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Palestinians Greatest Achievement in Gaza: U.S., Britain Being Disgraced

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▸ Page 3

Congratulations on the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ to all monotheists in the world

Presidents of Iran and Egypt vow to move towards détente

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi agreed to "resolve" the remaining issues between the two countries during a phone call on Saturday.

Mohammad Jamshidi, a political aide to the Iranian president, was the one to break the news, announcing that "the two presidents agreed to take concrete steps to resolve and settle the remaining issues between the two countries". The two presidents also discussed the latest developments in Gaza and the occupied territories, Jamshidi said in a post on X.

As subsequently reported by the Iranian president's website, Raisi congratulated el-Sisi for winning Egypt's latest presidential elections during the phone call. He also called on Cairo "to use all its capacities to stop the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza, start providing aid, and fulfill the rights of the people of Palestine."

The Egyptian leader, for his part, expressed his satisfaction with the opportunity to speak to Raisi, adding that "Iran and Egypt can play an effective role in establishing stability and security in the region due to their high historical and civilizational position and having diverse capacities." ▸ Page 3

Ex-CIA chief analyst says Israel "really cannot" destroy Hamas

By M. A. Saki

TEHRAN – "Obviously the unqualified Western support has been a major factor in enabling Israel to continue down the tragic path that has led to the situation we see today," says Paul Pillar, a nonresident fellow at the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University.

Pillar also casts serious doubts over the Netanyahu government's declared statement to eliminate Hamas, saying Israel "really cannot" decimate Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Professor Pillar believes that the rage against the Israeli attacks on Gaza is helping Hamas recruit new forces and that the resistance may take other forms in the future.

"Even if Hamas could be 'destroyed'--which it really cannot, given how anger over the Israeli assault is gaining Hamas new recruits and support--resistance would take other forms, including groups yet to be formed and acts of resistance by angry individuals," Pillar tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview. ▸ Page 5

Lessons from a poll

By Mahdi Fazaeli

TEHRAN- The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) recently conducted a survey in Gaza and the West Bank, providing valuable insights into the experiences and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian people have a rich history of resilience and determination, having endured generations of occupation and struggle for their fundamental rights. They have witnessed the outcomes of various approaches to confronting Israel, including negotiation, armed resistance, and symbolic resistance through the use of stones.

The findings of the PSR have shed light on the evolving sentiments of the Palestinian public.

1) Support for Hamas has surged in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, tripling in the West Bank since the previous survey three months ago.

2) Public trust in President Mahmoud Abbas and the Fatah party has plummeted, with a majority of Palestinians calling for the dissolution ▸ Page 5

The world told the Israeli regime to stop, but the U.S. said carry on

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- The UN Security Council has passed resolution 2720, which calls on more aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip but falls short of calling for an end to the indiscriminate Israeli bombardment of the enclave.

It has left many countries and international humanitarian organizations furious with the United States for obstructing yet another international effort to end the Israeli massacres against civilians in Gaza.

The resolution passed with 13 votes in favor, no votes against, and two abstentions.

Russia and the United States abstained from voting but offered completely polarizing reasons for doing so.

The goal of the second Security Council resolution over the Israeli war on Gaza was introduced by the UAE to end the war in Gaza. After days of dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the United States, which opposed many parts of the draft text with ▸ Page 5

Iran, Indonesia sign MOU to empower women

TEHRAN – Iran and Indonesia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to broaden cooperation in areas related to empowering women.

The agreement was signed by Iranian Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali and Indonesia's Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Minister I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati during the visit of Khazali to Jakarta.

The MOU aims to expand ties to empower women and families, increasing the health, safety, and productivity of the family, and preventing and eliminating social harm.

It also includes clauses on exchanging information and experiences and also tackling challenges and removing obstacles to women's progress.

The MOU is valid for two years and can be extended for the same period.

Iran's remarkable rise as a global leader in nanotechnology

TEHRAN – Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide.

According to StatNano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

This ranking proves the country's remarkable scientific development. ▸ Page 7

©IRNA/ Payam Sani

U.S., Zionist regime should be tried for genocide in Gaza: Raisi

TEHRAN – Iraian President Ebrahim Raisi has asserted that the U.S. and the Zionist regime should be brought to trial for their role in the Gaza genocide.

Speaking at the Tehran International Conference on Palestine, Raisi expressed gratitude to representatives from various countries for their solidarity on the Palestinian cause. He underscored the global focus on Palestine, condemning the violations of human rights in Gaza by a ruling system that lacks ethical and legal considerations.

President Raisi deplored the widespread slaughter, destruction of homes and other civilian sites, ▸ Page 3

25th International Storytelling Festival concludes in Yazd

TEHRAN-The 25th International Storytelling Festival wrapped up on December 21 in Yazd by awarding the winners in different sections.

In the International section of the festival, the top prize went to the Indian storyteller Zainab Fatima, IBNA reported on Saturday.

In the Traditional and Rituals section, Alireza Motaghi from Markazi Province and Hossein Kazemi from Mazandaran Province received the main awards in the Teenage and Adults categories respectively.

Mahya Kamalian from Yazd Province and Zahra Akbarinejad from Lorestan Province were the winners of Classical and Modern section in Teenage and Adults categories respectively. ▸ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

Mr. Lavrov, your mistake is a sign of betrayal!

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

Kayhan devoted its editorial to the meeting of foreign ministers of the Arab and Russian Cooperation Forum in which Sergei Lavrov co-signed the final communique repeating the United Arab Emirates' ownership claims over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. It wrote: The Zionist regime has repeatedly announced that it considers the Islamic Republic of Iran to be its main and most powerful enemy. Now, it is possible to consider the untimely formation of this meeting and the baseless claim of the UAE sovereignty over the three Iranian islands of Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa as another part of the project to coalesce with the Zionist regime in expressing its enmity with Islamic Iran. From the Arab countries present in the meeting, nothing is expected other than enmity with Islamic Iran and cooperation with the Zionist regime, but the Russian government must answer to its illegal move against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mr. Lavrov is aware of many documents that indicate Iran's definite sovereignty over the three islands. Therefore, the position of the Russian government, even if it is a mistake, is a sign of betrayal, and the least we can expect from the diplomatic system of our country is to ask the Russian government to officially apologize for the action it has taken against the territorial integrity of Islamic Iran.

Iran: Illusory coalition

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the issue of forming a coalition against Yemen and said: With the intensification of attacks against Western commercial ships in the Red Sea destined for Israel, the Americans have claimed that the Yemeni resistance is carrying out such actions with the support of Iran. America's insistence on Iran's support for resistance groups, which has increased especially after numerous attacks against Western ships in the Red Sea, is due to the difficult conditions to help Israel and an increase in the diplomatic pressure on the American-Israeli alliance (in the war on Gaza). To divert the world's attention from Israel's wide-ranging attacks against the people of Gaza, America is trying to highlight the issue of Iran and consider its current predicament a result of Iran's greater support. These claims have been made while America has formed a coalition to protect the Red Sea, but Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and some other countries in the region have not shown any desire to do so. A refusal by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, two important countries bordering the Red Sea, to join the naval task force indicates the failure of the coalition as desired by Washington before its full formation.

Hamshahri: Israel's anger at quick action of the UN regarding Iran

In a commentary, Hamshahri addressed the anger of the Israeli representative to the United Nations over the UN Security Council's condemnation of terror attack on an Iranian police outpost near the border with Pakistan wrote: The representative of Israel, as the Security Council had met on Gaza, did not tolerate the quick condemnation of the terrorist attack by the Jaish ul-Adl group on the Rask police headquarters in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province by the Security Council and criticized it. Claiming that terrorism must be condemned, Israeli diplomat Brett Jonathan Miller, in a pretension without the slightest hint at Tel Aviv's crimes against the Palestinians and America's comprehensive support for the regime, criticized the Security Council for not condemning Hamas. The anger of the representative of Israel in the Security Council was, in fact, due to the quick condemnation of the Rask terrorist attack. Certainly, issuing a statement quickly considering the existing international conditions, where the bombing of the Gaza Strip is a priority on the agenda of the entire world, including the United Nations, was a very difficult task. This action was only possible with the efforts of the diplomats of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New York.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UNSC resolution on Gaza good but inadequate: spokesman

TEHRAN- The recent resolution passed by the UN Security Council to increase humanitarian supplies to the Gaza Strip has been characterized by Iran as a "positive but insufficient step" toward alleviating the dire needs of the beleaguered Palestinians residing in the region.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said on Saturday, "It is very regrettable that after 77 days of frenzied attacks by the Zionist regime against defenseless people in the Gaza Strip, the U.S. administration still prevents the adoption of a binding resolution in the Security Council to stop the war, war crimes and genocide of the Zionist regime in Gaza."

He stated that sending supplies to Gaza is nearly difficult due to the continued Israeli bombardment and military operations in Gaza for the past 77 days, which have damaged more than 60% of residential buildings and urban infrastructure.

Kanaani said remarks by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres following the vote also attest to this bitter reality.

He added, "The adoption of Resolution 2720 does not absolve the UN Security Council of its responsibilities. The U.S. administration is still primarily responsible for the continuation of brutal attacks and war crimes by the Israeli regime against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank."

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on Friday about the continuous Israeli assault on Gaza. The resolution called for greater humanitarian supplies to be sent to the besieged region, but it did not demand an immediate end to the massacre.

All parties to the conflict were required under the watered-down resolution to provide the "safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale."

It did not, however, demand that hostilities halt right away; instead, it asked for the establishment of "conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities."

The vote in the 15-member council was 13-0 with the United States and Russia abstaining.

Tehran hosting international conference on Palestine

Separately, Kanaani said that the international conference on Palestine held in Tehran on Saturday aimed to express solidarity for the Palestinian people living in the Gaza Strip and compel the Israeli regime to cease its horrific offensive against the coastal sliver.

He also noted that the one-day event attracted government leaders, notable political and religious personalities, academics, and media activists from more than 50 nations.

According to Kanaani, the participants were expected to consider strategies to mobilize support for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, put pressure on the Tel Aviv regime to halt its military attacks on Gaza and lift the blockade on the enclave, and accelerate the flow of international humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people.

The spokesperson also underlined that the meeting is a component of the Islamic Republic's ongoing diplomatic initiatives to back the resistance of the Palestinian people.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Raisi to visit Turkey soon: Turkish FM

TEHRAN – Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has announced that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi is expected to visit Turkey soon, marking the eighth meeting of the high-level cooperation council between the two nations.

While Fidan did not provide the exact date of Raisi's visit during his address at the parliament's budget talks on Dec. 21, he emphasized the strategic significance of Turkey's relations with Iran.

Fidan reminisced about the inaugural foreign ministerial-level meeting of the South Caucasus Regional Cooperation Platform held in Tehran on Oct. 23, which brought together Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, and Iran. He disclosed that the subsequent meeting of this platform is slated to take place in Turkey in 2024.

