will be run by the Touring and Automobile Club of Iran to showcase portions of its rich history and exquisite craft skills, reflected in its wide array of traditional souvenirs and handicrafts.

The Iranian delegation is gearing up to exhibit an impressive range of cultural treasures, including handwoven carpets, intricately designed ceramics, stunning Persian rugs, vibrant textiles, traditional clothing, and an assortment of handcrafted items that reflect the country's artistic prowess and heritage.

The event serves as a platform for Iranian artisans, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs to showcase their craftsmanship to a global audience, fostering trade partnerships and cultural exchange.

At present, a total of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts". The World Crafts Council is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that was founded in 1964 to promote fellowship, foster economic development through income-generating craft-related activities, and organize exchange programs, workshops, conferences, and exhibitions.

According to organizers, the upcoming trade show will feature gift manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers from various countries who will present their latest products covering categories such as touristic gifts, souvenirs, textile products, etc. Moreover, Souvenir Turkey 2023 will host guided tours, live demonstrations, practical workshops, competitions, and various networking hubs spread across the venue.

New York City's Chinese tourism recovery to lag in 2024

Chinese tourists won't be coming back to New York City at their pre-pandemic levels next year. Affordability and limited flights are two issues holding back the rebound, say travel executives.

"It is unaffordable at this moment for people from China, for the average visitor to come to the U.S.," said Peter van Berkel, chairman of the International Inbound Travel Association and president of Travalco, a tour operator.

Van Berkel spoke at a panel last week with New York City tourism leaders, hosted by the Association for a Better New York.

Airfares have been too expensive for Chinese tourists. "Just this past year, we were talking about economy fares of more than $3,500 depending on time of year," he said.

Flights between the U.S. and China are nowhere near their pre-pandemic numbers. There were 120 nonstop flights between the countries during the week of December 11. The number will reach 126 for the second week of January, down from 674 for the same period in 2019, according to Cirium Diio.

Late restart for Chinese tourism to the U.S.

Chinese tourism has been slow to recover since the pandemic. The country was late lifting its Covid-era travel restrictions. The government has also been encouraging domestic over international travel, said van Berkel.

"They are running almost a year and a half behind the other markets," he said. "Things will definitely improve. It's not going to be a switch."

In August, China lifted its restrictions on group travel to the U.S. In November, Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Joe Biden said they plan to improve air connectivity.

Optimism for Chinese tourists—New York City's top spenders

Some New York executives are optimistic about Chinese tourism next year. "I'm very bullish on China," said Vijay Dandapani, CEO and president of the Hotel Association of New York City. "China's going to open up."

Before the pandemic, China was one of New York City's top tourist segments in terms of spend, NYC Tourism + Conventions CEO and President Fred Dixon told Skift in July. The city expects to receive over 380,000 Chinese tourists this year.

Chinese tourists stay long, spend more money and attend more than one show, said Allison French, senior director for Broadway Inbound.

Demand for first-time visitor visas in China has been down from its pre-pandemic levels, said van Berkel.

The State Department isn't processing anywhere near the number of first-time visitor visas it was prior to the pandemic. "Pre-Covid we were doing I think probably five or six times what they're doing today," Julie Stufft, deputy assistant secretary for visa services, told Skift.

At the same time, visa wait times at some U.S. embassies are over a 100 days. In Shanghai, it's 175 days, for example, according to the U.S. State Department's website.

For the millions of Chinese citizens who need to renew their 10-year visas next year, the State Department plans to waive the interviews for most of them.

(Source: Skift)

Foreign arrivals in Iran reach 4.4 million in 8 months, up by 48.5% y/y

From Page 1 ▸ He said some 258,000 visitors from Turkey arrived in the Islamic Republic in the first six months of this year which shows a 36% growth compared to the same period last year.

Moreover, countries within the ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization), including Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan, also saw a 55% growth with 1.1 million visitors in the first six months of this year, the official stated.

Referring to Chinese nationals, who enjoy visa-free travels to Iran, Shajai said: In the first six months of this year, the number of Chinese arrivals increased by 67% compared to the pre-pandemic period.

He said travel from Russia to Iran increased by approximately 14% with the entry of 21,200 people.

Despite reports from agencies indicating a decline in European tourist visits to Iran since last year. However, the official highlighted positive growth from some European countries.

"For instance, arrivals from Sweden experienced a 34% growth during the same period, accounting for about 6,600 visitors, including Iranian residents in Sweden traveling to Iran for tourism purposes."

He put the number of German visitors to Iran at 12,000 in the first six months of this year, which is almost the same as the period last year.

Shojai highlighted notable growth in travel from India to Iran, with 31,000 visitors in the first six months of this year, experiencing a 25% growth compared to the same period last year.

