

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 45th year | No. 14680 | Saturday | January 6, 2024 | Day 16, 1402 | Jumada al-Thani 23, 1445

Iran grieves victims of Kerman terrorist attack in mass funeral procession

Daesh Takes Bullet for Whom?



Interior Ministry confirms 84 dead in Kerman attack

TEHRAN- Iran's Deputy Minister of Interior, Majid Mirahmadi, has provided an updated casualty count for the recent terrorist attack in Kerman.

The Ministry confirms that 84 people were martyred in the attack, including 45 from Kerman, 40 from other provinces, 1 from Mashhad, and 1 from Tehran. The identities of the two remaining martyrs are still being verified. Additionally, 12 of the martyrs are Afghan nationals.

Mirahmadi further stated that 36 of the martyrs were women and 53 were men. A small number of injured individuals remain in critical condition, and there is a possibility that the casualty count may increase.

Among the martyrs, 30 individuals were under the age of 18. Notably, there are 23 martyrs aged 15 and under, with 20 of them being under 15 years old. Additionally, 11 victims were aged 10 and under, and 9 were below the age of 10. Tragically, 2 individuals were even under the age of 5.

The Deputy Minister confirmed that the remains of two suicide bombers were found at the scene of the attack, indicating that both explosions were carried out by suicide bombers.

Iran, Turkey prepare to hold joint economic committee meeting

TEHRAN - The coordination meetings of Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee were held during the visit of the Iranian minister of transport and urban development as the head of this committee to Ankara.

During his visit to Turkey on Wednesday, Mehrdad Bazrpash held separate meetings with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, the country's Minister of Youth and Sports Osman Ashkin Bak, who is also the head of the joint committee, and the minister of Transport and Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloglu to coordinate the approvals at the upcoming joint committee.

At the meeting with Fidan, the Iranian minister stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the development of comprehensive relations with its neighbors.

"The cooperation of the two great powers of the region, Iran and Turkey, can bring peace, stability, security and prosperity to the region," Bazrpash said.

He further made suggestions regarding holding a tripartite meeting between the foreign ministries of Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan in order to increase the role of transit corridors in the economy of the three countries.

According to Bazrpash, the volume of trade between Iran and Turkey, as the third trading partner of the Islamic Republic, has increased significantly after the Covid pandemic. ▶ Page 4



What lesson does the Egyptian spy of 50 years ago have for us in Kerman incident?

By Habib Ahmadzadeh

TEHRAN - A few months ago, the Israeli spy apparatus officially acknowledged what many had long suspected. It said that Ashraf Marwan, the son-in-law of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, had been a spy for Israel, providing necessary information to this regime on all matters such as war and peace.

Fifty years have passed since the emergence of this narrative. And revealing this story will not benefit Egypt and compensate the country for the losses it experienced then.

The Kerman terrorist attack, which claimed the lives of 84 innocent people, bears striking parallels to the Marwan affair. ISIS, the group that claimed responsibility for the attack, is believed to have been created and funded, at least in part, by Western spy agencies.

According to U.S. former President Donald Trump, ISIS was created and funded by America. Contrary to the public perception of ISIS as a fanatically religious organization, the group's actions often contradict this narrative. ▶ Page 3

Tragedy strikes family as nine members fall victim to terrorist attack in Kerman

TEHRAN - In a devastating incident that unfolded during a recent terrorist attack in Kerman city, Iran, a single family bore the heart-wrenching loss of nine of its members.

The Soltaninezhads lost 9 of their members in the terrorist attack, which occurred near the tomb of top Iranian anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani during a ceremony marking four years since his martyrdom, has left a community in mourning.

The explosions, claiming 84 innocent lives and leaving over 200 injured, struck particularly hard for this family as they lost multiple generations in the blink of an eye.

The 9th member of this family who lost his life was a 12-year-old boy who succumbed to his injuries and passed away in the local hospital on Friday morning.

The Islamic Republic of Iran declared Thursday a National Day of Mourning, recognizing the gravity of the situation that has befallen the nation.

In the wake of this heart wrenching incident, condolences and support have poured in from the community and beyond, with officials expressing solidarity. Iran's Finance Minister, ▶ Page 3

Kerman terror attacks draw global condemnation

TEHRAN- World leaders and figures expressed sympathy over the recent deadly attack in the city of Kerman.

Leaders from Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and other nations across the world have all condemned the tragic event.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Security Council said, "The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the cowardly terrorist attack in the city of Kerman, the Islamic Republic of Iran on January 3."

The UN body continued, "The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers, and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice."

It also offered condolences to the families of the victims and the government of Iran.

The Security Council encouraged all governments to work constructively with the government of Iran to prosecute the perpetrators of the terrorist act.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a statement on Wednesday strongly condemning the terrorist attack in Kerman. ▶ Page 2

9 linked to Kerman terror acts detained: Intelligence Ministry

TEHRAN - The Iranian Intelligence Ministry issued a statement late on Friday saying nine persons have been arrested in connection to the Wednesday terrorist attacks in the southeastern city of Kerman.

The nine were arrested on Wednesday evening after the elements who transferred the suicide bombers to Iran were identified, the ministry said, adding one of the suicide bombers is a national of Tajikistan and the identity of the second one is still unknown.

Also, in the early morning of Thursday, the residing place of the two suicide bombers was found on the outskirts of Kerman and then two persons who provided logistics for them and gave sanctuary to them were arrested.

In the research operation, 9 members of the terrorist team were apprehended in six provinces.



Gaza still resisting after Israeli assassination

By Ali Karbalaeei

TEHRAN- Deputy Hamas chief Saleh al-Aroui was killed in a drone strike on a Hamas office in Lebanon on Tuesday. He was laid to rest at Martyrs Cemetery in the Shatila refugee camp in the Lebanese capital.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said in a speech aired during the funeral ceremony that "the enemy is running away from its failures and defeats in Gaza to Lebanon."

Back in Gaza, the Palestinian resistance is still engaged in fierce clashes with the occupation forces, who are attempting to advance into the enclave from several directions, especially in the center and south of the territory, but to no avail. ▶ Page 5

Tehran, Tashkent to establish technology park in Samarkand

TEHRAN -Iran and Uzbekistan will establish a joint technology park in the city of Samarkand focusing on health, digital economy, and cultural industries.

A delegation from Uzbekistan will meet representatives of some Iranian knowledge-based companies on Saturday, January 6, in Tehran to discuss and negotiate further issues.

Uzbekistan planning to boost tech co-op with Iran

Nasriev Fariddin Badriddinovich, ambassador of Uzbekistan to Iran, visited achievements of Iranian knowledge-based companies in the 11th exhibition of Iranian-made laboratory equipment and materials, Iran Lab Expo 2024, on Thursday. ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

The terrorist incident in Kerman is the enemy's revenge on the people of Iran

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

In a commentary, Kayhan discussed the terrorist attack in Kerman and wrote: These days the Islamic resistance has subdued the Zionist regime with its courage and intelligence in the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, and other resistance groups in the region in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen have stood manfully in front of the global arrogance and the supporters of Zionist crimes and they have confused them and made them helpless. In this situation, the occurrence of this painful and cruel incident shows that the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, when they have been helpless in front of the power and sagacity of the region took their revenge cruelly. They took revenge from the people of Iran and from children, women and men who had gathered to pay respect for the position of a national hero and a commander who helped the oppressed and victims of terrorism all over the world and in the West Asia region. Undoubtedly, the Iranian nation will punish the perpetrators of this disgraceful terrorist incident severely and painfully.

Shargh: Terror triangle

Shargh also devoted its editorial to the terrorist attack on defenseless people in Kerman and said: Considering the current conditions of the region, it should be wondered that for the benefit of whom or which countries or actors this terrorist attack was carried out. Following this issue, this horrible crime in Kerman must be seen within a triangle, one side of which is the intelligence, operational and espionage system of the Zionist regime and the United States of America. On the other side, the survivors of ISIS, and it should be acknowledged that the other side of this triangle can be the rental terrorist groups, for whom ideology or the reason for carrying out terrorist operations does not differ, and they are willing to carry out terrorist operations with any country and actor. According to what was said, when one side of this triangle of terrorism takes responsibility for the bitter tragedy of Kerman, the other two sides cannot be considered innocent.

Etemad: Consequences of Al-Aqsa Storm

In an analysis, Etemad discussed the consequences of the Al-Aqsa Storm and quoted Hossein Jaber Ansari, the former deputy foreign minister for Arab affairs, as saying: The operation of the Palestinian resistance on Oc-

tober 7 was a surprising event that divided the situation of Palestine and West Asia before and after it. With this operation, the legend of the invincibility of Israel's army, intelligence services, all imaginations and psychological operations during the past decades collapsed in this framework. Also, the influence of Iran and the resistance group is more obvious and cannot be removed from the regional trends. In other words, it became clear, that without the support of Iran and the resistance groups, no trend in the region can have the element of continuity and stability. In addition, the concept, nature and level of coordination and companionship between Iran and the resistance group was faced with a kind of test and its real dimensions became clearer in a great objective experience. On the other hand, it revealed the reality of the double standards, oppressive and brutal policy of America and the West and the falseness and deceitfulness of the slogans of democracy and human rights as well as ended many doubts and questions in this field among the masses and elites of Iran and the world.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Infanticide from Gaza to Kerman

In a note, Vatan-e-Emrooz discussed the similarity of crimes in Gaza and Kerman. It wrote: Just as children, women and defenseless people were killed in the most crowded places in Gaza, the same thing happened in Kerman. The images of these crimes in the two regions are quite familiar and similar. Contrary to the situation of the Zionist regime, which became anxious and angry after the October 7 operation and is trying to lead the world towards anxiety and intimidation, it is a society that behaves based on rationality, so it does not rush in this direction and is not captured by emotions and excitement. Soleimani's soldiers are ready for revenge. It seems that the story of the Zionists' behavior in "Infanticide" should also be seen and analyzed in this context. After the October 7 operation, the Zionists have not been able to release even one of their captives, and even when they approached the prisoners, the resistance forces killed them. In this situation, it was very predictable that the enemy was thinking of carrying out sabotage operations in the region. The assassination of the pilgrims of Martyr Soleimani in Kerman is an example of these actions.

Kerman terror attacks draw global condemnation

"The Secretary-General strongly condemns the attack today on a memorial ceremony in Kerman city in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General calls for those responsible to be held accountable," deputy spokesperson Florencia Soto Nino said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message of condolences to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi saying he is "shocked to learn about serious terror attacks" in southeastern city of Kerman.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Kerman, expressing "deepest condolences" to the victims and their families.

Syrian President sent separate messages to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Raisi on Thursday, extending his condolences over the horrendous incident.

Pakistani President Arif Alvi expressed condolences to the Iranian government and people over the Kerman terrorist attack and condemned the barbaric act.

In a statement, he said that the Pakistani government and nation express solidarity with the Iranian people in this hour of grief.

He stated that Pakistan's sympathies are with the bereaved families who lost their loved ones in the attacks.

The speakers of the parliaments of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman expressed their condolences to the Iranian people, con-



demning the terrorist attack.

The spokesman for the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, expressed solidarity with the Iranian people following the terrorist attack.