The announcement comes after the absence of President Raisi from a summit in Ankara on Nov. 28, previously confirmed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, raised questions last month. According to Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman, the coordination for Raisi's trip was expected to follow the meeting of the foreign ministers of both nations at the United Nations. Unfortunately, the trip faced a delay due to the untimely issuance of travel permits for Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. Consequently, the visit has been rescheduled for a later timeframe.

However, diplomatic engagements between the two nations have persisted. Recent phone conversations between the two countries' presidents and top diplomats have focused on the ongoing conflict in Gaza. During these discussions, both parties expressed deep concern over the developments in Gaza, particularly the relentless bombing of residential areas and civilians in the besieged region.

Both Iran and Turkey have consistently condemned Israel's brutal actions against Palestinians. They are actively working to support the people of Gaza, emphasizing the urgency of establishing a ceasefire, halting the attacks, and lifting the blockade imposed on Gaza. These efforts underscore the critical and fundamental priorities to address the situation at the current sensitive juncture.

INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER
Second Announcement
55/02/24482
24/12/2023

Agricultural Support Services Company

Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below items of technical, through one step international tender.

	Name	PACKING	Quantity/ KG
1	**Deltamethrin Tech Min 98.5 pct.**	50 kg drums	**1800**
2	**Cypermethrin Tech Min 90 pct.**	50 kg drums	**13500**

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Saturday dated 23/12/2023 until Wednesday dated 27/12/2023 (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).
The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000006.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 27/1/2024 (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelops will be held on Sunday dated 28/1/2024 at 14:00 with the presence of bidder's representatives at our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the value of the bid bond amount must be only submitted by the bidders in bank guarantee as follows:

1- € 6487 for Deltamethrin Tech Min 98.5 pct. equivalent to Iranian Rials 1986653102
2- € 8566 for Cypermethrin Tech Min 90 pct. equivalent to Iranian Rials 2623192411

- The bid bond value for each of the items should be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the exchange rate of Telegraphic Transfer of the basic and essential commodities on CBI's ETS website, www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir, on 9/12/2023

-The bidders are also permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial.

- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and http://iets.mporg.ir or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

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IRGC commander warns U.S. might be blocked in more waterways if war on Gaza continues

TEHRAN – The deputy coordinator of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps said on Saturday that the U.S. and its allies might have to halt their activities in several more waterways due to their persisting crimes in the besieged Gaza Strip.

"Yesterday, the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz were a nightmare for them, and today the Bab-el-Mandeb and the Red Sea have grounded them, and with the continuation of these crimes, they should soon expect the closure of the Mediterranean Sea and Gibraltar," said General Mohammadreza Naghdi.

The U.S. has formed what it calls an international alliance to counter Yemen's attacks in the Red Sea, which have been targeting Israeli-bound ships in recent weeks in response to the regime's killing campaign in the besieged Gaza Strip. So far, at least 100 attacks by the popular Ansarullah movement have been recorded against Israeli-linked vessels. This has caused Israel's Eilat Port to see an 85% drop in activity.

The high-ranking IRGC official warned that more resistance groups are to be formed in the future if the U.S. and the Israeli regime do not put an end to their massacre of innocent people.

"Today we all witness the unprecedented awakening of nations. The people in the entire world have been on the streets for nearly 80 days and are shouting for justice. Throughout these days, people file lawsuits and shout against the oppressors," he added.

The latest round of Israeli attacks on Gaza, which began after a successful operation by Palestinian resistance group Hamas on the occupied territories, has killed more than 20,000 civilians in the past 80 days. More than 70% of the dead are comprised of women and children.

Entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubbles in the territory as those managing to flee from Israeli bombardments grapple with a lack of food, water, and medicine due to a "full siege" by the Israeli regime.

'Trio islands unsimilar to Crimean Peninsula'

TEHRAN- Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of the Supreme Council for the Coordination of the Heads of Governments has emphasized that Russia's unfriendly interventions in relation to Iran's territorial integrity should not be repeated, adding that the three islands of the Persian Gulf are not similar to the Crimean Peninsula.

In post on X on Friday, he said that "Tehran has repeatedly noted that the three islands are not negotiable."

"The UAE's continued excesses are not in their interest and have consequences. Russia's unfriendly interventions regarding Iran's territorial integrity should not be repeated," he added.

In a Friday telephone conversation between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, Iran asserted its territorial integrity, designating the Iranian trio islands as an inseparable part of the nation's sovereign territory.

The phone call touched upon key issues addressed at the 6th Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum in Morocco on the three Iranian islands.

Amir Abdollahian emphasized the rejection of any claims made by external parties regarding this matter.

The top Iranian diplomat addressed the trio islands as an integral part of Iran's territorial integrity, stating, "Concerning Iran's territorial integrity and governance matters, we hold no formalities with any party."

Amir Abdollahian acknowledged the positive and growing relations between Iran and Russia, highlighting that respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries is a fundamental principle in international relations.

The Russian Foreign Minister, on his part, echoed the importance of Iran's constructive role in promoting peace in the South Caucasus. He considered the relations between Moscow and Tehran as strategic and emphasized, "Russia has consistently respected Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity—a policy that should never be questioned."

Lavrov added that during the negotiations for the final statement of the meeting in Morocco, they explicitly focused on respecting Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's top advisor, Ali Akbar Velayati, stated on Thursday that he believed the concluding remarks of the 6th Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum in Morocco about the three Iranian islands amounted to meddling in Iran's domestic affairs.

Decrying the communiqué, he continued, "The meeting was held in the presence of some Arabs, who are indifferent to the fate of the Palestinians, and Russian experts in Morocco and issued a statement that has various flaws, the most important of which is interference in Iran's affairs."

Instead of taking effective action to halt Israel's attack in Gaza, the UAE —which has adopted a "regrettable" position against the Palestinians and supported Israel's massacre of the oppressed people in Gaza— keeps bringing up this "baseless claim" regarding the three islands.

The spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry debunked the accusations regarding the three Iranian islands on Thursday in a separate statement, calling them "baseless and unacceptable."

Nasser Kanaani underscored that "the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, located in the blue waters of the Persian Gulf, eternally belong to Iran and are an inseparable part of the Islamic Republic of Iran's land."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran does not consider its territorial integrity and sovereignty over the three islands negotiable and rejects any claim by any side on the issue and will not back down from its sovereignty and territorial rights in any way," he added.

Palestinians greatest achievement in Gaza: U.S., Britain being disgraced

TEHRAN- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei met with thousands of people from the provinces of Kerman and Khuzestan at the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah on Saturday.

According to the khamenei.ir, Ayatollah Khamenei spoke about the latest developments in Gaza, stating that, "This incident is unparalleled in two ways. From the side of the Zionist regime, this kind of brutality, criminality, bloodthirstiness, child killings, malice, cruelty, and the dropping of bunker-breaking bombs on patients and hospitals was never seen before. And also, on the side of the Palestinian people and fighters, the way they exhibited patience, resistance and the way they infuriated the enemy was unprecedented."

The Leader added that, "Even though water, food, medicine and fuel are not reaching these people, they are still standing strong like a mountain and it is this resilience that will lead them to victory, for God is with those who are patient and the signs of victory can be seen today."

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that the Zionist regime remains powerless against the Palestinian fighters despite all its equipment and assets, and this, the Leader stated, is another important aspect of this unparalleled confrontation. "The Zionist regime's defeat in this incident is equivalent to the defeat of the United States. Today, no one in the world considers the occupying regime, the U.S. and Britain to be any different from each other. Everyone knows that they are one and the same."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the vetoing of several UN Security Council resolutions for a ceasefire a "shameless" act of the U.S. government, while denouncing the United States' complicity with the Zionist regime to drop bombs on children, women, patients and other defenseless people.

"The Palestinian nation and the Resistance Front and the Front that stands with the Truth gained a great victory by discrediting the West and the U.S., and by exposing the nature of all of their false human rights claims; because Israel would not have been able to commit all of these crimes had it not been for America's support. Today, the hideous, monstrous, evil faces of the US and England have been revealed to everyone all around the world," he noted.

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that it is the duty of the world's governments and nations to help the Resistance in any way or form. "Helping the Resistance is everyone›s duty, while helping the Zionist regime is a crime and treason."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also denounced some Islamic states for their criminal act of assistance towards the Zionist regime, stressing that "Muslim nations will not forget this issue."

In addition to this, he emphasized that it is the duty of Islamic governments to prevent goods, oil and fuel from reaching the Zionist regime, the regime which itself has blocked off water access to the people of Gaza.

On the same note, Ayatollah Khamenei remarked that, "Muslim nations should call on their governments to cut off any ties and assistance to the Zionist criminals. If they are not able to cut ties permanently, they should at least do it temporarily in order to put pressure on the evil, cruel and bloodthirsty regime."

The Leader added that, today, the world's conscience has been hurt in the face of the Zionist regime's savagery. "People in the U.S. and Europe are coming to the streets and some of their political figures, university heads, and scientists are protesting against their governments› support of the Zionist regime. But despite this, some governments still continue to help the brutal regime."

He underlined that, "With God's help, the Front that stands with the Truth will undoubtedly be victorious and the usurping Zionist regime will be eliminated. I hope that you young people will see that day with your own eyes."

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei also touched upon Iran's upcoming parliamentary elections which are set to take place on March 21, 2024. He called on the Iranian nation to prepare itself for holding the elections in the best possible way, in line with the following four characteristics: "A strong and lively participation, true competitiveness of factions and the inclusion of their differing views, true lawfulness, and the provision of complete security."

In explaining the importance of the principle and logic of elections in the Islamic Republic, the Leader outlined that, "Both the 'Republic' and the 'Islamic' aspects of the system are dependent on the elections, because there is no other way to acquire a republic, a democracy, and the involvement of the people in the administration of the country than by holding elections."

Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed out that if elections are not held, the country will be faced with a dictatorship, chaos, insecurity, and riots. "Elections are the only correct and true path that can ensure the national sovereignty of the people," he added.

Presidents of Iran and Egypt vow to move towards détente

Frome Page 1 ▸ In recent months, Iran and Egypt have been working to cultivate a closer relationship and heal longstanding rifts. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry convened on September 20 during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani hailed the meeting as a pivotal moment in Tehran-Cairo relations, marking a positive step within Iran's regional diplomacy initiatives.

In addition to diplomatic engagements, Iran's Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi met with his Egyptian counterpart during a visit to Cairo in September. Both officials reached an agreement to establish a committee for overseeing joint projects.

Egypt severed its diplomatic ties with Iran in 1980 following its welcoming of the deposed Pahlavi ruler and its recognition of the apartheid Israeli regime.

Presently, discussions are underway between the two regional heavyweights regarding the potential reopening of their respective embassies in Iraq. Nevertheless, there are reports indicating that the Israeli regime is exerting pressure on Egypt to refrain from re-establishing ties with Iran.

According to Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth daily newspaper, Israeli delegates have purportedly undertaken covert visits to Cairo in an attempt to dissuade the government of President el-Sisi from reciprocating steps to restore diplomatic relations with Iran.