Moreover, he emphasized that Iran's tourism is not limited to a single market or specific type, as foreigners visit the country for various reasons including pilgrimage, medical treatment, trade, historical, and cultural interests.

Earlier this year, Ebrahim Pourfaraj, the former head of the Iranian Tour Operators Association, said the number of inbound passengers has dramatically declined, suggesting that "hardly any tourists come to Iran, not even for free."

According to available data, the Islamic Republic saw 3.35 million foreign arrivals in the first half of the current Iranian year, which soared 38 percent year on year.

Pursuing a border-easing scheme, the Iranian government mulls abolishing visa requirements for passport holders from 68 countries. The country seeks to encourage overseas travelers, though available evidence suggests it will not be finalized to be implemented shortly. Its tentative list includes Argentina, South Africa, Indonesia, Jordan, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ecuador, Algeria, UAE, Bahrain, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Belarus, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Paraguay, Peru, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Thailand, and Turkmenistan.

Tunisia, Czech Republic, Russia, Romania, Japan, Ivory Coast, Singapore, Senegal, Sudan, Seychelles, Chile, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Finland, Cyprus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Cameroon, Croatia, South Korea, Colombia, Comoros, Kuwait, Guinea, Poland, Luxembourg, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Hungary, Macedonia, Mexico, Mauritius, Mali, Madagascar, Niger, Vietnam, Yemen, Greece, and India constitute other states whose nationals may be granted visa-free access.

According to available data, Iran's tourism had constantly been growing before the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching more than eight million visitors in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (started March 21, 2019). Based on the latest United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) World Tourism Barometer, foreign tourist arrivals in Iran reached some 2.93 million between January and July 2023.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 27 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Chinese Spring Festival opportunity for Iran's golden triangle of tourism, expert says

TEHRAN – China's Spring Festival more commonly known as the Chinese New Year opens a window of tourism opportunity for Iran's s golden triangle of tourism, a travel expert said on Monday.

The golden triangle, encompassing Kerman, Yazd, and Isfahan, presents a captivating tapestry of cultural heritage, architectural wonders, and natural landscapes.

"The provinces of Yazd, Fars, and Isfahan, recognized as the country's golden triangle of tourism, can benefit from the opportunity provided by the Chinese New Year celebrations in a span from the 10th to the 30th of Bahman (Iranian calendar), by holding events and joint programs to accommodate Chinese tourists," said Moslem Shojaei who presides over the office for foreign tourism marketing and development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Spring Festival, more commonly known in English as the Chinese New Year, is the biggest festival in China with celebrations that traditionally last for 16 days, starting from Chinese New Year's Eve to the Lantern Festival.

Shojai made the remarks at a Tehran meeting attended by the deputy tourism minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, and governors-general of the provinces, IRNA reported. He said one of the measures that can be taken in this regard is to seek assistance from industrial and economic sectors to promote provincial tourism.

"When it comes to that golden triangle, the need for the participation of industrial and specialized sectors in national such as organization of familiarization tours is of high significance," he explained.

He said the three provinces have long been traditional destinations for Chinese nationals visiting Iran. "Focusing on the Chinese New Year holidays can take advantage of the opportunity to host Chinese tourists during this period by holding joint events and presenting event-oriented programs."

Speaking at the meeting, Mehran Fatemi, the governor-general of Yazd province, demanded governmental support for the three provinces.

"With the government's attention and special focus on the three provinces of Yazd, Fars, and Isfahan, the path of development becomes smoother by emphasizing the strengthening of transportation and infrastructure provision," Fatemi said.

He added considering that the three provinces of Yazd, Fars, and Isfahan are the cultural tourism destinations of the country, and most tours' major destinations and the majority of our nationally and internationally registered monuments are predominantly located in these provinces, it is necessary to open a new chapter for joint collaborations.

Fatemi also mentioned issues such as attention to providing communication infrastructure needs, which included transportation, defining common routes and packages, establishing a joint logo, forming a special pavilion at national tourism fairs, establishing a permanent secretariat, creating a joint website, focusing on advertising and producing joint tourism content emphasizing lesser-known areas, organizing joint cultural programs and nights, and ultimately focusing on common target markets.

Placed within the heart of Iran lies a region steeped in history, culture, and architectural marvel, Iran's golden triangle of tourism beckons travelers with its rich heritage, mesmerizing landscapes, and a tapestry of ancient wonders waiting to be discovered.

Kerman, the gateway to the southeastern part of Iran, presents an intriguing mix of history and natural beauty. It boasts the awe-inspiring Kaluts—majestic sand formations sculpted by the wind over centuries—in the Lut Desert, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Travelers can marvel at the exquisite craftsmanship in the historic Ganjali Khan complex and the mesmerizing Shahdad Desert.