In a statement, the Swiss government strongly condemned the "deplorable acts" that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and significant injuries. The statement emphasized that Switzerland stands in solidarity with Iran in its fight against terrorism and violence.

Similarly, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) issued a statement condemning the "horrendous bombing" in Kerman.

The FCDO spokesperson expressed the UK's "thoughts and condolences to the families of those killed and injured."

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko expressed his deepest sympathies for the lives lost in the city of Kerman's terrorist incident.

Raisi vows retribution against those responsible for terror attacks

TEHRAN- Iran's determination to bring those responsible for the most recent, extremely lethal terror attacks in Kerman to justice is reaffirmed by President Ebrahim Raisi.

The president made the remarks in a Thursday phone conversation with his Serbian counterpart, Aleksandar Vucic.

"No degree of support or patronage from no power can provide a security margin to the agents that have been involved in this atrocity," Raisi said.

The remarks were made the day following two consecutive bombings at the funeral ceremony for Iran's former senior anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in the city of Kerman, which left at least 84 people dead and several others injured. The Daesh terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the massacre.

Cowardly actions like this, Raisi asserted, would not prevent the great Iranian nation from striving toward its lofty objectives of resisting injustice, tyranny, and repression.

Regarding the terrorist attacks, the Serbian official expressed regret on behalf of the Serbian government and people to the Iranian government and people.

Vucic expressed hope that the terror attack planners and perpetrators will be brought to justice right away and dealt with legally for their atrocities.

At last, the president of Serbia declared that his nation supported Iran in the war against terrorism.

The UN Security Council earlier issued a statement in which it denounced the "cowardly terror-



ist attack" and expressed sympathy to the families and the Iranian government of those killed.

Leaders from Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and other nations across the world have all condemned the tragic event.

"Tehran deals with corrupt brains, dirty hands of designers, perpetrators"

In a phone call with Raisi on Thursday, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov condemned the terrorist and inhumane crime of attacking people in Kerman, and condoled the martyrdom of a number of citizens on behalf of the government and nation of Turkmenistan, as well as the national leader of the country, and expressed condolences to the Iranian government and people, especially the families of the deceased.

President Raisi also said that "the corrupt brains of those who have designed this terrorist crime and the dirty hands of perpetrators will be decisively dealt with."

The President of Turkmenistan also described Iran as one of the most important trade partners of Turkmenistan, adding, "In

addition to good and strong relations, the two countries have many facilities and capacities for the development of cooperation."

"Terrorist acts will never undermine Iran national unity"

Speaking in a phone conversation with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani on Wednesday evening, President Raisi said that "the Iranian nation has proven that terrorist acts cannot disrupt their will, national cohesion, and resilient spirit."

He went on to say that the atrocity occurred on the anniversary of martyr Qassem Soleimani, who is revered in the region and throughout the globe as a hero in the fight against terrorism.

He further stated, "The Zionists are desperately seeking to spread insecurity to other parts of the region due to the global attack against them and the failure to achieve the results they expected."

The Emir of Qatar, for his part, strongly denounced the despicable terrorist assault on pilgrims at Kerman's martyrs' graveyard, offering condolences and sympathies to the government

and people of Iran for the loss of life in this terrorist act.

"This criminal act was carried out by those who seek to make Iran insecure, but we are confident in the national unity of the Iranian nation and we stand by you," he stated.

The Emir of Qatar further said, "We must work together and through deeper consultations with the countries of the region and the Islamic world to stop the crimes of the Zionist regime against the oppressed people of Gaza."

"Foes failed to foil Iran unity through terrorism"

During a phone call from his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday, Raisi noted that enemies might assume that terrorism could help them accomplish their unlawful aims, but the Iranian people have demonstrated that such acts will not disturb their "unity, security, and strategy."

"This terrorist incident occurred on the anniversary and in the vicinity of the resting place of a martyr who is known as a hero in the fight against terrorism and violence in the region," Raisi said.

He went on to add that "the enemies of the Iranian nation may think they can achieve their illegitimate goals through the tool of terrorism, but the Iranian people have proven that these crimes cannot disrupt their unity, security, and strategy."

"I felt it necessary to personally express my sympathy and condolences to you regarding this heinous terrorist attack," stated the president of Turkey, who had already sent written condolences to the Iranian leadership and people.

Raisi will pay visit to Ankara in near future

TEHRAN- Iran and Turkey have mutually agreed that President Ebrahim Raisi would visit Ankara shortly after canceling his planned visit following Wednesday's terrorist blasts in Kerman.

The visit— which was scheduled to start on Thursday— was postponed following a phone conversation between President Raisi and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, during which the Turkish president expressed condolences, denounced the incident, and urged for cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Turkey's Foreign Minister, Hakan Fidan, contacted his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, late Thursday night to "express condolences and solidarity of the government and people of Turkey with the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran" in the aftermath of the terrorist incident.

Amir Abdollahian appreciated high-ranking Turkish officials, including the president and foreign minister, and stressed the Iranian authorities' attentive efforts to "accurately identify the perpetrators and planners of this barbaric and terrorist act."

Additionally, the two foreign ministers decided that President Raisi's formal visit to Turkey will take place soon.

Erdogan had first announced in November that "President Raisi is coming to us" on the 28th of the month to focus on forging a joint response to

the Israeli invasion of Gaza, but the visit did not take place due to conflicting schedules of their foreign ministers.

Turkey and Iran both reject the illegitimate U.S. involvement in Syria and have loudly criticized Israel's continued slaughter against Palestinians.

Late Thursday, Amir Abdollahian received a phone call from his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mikdad, who strongly denounced the Kerman terrorist blasts and expressed condolences to the victims' families.

Mikdad emphasized that the world must unite against terrorism and that the forces behind the atrocity must be held accountable as well as the required cooperation made to find the culprits.

He also reaffirmed Syria's "full solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran, as people and leadership, and with all families of the victims who met to commemorate the human memory of martyrs of truth and justice, General Qassem Soleimani and Commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, late Abu al-Mahdi al-Muhandis," who were assassinated in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.

"As the two countries have agreement on the necessity of combating terrorism in every way and resisting the growing Zionist tendency to take revenge on the Palestinians and their achievements in confronting the Zionist attacks on Gaza," Amir Abdollahian said in response to

the Syrian people's show of solidarity with the Iranian people.

Amir Abdollahian was also in conversation with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, who "expressed deep condolences over deaths in the dastardly terrorist attack that took place yesterday in Kerman," according to a statement from the ministry.

"On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, Foreign Minister expressed solidarity with the people of Iran at this moment of grief," it said.

Jilani termed terrorism as a common threat to both Pakistan and Iran which needs to be countered by effective measures.

Even on Thursday, Amir Abdollahian held separate phone calls with his Qatari and Sri Lankan counterparts over the recent terrorist attack in Kerman.

During the conversations which were separately held between Amir Abdollahian and Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani and Ali Sabry, they all condemned the terrorist attack, urging for the punishment of all those behind the terrible incident.

They also talked about the Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip, calling for an end to the massacre and crimes that are being perpetrated by the Tel Aviv regime.

Terrorist attack in Kerman unsuccessful effort to create unrest in Iran: IRGC

TEHRAN- The recent "indiscriminate and spiteful" terrorist strike in Kerman, southeast Iran, according to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), was an unsuccessful attempt to sow discord throughout the nation.

The IRGC denounced Wednesday's two terrorist attacks, which killed 84 people and injured 284 others, some of whom were in critical condition, in a statement issued on Thursday. The death toll is anticipated to grow, according to medics.

The twin explosions took place near the burial site of Iran's late anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in Kerman during a ceremony marking his fourth martyrdom anniversary.

According to the IRGC, the terrorist act was carried out as payback for General Soleimani's great regard among the Iranian people, especially the courageous younger generation.

It served as a warning to the cowardly adversaries that General Soleimani's path would be passionately followed by the Iranian people, preventing them from accomplishing their nefarious objectives.

The statement added the heinous terrorist bombings showed that the enemies are unable to compensate for the defeats they had suffered by General Soleimani.

Terrorist attacks demonstrate brutality of Islam enemies

The Iranian Army also condemned

the terrorist attack in Kerman, which murdered innocent citizens, including women and children, in a statement on Thursday.

"This act of terrorism, which killed a group of innocent people, shows the brutality and savage nature of the enemies of Islam and the Islamic establishment," it noted.

The terrorist acts, it said, further demonstrated the adversaries' animosity and hostility toward the honorable Iranian people.

The Iranian Army stressed that the heinous act will not weaken the Iranian people's will and desire to combat terrorism, but will instead strengthen their cohesion and solidarity.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi



stated on Wednesday that although terrorist activities are seen by some as a means of achieving their illegal objectives, the country has proven that cohesiveness, security, and strategy cannot be undermined by such acts.

Daesh takes bullet for whom?

More evidence suggests Israeli hand in Kerman terrorist attack

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – As Iran's interior minister announces the arrest of several suspects, journalists and media outlets point out the growing amount of evidence pointing towards Israeli involvement in a terrorist attack that killed at least 84 civilians in the southeastern city of Kerman.

Ahmad Vahidi revealed on Friday that multiple individuals suspected of playing a role in the attack have been taken into custody. The individuals were arrested in five different Iranian provinces by intelligence forces.

Twin explosions tore through a densely populated area near the tomb of the late anti-terror commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, on Wednesday. Both blasts were caused by suicide bombers.

The locations of the explosions were approximately 1.5 km and 2.7 km from the burial site of General Soleimani as the terrorists couldn't reach the tomb itself due to inspection gates.

In a statement released on its affiliated Telegram channel on Thursday, the Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for the deadliest attack in Iran in the past 40 years. The group alleged that two brothers carried out the attacks by detonating their explosive vests as they approached mourners heading towards General Soleimani's burial site.

Inconsistencies in Daesh statement suggest direct Mossad involvement

While some Iranian officials have already hinted at Israel's involvement in the Wednesday terror attack, journalists and active media members have been bringing to the limelight the differences between Daesh's latest statement and its previous ones to prove a



second party's complicity.

The extremist group acknowledged responsibility for the assault more than 30 hours following the explosions. This departure from its usual pattern is unconventional, as the group typically asserts its role in acts of terror immediately after their occurrence. Also, Daesh generally precedes attacks with ominous posts on its platforms shortly before they unfold. Surprisingly, no such forewarning preceded the blasts in Kerman, contrasting with the group's established modus operandi.

Daesh asserted that two of its members executed the suicide attacks and subsequently shared an image of the purported assailants. However, in the image disseminated by Daesh, both individuals are completely obscured, with their faces fully covered and their eyes deliberately blurred. That's while previous attacks carried out by Daesh members featured images of the perpetrators in full clarity.

The text of the recent statement also exhibited notable disparities from prior declarations made by the extremist group. Historically, Daesh has consistently referred to Iran as the "land of Persians" or the «state

of Khorasan.» However, the latest communication from the terrorists explicitly uses the country's actual name: Iran. This shift has sparked suspicions regarding the origins of the statement, prompting questions about whether it might have been authored by an external entity and subsequently handed to the group for dissemination on its platforms.