Iran says malware used in cyberattack on fuel stations detected

TEHRAN - During the opening of an exhibition showcasing domestic civil defense industries, the head of Iran's Civil Defense Organization, reported that Iranian experts have successfully identified the malware deployed in a recent cyberattack on the country's fuel distribution system.

Brigadier General Gholam Reza Jalali cited that the disruption, which occurred at Iran›s gas stations on December 18, involved a sophisticated and persistent form of malware, currently under analysis in Iranian laboratories. Drawing a parallel to a complex murder investigation, he emphasized that technical challenges are being addressed to ensure the normal functioning of the fuel distribution system.

Furthermore, General Jalali highlighted that artificial intelligence (AI) plays a pivotal role in cyberattacks, constituting over 55 percent of global incidents, with more than 30 percent of such assaults targeting Iran being AI-powered. He also underscored the urgent need to modernize Iran›s aging nationwide fuel distribution system, emphasizing the necessity for updated and secure connections among processing units, payment systems, and gas stations.

In October 2021, a cyberattack aimed at Iran›s fuel distribution infrastructure led to a momentary disruption, promptly mitigated by Iranian experts. The one occurring this month was also neutralized in less than 32 hours, bringing 90% of the affected gas stations to normal. Both attacks have been linked to Israel.

U.S., Zionist regime should be tried for Gaza genocide: Raisi

Frome Page 1 ▸ and condemned the continues support of Israel coming from the claimed human rights advocates like the United States.

He criticized the inefficiency of international organizations in addressing the situation in Gaza.

Raisi argued against the incomplete analysis of the Palestinian issue, urging a thorough examination starting from from the time of British occupation, leading to continuous crimes and genocide by Zionists over 75 years. He highlighted recent Zionist atrocities in Gaza and the regime's disregard for agreements, violating over 400 statements and resolutions.

He pointed out recent Zionist atrocities in Gaza and stated that the Zionist regime's loyalty to agreements is nonexistent, violating more than 400 statements and resolutions.

Emphasizing the legitimate right of oppressed people to defend themselves, President Raisi declared Iran's policy to support the liberation

of al-Quds and defend resilient Palestinians. He criticized unsuccessful negotiations for resolving the Palestinian issue.

Raisi emphasized that America and the Zionist regime must be tried for genocide and crimes against humanity in international courts. He revealed the warmongering nature of America and criticized the inefficiency of international organizations.

President Raisi outlined priorities for assisting Gaza, including an immediate halt to attacks, lifting the blockade, and establishing a reconstruction fund. He criticized the American conspiracy to relocate Gaza residents and urged world leaders to take action. Raisi addressed the expulsion of U.S. university presidents and the French government's prevention of pro-Palestinian gatherings as contradictions in the West's behavior toward basic rights including the right to free speech. He expressed hope for a new order based on justice by ending the current unjust system.

The Tehran International Conference on Palestine commenced in Iran's capital on Saturday, attended by representatives from over 50 countries. Hosted by Iran's Foreign Ministry, the event focuses on the latest developments in occupied Palestine. Former and present diplomats will exchange views on the political and legal impacts of the Gaza war, exploring avenues for an immediate halt to the crimes committed in Palestine.

SPORTS

Iran's Journey at the 2023 AFC Asian Cup: A Quest for Glory

TEHRAN - The 2023 AFC Asian Cup proved to be a defining moment for Iran's national football team. With a rich history in the tournament, Iran will enter the competition with high hopes of clinching their fourth title.

This article explores Iran's performance, key moments, and the impact of their campaign on the nation.

***Group Stage Dominance:**

Iran were drawn into Group C alongside Team Melli are drawn in Group C along with Palestine, Hong Kong and the UAE. The Iranian squad have previously showcased their tactical prowess and attacking flair.

***Star Performers:**

Several Iranian players stood out during the tournament, contributing significantly to the team's success. Striker Sardar Azmoun has always emerged as a key figure, scoring crucial goals throughout the competitions. His clinical finishing and ability to create opportunities for his teammates earned him the tournaments' vital player.

Midfielder Saeid Ezatollahi played a pivotal role in orchestrating Iran's attacks. His vision, passing accuracy, and leadership qualities were instrumental in unlocking opposition defenses. Additionally, goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand showcased his shot-stopping abilities with several crucial saves that kept Iran in contention during tight matches.

***Impact on Iranian Football:**

Iran's journey at the 2023 AFC Asian Cup will have a significant impact on football within the country. The team's success will unit the fans across Iran and instill a renewed sense of pride in their national team. The players' dedication and skill will inspire young aspiring footballers nationwide to pursue their dreams of representing Iran on an international stage.

Furthermore, this campaign highlights Iran's potential as a footballing powerhouse within Asia and beyond. It will showcase their ability to compete against strong opponents while playing attractive football that captivated audiences worldwide.

Although falling short of winning another AFC Asian Cup title for about 50 years, Iran's national football team display exceptional talent and determination throughout the tournaments.

As Team Melli continue journey towards future tournaments, it is evident that they have laid down strong foundations for sustained success at both regional and global levels. With continued support from fans and investment in youth development programs, Iranian football is poised for even greater achievements in years to come.

Iran's basic and preferred Tactical Formation in the recent matches was a flexible 4-2-3-1, with experienced Alireza Beyranvand in the goal. In attacking line, Sardar Azmoun and Mehdi Taremi are reinforced on the flanks by two fast and clever dribblers, Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Mehdi Torabi. Iran's opening match on Jan. 14 will be against Palestine.

Mighty Japanese are in the league of their own when they come to dominate opponents with ball possession. Japan's coach Hajime Moriyasu, a true practitioner, was named AFC Coach of the Year for Japan's successful performance in the 2022 World Cup. His team played a variation of 4-3-3 and 4-2-3-1. Japan will be one of the tournament's main contenders.

Under the guidance of former Germany and the U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann, Republic of Korea boast a highly talented squad, including the incredibly gifted Heung-Min Son from Tottenham Hotspur.

However, the team have shown that they are not just about Son. They have demonstrated physical strength, solid defensive organization, and a formidable counter-attacking game plan.

Korea Republic utilized the 4-4-2 or 4-2-3-1 formation, emphasizing high pressing, defending, and effective ball possession with attacking switches.

During his debut press conference as Saudi Arabia's new head coach, Roberto Mancini declared their goal of winning the Asian Cup after 27 years.

Mancini has a history of success, winning 13 trophies in his seven head coaching roles. Mancini used a 4-1-4-1 formation against Costa Rica, 4-3-3 against Korea Republic, and was defeated by Mali playing 4-2-3-1.

The league in Saudi Arabia keeps getting better and has many top-class players, but only time will reveal Roberto Mancini's fate in his new coaching journey.

At the end, there is a crucial question to consider about Iran's national team success: do we have what it takes to win in the AFC Asian Cup? the answer is yes as legendary Sir Alex Ferguson said, "the greatest thing a team can do is sacrifice for one another, offering help when needed."

Do Iran have what it takes to win in the AFC Asian Cup?

By Morteza Mohases

TEHRAN - In football, consistent performance is often a result from consistent tactic and proper systems of play.

The 2023 edition of AFC Asian Cup will feature 24 teams, divided into six groups of four with a round-robin format, with the four main favorites, Iran, Japan, Korea Republic and Saudi Arabia take advantage of highly experienced players and top coaches, promising a spectacular and captivating tournament.

Iran national team head coach, Amir Ghaleneoi, believed under his leadership the Team Melli enjoy good level of cohesiveness and clear Team Concept as he said, "I told my players that names do not play in the football field, it is their passion and quality that distinguish them".

Ghalenoei, 60, was appointed as Team Melli coach for the second time in March 2023, replacing Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz. Since his return, Iran played 11 games, won nine games, and drew against Uzbekistan and Russia.

Iran to host upcoming Davis Cup 2024 World Group II Play-Off

TEHRAN - With the announcement of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), the Islamic Republic of Iran will host the Davis Cup 2024 World Group II Play-Off.

Iran Davis Cup team had promoted to World Group II after nearly half a century, and Estonia was introduced as the first opponent of Iran in this competition.

Due to the sensitivity of this match and Iran's right to host the match, the officials of the Estonian team have been obstructing their participation in Tehran for some time, citing various illogical reasons to refrain from this match.

The measure of the Estonian tennis officials was rejected by the World Federation's Davis Cup Committee and Iran's hosting was emphasized.

Iran's sitting volleyball remain top of world ranking

TEHRAN – Iran's men's sitting volleyball team remained top of the world ranking released by worldparavolley.org.

Team Melli won the 2022 Asian Para Games by beating Kazakhstan in straight sets in Hangzhou.

Iran also won the 2023 World Sitting Volleyball World Cup title a month later, defeating Egypt 3-0 in the final match.

Brazil and Egypt sit second and third in the ranking.

Canada's women's team lead the standing, followed by Brazil and the U.S.

Iran's crude steel output rises %7.6 in November: WSA

TEHRAN – Iran's steel production reached at 3.0 million tons in November, registering a 7.6 percent increase compared to the previous month, according to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

The Islamic Republic produced 28.1 million tons of crude steel in the first 11 months of 2023, also registering a 0.6 percent increase as compared to the same period in the past year, the WSA report said.

Based on the WSA data, Iran maintained its place as the world's 10th largest steel producer in the mentioned period.

The WSA data put the world's 11-month crude steel production at 1.715 billion tons, indicating a 0.5 percent increase compared to the first 11 months of 2022.

The world's 71 steel producers managed to produce 145.5 million tons of steel in November 2023, 3.3 percent more than the figure for the previous year's same month.

Based on the WSA report, China, India, Japan, the U.S., and Russia were the world's top steel producers in the first 11 months of 2023, respectively.

The previous WSA report had put Iran's steel output in the first 10 months of 2023 at 25.1 million tons, 0.1 percent less than the same period in 2022.

The Islamic Republic's monthly crude steel output stood at 3.1 million tons in October.

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

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

Tehran, Dakar ink 6 co-op MOUs, documents

TEHRAN – Iran and Senegal have signed six memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and agreements at the end of the two countries' fifth Joint Economic Committee meeting which was wrapped up in Senegal's capital Dakar on Friday.

Co-chaired by Iran's Agriculture Minister Mohammadali Nikbakht and Senegal's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismaila Madior Fall, the fifth Iran-Senegal Joint Economic Committee meeting was held during December 21-22 after a 12-year hiatus.

As reported by the Iranian Agriculture Ministry portal, during the two-day event, the two sides discussed ways of expanding ties in various areas including agriculture, trade, investment, etc.

On the sidelines of the committee meeting, Nikbakht met and held talks with senior Senegalese officials including his counterpart and the county's Foreign Minister.

Speaking in his meeting with Madior Fall, the Iranian minister said: "Tehran does not have any restrictions for developing relations with African countries and is ready for any cooperation and sharing its experiences with Senegal."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has experienced the most severe sanctions and pressures, and despite them, it has achieved many successes in the fields of modern technologies, knowledge-based economy, energy, and agriculture, and in this field, it is ready to cooperate with friendly countries based on common interests," Nikbakht said.