Moreover, Kerman embraces cultural diversity with open arms, hosting various ethnic communities, each contributing to the region's vibrant heritage. Visitors can immerse themselves in the enchanting ambiance of traditional bazaars, such as the Grand Bazaar and the Vakil Bazaar, where echoes of ancient trade routes still resonate.

Yazd, renowned for its architectural marvels and as the embodiment of Persian heritage, stands as a testament to the ingenuity of its people. The city is a labyrinth of wind towers, adobe structures, and intricate mosques, including the UNESCO-listed Jameh Mosque and the Amir Chakhmaq Complex. Wander through the historic Fahadan neighborhood, adorned with narrow alleys and mud-brick homes, offering a glimpse into Iran's past.

Moreover, Yazd is synonymous with Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest religions. The Towers of Silence and its ancient fire temples are sacred sites where visitors can explore the spiritual and cultural roots deeply ingrained in the city's identity.

Isfahan, the crowning jewel of Iran's cultural heritage, captivates with its opulent palaces, grand mosques, and UNESCO-recognized Naqsh-e Jahan Square. This bustling square is surrounded by architectural marvels such as the Imam Mosque, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and the Ali Qapu Palace, showcasing the pinnacle of Safavid-era design.

The city's historic bridges, notably the iconic Si-o-Se Pol and Pol-e Khaju, provide an atmospheric setting for strolling and taking in panoramic views of the Zayandeh-Rud river. Isfahan's vibrant bazaars, including the Grand Bazaar and the Qeisarieh Bazaar, offer a treasure trove of Persian handicrafts, textiles, and spices.

From the ethereal beauty of desert landscapes to the intricate details of ancient cities, this cultural triangle invites travelers on an unforgettable journey through Iran's rich history and vibrant traditions.

Temple linked to Hercules and Alexander the Great discovered in ancient megacity in Iraq

Archaeologists have discovered two temples, one buried atop the other, in the ancient megacity of Girsu in Iraq. One temple is linked to Hercules and Alexander the Great.

Archaeologists in Iraq have unearthed twin temples built on top of each other. The newer, Hellenistic temple dates to the fourth century BC and may have a link to Alexander the Great.

The temple contained a fired brick with an Aramaic and Greek inscription that references "the giver of two brothers" — a possible reference to the Macedonian king, who conquered much of the known world during his 13-year-reign from 336 BC to 323 BC.

Archaeologists from the British Museum in London discovered the older temple while conducting excavations at Girsu, a Sumerian city now known as Tello in southeastern Iraq. The excavations are part of an ongoing venture conducted by the museum known as The Girsu Project that focuses on learning more about the city's storied history.

Remnants of the older, Sumerian temple were found buried "on the exact same spot" as the newer construction, which was dedicated to the "Greek god Hercules and his Sumerian equivalent, the hero god Ningirsu [also known as Ninurta]," Sebastien Rey, an archaeologist and curator of Ancient Mesopotamia at the British Museum who led the excavation, told Live Science in an email.

The fact that a temple was raised on the same site where one stood 1,500 years earlier was no coincidence, and the site must have held some significance to the people of Mesopotamia, the researchers said.

"It shows that the inhabitants of Babylonia in the [fourth] century BC had a vast knowledge of their history," Rey said. "The legacy of the Sumerians was still very vibrant."

(Source: Live Science)

Global Innovation Index: Iran fastest-rising country in decade

TEHRAN – According to the Global Innovation Index (GII) report published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Iran has been the fastest-rising economy in the world, reaching from 113th place in 2013 to 62nd in 2023.

India (40th), Iran (62nd), and Kazakhstan (81st) are ranked first to third respectively in Central and Southern Asia, IRNA reported.

The global innovation and technology indicators include the index of creative outputs, knowledge and technology outputs, human capital and research, and business sophistication>

Iran is second within the region once again at 62nd position, following Turkey.

Also, in terms of the number of patents registered by WIPO, Iran ranks 51st in the world, next to the United States of America, Japan, and South Korea.

Among Islamic countries, Iran is ranked 5th with 1768 patents submitted. Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates ranked first to fourth with 17088, 8116, 5765, and 2942 patents respectively.

2023 edition of GII

According to the GII report, the Islamic Republic of Iran ranked second among the countries of the Central and Southern Asian region, unchanged compared with last year.

The report ranked Iran 19th, 43rd, and 55th in "Market sophistication", "Creative outputs", and "Knowledge and technology outputs", respectively.

The GII 2023 used 80 indicators to track global innovation trends in 130-plus economies, guiding policymakers and business leaders in stimulating human ingenuity. This year, the report's findings were unveiled against a background of slow economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, high-interest rates, and geopolitical conflict.

The 2023 edition identified an increasingly uncertain outlook for venture capital (VC) that helps transform human ingenuity into new products and services, with the global value of VC funding marking a significant plunge last year.