In addition to current and former Israeli officials and military members expressing glee over the loss of lives in the Kerman terrorist attack on social media, the characteristics of the attack also raised suspicions about Israel's potential involvement. As per an Iranian lawmaker who inspected the blast site, the explosives employed to trigger the suicide vests were identified as RDX. Known for its significantly higher potency compared to TNT, RDX has frequently been associated with Israel's past use in carrying out targeted assassinations within Iranian territory.

Why would Israel orchestrate a terror attack in Iran?

Israel has been trying to weave a web of provocations to turn the whole region into a ring of fire following its significant defeat on October 7 at the

hands of the Hamas resistance group and its overall lackluster performance in a ground offensive in Gaza, Israel has grown increasingly desperate for direct involvement from Washington in the ongoing warfare.

Despite the U.S.'s diplomatic support and provision of weaponry used in Gaza, it has, thus far, displayed reluctance to escalate the conflict beyond Gaza. In fact, reports suggest that the U.S. has been pressuring Israel to halt its fruitless campaign by the end of January. Recognizing its inability to eliminate Hamas and its deteriorating international standing, Israel now views a regional war as necessary to permanently eliminate the Axis of Resistance. From Israel's perspective, the opportunity to draw the U.S. into a war with Iran and its allied groups may not arise again.

This motive has led to a series of orchestrated attacks in recent weeks aimed at provoking Iran and triggering a full-scale regional conflict. The sequence began with the assassination of a top Iranian military advisor in Syria, followed by an attack targeting a Hamas leader in Beirut. While some analysts anticipated a similar assault on Iranian soil, the direct targeting of civilians in a terrorist attack was largely unforeseen.

It remains possible that Daesh members were responsible for the Kerman attack, but it has become evident to many around the world that Israel played an undeniable role in orchestrating the terrorist act by at least giving the orders and providing logistics.

While Iran should undoubtedly make a strong response to the aggression, it is important that the country hits back at Israel when, and where it hurts the most.

What lesson does the Egyptian spy of 50 years ago have for us in Kerman incident?

From Page 1 ▶ During the Syrian civil war, ISIS refrained from attacking Israeli territory, despite its proximity to the border. Even in the face of the devastating Israeli-led massacre of Palestinians which has so far claimed the lives of 22,000 Palestinians, ISIS failed to direct its violence towards American or Israeli forces.

It must be acknowledged that expecting Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to personally wear an explosive vest to convince people of the involvement of Western spy agencies in extremist group activities is unrealistic. Just as Egyptians have had to patiently await information disclosure for half a century, so should others.

The paramount responsibility of every individual is to unequivocally condemn such heinous crimes

through various means. As time unfolds, history will unveil the narrative behind the scenes of those responsible for these crimes, akin to the revelation of Ashraf Marwan's story.

While it may take decades for the full truth to emerge, the collective consciousness of the people in West Asia has evolved far beyond the era of Ashraf Marwan.

Tragedy strikes family as 9 members fall victim to terrorist attack in Kerman

From Page 1 ▶ Ehsan Khandouzi, visited the Soltaninezhad family on behalf of President Ebrahim Raisi, conveying condolences and support.

Iranian authorities including the

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has vowed a fitting punishment for the perpetrators, seeking justice for the families affected by this senseless act of violence.

As the nation grapples with the aftermath, the focus remains on providing support to affected families and fostering resilience within the community. The tragic loss experienced

by the Soltaninezhad family highlights the urgent need for collective efforts in confronting and eradicating the threat of terrorism, safeguarding the lives and well-being of innocent civilians.

Iran grieves victims of Kerman terrorist attack in mass funeral procession

TEHRAN – In a poignant display of national solidarity, Iranians came together amidst a somber atmosphere to mourn the lives lost in a recent terrorist act in the southeastern city of Kerman.

The funeral and burial ceremonies, held on Friday, January 5, became a solemn platform to bid farewell to the victims and reflect the resilience of the Iranian people in the face of adversity.

Tragedy unfolded on Wednesday in Kerman when two explosions occurred near the tomb of former Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, during a ceremony marking four years since his martyrdom. The explosions resulted in 84 casualties and over 200 injuries, including three paramedics who bravely rushed to the scene after the first explosion, according to Iran's Red Crescent. Among the victims were 44 women and children, along with at least a dozen Afghan nationals.

The Islamic Republic of Iran declared Thursday a National Day of Mourning, underscoring the gravity of the situation.

In a statement, Leader of the Islamic Revolution

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowed a fitting punishment and a harsh response for the perpetrators of the terrorist attack.

Daesh claimed responsibility for the heinous act, stating that two of its members had detonated explosive belts in the crowded cemetery.

Armed forces will be in charge of firm response: Raisi

During the funeral procession held in Kerman, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi addressed a massive march held in remembrance of General Soleimani. Raisi condemned the senseless violence, highlighting Iran's enduring strength and emphasizing the unwavering power of the Islamic Republic's armed forces. He underscored the nation's status as a powerful and heroic entity, fueled by the legacy of General Soleimani.

"Our mighty armed forces have demonstrated the unwavering power of the Islamic Republic, and they will determine the time and place for our response," he further stressed.

Raisi urged officials and the public to unite

against external threats, praising the diligent work of the martyred General Soleimani in expanding the Resistance movement in the region. He further shed light on the Palestinian Resistance's successful confrontation of the Israeli occupation, confirming that no one can disregard the role of martyr Soleimani mirrored in today's victories.

Iran will avenge its martyrs: IRGC chief

In a separate address, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) in Iran, Major General Hossein Salami, emphasized Iran's commitment to avenging its martyrs.

He highlighted defeats suffered by the enemy in various regions and the significant role played by General Soleimani in eliminating terrorist movements. Salami expressed confidence in achieving further victories, emphasizing Iran's continuous activity on all military fronts.

The funeral procession concluded at the burial site, marking the victims' final resting place. The ceremonies concluded with a resounding call for justice and a collective commitment to overcoming adversities.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRGC vows retaliation for Kerman attack

TEHRAN – Major General Hossein Salami, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), has pledged to avenge the victims of the Kerman terrorist attack.

Addressing the public on Friday, the IRGC commander emphasized that the martyrdom of dozens of Iranians in the attack echoed the setbacks experienced by the "body of arrogance" and its regional and internal elements in recent years.

General Salami declared, "The martyrdom of these courageous Iranians will not go unanswered. We

have received the directive from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and we are committed to carrying it out." He emphasized that divine intervention has empowered the Iranian people and the Islamic nation to retaliate against their adversaries.

Referring to the legendary Martyr Soleimani and his companions, General Salami highlighted their success in freeing Iraq from American political control. He noted that the United States, aiming to exert political dominance in Afghanistan,

faced a humiliating withdrawal.

Despite U.S. attempts to impose sanctions on Iran, General Salami asserted that these measures were thwarted, resulting in failure.

Addressing the Zionist regime's ambitions in the region, he stated that while they sought to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates, the resilience of the heroic Palestinians had brought the Zionist regime to the brink of collapse.

General Salami praised the Al-Aqsa Storm operation for showcasing the

defeat of the occupying regime.

Discussing the origins of ISIS, a byproduct of American policies in the Islamic world, the general highlighted the group's failed attempt to redraw the political map of the Islamic world and establish a global Islamic caliphate. He credited the efforts of revolutionary youth, led by the late Qassem Soleimani, for eradicating any remnants of this terrorist group.

In conclusion, General Salami affirmed that the Iranian nation would not be deterred by these terrorist attacks.

JANUARY 6, 2024

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran defeat Burkina Faso in friendly match

TEHRAN – Iran national football team came from behind to beat Burkina Faso 2-1 in a friendly match on Friday.

Iran and Burkina Faso players observed a minute's silence before the kick-off for the victims of the terrorist attack in Kerman.

Mohamed Konatè gave the visiting a lead in the 12th minute in Kish Island's Olympic Stadium but Mehdi Taremi canceled out his goal three minutes before the halftime.

Omid Ebrahimi was also on target in the 70th minute. Team Melli prepare for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, where they are drawn in Group C with the UAE, Palestine and Hong Kong.

Iran will start the campaign against Palestine on Jan. 14 at the Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar.

Iran, headed by Amir Ghalenoei, are going to bring an end to the title drought in the competition.

Iran have not won the title since 1976.

Raphael Silva joins Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Raphael da Silva Arruda joined Esteghlal on an 18-month contract Thursday night.

The Brazilian defender is Esteghlal's first January transfer signing.

Silva was a member of the Iranian club last season but parted company with them due to financial problems.

Esteghlal lead the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) table and are favorites to win the title.

Silva helped Esteghlal win 2021/2022 season and 2022 Super Cup in his first stint in the Iranian team.

Hajsafi among AFC Asian Cup's Most Capped Players

TEHRAN – Iran football team captain Ehsan Hajsafi is among the Asian's most capped players.

The 24 teams in the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 have confirmed their respective squads for the 18th edition of Asia's premier national team tournament with plenty of interesting narratives at play.

From the oldest to the youngest as well as players looking to break records, the-AFC.com picks out eight interesting facts from the squads.

In one of them, Hajsafi, who has 132 caps, has been considered as one of the most capped players.

Hassan Al Haydos has 175 appearances for Qatar under his belt, making him the most capped player in the tournament.

The Al Sadd forward, who captained his side to the AFC Asian Cup title on home soil in 2019, will be making his fourth appearance in the competition at 34 years old, having also featured in the 2011 and 2015 editions. The evergreen Sunil Chhetri comes in second with 145 appearances for India, while Hajsafi is third with 132 games.

Roma want to include Sardar Azmoun in their long-term plans

TEHRAN – Roma are extremely satisfied with attacker Sardar Azmoun's output since his arrival in the summer.

The 29-year-old has impressed both Mourinho and the club despite playing very limited minutes in the first months of this season.

His appearances off the bench have often resulted in Roma getting a result near the final minutes of almost any game Azmoun featured in.

According to Corriere dello Sport, Roma would like to include Azmoun in their long-term plans.

However, for the time being the club have not taken a decision yet as to whether trigger the option in his loan from Bayer Leverkusen or not.

Azmoun's current price-tag is €13 million – a fee that Roma will not be able to afford if they fail to qualify for Champions League.

Hamed Haddadi signs for Palayesh Naft Abadan

TEHRAN – Iranian legendary basketball center has signed for Palayesh Naft Abadan club.

The media reports had reported he would join Zob Ahan but Haddadi joined Palayesh Naft.

Haddadi, the only Iranian to play in the National Basketball Association (NBA), retired from international play at the age of 38 after his team were eliminated from the 2023 FIBA World Cup.

Haddadi became the first and, yet only Iranian player to join the NBA when he signed for the Memphis Grizzlies as an undrafted free agent.

Between 2008 and 2013 he appeared in 151 regular season games for Memphis and Phoenix. Haddadi averaged 2.2 points per game. He also made 13 post-season appearances for the Grizzlies.

He has most recently played for the Sichuan Blue Whales, which marked his fourth stint with the Chinese Basketball Association team.

Persepolis GM Darvish tries to dissuade Golmohammadi from resignation

TEHRAN – Persepolis club general manager Reza Darvish is going to dissuade Yahya Golmohammadi from resignation.