Madior for his part pointed to the good relations between the two countries based on religious and cultural commonalities, and said: "The meetings of high-ranking officials, including the presidents of the two countries, on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in South Africa, show the will of Tehran and Dakar to develop relations in various economic, commercial, and agricultural fields."

He expressed hope that holding the fifth meeting of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee will lead to the all-round promotion and expansion of relations, especially in the economic field, and in this way, a new window will be opened in the cooperation of the two countries for mutual progress.

In another meeting with Senegal's Agriculture Minister, Nikbakht invited his Senegalese counterpart to visit Tehran and announced the readiness of his ministry to hold training courses and transfer knowledge to Senegalese experts and farmers.

Commodities worth $104m exported from North Khorasan in 8 months

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 349,000 tons of non-oil goods worth $104 million were exported from North Khorasan province, in the northeast of Iran, during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 21).

Hossein Haji-Beglou, the director-general of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that the products were exported to

Iraq, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, UAE, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, Germany, Poland, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Italy, Serbia, Lebanon, Somalia, Syria and Jordan in the mentioned eight-month period.

According to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil exports exceeded $32 billion in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Based on the IRICA data, Iran exported 90.044 million tons of non-oil commodities worth $32.243 billion in the mentioned eight months.

The non-oil exports in the mentioned period increased by 27 percent in terms of weight, and 1.6 percent in terms of value, year on year.

The average value of each ton of exported goods in the first eight months of the current year was $358 while the average value of each ton of exported goods in the previous year's same period was reported to be $462.

Liquefied natural gas, liquefied propane, methanol, petroleum bitumen, and liquefied butane were the five main exported goods in the period under review.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with $9.158 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with $6.023 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over $4.162 billion, Turkey with $3.028 billion, and India with $1.466 billion.

Meanwhile, some 24.709 million tons of goods valued at $42.199 billion were imported into the country in the said period, indicating a 12.36-percent rise in terms of value, and a 4.32 percent increase in terms of weight, year on year.

The average customs value of each ton of imported goods during this period was $1,708, which shows a 7.70 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Corn, mobile phones, soybeans, automobile parts, sunflower seeds, and safflower were the five main items of imported goods in the mentioned eight-month period.

The country's top five sources of imports in the first eight months of the current year were the UAE with $13.054 billion, China with $12.191 billion, Turkey with $4.443 billion, Germany with $1.428 billion, and India with $1.244 billion worth of imports.

TEDPIX drops 1,800 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 1,867 points (0.08 percent) to 2,208,350 on Saturday, which is the first day of 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).

Iranian economy continues to expand despite sanctions: WB

TEHRAN – The World Bank in a recent report on Iran's economy dubbed "Iran Economic Monitor" said the Islamic Republic's economy has been expanding despite the sanctions and global economic conditions.

According to the WB report, Iran's economy continued to grow moderately for the third consecutive year in the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023) and it is expected to continue this upward trend albeit at a slower pace.

"Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 3.8 percent in 2022/23, driven by expansions in services and manufacturing. Despite sanctions, the oil sector also expanded, aided by the tighter global oil markets," the report said.

Favorable weather conditions helped the agriculture sector to marginally grow after the contractions in previous years, the WB stated.

"On the expenditure side, private consumption was the main driver of GDP growth. Government consumption contracted to contain the budget deficit following a sharp expansionary policy in 2021/22. Meanwhile, exports and imports both increased, and strong investment in machinery drove investments up, while construction investment marginally improved," the report read.

Based on the WB data, the service sector was one of the main drivers of non-oil growth during the last two years. The sector continued its expansion in 2022/23 (2.7 percent, y/y), following a strong expansion in 2021/21 (6.5 percent).

This growth was mainly driven by a rebound in "transport and storage" and "wholesale and retail" services, as well as the sustained growth of "Information and telecommunication services (ITS)".

The WB has put Iran's GDP growth at 2.4 in the current Iranian calendar year.

It is expected that the growth of Iran's GDP will continue in the medium term, and the increase in oil production and export will act as one of the growth factors of Iran's economy during this period.

Iran-Oman trade targeted to be $5b

TEHRAN - Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi said the value of trade between Iran and Oman is targeted to become $5 billion.

Saying that signing a preferential trade agreement with Oman is being followed up, the minister said: "Our trade with Oman is targeted to be $3.5 billion first and then $5 billion ."

Iran and Oman have signed two memorandums of understanding (MOU) to boost bilateral cooperation and emphasize the importance of using their national currencies in mutual trade instead of the dollar.

The mentioned MOUs were signed during the two countries' 20th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on December 6.

One of the MOUs was signed by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Abbas Aliabadi, and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais Mohammed Al Yousef on supporting joint investment by the two sides.

Iran's Ministry of Industry and Oman's Chamber of Commerce also signed an MOU to boost cooperation in technology as well.

The two sides have also exchanged views on ways of expanding cooperation in the field of fishery and agriculture, deciding to hold a joint fishery exhibition soon.

During the joint committee meeting, Aliabadi announced Iran's readiness to jointly implement key industrial projects with Oman including the construction of an industrial park, the establishment of power plants as well and cooperation in maritime transport projects among others.

The Omani minister on his part emphasized the importance of boosting economic and trade relations between Tehran and Muscat.

During his stay in Tehran, Mohammed Al Yousef also met with the Head of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Mohammad-Reza Farzin, and stressed the importance of using Iranian and Omani national currencies in mutual trade.

The Omani official said his country wants to have a strong presence in establishing the required infrastructure for banking and monetary transactions in Iran, implementing joint projects, as well as making investments in industrial and mineral projects. Omani investors are also keen to participate in energy projects and to develop Iran's gas fields, he added.

The top Iranian banker also said that his country welcomes any measure that helps boost monetary and banking cooperation between the two countries.

Farzin stressed the importance of using national currencies by the two countries in their mutual trade instead of the dollar as well.

Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman signed four cooperation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to Tehran in late May.

The document on the energy sector was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi.

The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors.

Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki signed the mentioned documents with the ministers of economy and commerce of Oman.

Meanwhile, in mid-July, the former head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for promoting joint investment between the private sectors of Iran and Oman in order to boost the trade exchanges between the two countries.

Hossein Selahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim bin Ahmed Almuaini.

During the meeting, Selahvarzi expressed the readiness of the private sectors of Iran and Oman for joint investments, as well as, using transit capacities of the two countries for re-exports if the necessary infrastructure is provided by the governments of the two countries.

Referring to the 40 percent growth of trade exchanges between the two countries in the previous year, the official said: "Although this positive trend is significant, the ICCIMA is trying to increase the volume of exchanges as much as possible."

He pointed out that the Joint Economic Committee meeting of Iran and Oman will soon be held in Tehran, noting that the ICCIMA is ready to discuss ways of facilitating the trade between the private sectors of the two countries in the mentioned meeting.

Also, in early May, a Joint Iran-Oman Business Forum was held at the place of ICCIMA in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman.

The forum aimed at consolidating bilateral business relations, conducting strategic partnerships to augment the volume of investments and business activity, and accessing new economic fields.

Several B2B meetings were held during the forum between Omani and Iranian businesspeople. The meetings targeted striking business and investment deals. As many as 250 Iranian firms took part in the event.

Prior to the forum, ICCIMA former Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie met with his Omani counterpart to discuss avenues of mutual cooperation between the two countries' private sectors.

In this meeting, while emphasizing the need to remove trade obstacles, Shafeie said: "Attention should be paid to multilateral cooperation and joint investments so that the markets of the two countries can take advantage of each other's business opportunities in any situation."

Iran, Azerbaijan rail transport rises 47%

Iranian Transport Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash (R) and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev

TEHRAN - Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev has said rail transport between Iran and Azerbaijan has increased by 47 percent in 2023, IRNA reported.

Mustafayev, who is the head of Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee, made the remarks in a phone conversation with Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash on Saturday.

According to Mustafayev, over 700,000 tons of goods have been transported between the two countries through railway in 2023, which is a record high.

The official also noted that transit between the two countries has also increased by 57 percent in the current year.

In this conversation, the latest developments in the relations between the two countries, especially in the economic field, including transportation and energy, were discussed and opinions were exchanged.

The officials also emphasized on accelerating the finalization of joint projects, including the new transit route in Astara border and joint dams.

Monthly red meat production stands at 37,000 tons

TEHRAN- Production of red meat in Iran stood at 37,147 tons in the eighth month of the current Iranian calendar year (October 23-November 21), showing a 30 percent fall compared to the same month in the past year, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) reported.

As reported, beef and veal had the lion's share in the country's red meat output during the eighth month with 19,423 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 13,803 tons, goat meat with 2,888 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 1,033 tons.

Supply of red meat in the eighth month also fell four percent from the seventh month.

In mid-July, the chairman of the National Union of Light Livestock Producers stressed the need to support domestic producers of red meat.

Afshin Sadr-Dadras said that the subsidy that is allocated to support consumers for imported meat should be allocated to support domestic production.

He reiterated that the country's livestock industry needs serious support, adding that if the problem of the livestock industry is not taken seriously, due to the lack of liquidity of the producers, there is a possibility of a decrease in production in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (September 22, 2023-March 20, 2024).

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after.

However, the consumption per person is around a third of what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran's red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious rules.

Ex-CIA chief analyst says Israel "really cannot" destroy Hamas

'Western support a major factor in enabling Israel to continue down the tragic path': senior expert

From page 1 ▸ Pillar also asserts that if a solution is not found to the decades-long conflict between Palestinians and Israelis there will be no end to the violence.

"There will be unending violence without a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," notes Pillar who served as a national intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia at the CIA.

Following is the text of the interview:

How do you analyze Israel's atrocities in Gaza in response to Hamas's October 7 attacks in terms of proportionality, international law, especially attacks on health centers, etc.?

The well-known facts of what has transpired in Gaza since early October speak for themselves and really do not require analysis, including the fact that the casualties, destruction, and suffering of the civilian population are far out of proportion to the damage inflicted in the opposite direction. I am not an international lawyer, but clearly there are issues regarding the laws of war that have properly been raised regarding not only attacks on medical facilities but also the overall manner in which lethal violence has been directed at civilians. The atrocities that Hamas committed in Israel on October 7th also were violations of international law. One such violation does not justify the committing of other violations.

Israeli PM Netanyahu has claimed he wants to remove Hamas from Gaza. Do you think it is practically possible?

Even based on the Israeli government›s own numbers, the Israeli assault has so far destroyed only a fraction of Hamas›s military capability. Given the current rate and methods of the Israeli military, to «remove» Hamas or even to destroy its military wing would mean continuing the operation in a way that would increase civilian casualties to several times the alarmingly high number they have already reached. Given that Hamas is much more than just the military wing and has been the civil administration of the Gaza Strip, «removal» is not something that can be accomplished anyway with just a destructive military assault.

Even if Hamas is debilitated, can it be imagined that new groups would not emerge after some years or that new intifada/intifadas would not begin in the West Bank?