According to the GII 2023 rankings, Switzerland, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore are the top countries. China, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Iran are the middle-income economies making the most headway in innovation over the last decade.

In the 16th report of the GII, which was announced at an event hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), it is stated that Iran ranks 62nd among 132 countries in the world and 6th among 37 countries in lower middle-income countries.

In knowledge and technology outputs, creative outputs, market sophistication, human capital, research, and infrastructure, Iran's performance is above the average of the lower middle-income group.

On the other hand, Iran performs above the regional average (Central and South Asia) in all these indexes, except for the infrastructure.

Under the 6.2.2 index, which was presented in the 2022 report under the title of "New Businesses" and in the new report under the title of "Unicorn Valuation", Iran's rank has risen from 90 in 2022 to 48 in 2023.

Iran is the regional leader in Market sophistication (19th), and Creative outputs (43rd). It performs well in Intangible assets (13th), ranks 1st globally in Trademarks(1st), and in the top 15 worldwide in Graduates in Science and Engineering (3rd), Market capitalization (5th), and Industrial designs (11th).

Iranian inventors grab gold medal at Dubai Invention Expo

TEHRAN – The team of Iranian researchers won a gold medal in the Invention Expo for Smart Sport Tourism with Marketing UAVs, which was held in Dubai from December 7-9.

With the support of the World Invention Intellectual Property Organization (WIIPA), the event was held in the eight fields of energy, medicine, information technology, aerospace, chemistry, physics, marketing and advertising, and art, IRIB reported.

More than 150 designs, inventions, and ideas were presented from 21 countries, including Iran, Germany, Croatia, Romania, South Korea, Singapore, England, Indonesia, China, and Poland.

The Iranian team consisted of tourism and tourism management students from Tehran and Shiraz universities.

Reza Heydari, Amirhossein Payandeh, Saman Keivannia, Mostafa Raftari, Amir Arghvan, and Amirhossein Lotfi, were the members of the Iranian team.

Their design is called "Smart Sport Tourism with Marketing UAVs" which uses a combination of aerospace sciences and technologies, tourism, and artificial intelligence.

The idea of Iranian researchers has been designed and tested in regard to the restrictions on access to sports tourism destinations and different sports events in the world due to economic, political, physical, and health restrictions.

It was evaluated by the jury of the festival in terms of innovation, practicality, design, affordability, social and economic effects, and market opportunities.

Thanks to being recognized as the best in its group, the design received the gold medal in the international competition.

Dubai Invention Expo

DIS, International Invention Show 2023, provides a business platform for inventors, manufacturers, and dealers to present their latest products and innovations and exchange information. For this occasion, delegations from more than 32 countries came to Dubai to present their patented inventions and new ideas, the competition brings together many participants and inventions in many diverse areas.

The renowned international contest is first and foremost a propitious place for professional exchanges where partners and contacts mingle in a convivial and positive atmosphere.

At DIS, excellence in innovation is highlighted through the Invention & Innovation Award, it brings recognition to the best inventions, innovations, and trade, adding onto its merit is supported by many international delegates.

This event offers a platform for innovation, a professional meeting place that gathers different players from the world of innovation, research, development, and financing, it covers areas such as energy, medicine, information technology, aerospace, biochemistry, and many more.

Developing AI on the agenda

President Ebrahim Raisi has issued an executive order for the establishment of the 'National Steering Committee and the National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center'.

Creating a complete and stable chain of ideas to market in AI, benefiting from AI for the economic progress of the country, planning to achieve a leading and sustainable position among the countries of the world, as well as identifying and nurturing talents in the field of AI are among the most important tasks of the national AI center, IRNA reported.

"Iran ranks 17th in artificial intelligence in terms of scientific production and publication of articles in the world, while ranks 78th in terms of its application in the world," Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, Vice President for Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy, has said.

The Vice Presidency has prepared three comprehensive plans to develop artificial intelligence in different sectors.

Currently, artificial intelligence is the first priority for the development of technology and is pursued with three programs, IRNA quoted Firouzabadi as saying

Artificial intelligence is a comprehensive technology and affects all other areas of technology, he highlighted.

"The plans in the field of artificial intelligence include scientific development programs that are mostly pursued in universities. The second plan is technology development programs that are pursued in companies that work in the field of artificial intelligence. And the third plan is the creation of a national technology hub in the field of artificial intelligence."

Iran, UNICEF agree to draft MOU on refugees

TEHRAN –Ruhollah Qaderi, the National Organization for Migration's director for international affairs, and Robin Nandy, the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Iran, in a meeting on Monday, emphasized the need for drafting a memorandum of understanding on refugees.

Referring to the enhanced cooperation between UNICEF and the National Organization for Migration, Qaderi said, "We are talking about refugees as they are imposing heavy costs on the government and the people of Iran."