Golmohammadi stepped down from his role on Monday due to financial problems.

Considering that Golmohammadi has verbally resigned from his post, Darvish is going to persuade him to change his mind.

Former Persepolis coach and current boss of Oman national football team Branko Ivankovic is among the candidates to replace Golmohammadi but Darvish wants to keep the Iranian coach until the end of the season.

Golmohammadi was named Persepolis coach in January 2020 and won three Iran league with the Reds.

Iran edged by Belarus in Handball Friendship Cup

TEHRAN – Iran's men's handball team were defeated by Belarus 29-28 in their first match in the four-team Friendship Cup.

The match was held at the Volleyball center «Dynamo» in Moscow.

Team Melli are to meet Russia and youth Russia on Saturday and Sunday respectively.

Iran prepare for the 2024 Asian Men's Handball Championship to be held in Manama, Bahrain from Jan. 11 to 25.

Iran are drawn in Group B along with South Korea, China, and New Zealand.

Ramin Rezaeian linked with Al Wasl

TEHRAN – Iran and Sepahan football teams winger Ramin Rezaeian has reportedly been linked with a move to Al Wasl.

Al Wasl sit top of the UAE Pro League's 14-team table.

Rezaeian played a key role in Sepahan's qualification for the 2023-24 AFC Champions League next round.

Emirati media have reported that Al Wasl has opened negotiations with the 33-year-old player.

Rezaeian will accompany the Iran football team at the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

ICCIMA holds meeting to discuss private sector's contribution to climate change

TEHRAN- The members of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Energy Committee held a meeting on Thursday to discuss ways of private sector's contribution to climate change actions.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, in this meeting, the achievements of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) were discussed.

Speaking at the meeting, Arash Najafi, the head of the mentioned committee, stressed the need to pay attention to environmental issues in the country and said: "The government and the private sector should pay special attention to the country's environmental issues and interact with each other in this regard."

Underlining the importance of Carbon emissions reduction, the official said that "To this end, we can use international capacities and funds and reduce emissions in the country. This is a serious issue in the world and we must interact with the global community in the field of carbon reduction."

"The fields of environment and the renewables sector are not subject to sanctions and this is an opportunity for Iran to cooperate with the world. Of course, we are not yet a member of the Paris Agreement, but we must do our best to protect the environment and use the economic capacities of this area to reduce carbon emissions," he said.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in UAE in mid-December 2023. At the end of the conference, an agreement was signed that signaled the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just and equitable transition, underpinned by deep emissions cuts and scaled-up finance.

In a demonstration of global solidarity, negotiators from nearly 200 Parties came together in Dubai with a decision on the world's first 'global stocktake' to ratchet up climate action before the end of the decade - with the overarching aim to keep the global temperature limit of 1.5°C within reach.

14,000 residential units to be delivered to applicants in Hormozgan by late March



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 14,000 residential units will be completed and delivered to applicants in the villages and cities of southern Hormozgan province by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

Abbas Sharafi, the director-general of the province's Transport and Urban Development Department, also emphasized that the National Housing movement plan is being followed seriously in this province.

As announced by the head of the National Land and Housing Organization, 1,000 units of the National Housing Movement have been completed across the country and are ready to be handed over to applicants, Mehr News Agency reported.

"Our priority at the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development is to accelerate the progress of the National Housing Movement program and we must know that the faster completion of these projects, even for one day, means solving the housing problem for a family," Arsalan Maleki said on January 1.

The National Housing Movement is one of the major policies of the 13th government in the housing sector, and according to this policy, the construction of four million residential units is planned in four years.

It is one of the projects through which the government is trying to help low-income individuals in society become homeowners.

Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Hadi Abbasi-Asl has emphasized the acceleration in implementing the Housing Construction Leap Law to achieve the goals of the 13th government.

In late September 2023, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples in order to help them build houses.

The National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in

villages.

After the National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini.

The mentioned units were delivered to the applicants in five provinces throughout the country.

The Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to construct 100,000 units under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

According to Norouzi, the headquarters also completed and handed over 2,000 such units back in April, 2023.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the official said construction of the National Housing Movement units is underway by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini in 27 provinces.

President Ebrahim Raisi has stated that the National Housing Movement is the flagship project of the 13th government to meet the needs of the people, and in addition to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, all relevant organizations are also striving to achieve it.

Over 53.5m tons of non-oil products loaded, unloaded in ports in 9 months

TEHRAN - As reported by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), 53,582,107 tons of non-oil products were loaded and unloaded in the ports of country during the first nine months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2023).

As reported, the loading and unloading of non-oil products in the mentioned nine-month period rose 21.3 percent, year on year.

The PMO has also reported that the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran increased by 6.1 percent in the first nine months of the present year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

As the organization reported, 172,767,051 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports during the nine-month period.

During the said period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,917,354 TEUs, which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of the same time span in the previous year.

Based on the data previously



released by the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Iran rose 17 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

The ministry's data show that the loading and unloading of goods in the country's ports reached 152.91 million tons in the previous Iranian calendar year, while the figure stood at 130.69 million tons in the preceding year.

During the said year, loading

and unloading operations in the container sector reached 2.1 million TEUs with a weight of 24.57 million tons, which was 13.5 percent more than the 1.85 million TEUs in the Iranian calendar year 1399, the report said.

The loading and unloading of goods during the previous year also grew by 12.8 percent in the dry bulk sector, while in the liquid bulk sector, the figure increased by 12.6 percent, in the general cargo sector rose by 13.1 percent, and in the oil sector grew by 22.5 percent.

While Iran is combating the

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

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

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

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

About 10,000 knowledge-based industrial companies active across Iran

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Industry Minister Mohammad-Majid Fouladgar has said about 10,000 knowledge-based industrial companies are currently active across the country, IRNA reported.

Speaking to the press on the sideline a visit to a factory in Chahar Mahal-Bakhtiari Province, Fouladgar said the Industry Ministry is trying to increase this number even further.

"Although the ministry's main approach in recent years has been to increase the number of knowledge-based industrial units in the country, it is also following a plan to benefit from the available capacities in the field of knowledge-based industries in order to improve the quality of such units," Fouladgar said.

According to the official, the ministry is trying to create new markets for such companies to develop the activities of this sector even more.

"Out of the total number of knowledge-based companies in the country, about 100 companies

operate on a large economic scale, which indicates that more actions should be taken to support this field," he said.

Fouladgar put the number of semi-finished production units in the country as 21,000 units and said: "Of the mentioned figure, 8,000 units have a physical progress of over 60 percent and 2,300 units have a progress of over 80 percent."

Back in October 2023, the head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) said 717 knowledge-based production units are operating in the country's industrial parks and zones.

According to Farshad Moghimi, 1,800 deals have been signed in the country's industrial parks in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2023) of which 50 have been with knowledge-based firms.

"One of the most important requirements of knowledge-based companies is the



distribution of their products in the market; Knowledge-based companies should check the country's needs and make sure that after producing a product or investing in knowledge and technology, their capital will return," Moghimi said.

According to the official, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry has recently unveiled a support package for knowledge-based companies.

Iran, Turkey prepare to hold joint economic committee meeting

From page 1 ▶ Fidan for his part referred to the two countries' trade target of \$30 billion and said that this volume of trade can be achieved by increasing bilateral cooperation.

He emphasized the cooperation between the two countries in various fields of energy, including oil, gas and electricity, as well as customs.

Iran, Turkey to sign comprehensive transport co-op document

Also, during the meeting with Uraloglu, the Iranian official reviewed some road transport problems between the two countries and announced Iran's readiness to develop cooperation in all sectors of transportation including road, rail, air and sea and to sign a comprehensive transport document with Turkey.

In this meeting, the two sides, while examining the fields of transportation cooperation development, put the increase in the volume of road and rail transit on the agenda.

According to the latest figures released by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), the trade exchanges between Iran and Turkey in the first 11 months of 2023 reached \$5.0 billion, showing a 13 percent

decline compared to the same period of last year.

Iran's trade with the neighboring country stood at \$5.8 billion in January-November 2022, Tasnim News Agency reported.

According to TURKSTAT, Turkey's exports to Iran from January to November 2023 reached \$3.0 billion, recording a seven percent increase compared to last year's corresponding period.

Turkey exported over \$2.8 billion worth of products to the Islamic Republic in the first 11 months of 2022.

Turkey's imports from Iran however registered a 33 percent decline and fell from \$3.0 billion in January to November 2022 to \$2.0 billion in the first 11 months of 2023.

The Turkish Statistical Institute reported a 42 percent increase in the country's exports to Iran in November 2023. Turkey's exports to Iran were reported to be \$290 million in November last year, while the figure has increased to \$412 million in November this year. Iran has been the 13th destination of Turkey's export goods this month.

Meanwhile, Turkey's import from Iran in November 2023

reached \$182 million with a 13 percent decrease compared to the previous year. Turkey had imported \$212 million of goods from Iran in November last year.

The total trade between the two countries in the 11th month of 2023 reached \$594 million with an 18 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Based on the data previously released by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the value of Iran's exports to Turkey increased by 19 percent to reach \$3.35 billion in 2022.

Turkey had imported over \$2.82 billion worth of commodities from the Islamic Republic in 2021.

Based on the mentioned data, Iran's imports from the country also marked an 11-percent rise to hit \$3.07 billion in the past year, in comparison with 2021, when the figure was \$2.77 billion.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the trade between the two countries registered a 15-percent rise in 2022 compared to 2021.

The value of trade between the two neighbors reached \$6.42 billion in 2022, while the figure stood at \$5.59 billion in the preceding year.

Iran's trade balance with

Turkey was \$280 million positive in favor of Iran in the past year.

In July 2021, Iran, and Turkey discussed ways of expanding economic relations along with political ties at the Turkish-Iranian High-Level Cooperation Council in Tehran.

During the meeting, which was co-chaired by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the two sides negotiated the extension of the gas export contract between the two sides for the next 25 years.

In the meeting, President Raisi noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to expand economic relations with neighboring countries.

The president also evaluated Tehran-Ankara ties as positive and progressive, saying that the two countries should pursue appropriate policies to move towards increasing their annual trade exchanges to \$30 billion.

On the sidelines of the mentioned meeting, Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian also held talks with Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Fatih Dunmez in which the two sides exchanged views on cooperation in energy fields.

SEO to establish risk hedge fund for stock market



TEHRAN - The managing director of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) has said the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) is going to form a risk hedge fund for the stock market, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a press conference on Wednesday, Mohammad Goudarzi mentioned financing and digitalization of processes as important programs that the TSE is focusing on, and stated: "To achieve our goals, we

focused on two areas of financing and digitalization of the processes at the Tehran Stock Exchange and implemented significant measures in this regard."

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).

Gaza still resisting after Israeli assassination

Nothing has changed on the ground

From page 1 ▶ If the regime believed that assassinating al-Arouri in another country would dampen the morale of the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, it has been mistaken.

The Israeli military is trying to advance in the Gaza Strip from the north to the south, and the Palestinian resistance is preventing it from doing so.

It has been this way for more than two months now, and the status quo on the ground looks set to play out similarly; before al-Arouri's assassination and after al-Arouri's assassination.