Yes, of course it can. One of the common errors in talking about Hamas is to treat it as some sort of prime mover that is uniquely destabilizing. Hamas is just one organizational manifestation of Palestinian resistance against occupation and blockade. Even if Hamas could be «destroyed»--which it really cannot, given how anger over the Israeli assault is gaining Hamas new recruits and support--resistance would take other forms, including groups yet to be formed and acts of resistance by angry individuals.

Sociologically speaking, is it rational to expect around 2 million Gazans who have been put in a concentration camp not to rebel? Don't you think the way Israel is treating the Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank automatically breeds extremism and violence?

The principles at play are not unique to the Middle East or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One principle is that when a population is mistreated and its nationalist aspirations suppressed, it will resist. Another principle is that when people are denied peaceful channels for pursuing their grievances, some will resort to violence.

Do you agree with this view that the Western world is partly responsible for the current situation as it has turned Israel into a "spoiled child" through its unwavering support in a way that the Tel Aviv rulers have turned down any offer to heal this decades-long wound?

Obviously the unqualified Western support has been a major factor in enabling Israel to continue down the tragic path that has led to the situation we see today. One of the unfortunate things about this is that although the tragedy is first of all one for the Palestinians, it also is a tragedy for Israelis, who will never know true peace and security until and unless they recognize the aspiration for self-determination among their Palestinian neighbors. Those in the West who admire and respect Israel would be true friends of Israel only if they stop enabling the destructive behavior. True love in this case must take the form of tough love.

Despite the current calamity, Netanyahu boasts that he has stood strong against efforts to establish an independent Palestinian state. With this in mind, is it possible to imagine that a two-state solution can be found to the conflict?

It is difficult to imagine an Israeli government with its current extreme-right political make-up ever agreeing to an independent Palestinian state, but politics in Israel can change just as they can change in other countries. As to whether the construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories has gone so far as to make a two-state solution almost impossible, that is a question on which objective observers can disagree.

What can we learn from history in finding a durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

That the conflict, as long as it is not resolved with a negotiated political settlement that meets the nationalist aspirations of both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, cannot be sidelined or shoved aside or pushed out of the world›s consciousness. Without such a resolution of the conflict, there will be unending violence.

Lessons from a poll

From page 1 ▸ of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The demand for the dissolution of the party has risen to nearly 60%, which is the highest percentage ever recorded in PSR polls. This sentiment is particularly strong in the West Bank, where 90% of respondents favor Abbas's resignation. Of course, Barghouti's popularity is still high.

3) Support for armed struggle has increased by 10%, with over 60% of Palestinians now believing that it is the most effective means to end the Israeli occupation. This sentiment is particularly pronounced in the West Bank, where armed struggle is supported by nearly 70% of the population.

4) A majority of Palestinians in the West Bank believe that the formation of armed groups in settler-targeted communities is the most effective strategy to counter settler violence against Palestinian cities and villages.

5) The survey revealed that the majority of Palestinians are confident in Hamas's ability to resist Israel and prevent the creation of a second Nakba, or Palestinian catastrophe. They firmly believe that Hamas will emerge victorious in its struggle against the Israeli regime.

6) Dissatisfaction with the Palestinian leadership is widespread, with the majority of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the actions of the PA Prime Minister, PA President, Fatah, and the PA as a whole. Only the actions of Hamas, Yahya Sinwar, and Ismail Haniyeh received a positive response from the majority of Palestinians.

7) The survey also highlighted the high level of discontent with the positions of the United States, European countries, and Arab nations towards the Palestinian cause.

pay attention!

The Palestinian people have unequivocally rejected compromise and compromisers, expressing unwavering support for resistance and its leaders.

This sentiment is particularly striking given that the survey was conducted in the aftermath of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, when Gazans were experiencing unprecedented levels of suffering, including a high number of casualties and injuries, widespread hunger, a severe lack of essential infrastructure, and mass displacement.

The Palestinian people have concluded that the cost of compromise is far greater than the cost of resistance. Their experience is a valuable lesson for other nations seeking to liberate themselves from oppression.

This survey serves as a stark reminder of the Palestinian people's unwavering determination to achieve their inalienable rights and their unflinching support for the resistance movement. Their struggle is an inspiration to all those who aspire to live in freedom and justice.

The world told the Israeli regime to stop, but the U.S. said carry on

UN Security Council resolution falls short of ending indiscriminate Israeli attacks

From page 1 ▸ threats to veto it, a very watered-down version of the original text has been passed.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the American ambassador to the UN, said that the U.S. was "deeply disappointed, appalled ... that the council was not able to condemn" Hamas's al-Aqsa Storm Operation on 7 October.

"I can't understand why some council members are standing in the way and why they refuse to condemn" the operation, she said.

"I will never understand why some council members have remained silent," Thomas-Greenfield further said in reference to the al-Aqsa Storm Operation.

Russia's ambassador to the UN, Vasily Nebenzya, condemned the U.S. for "playing an extremely underhanded game of forcing into the text an essential license for Israel to kill Palestinian civilians in Gaza under the pretext and record of creating conditions for cessation of hostilities."

"The United States goes around twisting arms in the region, not for the sake of peace as my American colleague asserts, but for the sake of ensuring the short-term interests of Washington," he warned.

"By signing off on this, the council would essentially be giving the Israeli armed forces complete freedom of movement for further clearing of the Gaza Strip, and anyone who votes in favour of the text as it is currently ... would bear responsibility for that essentially becoming complicit in the destruction of Gaza.

"Moreover, the text of the draft has lost a reference to condemnations of all indiscriminate attacks on civilians. What signal ... this sends to the international community is that the security council is giving Israel a green light for war crimes," he explained.

Dai Bing, charge d'affaires of China's permanent mission to the United Nations, urged "Israel to immediately reverse course, cease its indiscriminate military attacks and stop its collective punishment of the population of Gaza as an occupying power. Israel has an obligation to safeguard the humanitarian needs for the population of Gaza, and to guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers in Gaza."

Dai also pointed out, "We expect urgent actions to be taken pursuant to this council resolution to expand humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including by making full use of the Kerem Shalom crossing and opening of additional crossings to ensure the safe and unimpeded entry of sufficient humanitarian supplies into Gaza."

While the UN Security Council backed the resolution calling for more humanitarian assistance for the Gaza Strip, the UN Secretary General said the way the Israeli regime is conducting its military offensives in Gaza is creating "massive obstacles" to distributing humanitarian aid.

Antonio Guterres said after the vote that he hoped aid delivery would improve, "but a humanitarian ceasefire is the only way to begin to meet the desperate needs of people in Gaza and end their ongoing nightmare."

While the resolution will not stop the Israeli bombardment of Gaza and does not seek to do so after the U.S. threats to veto the vote, it only calls for "urgent steps" to establish "conditions" for a sustainable ceasefire, which are open to many different interpretations.

It is quite clear that the regime will not even adhere to a humanitarian resolution judging by its track record of respecting UN resolutions.

Palestine's ambassador to the UN, Riyad Mansour, said, "The council is now meeting after over 20,000 Palestinians have been killed, almost half of them children. And 60,000 people have been wounded, and 2 million Palestinians have been forcefully displaced. It is meeting as homes, shelters, schools, hospitals have been destroyed, and as hunger and disease are spreading like wildfire."

"There is no way to stop the war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide underway, but [by] an immediate ceasefire. Ceasefire again. There is no way to start addressing the...humanitarian catastrophe, but [by] an immediate ceasefire. Ceasefire again. There is no way to release those held captives but [by] an immediate ceasefire," he added.

Hamas called the resolution an "insufficient step" for meeting the impoverished enclave's needs.

"During the past five days, the U.S. administration has worked hard to empty this resolution of its essence, and to issue it in this weak formula... It defies the will of the international community and the United Nations General Assembly in stopping the Israeli regime's aggression against our defenseless Palestinian people," a Hamas statement said.

The humanitarian organization Mercy Corps released its own statement on the resolution, saying that "nothing short of a ceasefire and an end to the siege will prevent this catastrophic and preventable loss of life."

The organization said: "While we are relieved to finally see agreement in the Security Council on the gravity and urgency of the humanitarian situation, the failure of this resolution to address what is most needed by the 2 million people in Gaza facing starvation cannot be called an achievement."

It further warned, "Without an immediate and sustainable pause in hostilities, women and children will continue to die in bombardments and aid organizations will not be able to scratch the surface in meeting needs.

We cannot deliver aid to 2.3 million people under active bombardment and by trucking it in. Nothing short of a ceasefire and an end to the siege will prevent this catastrophic and preventable loss of life."

Among the long list of humanitarian groups that have responded to the resolution, the International Rescue Committee said that "with more than 20,000 Palestinians killed and latest food insecurity numbers showing unprecedented threat of starvation in Gaza, much more is clearly needed..."

The committee added, "We reiterate that the only way fully to protect Palestinian lives, enable a sufficient humanitarian response, and offer the best chance of hostage release, is to stop the fighting. From a humanitarian point of view, the failure of the UNSC to demand an immediate and sustained ceasefire is unjustifiable."

What has become very clear is that the majority of the world, and on three occasions now at the United Nations, is calling on the Israeli regime to end its indiscriminate bombardment of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

This is while the U.S. stands, along with Britain, in calling for the regime to carry on killing.

The world told the Israeli regime to stop, but the U.S. said to carry on.

UN Security Council resolution falls short of ending indiscriminate Israeli attacks.

WORLD HEADLINES

Macron fires intelligence service chief for revealing terror plots against resistance leaders

Bernard Emie, the chief of France›s DGSE foreign intelligence service, has been fired by President Macron for informing the Lebanese authorities of the Israeli Mossad›s plans to assassinate Palestinian resistance leaders Saleh al-Arouri, Osama Hamdan, and Ziad Nakhale, the al-Diyar newspaper reported.

The mentioned resistance leaders are living in Lebanon.

According to the newspaper, Bernard Emie said resistance leaders are facing many dangers and this entails serious precautionary measures.

Doctors Without Borders calls for ceasefire

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has reiterated the need for a ceasefire to deliver aid.

"The way Israel is prosecuting this war, with US support, is causing massive death and suffering among Palestinian civilians and is inconsistent with international norms and laws. Even war has rules," MSF said on X.

"Stop attacks on hospitals, healthcare workers and ambulances."

Israel planning to end ground operation in Gaza in '3rd phase of war': media

Tel Aviv is preparing to end its military ground operation in the Gaza Strip as part of the third stage of its war in the coming weeks, the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation reported on Friday.

The broadcaster quoted unnamed sources as saying that the Israeli army "is preparing to move to the third phase of the fighting in Gaza during the coming weeks."

"The third phase includes ending the ground operation in the Gaza Strip, reducing army forces and demobilizing reserves, resorting to air strikes, and establishing a buffer zone on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip," according to the sources.

The report claimed that the army "took control of most of the northern Gaza Strip area, while it faces great difficulties in moving forward in the southern Gaza Strip area."

At least 472 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the start of the ground operation in the Palestinian enclave on Oct. 27, according to Israeli army figures.