The Islamic Republic of Iran has practically no role in the crisis created in Afghanistan. However, displaced Afghans and refugees have kept flowing to the country, he added, IRNA reported.

Despite Iran's generous hosting of the refugees, who are mainly Afghans, the international community has failed to support the country. They have paid for less than one percent of the costs of hosting refugees, which is not acceptable at all, Qaderi explained.

Nandy, for his part, appreciated Iran for supporting refugees residing in the country.

Confirming that the amount of foreign aid is not proportionate to hosting costs and highlighting the need to depoliticize humanitarian issues, particularly children in a polarized world, Nandy said UNICEF's support will be tailored to the needs of Iran.

Protection for refugee children is encouraging

In May, Nandy said the country's comprehensive program for the protection of refugee children is encouraging.

Making investments in programs and services to better care for and support children affected by migration and asylum will reduce costs in the future, he added.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Ali Kazemi, the deputy justice minister, IRNA reported.

Emphasizing the important role of non-governmental organizations in supporting refugee and immigrant children and teenagers, Nandy expressed hope that holding educational workshops will lead to the promotion of children's rights and justice for children.

Kazemi, for his part, said some 63 percent of Afghan refugees have selected Iran as their destination and the government does its best to settle the refugees with dignity.

The situation of non-Iranian children and adolescents and their families who have sought refuge in the Islamic Republic of Iran due to migration or injuries caused by unforeseen events and natural disasters or issues such as war has always been of concern to Iran, IRNA quoted Kazemi as saying.

"It is expected that international organizations and other countries will also provide more assistance in this field in line with their humanitarian responsibilities and duties arising from human rights conventions," he added.

The Law on the protection of children and adolescents considers protection as the right of all people under the age of 18 who live within the borders of the Islamic Republic, Kazemi highlighted.

"According to the law, equal and non-discriminatory treatment in terms of color, race, religion, language, health, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and family status is the right of every child living in Iran.

The indisputable principle that governs all measures related to children and various legal protections have been considered for non-Iranian children and adolescents."

The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees.

The country is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans. Today, more than 500,000 Afghan children-including undocumented Afghans and those who have newly arrived in Iran following the Taliban-takeover-are benefitting from Iran's inclusive education policies, one of the most progressive in the world.

Many of the refugees living in Iran are second and third-generation, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Iran has spent more than $352 million in the current school year that started on September 23 on the education of Afghan students.

Over 670,000 students of Afghan nationals are studying in Iran, and the cost of educating these students is more than $352 million, IRNA reported.

In the current school year, $17 million of international aid and $335.631 million from internal sources have been spent on the education of Afghan nationals.However, international organizations have paid less than 3.9 percent of the cost of education for Afghan students in Iran in the last two years.

No more capacity for refugees

In November, the head of Iran's immigration organization on Tuesday said Iran has no longer the capacity to accept new immigrants, and if the international community does not bear the responsibility for supporting refugees in Iran, most of them will migrate to European countries.

Abdollah Mobini made the remarks at the 114th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva, held from November 27-29, IRNA reported.

Highlighting the disproportionate burden of hosting refugees by the international community, Mobini said, "Iran has far exceeded its share in hosting and supporting refugees; the international community should consider the fair distribution of this international responsibility."

Migration is driven by several factors, including political, and military interventions and climate change in the neighboring countries of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the shadow of the military interventions of extra-regional countries in Afghanistan and Iraq; Iran has hosted several million refugees and displaced persons for more than four decades, he added.

Mobini went on to say, "Security and economic problems and constraints such as banning male and female students from studying have been among the reasons for the displacement of Afghan nationals and their migration to neighboring countries."

ENGLISH IN USE

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Excessive use of renewable water in Kerman 'worrisome'

Excessive withdrawal of renewable water, equaling 123 percent of the current volume, in the southeastern province of Kerman, has raised great concerns while posing a serious threat to the life of residents and region's biodiversity.

"Currently, there are 5.5 billion cubic meters of renewable water in Kerman province, but 6.8 billion cubic meters equivalent to 123 percent of renewable water resources is being used," IRNA quoted Reza Jazinizadeh, the head of Kerman province's department of environment, as saying on Thursday.

In the [13]40s (falling on 1960s), concurrent with the establishment of the Ministry of Energy, renewable water resources measured at 90 million cubic meters, and some 50 million cubic meters out of this amount was withdrawn, Jazinizadeh explained.

برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد آبهای تجدیدپذیر در کرمان نگران کننده است

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست استان کرمان گفت : برداشت ۱۲۳ درصد از آبهای تجدیدپذیر در این استان که حیات انسانی و جانوری را با تهدید جدی مواجه کرده ، نگران کننده است .
وی تصریح کرد: در حال حاضر در استان کرمان ۵.۵ میلیارد متر مکعب آب تجدیدپذیر داریم که ۶.۸ میلیارد مترمکعب معادل ۱۲۳درصد آبهای تجدید پذیر برداشت و مورد استفاده قرار می گیرد.
رضا جزینی زاده روز پنجشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: در دهه ۱۳۴۰ با تشکیل وزارت نیرو در کشور میزان برداشت آب از سفره های زیرزمینی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و مشخص شد که در کشور ۹۰ میلیون مترمکعب آب تجدید پذیر وجود دارد و از این میزان ۵۰ میلیون مترمکعب برداشت می شود.

ISNA / Morteza Zangeneh

Tehran expo showcasing technological achievements

The 24th exhibition on national achievements of research and technology opened in Tehran on Monday, December 11, and will run until Wednesday.The event aims to find solutions to challenges facing technological companies and remove hurdles to meet the country's needs.

TEHRAN TIMES

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DECEMBER 13, 2023

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Knowledge is the missing goal of a believer, so obtain it event from a man of discord.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:58 Evening: 17:12 Dawn: 5:35 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:05 (tomorrow)

Fajr International Theater Festival to dedicate section to Gaza

Frome Page **1** ▸ which will also be present in the special Gaza section after going through the festival's selection process," he explained.

The 42nd edition of Fajr International Theater Festival is scheduled to be held in the Iranian capital from January 13 to February 1, 2024.

On October 7, Israel started a deadly war on Gaza after the territory's Palestinian resistance group, Hamas, launched a surprise retaliation strike against the occupying regime, codenamed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

The Israeli regime's offensive has claimed the lives of nearly 18,000 individuals in Gaza, with a significant majority being women and children. Furthermore, over 49,000 people have suffered injuries as a result.

Israeli officials, including the prime minister, have made public statements endorsing or pledging to carry out acts of genocide against Palestinians throughout the course of this conflict. These alarming declarations have raised serious concerns regarding the protection of human rights and the safety of the Palestinian population.

Tel Aviv has also imposed severe restrictions on essential resources such as water, power, and gasoline in one of the world's most densely populated areas.

Sundance Film Festival picks Iran's "In the Land of Brothers"

TEHRAN-Iranian movie "In the Land of Brothers" co-directed by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi will go on screen at the 41st edition of the Sundance Film Festival.

The film will compete at the World Cinema Dramatic Competition section of the festival, which will be held in the U.S. city of Park City from January 18 to 28, 2024.

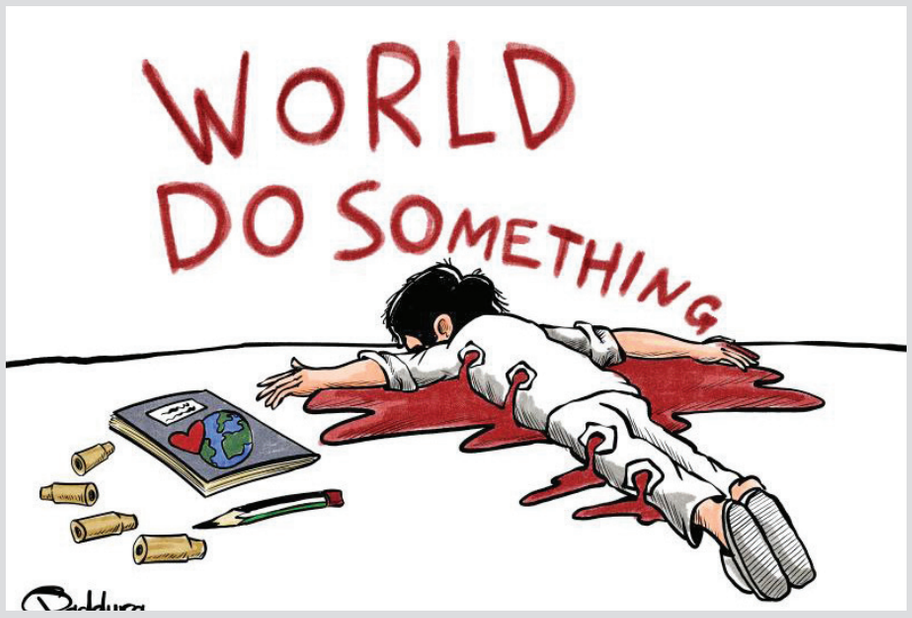
"In the Land of Brothers" tells the story of the lives of three individuals belonging to an extended Afghan family. Displaced from their homeland, they seek refuge in Iran, naively unaware of the arduous journey awaiting them to find a true sense of belonging.

Iran shelters approximately five million Afghan refugees, their legal status often tenuous, rendering them vulnerable to unforeseen circumstances that could lead to forcible deportation, separation from their loved ones, or even worse fates. Set against the backdrop of 2001, these three interconnected tales poignantly depict the struggles endured by these resilient individuals, whose lives teem with hope and joy. Yet, their existence remains confined within the clutches of a perilous state, forever edging on the precipice of uncertainty.