Wherever the regime's army claims to have taken control of an area the next day fighting continues in the same area.

The regime's military started its ground offensive in the northern Gaza Strip towards the end of October, and after suffering heavy losses, it is now withdrawing its ground forces from the north.

The Israeli war minister Yoav Gallant has tried to polish the withdrawal element to what he termed «a transition», saying that «in the northern region of the Gaza strip, we will transition to a new combat approach.»

Essentially, the regime military has failed in the north. No Hamas leaders have been assassinated, no Hamas leaders captured, no Hamas military capabilities weakened, and no Israeli captives have been rescued.

The armed wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam brigades, has broadcast scenes of its fighters clashing with Israeli occupation soldiers and targeting vehicles on the frontlines in the city of Gaza in the north. Israel announced it had taken control of the area two weeks ago.

Footage shows the armed wing of Hamas targeting a crowd of Israeli soldiers standing next to



Tens of thousands gathered for senior Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri's funeral in Beirut on Thursday.

military vehicles that had been trying to advance into the al-Tuffah neighborhood with RPG shells.

Al-Qassam confirmed that it had killed and wounded Israeli soldiers, in addition to destroying a tank using an Al Yassin 105 shell.

In a joint operation, announced by the al-Qassam brigades in conjunction with the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Al-Quds Brigades, Israeli soldiers and military vehicles that had gathered at the al-Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City were targeted with mortar shells and short-range missiles.

The al-Qassam brigades reported that it had destroyed an Israeli Merkava tank west of al-Maghazi in the central Gaza Strip.

Al-Qassam added that it had succeeded in detonating a highly explosive device inside a house where Israeli troops had been stationed, leaving them dead and wounded north of the Nuseirat camp in the middle of the Gaza Strip.

Likewise, al-Qassam targeted a gathering of the regime's military vehicles and soldiers in the Bureij refugee camp, in the center of the Gaza Strip, with heavy-caliber

mortar shells.

Another statement issued by the armed wing of Hamas said its forces detonated an anti-personnel device targeting part of an Israeli ground force holed up inside a building in the town of al-Mughraqa six kilometers southwest of Gaza City.

The media run by al-Qassam showed combat taking place in areas of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, where the resistance destroyed Israeli Merkava tanks with two Al-Yassin 105 shells, north and south of the city, in addition to targeting two more tanks with Al-Yassin 105 shells, in the Al-Mahatta and Al-Katiba neighborhoods of the city.

Also, in Khan Younis, the al-Qassam brigades targeted a crowd of the occupation's ground forces with mortar shells.

The al-Quds brigades, the military arm of the Islamic Jihad, also announced that it had targeted two Israeli military vehicles with RPG shells east of the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza.

In a brief statement, the al-Quds brigades confirmed that its forces were engaged in fierce clashes with the invaders in the direction of the city center of Khan Younis to

halt their advance.

Israeli warplanes continue to pound the Gaza Strip in its entirety and continue to do so in a hugely indiscriminate manner, committing more massacres against women and children.

The al-Quds brigades claimed responsibility for bombing the occupied city of Ashkelon and settlements in the area surrounding the northern Gaza Strip with a concentrated missile barrage.

It also published scenes of missile barrages with which it struck the occupied cities, settlements, and the regime's military sites.

Also, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades announced, in brief statements, several operations carried out by its fighters on several fronts in the Gaza Strip.

The Mujahideen Brigades also broadcast scenes of its fighters targeting an Israeli force holed up in a house, west of Gaza City, with an anti-personnel missile.

Likewise, the National Resistance Brigades, the military wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, published a brief statement confirming that its fighters targeted Israeli army vehicles with missiles in the center of Khan Younis.

The resistance brigades published photos of an Israeli reconnaissance plane that it had shot down, in addition to an Israeli special force unit that it ambushed on the northern outskirts, after killing and wounding its troops.

The regime claims the death toll among Israeli army soldiers has risen to 175 since the start of the ground offensives into the Gaza Strip, and 509 since the Palestinian resistance launched the al-Aqsa Storm Operation on October 7, although experts believe the Israeli military downplays its casualty figures during wars.



"All of our missiles, the ammunition, the precision-guided bombs, all the airplanes and bombs, it's all from the US. The minute they turn off the tap, you can't keep fighting. You have no capability... Everyone understands that we can't fight this war without the United States. Period," retired Israeli Major General Yitzhak Brick conceded in November of last year.

He stopped the transfer of cluster munitions to Israel and told Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in a phone call that "this is a holocaust." Reagan demanded that Israel withdraw its troops from Lebanon. Begin caved. Twenty minutes after their phone call, Begin ordered a halt on attacks.

Indeed, it is absurd to claim that Biden has no leverage, particularly given the massive amounts of arms he has shipped to Israel. In fact, Israeli officials openly admit it. "All of our missiles, the ammunition, the precision-guided bombs, all the airplanes and bombs, it's all from the US," retired Israeli Major General Yitzhak Brick conceded in November of last year. "The minute they turn off the tap, you can't keep fighting. You have no capability... Everyone understands that we can't fight this war without the United States. Period."

But Israel cannot destroy Hamas militarily, just as the United States couldn't rely on military-only solutions to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert admitted as much just last month, "The odds of achieving the complete elimination of Hamas were nil from the moment that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared them to be the chief goal of the war," he wrote in Haaretz at the end of December.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

US soldiers injured in drone strike in eastern Syria: Sputnik

Several U.S. service members have been reportedly injured in a drone operation against a military base in Syria's eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr as anti-U.S. sentiments continue to rise in the region amid Washington's support for Israel's war on Gaza.

Several sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Arabic-language service of Russia's Sputnik news agency that the strike against the facility at the al-Omar oil field on Thursday night resulted in casualties and infrastructural damage.

They added that U.S. military helicopters could be seen taking off from the base and heading northwards to transport the injured to other bases and field hospitals belonging to the U.S. military.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, in a statement published on its Telegram channel claimed responsibility for the drone strike on the U.S. military base.

The group noted that the airstrike was carried out in retaliation for U.S. support of Israel's bloody war against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Yemen says US military buildup in Red Sea 'serious' threat to shipping

Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement has cautioned that the U.S. militarization of the Red Sea in an attempt to serve the Israeli regime will pose a serious threat to international shipping in the strategic waterway.

Ansarullah made the statement on Friday after the United States, which has over the past weeks been spearheading a maritime coalition in the Red Sea under the pretext of safeguarding the transit of vessels in the area, claimed that the Yemeni forces and the popular resistance movement were targeting international ships and jeopardizing the security of the Red Sea.

The United States and the coalition members warned Yemen's Armed Forces of "consequences" if they continued their missile and drone attacks against ships en route to Israeli ports in support of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Ansarullah said the Yemeni armed forces never attacked international ships and that the security and safety of international maritime transport in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait was guaranteed by them.

Iraq holds US responsible for death of Nujaba commander

Iraq has slammed the United States for a drone strike on the headquarters of its Popular Mobilization Units in eastern Baghdad that killed three people, including a commander of the Nujaba resistance movement.

The office of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani issued a statement on Thursday saying the "attack was a dangerous escalation and a violation of Iraq's sovereignty."

"The Iraqi Armed Forces hold U.S.-led coalition responsible for this unwarranted attack on an Iraqi security entity that is operating within the powers authorized by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces," the statement said.

It added that the drone strike would undermine "all understandings" between Iraq's armed forces and the U.S.-led coalition troops.

The drone strike was an "assault on Iraq," the statement said, "diverging from the spirit and the text of the mandate and the mission for which the coalition was established in Iraq."

Meanwhile in Baghdad, a group of Iraqi lawmakers demanded the expulsion of the U.S. ambassador.

N. Korea fires some 200 artillery shells off western coast: S. Korean military

North Korea fired some 200 artillery shells into waters off its western coast Friday morning, Seoul's military said, in its latest saber-rattling after it scrapped a 2018 inter-Korean military accord in November.

The move prompted an emergency evacuation order for civilians on the South Korean western border islands of Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong. Also in response, the South Korean military staged live-fire drills on the border islands.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected the artillery firings from Jangsan Cape and Deungsan Cape, both in the North's southwestern coastal areas, from 9:00 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Israel's war minister says Hamas would no longer control Gaza

Israel's War Minister Yoav Gallant outlined plans for the next phase of the war, including the future of Gaza. Here are the key points:

- * Hamas would no longer control Gaza, and "Palestinian bodies" would be in charge of running the enclave.

- * Israel would reserve its operational freedom of action, and the new people running Gaza would not be hostile towards Israel in any way.

- * There would be a "multi-national task force" comprised of Western and Arab nations to govern the border area.

- * Israel wants to lead this force, and also wants it to be in charge of the restructuring and redevelopment of the Gaza Strip.

Risk of deadly hypothermia growing in Gaza: physician

Winter will bring "an unbearable avalanche of human suffering" to Gaza, Dr Mads Gilbert, a Norwegian physician who previously worked in the besieged enclave, told Al Jazeera.

"The combination of winter cold, wind and precipitation will make the risk of hypothermia overwhelmingly dangerous," said Gilbert.

"This is particularly true for those who are small and those who are already starving or sick - which a large portion of the people are.

"A small child will very quickly become cold and when your body temperature drops below 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) it reaches hypothermia. This weakens the body, weakens the immune system, and if there is a bleeding injury, causes bleeding to occur more quickly. Hypothermia is a death trap," he said.

Death toll in Gaza rises to 22,600

At least 22,600 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip since October 7, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Friday.

A total of 57,910 people have also been wounded, the majority of them women and children. About 7,000 are missing, presumed to be dead under the rubble.

In a statement, the ministry said it had recorded 162 deaths over the past 24 hours.

Israel seeking to drag the U.S. into another ruinous war: analysis

In a commentary on January 3, The Nation said Israel is pushing the United States toward another "ruinous war" as Israel's war in the Gaza Strip is gradually spreading.

The newspaper says Israel wants to expand the war into Lebanon and appears to welcome open warfare against Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and Iran.

It says while President Biden says the U.S. is against the spread of war he refuses to pursue the most obvious way of de-escalating tensions and avoiding American deaths by demanding a cease-fire in Gaza.

Following is the text of the article titled "Will Israel Drag the US Into Another Ruinous War?":

America and Israel's interests were never fully aligned on Gaza. But as Israel's bombardment of the narrow strip has continued for almost 100 days, the Netanyahu government is increasingly shifting in a direction that directly threatens the US and the stated goals of the Biden administration: Israel wants to expand the war into Lebanon and appears to welcome open warfare against so-called Axis of Resistance—Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen. The assassination of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri in Beirut on January 2 makes that clear. So far, President Joe Biden has refused the one step that can prevent both this escalation and the US from getting dragged into yet another war in the Middle East: a cease-fire in Gaza.