The Walla news website and the Israeli Channel 12 broadcaster reported Thursday that one of the units in Gaza, known as the Golani Brigade, had lost 44 soldiers in 70 days of fighting. The brigade left Gaza to "reorganize their ranks and visit their families for a few days," it was reported.

Since an Oct. 7 attack by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas, Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip, killing more than 20,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injuring 53,320, according to health authorities in the enclave.

Death toll of journalists rises to 99: Gaza government

The Government Media Office in Gaza has said on their Telegram channel that the number of journalists killed by Israeli forces has risen to 99 since the start of the war.

Muhammad Khalifa is the latest journalist to be killed in Gaza after Israeli forces bombed his family's home in Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

'Stop the Gaza genocide': Berlin protesters

A pro-Palestinian demonstration in Berlin calling for an end to the war in the Gaza Strip drew several hundred people.

Demonstrators marched from the Kreuzberg district of the German capital to the Brandenburg Gate in the city centre in "Solidarity with Palestine."

Marchers wore Palestinian scarves and carried placards condemning the bombing of the Gaza Strip as a war crime. They called for freedom for Palestine, waving Palestinian flags.

They chanted: "Stop the murder, stop the war, stop the Gaza genocide."

Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, and Ilam see highest growth in domestic tourism

TEHRAN – Iran's domestic tourism sector has seen a significant surge in travel and stays across various provinces, notably in Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, and Ilam, which are among lesser-known destinations.

"During the first eight months of 1402 (the current Iranian year started on March 21), there was a notable increase in domestic travel and overnight stays across the country compared to the previous year," said Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, who presides over the tourism ministry's department for domestic tourism development.

"Sistan-Baluchestan witnessed a remarkable 29% growth, securing the top position in increased travel. Bushehr followed with a 22% rise, while Ilam experienced a 17% surge, making these three provinces the epicenters of heightened travel and overnight stays during the eight months," ILNA quoted Fatemi as saying on Saturday.

He pointed out that while provinces like Fars, Mazandaran, and Isfahan have long been significant travel destinations, there's a newfound focus on exploring untapped potential and lesser-known attractions in other provinces.

Fatemi attributed the growth in travel to provinces like Sistan-Baluchestan, Bushehr, and even Tehran, to a paradigm shift in domestic travel trends.

Western regions of the country have also experienced an increase in travel, with more preference shown towards southern cities over northern ones, the official stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Fatemi stressed the significance of regulating tourist influx, especially in environmentally sensitive areas like the islands of Hormozgan province.

In conclusion, the official underlined that the surge in domestic travel has led to considerations for managing tourist capacity, prioritizing eco-friendly stays, and ensuring a balanced distribution of travel across regions to sustainably support the country's flourishing tourism industry.

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 last year.

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.

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 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.

Konar Sandal undergoes excavation after a 17-year pause

TEHRAN – A fresh archaeological season has commenced on Konar Sandal, a Bronze-Age site in Iran's Jiroft region, after a 17-year hiatus.

"Led by [Iranian archaeologist] Seyyed Mansour Seyyed Sajjadi, these excavations are being conducted after a 17-year pause under the supervision of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage," Kerman province's tourism chief said on Saturday.

"That interruption in excavations resulted in partial destruction of the mounds and historical artifacts. In this renewed operation, the primary objective is to salvage and preserve the artifacts obtained from these mounds," Saeid Shahrokhi explained.

The second phase will be dedicated to new excavations and research, the official said.

"Shahrokhi added, "Preliminary study, damage assessment, and estimating the time required for the restoration and protection of the obtained artifacts are among the most crucial objectives of the archaeological season."He emphasized: "Many of the discovered artifacts remain unstudied and require documentation, making the creation of a comprehensive database a priority for us."

Shahrokhi highlighted Dr. Seyyed Sajjadi's significant role as one of the country's eminent archaeologists, saying "He previously led excavations in the ancient site of Burnt City located in Sistan-Baluchestan and is renowned as the savior of Burnt City."

Seyyed Sajjadi's years-long excavations and efforts resulted in the UNESCO registration of this ancient site, the official said.

Situated in the Jiroft plain of Kerman province, the site consists of two mounds a few kilometers apart, called Konar Sandal A and B with a height of 13 and 21 meters, respectively. At Konar Sandal B, a two-story, windowed citadel with

a base of close to 13.5 hectares was found. Tablets with scripts of unknown nature were reportedly discovered at the site.An initial archaeological dig at the site occurred about twenty years ago, led by Iranian archaeologist Yousef Majidzadeh and a team of international experts. This survey uncovered a Bronze Age settlement nestled in the Halil-Rud Valley.

The remarkable Jiroft site's discovery was accidental in the early 21st century when severe floods along the Halil River unearthed numerous previously unknown tombs, revealing artifacts believed to date back to the Early Bronze Age (late 3rd millennium BC).

Reports initially described the sight of "an ancient object floating on the water's surface." Recognizing its value, villagers, impacted by two years of drought, swarmed the riverbanks the following day, searching for 5,000-year-old relics.

Despite its historical significance, geological factors led to the site's oversight by tourists and archaeologists, who were typically more focused on locations like Mesopotamia, situated roughly 1,000 km away.

In 2003, Iran invited Jean Perrot, the renowned French archaeologist who directed excavations in the Shush (or Susa) area from 1969 to 1978 as head of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Referring to the discovery of Jiroft's artifacts as an archaeological revolution, Perrot remarked: "An area once thought inhabited solely by nomads and their livestock was the center of an incredibly advanced civilization. Here, a structured society thrived, distinct from the Sumerians. We must now consider Jiroft as the birthplace of civilizations, shaping our view of those that came before and after."

Under the guidance of Dr. Yousef Majidzadeh, international archaeologists, commenced excavations in 2003 while also initiating an awareness campaign among locals to educate them about Jiroft's historical significance and the invaluable artifacts present.Majidzadeh and his team unearthed remnants spanning over two square kilometers, revealing a city dating back to at least the late 3rd millennium B.C. The evidence suggests that Jiroft's peak period existed between 2500 BC and 2200 BC. Surprisingly, the chlorite vases found in Jiroft were not unique; similar vessels had been discovered from the Euphrates to the Indus, stretching as far north as the Amu Darya and south to Tarut Island on the Persian Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia.

Majidzadeh, a leading authority on the third millennium BC and author of a comprehensive three-volume history of Mesopotamia, has long theorized that Jiroft might be the fabled land of Aratta, a "lost" Bronze Age kingdom renowned for exporting magnificent crafts to Mesopotamia. This quest began during his doctoral studies at the University of Chicago in 1976, where he proposed that Aratta lay in southeastern Iran.

According to Majidzadeh, Jiroft artifacts act as a "missing link" in comprehending the Bronze Age, shedding light on why numerous incised chlorite vessels, displaying remarkably similar imagery, appeared in distant ancient sites from Mari in Syria to Nippur and Ur in Mesopotamia, Soch in Uzbekistan, and Tarut in Saudi Arabia, north of Bahrain.

Majidzadeh suggests the existence of a school of stone carvers due to the consistent aesthetic seen in these objects across the kingdom, indicating a development period of 300 to 400 years for these traditions to evolve. Artisans in Jiroft crafted pieces adorned with enigmatic iconography and embedded with lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, carnelian from the Indus Valley, turquoise, agate, and other imported semiprecious stones. Majidzadeh notes their naturalistic style, which he claims was unparalleled in that era.

Nestled among mountains rising around 4,000 meters high on three sides, Jiroft's discoveries are viewed by many Iranian and international experts as evidence of a civilization as significant as Sumer and ancient Mesopotamia.

Delegation led by Chinese deputy tourism minister visits Fars province

TEHRAN – On Friday, a Chinese delegation led by Beijing's Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Li Qun embarked on a two-day journey to Iran's southern Fars province, which is home to countless cultural heritage sites and monuments.

China's Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Li Qun at the head of an 11-member delegation of cultural heritage officials and managers, arrived in Shiraz on Friday evening and visited the Eram Garden, the mausoleums of Hafez and Sa'di, Karim Khan citadel, and the holy shrine of Shah Cheragh, CHTN reported.

On Saturday, the Chinese delegation held meetings with several provincial officials before paying visits to UNESCO-designated Persepolis, the majestic necropolis of Nagh-e Rostam, and Tall-e Ajori in the Marvdasht Plain.

The Chinese delegation left Shiraz for Tehran on Saturday evening.

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

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, the capital city of Shiraz has become synonymous with education, nightingales, poetry, and crafts skills passed down from generation to generation. It was one of the most important cities in the medieval Islamic world and was the Iranian capital during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794. Moreover, Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking to this provincial capital.

Afif-Abad Garden, the Tomb of Hafez, the Tomb of Sa'di, Jameh Mosque of Atigh, and Persepolis are among the historical, cultural, and ancient sites of Shiraz that are of interest to domestic and foreign tourists. The ancient city is also home to some magnificent historical gardens, such as Bagh-e Narenjestan and Eram Garden, which are top tourist destinations both for domestic and international sightseers.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Bamiyan Valley

Enclosed between the high mountains of the Hindu Kush in the central highlands of Afghanistan, the Bamiyan Valley opens out into a large basin bordered to the north by a long, high stretch of rocky cliffs.

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley comprise a serial property consisting of eight separate sites within the Valley and its tributaries. Carved into the Bamiyan Cliffs are the two niches of the giant Buddha statues (55m and 38m high) destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, and numerous caves forming a large ensemble of Buddhist monasteries, chapels and sanctuaries along the foothills of the valley dating from the 3rd to the 5th century CE. In several of the caves and niches, often linked by galleries, there are remains of wall paintings and seated Buddha figures. In the valleys of the Bamiyan's tributaries are further groups of caves including the Kakrak Valley Caves, some 3km south-east of the Bamiyan Cliffs where among the more than one hundred caves dating from the 6th to 13th centuries are fragments of a 10m tall standing Buddha figure and a sanctuary with painted decorations from the Sasanian period. Along the Fuladi valley around 2km southwest of the Bamiyan Cliffs are the caves of Qoul-i Akram and Lalai Ghami, also containing decorative features.

Punctuating the centre of the valley basin to the south of the great cliff are the remains of the fortress of Shahr-i Ghulghulah. Dating from the 6th to 10th centuries CE, this marks the original settlement of Bamiyan as stopping place on the branch of the Silk Route, which linked China and India via ancient Bactria. Further to the east along the Bamiyan Valley are the remains of fortification walls and settlements, dating from the 6th to 8th centuries at Qallai Kaphari A and B and further east still (around 15km east of the Bamiyan Cliffs) at Shahr-i Zuhak, where the earlier remains are overlaid by developments of the 10th to 13th centuries under the rule of the Islamic Ghaznavid and Ghorid dynasties.

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterised ancient Bactria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandharan school of Buddhist art. The numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified structures from the Islamic period, testify to the interchange of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman, Sasanian and Islamic influences. The site is also testimony to recurring reactions to iconic art, the most recent being the internationally condemned deliberate destruction of the two standing Buddha statues in March 2001.