The annual Sundance Film Festival serves as a remarkable platform that unites ingenious storytellers with adventurous audiences, presenting an array of captivating program offerings. These include compelling dramatic, documentary, and short films, mesmerizing New Frontier productions, live performances, thought-provoking exhibitions, immersive virtual reality experiences, episodic storytelling, engaging filmmaker conversations, vibrant panel discussions, and exhilarating music events.

Since its inception, the festival has catapulted numerous films into the limelight, garnering critical acclaim and capturing the attention of global viewers hungry for innovative perspectives and fresh voices. As a non-profit organization, the Sundance Institute actively fosters an environment that encourages independent artists to create and showcase their authentic and original works. Founded by the legendary Robert Redford in the serene landscapes of Sundance, Utah, in 1981, the Institute has evolved into an esteemed entity, providing invaluable support and resources to countless artists worldwide. Through initiatives such as the Sundance Film Festival and a range of artistic development programs dedicated to film, theatre, and new media, the Institute strives to amplify the impact of independent storytelling on a global scale.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Ahmad Qaddura from Sweden

International Film Festival of Kerala paying homage to late Iranian directors Mehrjui, Golestan

TEHRAN-The 28th International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK), which is underway in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, India, has included two Iranian films in its Homage category.

The thought-provoking drama "A Minor" by Dariush Mehrjui and the classic "Brick and Mirror" by Ebrahim Golestan are among the notable entries in the special tribute section, which features eleven remarkable films showcasing the brilliance of renowned artists within the film industry.

Both Mehrjui and Golestan, who are considered as influential filmmakers in Iran, passed away earlier this year. Mehrjui was a recipient of the lifetime achievement award in the 19th edition of IFFK, ISNA reported.

With his landmark debut feature, "Brick and Mirror," made in 1965, Golestan delivered a jolt of modernism to Iranian cinema, laying the groundwork for the country's first, still often overlooked New Wave.

The film centers around Hashem, a taxi driver, who finds a baby child in the back seat of his cab one night after he gives a ride to a young lady. He and his friend try to cope with this unwanted child.

Melding the influences of Persian poetry, 1960s European art cinema, and Wellesian expressionism, "Brick and Mirror" offers a portrait of a crumbling relationship that also functions as a devastating dissection of a society poisoned by fear, distrust, and patriarchal arrogance.

The movie stars Zakaria Hashemi, Akbar Meshkin, Pari Saberi, Jamshid Mashayekhi, Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz and Manouchehr Farid.

"A Minor" revolves around a young girl named Nadi who is interested in playing, but her father strongly opposes music, and this is where her problems begin.

The movie delves into the depths of human emotions and societal dynamics. Set against the backdrop of Iranian society, it explores the intricacies of human relationships and the challenges faced by its diverse characters. Pardis Ahmadieh and Ali Nasirian star in the lead roles.

Mehrjui played a key role in the Iranian New Wave movement of the early 1970s. Known for works like "The Cow," "Hamoun," "Leila," "Pear Tree," "Santouri," and "Maman's Guest". He often drew inspiration from literature, adapting Iranian and foreign novels and plays into films.

Scenes from "Brick and Mirror" (L) and "A Minor"

In addition to these two films, five other movies by Iranian directors are present at two more categories of the Indian festival.

"Achilles" by Farhad Delaram is the only film from Iran competing in the International Competition category.

The 2023 drama tells the story of a young filmmaker who currently works in a hospital and takes a mental patient out for a short ride to find out who she really is. Now he has to decide whether to run away with her or take her back to the hospital.

Delaram's feature debut has been shot on various locations. It takes the audience from the capital Tehran to the dried-up Lake Urmia in the northwest of the country, to the Caspian Sea in the north, and to Maku, near Turkey's border. Mirsaeed Molavian, Behdokht Valian, Roya Afshar, and Neda Aghighi are in the cast.

Delaram, 35, won the Crystal Bear for Best Short Film in the Generation 14plus section of the 2019 Berlin Film Festival for his short film "Tattoo".

The World Cinema category of the festival is also hosting four films from Iran including "Endless Borders" by Abbas Amini, "The Last Birthday" by Navid Mahmoudi, "The Annoyed" by Mehdi Fard Ghaderi, and "Junks and Dolls" by Manijeh Hekmat.

"Endless Borders" is a political thriller that happens at the time when the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan reignited the fire of ethnic and tribal wars.

In the movie, the Hazara Afghans, who are under immediate threat from the Taliban, enter Iran illegally. Ahmad is an exiled Iranian teacher in a poor village of Iran close to the Afghan border. When he gets acquainted with a Hazara family, he sees the real face of prejudice and dogmatism in the region. He decides to save a young forbidden love but that decision can have dire consequences for everyone.