Since October 7, the assumption of the White House's strategy was that in order to have credibility with Israel, Biden must first show unconditional support. Only then, the logic goes, will he have the leverage to rein in Israel. This reasoning allows the possibility that Biden wanted a cease-fire but had to earn credibility before he could press Israel. And that pressure would of course only be applied privately. Before the cameras, there would be no daylight between Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But as the war has progressed and more than 22,000 Palestinians have been killed—almost half of them children—with weapons that Biden provided, the image of an American president that wants a cease-fire but is stumbling to find the leverage to force an end to fighting has fallen

apart. Biden has shipped more than 10,000 tons of weapons and ammunition to Israel, twice sidestepped Congressional oversight to expedite the arms transfers, twice vetoed resolutions at the UN Security Council calling for a cease-fire, and even studied how to permanently transfer 2.3 million Palestinians from Gaza to the desert in the Sinai. While Biden has condemned Israeli cabinet ministers when they openly speak of their plans of ethnic cleansing, Biden, it has become increasingly clear, never wanted a cease-fire, because he has bought into the feasibility and legitimacy of Israel's maximalist war objective: the complete military destruction of Hamas, come what may. Biden wants Israel to do to Hamas what the US couldn't do to the Taliban.

Of course, there was never a need to build credibility to pressure Netanyahu. The United States already had massive credibility with Israel, particularly after Biden openly contemplated offering Saudi Arabia a defense pact and access to the nuclear fuel cycle if it normalized relations with Israel. No other American president had ever given such concessions to Israel's Arab rivals to secure an agreement for Israel. Even Trump, who began the normalization campaign that explicitly sought to "move beyond the Palestinian issue," never offered defense pacts to the four Arab countries he brought into the so-called Abraham Accords.

The other myth propagated by the Washington foreign-policy establishment to excuse Biden's inaction in face of what the South African government convincingly asserts is a genocide also disintegrates with a closer look: The US, some DC analysts conveniently argue, simply does not have leverage to stop Israel. History suggests otherwise.

Israel cannot destroy Hamas militarily, just as the United States couldn't defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan was "disgusted" by Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

Pakistani minister visits Shiraz, emphasizes medical tourism cooperation

TEHRAN – Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Pakistan's Provincial Minister of Sindh for Education, Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities and Archives, arrived at Shiraz on Thursday morning, to attend a major tourism fair being underway in the ancient Iranian city.

The minister was warmly welcomed by Fars province's tourism chief Mohammad Sabet Eqlidi, who highlighted the historical and cultural ties between the two neighboring countries, underlining the significant geographical proximity and cultural exchanges.

Sabet Eqlidi emphasized the substantial historical, cultural, natural, and religious potential of Fars, citing it as a destination that could attract Pakistani tourists and expressed hope for more substantial bilateral commercial relations between the two nations.

Highlighting Shiraz's capacity in medical tourism, Sabet Eqlidi extended an invitation for familiarization tours and visits to medical facilities for Pakistani tourism operators. He underlined Shiraz's potential for hosting medical tourists.

Expressing solidarity over the tragic terrorist incident (which happened on Wednesday) in Kerman, the Pakistani Minister extended condolences to the Iranian people and expressed a desire to strengthen tourism ties between the two nations. He emphasized a keen interest in bilateral agreements encompassing tourism, sports, and culture.

Ali Shah expressed eagerness to visit and pay homage to historical and cultural sites, particularly the revered Shah Cheragh shrine. He also mentioned a cultural library focused on Iran in Karachi and expressed willingness to facilitate Iranian youth engagement through such centers.

Moreover, the minister offered collaboration opportunities with Pakistan's 300 medical facilities and extended an official invitation to Fars' medical team to explore Pakistan's medical capacities.

The visit signals a growing interest in fostering cultural ties and exploring avenues for mutual collaboration, especially in the tourism and healthcare sectors, between Iran



and Pakistan.

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: Island of Gorée

Island of Gorée lies off the coast of Senegal, opposite Dakar. It was the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast from the 15th to the 19th century.

The UNESCO-designated property testifies to an unprecedented human experience in the history of humanity.

Indeed, for the universal conscience, this "memory island" is the symbol of the slave trade with its cortege of suffering, tears and death.

The painful memories of the Atlantic slave

trade are crystallized in this small island of 28 hectares lying 3.5 km off the coast from Dakar. Gorée owes its singular destiny to the extreme centrality of its geographical position between the North and the South, and to its excellent strategic position offering a safe haven for anchoring ships, hence the name "Good Rade".

Thus, since the 15th century it has been prized by various European nations that have successively used it as a stopover or slave market.

Imamzadeh Bibi Hakimeh: a spiritual haven amidst Zagros mountains

TEHRAN – Nestled amidst the rugged beauty of the southern Zagros mountains lies the illustrious Bibi Hakimeh mausoleum, a revered sanctuary deeply entrenched in Shia Islamic heritage.

This sacred site, located in Gachsaran county within the Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province of Iran, stands as a testament to spiritual devotion and historical significance.

Distinguished as the final resting place of Bibi Hakimeh, the daughter of the seventh Shia Imam, Imam Musa al-Kazim (AS), and the sister of Imam Reza, this mausoleum holds profound religious significance for Shia Muslims worldwide.

The mausoleum, an open-air structure surrounded by nature, exhibits a partially circular design, with its positioning slightly inclined towards the north within this circular arrangement. The shrine's walls, primarily constructed from natural stone, manifest a rugged, uneven form,



a testament to the architectural resilience against the natural elements.

Standing tall at over 10 meters, the mausoleum's entrance which is reached via 12 stairs leading from the basement, marks the threshold to reverence and spirituality for pilgrims. There are two courtyards that offer spaces for contemplation and prayer.

According to Visit Iran, one remarkable feature within the

mausoleum is the Bab al-Morad, a small door situated six meters west of the holy shrine. This door holds historical significance, believed to be part of the cave where Bibi Hakimeh and her bondwoman sought refuge from adversaries, as recounted in narrations.

The mausoleum's origins trace back to the end of the third century and the early fourth century when Abu Mohammad

Hasan, the governor of Arajan, initiated its construction. The shrine's evolution continued across subsequent eras, bearing witness to transformations and expansions that enhanced its grandeur and sacred allure.

Bibi Hakimeh mausoleum stands as a beacon of faith, drawing countless pilgrims not only from the southern regions of Iran but also from Persian Gulf states such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Emirates, Qatar, and other Arab countries, including Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Annually, devotees embark on spiritual journeys to this revered site, seeking enlightenment and a profound connection with their faith.

An amalgam of history with religious significance, coupled with the breathtaking natural surroundings, makes Imamzadeh Bibi Hakimeh a destination for spiritual devotion and a haven for religious tourism in Iran's southern heartland.

Mayor unveils plans to boost handicraft industry in Iranian capital

TEHRAN – On Thursday, Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani unveiled plans for the forthcoming [Iranian calendar] year, aiming to transform the handicraft sector in the Iranian capital.

Emphasizing the municipality's commitment to fostering skills, production, and exportation within this industry, Zakani highlighted initiatives underway to prepare distinct infrastructures and allocate 23,000 square meters of land for permanent exhibitions.

"Next year will mark a distinctive shift in the handicraft sector within Tehran. We are preparing infrastructure for training, production, and exportation in unique ways," Zakani said.

"The municipality of Tehran will support skilled individuals engaged in training and

production of handicrafts, which ultimately contributes significantly to the nation's economy."

Speaking to CHTN, Zakani underlined the pursuit of a slogan – "Every Home a Workshop" – reflecting a path aimed at utilizing the city's capacities for attracting, training, skill-building, production, supply, and display through permanent exhibitions.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the mayor cited the allocation of 23,000 square meters of land earmarked for permanent exhibitions aimed at bolstering various industries.

The roadmap unveiled by Zakani reflects Tehran's commitment to harnessing its potential in the handicraft sector, promising a prosperous year ahead with a renewed focus on supporting skilled artisans and boosting the city's economy.

Police recover coins dating back to Seleucid, Parthian eras

TEHRAN – On Saturday, the tourism chief of Hamedan province announced the retrieval and seizure of 92 ancient coins dating back to the Seleucid-Parthian periods.

Mohsen Masoum-Alizadeh stated that the recovery was made following credible information and the vigilant pursuit by the heritage protection units in Hamedan regarding the smuggling of historical artifacts by illicit dealers in the Nahavand district.

"The police forces arrested an individual in the act of transporting these relics for sale in a neighboring province, after careful observation and repeated monitoring"

Highlighting the historical significance of the recovered

coins, the official added that the [majority of the] coins are associated with the ancient Elymais state (Hellenic form of the more ancient name, Elam), which was an autonomous state from the 2nd century BC to the early 3rd century CE, frequently a vassal under Parthian control.

Masoum-Alizadeh emphasized the authenticity of the recovered coins, noting that they were predominantly made of bronze and silver, some bearing Greek inscriptions typical of the Seleucid era.

Explaining the historical context, he detailed that Elymais state was a territory linked to the Seleucid-Parthian Empire, comprising present-day provinces such as Khuzestan, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, Bakhtiari, Lorestan, and Ilam. The

Elamite rule dates back to 147 BC in the aforementioned regions.

The recovery stands as a testament to the continuous efforts to preserve and protect the rich historical legacy and cultural heritage of the region, ensuring these invaluable artifacts remain intact for generations to come.

Elymais or Elamais was an autonomous state from the second century BC to the early 3rd century CE, frequently a vassal under Parthian control. The dynasty is believed to have been established by Kamnaskires, known from coins dated 81 BC, and it survived until its extinction by the Sassanid king Ardashir I (180–242 CE).

Khuzestan is home to the three UNESCO World Heritage sites

of Susa, Tchogha Zanbil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, yet it is a region of raw beauty that its visitors could spend weeks exploring. The province is also a cradle for handicrafts and arts whose crafters inherited from their preceding generations.

Lying at the head of the Persian Gulf and bordering Iraq on the west, Khuzestan was settled about 6000 BC by a people with affinities to the Sumerians, who came from the Zagros Mountains region. Urban centers appeared there nearly contemporaneous with the first cities in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium. Khuzestan, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, came to constitute the heart of the Elamite kingdom, with Susa as its capital.

Iran in frames



A group of international travelers pose for a photo with arrays of ancient rock-carved houses seen in the background in Kandovan village of Ardabil province, northwest Iran.

First Announcement



Tender No. 215182

Esfahan Steel Co. intends to purchase 7 items forged mill rolls through international tender. The prospective bidders should register their offers / bids in ESCO's Comprehensive System of Suppliers at www.esfahansteel.ir up to 16.01.2024

In case of having any question, please contact us through E-mail address: safari-mo@esfahansteel.ir

M.H.Pishdar
Equipment Purchasing Manager,
ESFAHAN STEEL CO.

Tehran, Tashkent to establish technology park in Samarkand

From page 1 ▶ “Last year (2023), our trade with Iran in various fields of technology was about 500 million dollars. We’re planning to increase it to 1 billion dollars,” IRNA quoted Badriddinovich as saying.

He went on to say that Uzbekistan gives priority to agriculture and textiles for technological cooperation with Iran.

In October 2023, Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi traveled to Tashkent to discuss developing technological cooperation with Uzbekistan’s Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Ibrahim Abdurakhmanov.

Dehqani-Firouzabadi was invited to attend the International Inno-week 2023, IRNA reported.

He was also scheduled to meet Uzbekistan’s industry minister.