(Source: UNESCO)

Second Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL SINGLE-STAGE TENDER No: 1402/108-52/03

Tender Holder:

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender :

Leasing 20MHz space on AM8 satellite in accordance with the terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and how to receive the tender documents:

From Sunday 24 Dec 2023 (1402/10/03) 10:00 a.m until Tuesday 26 Dec 2023 (1402/10/05) by 15:00 p.m with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of receiving the tender document:

Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept. ,4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex ,Hotel Esteghlal St. Vali –Assr Ave,Tehran, Iran

The fee of the tender documents and how to deposit it:

Submission of payment receipt for the amount of 10,000,000 Rials to account 4101029171204273 with BIC No.IR 310100004101029171204273 IRAN Central Bank in the name of IRIB.

Type and amount of guarantee for participation to tender:

The amount of deposit for participating in tender is USD 23725 fixed or its equivalent in Rials 12/100/000/000 which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and place of delivering Bidding Envelopes:

The sealed (A,B&C) packages/envelopes and the qualification evaluation package/envelope separately packed , should be submitted no later than 10:00 a.m. on Saturday 27 Jan 2024 (1402/11/07) at the address mentioned in 4th clause.

Time and place of opening Qualification Evaluation envelopes:

The date of opening the Qualification Evaluation envelopes is on Saturday 27 Jan 2024 (1402/11/07) at 10:30 a.m in the office of International Purchasing Dept.

Time and place of opening Envelopes:

The envelopes A of those eligible participants who meet the qualification criterion and approval of Technical and Commercial committee will be opened Sunday 28 Jan 2024 (1402/11/08) at 12:00 p.m in the office of Financial Vice President ,In case of complete content in the envelopes A the envelopes of B and C of eligible participants will be opened at the same time and place.

The participant must be qualified by the competent authorities.

For more information please see :

www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir/ Tel: 00982122167053

Purchasing (Kala) Dept.,IRIB

Tehran, Jakarta sign MOU on women, family affairs

TEHRAN – Ensieh Khazali, the Iranian Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, and I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati, the Indonesian Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, signed a memorandum of understating in Jakarta on Friday.

The MOU highlights boosting cooperation on women and family affairs; empowering women; improving health; enhancing security and productivity of family; preventing and eliminating social harms; improving the family economy; exchanging information and experiences; removing challenges and obstacles to women's progress; adopting effective policies to deal with deviations in families; and fighting against corruption by using the capacities of women.

The MOU was signed during Khazali's visit to Indonesia at the official invitation of Darmawati, to attend Hari Ibu, or Women's Day, celebration in Indonesia on December 22.

Expressing her satisfaction with the very good relationships between Tehran and Jakarta, Khazali highlighted the need to develop relations in women's affairs.

She stressed expanding relations in women's affairs, particularly creating job opportunities for women, reducing violence against women and children, and supporting families.

Referring to the commonalities of Iran and Indonesia, and the good cooperation between the women of the two countries in economic, social, and scientific fields, Khazali presented a report on the progress of Iranian women in various fields of science-technology, health, education, and entrepreneurship.

Top 1% most cited researchers

In 2023, 938 top researchers affiliated with Iranian organizations have been identified, which shows a 12 percent increase compared to the previous year. Over the past decade, the number of highly-cited researchers in the country has been growing.

Women are an important part of society, playing an important role in the development of human societies, IRNA quoted Ahmad Fazelzadeh, the head of the Islamic World Science and Technology Monitoring and Citation (ISC) Institute, as saying.

One of the indicators of scientific authority is the number of highly cited scientists in each country, and Iranian women researchers have a special place in the field of scientific authority at the national and international level, Fazelzadeh added.

ISC's main responsibilities are to introduce highly-cited researchers and to provide the possibility to identify and introduce elite researchers and scholars.

According to its missions, ISC is responsible for monitoring the status of science and technology in Iran, Islamic Countries, and the world.

One of the indicators of scientific authority is the number of highly cited researchers in each country.

Among Iranian highly-cited researchers, women are also present and have played their part in the scientific authority of Iran.

Using the data indexed in the ISC database, ISC identifies highly cited Iranian researchers in Human Sciences, Social Sciences, Art, and Architecture.

In the latest announced list, highly cited researchers have been introduced in the period of 10 years (2011-2021). The criteria for selecting researchers in this list is the number of citations made to their scientific productions.

According to the recent report of ISC, in the list of one percent of researchers in the world which is based on the Essential Science Indicators (ESI) database, a total of 135 Iranian female researchers have been recognized in the areas of Agricultural Sciences, Clinical Medicine, Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Pharmacology and Toxicology, Neuroscience and Psychology, Engineering, Material Science, Psychiatry/Psychology, Computer Science, Interdisciplinary, Social Science, generalities and some have obtained the necessary points even in several fields.

Wrong outlook towards women in West

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a speech on October 20, 2009, said, "There has always been a wrong outlook towards women. Today, the same wrong outlook exists in the West. Of course, a number of women may become outstanding, honorable, and modest personalities in Western systems. This holds true for men too. But the general outlook towards women, which has become firmly established in Western culture, is an objectifying and insulting outlook... It [the West] wants women to entertain men's eyes and it wants to use them in an illegitimate way. It wants women to have a special appearance in society. This is the greatest insult to women. Of course, they cover it up with certain beautiful words and give it different names. Respecting women means giving them the opportunity to develop, at different levels."

IRCS, Villa Maraini Foundation hold workshop on reducing addiction harms

TEHRAN – A training workshop focusing on lowering harms caused by drug addiction was held with the cooperation of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and Villa Maraini Foundation of Italy in Tehran on December 19-20.

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

Kolivand stated that drug users encounter severe health issues, they also suffer from an identity crisis which leads to their exclusion by both their families and society, the IRCS website reported.

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

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

Effective role of family in reducing drug abuse

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the "life helpers" exhibition on November 17, Mohammad Hosseini, the vice president for parliamentary affairs, described family, schools, media, and organizations as "effective" in reducing drug abuse.

Pointing to the various types of drugs and advertisements targeting youth to persuade them to use drugs, he emphasized the crucial role of family, school, and media in preventing drug addiction and creating trust and self-esteem among the youth.

According to Hosseini, prevention is better than cure because preventive measures are cost-effective, so there should be proper planning and investment in this field.

He also highlighted the necessity of proper upbringing for children and teenagers, stating that if they are raised with no confidence, they will be easily tempted by others.

On average, more than 90 percent of opium discoveries, 27 percent of heroin discoveries, and 59 percent of morphine discoveries in the world are made by Iran, he said, adding that some 716 tons of narcotics were discovered and seized in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2022-March 2023).

The flow of narcotics into Iran has decreased by about 15 percent over the past four years, Eskandar Momeni, the secretary general of the Iranian anti-narcotics headquarters, has said.

The impact of dismantling the financial foundations of drug traffickers has increased by about 10 times over the past three to four years, he said, adding "This has led to a decrease of 15 percent in the entry of drugs into Iran."

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$22m earmarked for equipping technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly $22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry's main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.
به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت‌بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.
حسینی‌مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود.

Iran's remarkable rise as a global leader in nanotechnology

From page 1 ▸ The site considers the number of scientific articles for comparing scientific progress in nanoscience, technology, and industry. The top three countries were China, the United States, and India, respectively.

Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter on a near-atomic scale to produce new structures, materials, and devices. The technology promises scientific advancement in many sectors such as medicine, consumer products, energy, materials, and manufacturing. Nanotechnology refers to engineered structures, devices, and systems.

In the past two decades, the world has observed a steady increase in the number of industries producing nano-based products and the number of countries promoting nanotechnology.

There is a continuous increase in the number of patents registered under nanotechnology worldwide. More importantly, the ratio of nanotechnology to nominal GDP has increased significantly, suggesting that the contribution of nanotechnology to World GDP has increased. Nanotechnology has also played a key role in new job creation, Press TV reported.

The nanotechnology sector is a prime example of success in Iran, an arena consisting of expert and program-oriented human resources with significant goals that shine like a jewel in the innovation and technology ecosystem of the country.

With the support of talented academicians and knowledge-based companies, the nanotechnology sector has indigenized many technologies to solve the main challenges of the country in various areas, including industry.

It is noteworthy that before the establishment of the national headquarters for nanotechnology development in 2000, the country ranked 58th in the world and 6th in West Asia, publishing just eight articles.

Policy making and planning for progress in nanotechnology started in 2003 with the formation of a special headquarters for the development of nanotechnology, and accelerated with the approval of the first 10-year document for the development of nanotechnology entitled "Future Strategy Document".

> Iran is moving towards global authority in science and nanotechnology by producing innovative products.

In this document, Iran was targeted to be among the top 15 nanotechnology countries in the world and aimed to generate wealth and improve people's lives. The general approach of the first ten-year document was the training of human resources and the provision of infrastructure for the development and commercialization of technology.

In order to continue the nanotechnology progress, the upcoming national document has been compiled with new goals and approaches such as being a reference in science and technology, industrialization, maximum impact of nanotechnology in priority industrial areas, and entry of nano products into the global markets and the promotion of people's lives.

Iran's ranking in nanotechnology articles citation in 2019 significantly improved compared to 2018, as it moved 26 levels higher, according to StatNano's statistics collected from the Web of Science (WoS) database.

Based on a Nanotechnology Publications report, Iran ranked 38 worldwide for the average number of times the nano-articles have been cited in the Journal Citation Reports in 2019, while in 2018, it was placed 64.

In 2022, the number of articles indexed in the WoS by Iran was 11,473, equivalent to 4.9 percent of the total WoS-based nanotechnology articles in the world.

The country secured its fourth place among the top 20 countries in this field. According to the report, the number of articles published by Iranian scholars rose from eight in 2000 to 11,473 in 2022.

Some 32 percent of the Iranian articles were jointly written by other countries, mainly China, the United States, Turkey, Iraq, and Canada.

China, with a total of 22,995 published articles, ranked first, followed by India, the United States, Iran, and South Korea, according to the StatNano website.

In 2022, about 8.7 percent of all WoS-indexed articles were related to nanotechnology. Five Islamic countries including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and Pakistan were among the 20 leading countries.

In the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020), the lowest share (7 percent) of nanotechnology products in the country's nanotechnology market was recorded.

The exports increased by 53 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) compared to the preceding year, ISNA reported.

Over the past year (ended March 20), the total sale of Iranian nano products has been equal to 115 trillion rials (nearly $425 million).

The expansion of nanotechnology export programs in recent years and the establishment of bases for exporting nanotechnology products to China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq have provided the opportunity for the entry of Iranian nanotechnology goods, equipment, and services into global markets.

Some 42 percent of the products in this field are related to construction, more than 17 percent to the field of oil, gas, and petrochemicals, 13 percent to the field of automobiles, and over 10 percent to the field of optoelectronics.

For the time being, 358 companies are operating in the field of nanotechnology in the country and 1608 products and equipment have received nanotechnology certificates.

some 20 percent of the 358 nanotechnology companies operating across the country are related to the field of health, and around 200 health products are manufactured using nanotechnology.