The film has won the VPRO Big Screen Award at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and the Golden Peacock for Best Film at the International Film Festival of India, Goa.

Mahmoudi's latest feature film "The Last Birthday" tells the story of Soraya, a female journalist, who has been trying to spread news about the difficult situation of Afghan women to the world for years. However, Taliban forces surprise Soraya and her friends once they arrest her at home on her birthday.

The political drama features Elnaz Shakerdoust, Pedram Sharifi, Sheyda Khaligh, Armin Rahimian, Sogol Khaligh, and Reza Behbudi among others.

Fard Ghaderi's third movie, "The Annoyed" is an episodic film about three cinema directors trying to make a film about social problems of violence and abuse against women and execution.

The cast includes Leila Zare, Mohammad Amin, Farrokh Nemati, Reza Behboudi, Roya Javidnia, and Hediyeh Azidhak among others.

The directors' previous feature films "Immortality" (2016) and "Weightlessness" (2019) were screened at several festivals around the globe, highly acclaimed, and received various awards.

In "Junks and Dolls," a couple is destined to build up their life in the heart of a waste depot in the heart of Iranian north forests. They begin to make different things with the junks they find and to make friends with other people.

Behdokht Valian, Mohammad Valizadegan, Reza Koolagahni, Raja Jafari, Jahan Yaghoubi, and Yamna Hosseinzadeh are in the cast.

A veteran filmmaker, Hekmat usually addresses the social problem of women in the society in her films. She is a producer and director, known for "Women's Prison" (2002), "Three Women" (2008) and "Bandar Band" (2020).

An annual event, the International Film Festival of Kerala is recognized as one of the leading cultural events in India.Over the years, the IFFK has come to be known as Asia's best managed and probably the world's most people-centered film festival.

The festival aims at presenting a competition section exclusively for films from Asian, African and Latin American countries and a selection of the best of World Cinema.

Opened on December 8, the festival will come to a close on December 15, screening 175 movies from 81 countries.

Iran hosting art exhibition with participation of 35 countries

TEHRAN- An art exhibition, featuring artwork and cultural heritage from 35 countries, including Iran, is currently underway at the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex's Blue Hall in Tehran.

Entitled "Humanity. Solidarity. One Planet.", the exhibition was officially inaugurated by Stefan Priesner, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iran, on December 7.

During the opening ceremony Priesner expressed his gratitude to all participating countries for their support in organizing the event.

"This exhibition holds a unique significance as it recalls the core principles of the United Nations enshrined in the UN Charter, a remarkable historical document," said Priesner.

"It serves as a reminder that, despite our differences, we are all part of the same humanity, which forms the basis for human rights. The exhibition also emphasizes the principle of solidarity, ensuring that no country or individual is left behind. And last but not least, it calls on us to protect this precious One and only planet that we all call our home."

In his address, Priesner highlighted the exhibition's aim to share stories from around the world with the people of Iran. " This is important because the UN is not only a forum of countries and governments, it is a confluence of peoples," he said.

Organized by the United Nations in Iran in collaboration with the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex, and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the exhibit also showcases some selected photographs of gifts to the United Nations' Headquarters in New York.

The exhibition, which will be on display at until December 17, is one of the initiatives commemorating the UN Day in the country. Its three interconnected themes of Humanity, Solidarity, and One Planet emphasize the importance of unity and the defense of our shared planet amidst human diversity.

The participating countries in the exhibition include Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Finland, Holy See (Vatican), Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

"The General and Comparative Literature" appears in Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN-"La Littérature générale et comparée" ("The General and Comparative Literature") by French writer Daniel-Henri Pageaux has recently been published in Persian.

Logos is the publisher of the book translated by Faezeh Taheri.

"La Littérature générale et comparée" is a comprehensive exploration of the field of comparative literature. Pageaux, an esteemed scholar in the realm of literature, delves into the theoretical and practical aspects of comparative literature, providing readers with an in-depth understanding of this discipline.

The book elucidates the fundamental principles and methodologies of comparative literature, examining the connections and interactions between various literary texts and traditions from different cultures and periods. Pageaux skillfully navigates through the complexities of comparative analysis, highlighting the significance of context, intertextuality, and cultural influences in the study of literature.

Throughout the book, Pageaux offers a wide range of examples and case studies, drawing from both renowned and lesser-known literary works to illustrate his points. He explores themes such as genre, narrative techniques, symbolism, and literary movements, and analyzes how these elements can be examined comparatively across different literary traditions.

By delving into the intricacies of comparative literature, "La Littérature générale et comparée" not only enriches our understanding of individual texts but also unveils the interconnectedness of global literary traditions. This book serves as an invaluable resource for scholars, students, and enthusiasts seeking a deeper appreciation and engagement with literature beyond national boundaries.