Apart from visiting the exhibition in which 25 Iranian knowledge-based companies were taking part, Dehqani Firouzabadi planned to visit the Iran House of Innovation and Technology in Tashkent, laying the groundwork for concluding several technology contracts and expanding knowledge-based exports.



iHiT in Tashkent

On June 18, 2023, the Iran House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT) in the city of Tashkent was inaugurated, aimed at introducing knowledge-based, technological, and creative products of Iran to Uzbekistan, and facilitating scientific interactions and cooperation between the two countries, IRNA reported.

The private sector invested about \$4 million to establish the iHiT Tashkent.

The two sides signed a technological cooperation agreement worth \$10 million in the field of energy under the support of the house of innovation and technology.

Exporting technological products of Iranian knowledge-based companies is one of the important and key programs of the Vice Presidency for Science and Tech-

nology, and in this regard over the past years, with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the Iranian houses of innovation have been set up in several countries to develop the global market for knowledge-based products.

These centers have already been set up in countries such as Russia, Turkey, China, Syria, Kenya, Armenia, and Iraq.

By supporting innovative ideas, and holding technological and innovative events, the centers will be a platform for the development and promotion of Iranian knowledge-based companies, startups, and creative industries.

Iran Lab Expo 2024

The 11th exhibition of Iranian-made laboratory equipment and materials named ‘IRAN LAB

EXPO 2024’ opened in Tehran on Tuesday and will wrap up today, January 5.

Supported by the Vice-Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy, the international exhibition is showcasing 10,500 innovative products, IRNA reported.

A total of 366 technological companies are presenting their latest technological achievements, laboratory equipment, and advanced testing.

Moreover, some nine technological products of knowledge-based companies are unveiled during the exhibition.

The 2024 exhibition of Iranian-made laboratory equipment and materials will display Iran-made products in 14 thematic sections including “Oil and Petrochemical”; “Electricity”; “Electronics and Software”; “Civil and Construction”; “Mechanics”; “Chemistry and Metallurgy”; “Agriculture and Environment”; “Basic Physics”; “General Laboratory Equipment”; “Laboratory materials”; “Medical engineering and biomaterials”; “Industrial test equipment”; “Calibration services” and “Educational and laboratory equipment for schools” are among different sections of the technological exhibition.

Benefactors help release 2,500 prisoners of involuntary crimes

TEHRAN –With the participation of altruists and benevolent people, a total of 2,548 prisoners of unintentional crimes have been released from prisons nationwide, ISNA reported on Friday.

In the first six months of the current Iranian year (which began on March 21, 2023), 4,224 prisoners of involuntary crimes were released from prison.

Of the total released prisoners, 4,032 were male and 192 were female, IRNA reported.

The debt of the released prisoners was 56 thousand billion rials (about \$112 million).

Governmental contribution

In March 2023, heads of the three branches of the government donated sums of money to help release prisoners of unintentional crimes.

President Ebrahim Raisi, Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, and Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf allocated a total of 8.6 billion rials (about \$17,000) for the issue, IRNA reported.

As an annual tradition, benefactors come together in a ceremony to raise funds for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes during the holy month of Ramadan, according to the Blood Money Organization.

Previously, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of

the Islamic Revolution, earmarked 15 billion rials (some \$30,000) for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes.

A total of 6,875 prisoners of unintentional crimes have been released over the past 12 months, Asadolah Joulai, the head of the Blood Money Organization, said on March 26, 2023, Mehr reported.

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways. The first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison.

The third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt.

The Blood Money Organization was established in 1990. Since then, more than 160,000 prisoners of unintentional crimes who had debts have been freed.

On March 6, 2023, Mohseni-Ejei said the Leader had pardoned a sizable number of prisoners.

He also said that over 80,000 prisoners have received pardons as a result of the order issued by Ayatollah Khamenei.

The top judge stressed that thousands who had been detained during recent disturbances in the country were given amnesty.

He added that the number of pardon cases could approach 90,000.

Over 36.5m people screened for hypertension and diabetes

TEHRAN –A total of 36,515,689 individuals have so far attended the national health campaign screening program for high blood pressure and diabetes nationwide.

Of the number of individuals screened, 703,676 people were identified with probable high blood pressure and 403,790 people with probable diabetes.

National health campaign

The first phase of the national health campaign started in November 2023 aiming to reduce deaths caused by non-communicable diseases.

The project with the theme of “earlier awareness, better care” will go on until January 20, ISNA reported.

The main objective of the campaign is to provide free health care for diabetic and hypertensive patients in the framework of the family physician program and to create an electronic health file for patients.

The identified patients will be checked every month or every three months by healthcare workers and doctors to receive free tests and medicines if needed.

Nowadays, health is one of the most essential human needs. Before the coronavirus pandemic, people may not have realized its importance, but this disease showed us how precious health is, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said at a ceremony to unveil the Campaign.

“Maybe everyone thinks that our job is treatment, but it is not true. Our main duty is to prevent diseases and promote health.”

For this reason, a project called “national health campaign” started on November 11, 2023, and will continue till January 20.

Emphasizing the importance of improving health literacy, Einollahi said, “The level of literacy in the society has increased, and we expect this level to improve in the field of health as well. Also, we hope to manage having an electronic health file for every Iranian with their national identification code to record the history of illnesses in their family, their lifestyle, etc. so that their diseases and their reasons can be traced easily.”

He emphasized the campaign should include over 70 percent of the country’s population; there is full preparation for its implementation in all universities of medical sciences, and everyone is mobilized to implement the plan.

Talking about the national health campaign, Einollahi said the campaign focuses on providing electronic health records for each family and screening them for diabetes and hypertension, and 70 percent of people are expected to participate in the campaign.

Einollahi added: “About 83 percent of all deaths registered in hospitals are caused

by non-communicable diseases. Around 300,000 people die from cardiovascular diseases every year. Some 32 percent of people over 18 years old have hypertension, and 60 percent are unaware of their high blood pressure. Some 30,000 deaths per year occur due to diabetes in the country, which are all significant cases.”

By implementing the national health campaign, half a million deaths from non-communicable diseases and 30,000 deaths from diabetes can be prevented, he added.

“We hope to be able to prevent half a million deaths due to cardiovascular disease and 30 thousand deaths due to diabetes till 2030 with timely awareness,” he said.

More than 220,000 deaths, that is, about 89 percent of deaths per year, are caused by factors such as blood pressure, blood sugar, obesity, and overweight, he concluded.

Over the past 20 years, deaths caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have risen by 14.5 percent. In 2016, 304,400 premature deaths were caused by NCDs in Iran, according to WHO.

Some 0.5 percent of premature deaths happen before the age of 70 and 2 percent before the age of 50.

Einollahi went on to say that in the future, each individual with a national ID code, will have a health file. In 93 cities, health infor-

mation is collected by healthcare providers.

NCDs account for 83% of mortalities

A large number of deaths in the country are caused by cardiovascular diseases. That’s why high blood pressure and diabetes, as risk factors, have been prioritized by the NCD Office and the Ministry of Health, IRNA quoted Farzaneh Farbakhsh as saying.

Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure can be easily controlled in the early stages even without taking medication, she added.

The national health campaign, which kicked off in November 2023, seeks to improve the health of the population group aged over 18 by extensive screening.

It aims at detecting diseases and informing the target group about these illnesses and their risks.

“The main objective of this campaign is to detect diseases in the early stages to provide more effective care for our countrymen,” Farbakhsh said.

Universities of Medical Sciences will help in different ways to inform the target population, those over 18, and pregnant mothers in all age groups, about health risk factors i.e. diabetes and high blood pressure.

The Health Ministry is looking for better implementation of the national health campaign by actively using the media,

billboards, placards, and posters to communicate information and raise people’s awareness, she noted.

The campaign tries to provide detailed information and educational content that will help the target groups learn about diseases they may not be aware of. Then, they will try to change their lifestyle to promote their health.

“By making coordination between governmental departments, private sector organizations, and health centers, our colleagues can undertake diabetes and high blood pressure screening as visiting workforces in labor departments, factories, and industrial estates,” Farbakhsh said.

The individuals identified in the screening won’t be abandoned after the end of the national health campaign; they will be subject to periodic control and receive the necessary care if needed, she added.

Health promotion program

Around 400,000 health volunteers are active in the country, acting as the link between the health system and different strata of the society, ISNA quoted Farshidi as saying on December 5, 2023.

Referring to the ‘comprehensive system of social participation’ which was introduced this summer, he said the promotion of health mainly highlights the rights of citizens and social justice.

By people-oriented participatory plans, it is tried to prevent the dominance of a certain group with local influence or the exclusion of some classes from services and facilities.

Health promotion programs aim to engage individuals and communities and promote a healthy lifestyle, prevention, and timely response.

It is a three-pronged plan. The first part involves ‘individual and family’, which refers to individual and family self-care and management. More than three million family ambassadors are active in this field.

The second part is the ‘neighborhood’ that promotes the health and the participation of 400,000 health volunteers.

The third part refers to the workplace and organization that practices a self-care approach at work.

In September 2022, Einollahi said that Iran has one of the strongest health systems in the region and that this opportunity should be used optimally in the field of health diplomacy.

Based on innovative indicators of health technology development in 2021, Iran was ranked 60th among 132 countries, which shows an improvement of 60 steps compared to 2014, Younes Panahi, the deputy health minister for research and technology, has announced.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

‘Only 15% of Tehran’s construction, demolition waste recycled’

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran’s department of environment (DOE) has said.

Waste materials, generally termed as construction and demolition waste, are part of construction materials’ packaging, containers, and spent machinery and equipment parts that are no longer usable. “A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face,” Bazgir said.

He further referred to a construction waste management unit opened in Abali in Damavand county last week, and stated that the unit is capable of recycling some 3,000 tons of construction waste, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دیو می شود.

محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود.

ظرفیت این واحد بازیافت حدود ۳۰۰۰ تن است و می تواند این مقدار نخاله و آوار ساختمانی را بازیافت کند.



The daffodil season

Harvesting daffodils in northern Iran is underway until mid-January.

Daffodils symbolize rebirth, new beginnings, hope, joy, and good luck, as they emerge each spring to light up barren landscapes with their cheerful yellow, orange, and white flowers.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

JANUARY 6, 2024

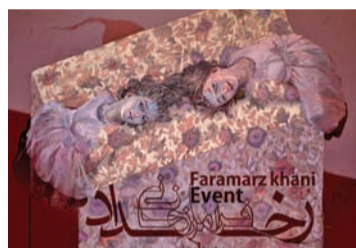
GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is reward for kindness to every living thing.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:10 Evening: 17:25 Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:15 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* An exhibition of paintings by Faramarz Khani is underway at Shokuh Gallery.

The exhibition named "Event" will run until January 14 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. off Andarzgu Blvd.

* Paintings by Maryam Goudarzi are currently on view in an exhibition at Gooya Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until January 10 at the gallery located at No. 89, Karim Khan Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Omid Bazmandegan is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until January 22 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

* Paintings by Zahra Rezadoost are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled "Silence and Tranquility", the exhibit will be running until January 23 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Hadith Baqeri is currently on display in an exhibit at Ev Gallery.