Medical nanotechnology and pharmaceutical nanotechnology are currently being taught in over 15 universities in the country to postgraduate students.

According to Press TV, Iran now boasts of nanotechnology-related doctoral courses in 23 universities and master's degree programs in 66 institutions. This feat is a clear indicator of the country's dedication to creating a robust foundation for nanotechnology research and development.

By 2033, the advancements of nanotechnology in Iran will improve the quality of life and the production of wealth. The country moves towards global authority in science and nanotechnology by producing innovative products while having a stable place in the market of other countries.

General goals are improving the scientific position and promoting the authority of the country in science and nanotechnology, promotion of innovation based on novel technologies with high economic and social impact, upgrading existing industries by nanotechnology, stable export and promotion of Iranian nano products in regional and global markets, enhancing the effectiveness of nanotechnology in improving the quality of life and social impact.

The field is also best placed to halt the migration of professionals from the country. High efficiency, convenience, and the low price of nanotechnology products can boost demand and create a high level of satisfaction. Nanotechnology is also crucial to sustainable economic development, Press TV reported.

Priority industrial areas in the national document consist of water and environment, energy, agriculture, health, and construction, IRNA reported.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The people whom I hate the most and who are the farthest from me on the Day of Judgment are those who talk uselessly, and those who put down others, and those who show off when they talk.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:04 Evening: 17:16 Dawn: 5:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:12 (tomorrow)

25th International Storytelling Festival concludes in Yazd

Frome Page **1** ▸ The special General Soleimani award, presented for the first time, went to Simin Mohammadalipour from East Azarbaijan Province.

Zohreh Bagheri from Alborz Province was the recipient of the special award of the Smile category, also presented for the first time at the festival.

Organized by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the four-day festival was held under the theme "Let's Make a Smile with a Story". Some 17,000 storytellers from across the world were submitted to the festival.

The festival's international jury included judges from Turkey, South Africa, Argentina, India, Scotland, Kenya, England, Malaysia, Uganda, Tanzania, Lesotho, Lebanon, and France.

The festival aims to encourage families to revert back to the authentic nature of storytelling for educational purposes.

It also serves as a platform for different educational activities, providing support to a variety of content forms that are founded on storytelling.

Storytelling has been utilized as a tool for the education and guidance of mankind by divinity, and Iran is harnessing its potential for empowering and educating children and young people.

Over 300,000 toured Film Museum in nine months

TEHRAN- Over 300,000 people have visited the Film Museum of Iran since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

The museum has also attracted cinephiles through its selection of film screenings, with more than 70,000 attendees enjoying movies in its halls, IRNA reported on Saturday.

During the first nine months of the year, the museum has showcased 80 films, providing a diverse range of cinematic experiences for its visitors.

Additionally, the museum has hosted a multitude of events and programs related to the film industry including ceremonies honoring cinema personalities, specialized workshops, and screenings of restored films.

The museum has also delved into the history of cinema through exhibitions, as well as showcasing international films. It has even provided educational and research programs for both students and enthusiasts of the cinematic arts.

Moreover, the installation of 24 televisions broadcasting stills and documentaries about various professions such as actors, filmmakers, and musicians has been completed. Additionally, eight new screens equipped with monitoring systems have been installed, providing comprehensive information about awards and their recipients.

Nestled within the Ferdows Garden, the Film Museum of Iran captivates visitors with its Qajar-era mansion and tranquil surroundings. A haven for film enthusiasts, this museum boasts curated exhibits that showcase the equipment, photographs, and posters that have shaped Iran's rich movie industry over the past century. English explanations accompany the displays, ensuring an immersive experience for international visitors.

One of the highlights of the museum is its functioning cinema, a true gem as Iran's first-ever cinema. Embellished with beautifully crafted plaster ceilings, this exquisite theatre screens both contemporary and classic Iranian films throughout the day. For those eager to delve deeper into Iranian cinema, a shop within the museum offers an array of elusive Iranian films on DVD.

The establishment of this museum has been a dream come true for advocates of Iranian culture, ensuring the preservation and celebration of the country's cinematic heritage for present and future generations. In September 1994, the Film Museum of Iran was inaugurated through the vision and determination of the managers of the Cultural Spaces Development Company, affiliated with Tehran Municipality. Their noble mission included collecting, preserving, recording, and presenting Iran's cinematic legacy.

With the invaluable support of renowned figures such as Abbas Kiarostami and Ezzatollah Entezami, and the relentless efforts of Jamal Omid, Amir Esbati, Behzad Rahimian, and Azizollah Sa'ati, the museum founders achieved their goal in May 1998.

Originally situated in Pirnia alley on Lalehzar Street, the museum was inaugurated by esteemed cinema personalities and supporters. Precisely four years later, in September 2002, the museum was relocated to its current home. The museum has continued to thrive in its present format, attracting a plethora of daily visitors ranging from passionate cinema enthusiasts to dedicated researchers.

Yalda Night celebrated at Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow

TEHRAN-Iran Culture and Art Days in Moscow was held on Thursday and Friday at the Russian capital, on the occasion of Yalda Night, ancient Persian festival celebrated annually on December 21.

Organized by the cultural office of the Embassy of Iran in Moscow, the event was held at the Library for Foreign Literature (LFL) and attended by a large group of Russian cultural figures, students of Persian language and literature, and those interested in Iranian history and art, IRNA reported n Saturday.

For centuries, Iranians around the world have gathered on winter solstice to celebrate Yalda, meaning birth or rebirth. It marks the end of autumn and the longest night of the year. During Yalda Night, Iranian families gather, have nuts and fruits such as pomegranates and watermelon, recite Hafez's poetry, and pass the time by talking and laughing all together to mark the occasion.

Yalda's significance lies in its embodiment of light's victory over darkness, with the subsequent lengthening of days heralding hope and renewal.

Speaking at the beginning of the ceremony, Pavel Kuzmin, the director of the LFL, expressed his interest in the authentic Iranian culture and civilization and referring to the philosophy of Yalda Night said: "Love, warmth and light can bring peace to the world".

For his part, the ambassador of Iran to Russia Kazem Jalali considered the shared moral values of the two civilized countries, Iran and Russia, to be the driving force of cultural relations between Tehran and Moscow.

Referring to the historical philosophy of Yalda Night and the victory of light over darkness, he said: "Today we are witnessing the worst crimes with the most advanced weapons against the oppressed people in the Gaza Strip, but as divine and historical traditions have promised us, hardship will be followed by ease and the light of justice will also win over the darkness of evil."

During the event, Diana Jalalova, the Russian host of the "One Day in the City" program on the TV channel "My Planet", who recently had a one-week trip to Tehran and Isfahan, spoke about Yalda Night as well.

Referring to her Iranian roots that go back to the Azarbaijan region, she called Yalda Night a special ceremony with each food served during the night having a special meaning. As an example, she said pomegranates are symbol of life and vitality at the peak of cold winter.

Musical performance of famous Iranian songs was another part of the ceremony that was welcomed by the audience. The participants also visited the exhibition of Iranian handicrafts at the library. In this exhibition, works of calligraphy, inlay and enamelware were displayed.

Movies from Iran line up for Dhaka festival

TEHRAN-A lineup of 29 movies by Iranian filmmakers will be competing in different sections of the 22nd Dhaka International Film Festival, which will take place in the Bangladeshi capital from January 20 to 28.

Four films including "Fereshteh" by Morteza Atashzamzam and "Green Plum Season" by Ali Bayat will go on screen in the Asian Film Competition.

Atashzamzam's "Fereshteh" is about a woman named Fereshteh who together with his husband Amjad keep trying hard to achieve their wishes.

Jaya Ahsan and Suman Faruque are the main actors of the 78-minute movie that has been made in Bangladesh.

"Green Plum Season" tells the story of Ata, who after resigning from his position as a judge, Ata retreats to his family's villa in the countryside, only to be met with a chilly reception from his son, Farhad, who has recently been released from prison.

A scene from "Green Plum Season" by Ali Bayat

As Ata's wife, Giti, files for divorce, tensions escalate, and the family is thrown into turmoil. However, their already strained relationships are further complicated when a car accident claims Farhad's life and leaves Giti paralyzed. In the aftermath of the tragedy, Ata finds himself caught in a web of lies as he tries to shield Giti from the truth. Meanwhile, Farhad's girlfriend, Vida, becomes increasingly suspicious of the circumstances surrounding his death.

"Number Ten" by Hamid Zargarnejad and "The Gentleman" by Hasan Keyghobadi will also be screened in this section.

Eight films from the lineup, including "Ropewalker Memories" by Hamed Rajabi, "The Leather Jacket Man" by Hossein Mirzamohammadi and "Butterfly Man" by Mitra Ruhimanesh will be showcased in the Cinema of the World section.

"Ropewalker Memories" is about a young man and his father, who share a close living arrangement in the same apartment. Despite his son's objections, the father invites sex workers into their home. One day, he brings home a woman who refuses to leave. Both father and son join forces to persuade her to depart. However, when she finally departs of her own accord, her absence becomes unbearable for the two men.

A suspense drama, "The Leather Jacket Man" follows Isa Farahman, a State Welfare Organization of Iran investigator who tracks down a ring using young women for drug smuggling.

In "Butterfly Man," Jahan, a middle-aged migrant dealing with a serious illness, is filled with regret over his past. He decides to return to his homeland, Iran, to seek forgiveness from his ex-wife, Homa, whom he forced to undergo an abortion after a positive PAPP-A test. Upon his arrival, Jahan learns that Homa has not only moved on but also raised their child, a sweet and talented young boy with Down Syndrome.

Cartoon of Day

New Year in Gaza
Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

Matei Visniec's "Agoraphobia" on stage at Shahrzad Theater Complex

TEHRAN-The play "Agoraphobia" written by the Romanian-French playwright and novelist Matei Visniec and directed by Hanieh Karandish is on stage at Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran.

The short work, 45 minutes, is an episodic play consisting four parts. Three episodes include monologues and one will be performed by two actors. Pegah Nekookar and Hasti Hayati are in the cast.

It is about the loneliness and concern of today's people. The stage design consists of paper hats that represent people.

The play is a part of Visniec's book "Beware of Old Ladies Gnawed by Solitude" that includes a series of short pieces divided into three parts that follow three spatial themes of borders, agoraphobia and desert.

Matei Vișniec, 67, is internationally known especially for his writings in the French language. After the fall of communism in Romania, in 1989, he became one of the most performed playwrights in the country, with more than 30 plays put on in Bucharest and other towns.

His international audience as a playwright started in 1992, with the play "Horses at the Windows" performed in France, and "Old Clown Wanted" at the Bonner Biennale. Since then, Vișniec has had more than 20 plays performed in France, Germany, the U.S., Denmark, Austria, Poland, Finland, Italy, Turkey, Brazil, Romania, Azerbaijan, Moldavia, and Georgia.

"Agoraphobia" will remain on stage until the end of December at Shahrzad Theater Complex located at No. 74, Neauphle-le-Château St., Hafez St.