Entitled "Odyssey of the Zir Space", the exhibition runs until January 9 at the gallery located at 36 Palizvani Alley, Africa Blvd.

* Ebrahim Akbari Garaz is displaying his latest painting collection in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit named "Non-How" will run until January 15 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



* Artibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Arman Yaqubpur.

Entitled "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring", the exhibit runs until January 14 at the gallery located at No. 2798, Vali-e Asr Ave, after Parkway, next to Bank of Industry and Mine.

* Nian Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mohammadrezaa Khalili.

The exhibition entitled "The Place That I Was" will be running until January 19 at the gallery located at 5 Abhari Alley, Vafai St. off Tur St. off South Mofatteh St.



Sculpture

* Sculptures by Hadi Roshan Zamir are currently on display in an exhibit at Sohrah Gallery.

The exhibition runs until January 15 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.

* An exhibition of sculptures by Reza Mikailzadeh is underway at Aria Gallery.

The exhibit will run until January 15 at the gallery located at No. 10, Zarrin Alley, near Beheshti St., Vali-e Asr Ave.



Art, culture community condemns Kerman terrorist attacks, expresses condolences to Iranians

TEHRAN-Following the Wednesday terrorist attack in the southeastern Kerman Province, where over 100 people lost their lives, several art and cultural organizations as well as officials and artists condemned the attacks and extended their condolences to the Iranian people.

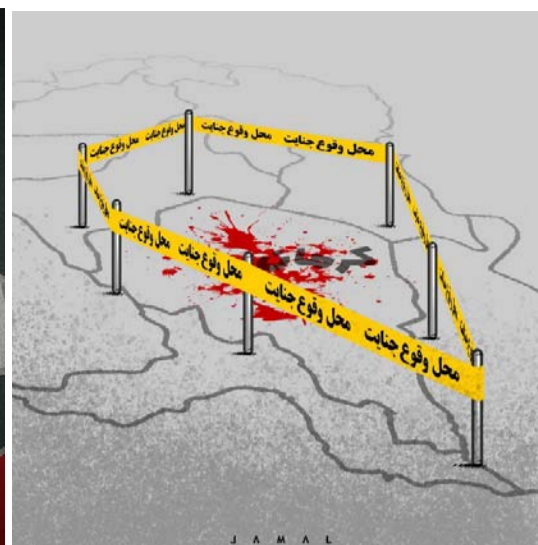
Two terrorist blasts near the burial site of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in the city of Kerman during a ceremony marking his fourth martyrdom anniversary left 103 people dead and 265 more injured.

"The American and Israeli enemies of Islam once again did not tolerate the unity among Iranian people and created a disaster by bombing the path to General Soleimani's resting place in Kerman and made many families grieve the loss of their beloved ones," ILNA quoted Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance as saying.

Condemning the great crime, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili said, "I offer my condolences to our beloved leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the families of the victims".

"Undoubtedly, history will never forget this horrible crime, and future generations will judge the terrorist actions of the enemies of Islam, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

Moreover, in separate messages, House of Cinema, Farabi Cinema Foundation, Documentary and Experimental Film Center, Roudaki Artistic Cultural Foundation,



Works by illustrator Jamal Rahmati posted on his Instagram page on January 4, 2024.

Iranian Artists Forum, Iran Music House, and Iran Book and Literature House denounced the attack, expressed sympathy with the Iranian nation, conveyed their condolences to the bereaved families, and requested the authorities to seek for revenge against those who committed this heinous and barbaric crime.

A wide range of Iranian artists from different fields of cinema, theater, music, and visual arts took to Instagram to react to the terror incident, sympathizing with the nation. Among the large number of artists, there were well-known figures including filmmakers Manijeh Hekmat, Mohammad-Mehdi Asgarpour, Saeid Roustai, and Reza Mirkarimi, actors Parviz Parastui, Amir Aqayi, Hamed Behdad, Reza Kianian, Mohammadreza Golzar, Vishka Asayesh, and Houtan Shakiba

among others.

In addition, Homayoun Shajarian, Mohsen Chavoshi, Reza Sadeghi, Hesamoddin Seraj, Mohammad Esfahani, Mohammad Motamedi, Salar Aghili, Rouzbeh Bemani, Ali Zand Vakili, Behnam Bani, Mohsen Ebrahimzadeh, Mohammad Alizadeh, Amir Azimi, Hamed Homayoun, Hamid Askari, Reza Yazdani, and Farzad Farzin were among the singers who also shared condolence messages to their Instagram stories.

Grieving the deadly blasts, singers who had planned to hold concerts or release a new piece at the weekend cancels their programs. On their Instagram stories, Alireza Ghorbani, Vahid Taj, Keivan Saket, Garsha Rezari, and Majid Razavi expressed their heartfelt condolences and postponed their plans to another time.

A number of painters, cartoonists, and graphic designers have reacted to the shocking incident by creating artworks on the issue.

On Thursday, the ISIS terrorist group claimed responsibility for the two explosions in Iran. In a statement posted on its affiliate Telegram channels, the militant Sunni Muslim group said two ISIS members had detonated explosive belts in the crowd that had gathered at the cemetery in the southeastern Iranian city of Kerman on Wednesday.

The memorial was marking the fourth anniversary of the death of General Soleimani, who was assassinated in Iraq in 2020 by a U.S. drone. Tehran has vowed revenge for the bloodiest such attack since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Over 700 books on General Soleimani published in Iran

TEHRAN- Over 700 books dedicated to Martyr Hajj Qassem Soleimani or related to his life have been published in Iran over the past four years.

These books, published from January 2020 to October 2023, cover various genres including memoirs, biographies, and poetry, IRNA reported on Friday.

The publishers of Tehran, Qom, and Mashhad provinces have the largest share compared to other provinces and the years 2019 and 2020 were the peak years of publishers' activities in this subject, the report added.

While the number of books published is substantial, the report highlights that few of them offer precise, comprehensive, and unique insights into the life of General Soleimani.

To address this, the Foundation for Preserving and Publishing the Works of Martyr Qassem Soleimani has undertaken the responsibility of carefully reviewing all works related to the martyr in any language or form.

One of the standout publications is "I Feared Nothing: The Autobiography of Qassem Soleimani, 1957-1979."

In this book, General Soleimani delves into his life, starting from his childhood in Qanat-Malek, a village in Kerman, under the influence of devoted parents, to his youth when he



migrated to Kerman to fulfill his family's religious duties. The book vividly illustrates his courage and revolutionary struggles up until 1979. Featuring handwritten notes, this autobiography serves as a credible document and valuable reference for understanding General Soleimani's upbringing.

Moreover, a comic strip edition of the book has been designed and edited specifically for the juvenile age group. It offers a valuable guide for children and young people who admire the path of Martyr Soleimani, helping them understand how he became known as the "Commander of Hearts."

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, a highly esteemed Iranian military strategist and prominent figure in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), left an indelible mark on Iran's defense efforts. Born in 1957 in Qanat-e

Malek, Iran, Soleimani devoted his entire life to safeguarding his country's interests. He gained widespread recognition for his crucial role in leading successful military campaigns, particularly in the battle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. His exceptional strategic planning, exemplary leadership abilities, and unwavering commitment to preserving Iran's security earned him profound respect both within the military and among the Iranian populace.

General Soleimani, with his remarkable charm and fearless demeanor, commanded immense admiration from his comrades as well as the general public. His resolute dedication to safeguarding Iran's sovereignty and ensuring its security solidified his position as an emblem of fortitude and perseverance.

Despite facing numerous hurdles, such as international sanctions and political tensions, Soleimani remained an indispensable figure in Iran's military and foreign policies. His assassination in January 2020 had a seismic impact on the region, profoundly grieving the Iranian people and intensifying tensions between Iran and the United States. General Qassem Soleimani's impactful contributions to Iran's defense will forever be etched in the nation's memory, serving as a testament to his enduring influence on the geopolitical landscape of the region.

Italian, Japanese cartoonists support iconic Palestinian character Handala

As Israel's aggression against Palestine intensifies, artists around the world react to the Zionist's crimes in Gaza in different ways to be the voice of the oppressed people in the Gaza Strip.

Italian comic strip artist and illustrator Francesca Ghermandi, along with other artists has launched what they described as "the first anti-war initiative in the history of comic strips in Italy."

104 famous comic characters were depicted from the back and placed around Handala, as a tribute to the iconic character created by Palestinian artist Naji al-Ali. In the poster, all characters seem to support and protect Handala, The Palestine Chronicle reported.

"104 characters without flags and united for Handala to call for an immediate ceasefire," Ghermandi wrote on her Instagram profile.

Naji al-Ali (1936-1987) was a Palestinian cartoonist, noted for the political criticism of the Arab regimes and Israel in his works.

One of the well-known cartoonists in the Arab world, and celebrated as the greatest

Palestinian cartoon artist, al-Ali drew over 40,000 cartoons, often reflecting Palestinian and Arab public opinion and offering sharply critical commentaries on Palestinian and Arab politics and political leaders.

He is best known as the creator of the character Handala, a personification of the Palestinian people that has become a prominent symbol of Palestinian nationalism and resistance.

In July 1987, while outside the London offices of al-Qabas, a Kuwaiti newspaper for which he drew political caricatures, al-Ali was shot in the neck and mortally wounded. He died five weeks later at the age of 50.

"The child Handala is my signature," Naji al-Ali had said about his iconic cartoon character. "His name is Handala and he has promised the people that he will remain true to himself".

"I drew him as a child who is not beautiful; his hair is like the hair of a hedgehog who uses his thorns as a weapon. (...) His hands are clasped behind his back as a sign of

rejection at a time when solutions are presented to us the American way," he said.

Al-Ali was assassinated, but he continued to live on through Handala, making him the most popular Arab cartoonist in history.

Throughout the years, Handala became a symbol of Palestinian refugees, and of the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom, justice and self-determination. Meaning "suffering" in Arabic, Handala is still depicted in various places in Palestine.

Ghermandi and her colleagues are also keen on keeping al-Ali's memory alive, by protecting his most precious creations, the boy Handala.

Seeing this campaign in Italy, Japanese artists have also planned this project to support the Palestinians by showing their unity with Handala.

Three Japanese artists namely cartoonist Tokushige Kawakatsu, painter Mariko Matsushita, and photograph artist Zohre Miha launched the initiative in Japan by creating WithHandala official

X (formerly Twitter) account on the first day of January, inviting all cartoonist in Japan to support this movement as they "consider this war to be ethnic cleansing / ethnocide / genocide by Israel"

The account has immediately received a great response and began reposting pictures of character's backside tagged with the #withHandala hashtag.

The war in Gaza has been ongoing for nearly 3 horrifying months with the Palestinians' death toll surpassing 22,500 and over 57,500 injured. Amid death, injury, devastation, displacement, hunger and thirst, humanitarian aid operations in Gaza are heavily restricted and can only respond to a fraction of people's needs.

Over half of the 2.2 million people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced due to the continuous bombardment by the Zionist regime. Yet again, Israel has issued new evacuation instructions for parts of the enclave. Reports say that Palestinians are exhausted from repeatedly fleeing to new areas and living without access to food, electricity or water.