

# The meaning of America's message to Iran U.S. Wants to Save Israel, Not Region



## Martyr Soleimani laid the foundations for the Islamic Republic's regional power



Major General Gholam Ali Rashid is one of the senior commanders of Iran's Armed Forces and the commander of the Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters. He is one of the people who had been with Lieutenant General Martyr Haj Qasem Soleimani since the years of the Sacred Defense. In commemoration of the anniversary of the epic funeral of Martyr Haj Qasem Soleimani, the Farsi division of KHAMENEI.IR media conducted an interview with this senior military commander. Presented below is a brief overview of this interview.

**Given the events of the last two decades and the introduction of the Quds Force mission, kindly explain the reasons, the factors, and the necessity behind establishing this force as well as its achievements.**

General Soleimani was appointed as the commander of the Quds Force in the late 1990s. Due to the experiences he gained during the war with the Iraqi army and after that in the fight against the evildoers in the country's east, he was able to create a significant transformation in supporting the revolutionary forces in Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen and Syria. ► Page 2

## Iran, Tajikistan strengthen ties with parliamentary cooperation pact

TEHRAN- Iran and Tajikistan elevated their bilateral ties with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on parliamentary cooperation in Tehran on Monday.

The MoU, inked in a meeting between Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Tajikistan's Majlisi Milli Chairman Rustam Imomali, aims to foster closer parliamentary relations between the two nations.

Imomali, who arrived in Tehran on Monday morning, was warmly welcomed by Mojtaba Zolnour, the head of Iran's Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Zolnour expressed optimism that the visit would mark a new chapter in the expanding relationship between Iran and Tajikistan. He noted that the two nations share a rich history and cultural heritage, creating fertile ground for further cooperation.

"Tehran possesses ample capacities and diverse needs, and we share a lot in common with Tajikistan," Zolnour stated. "Business interactions have improved over the past two years, but there is still ample room for growth, particularly considering the potential for increased land trade." ► Page 3

## Hezbollah commander assassinated in Israeli strike in Lebanon



A senior Hezbollah commander identified as Wissam al-Tawil, also known as "Jawad", was assassinated in an Israeli air strike on Monday.

Unnamed security sources told news agencies that Jawad, the deputy head of a unit in the elite Radwan force, and another Hezbollah resistance fighter were assassinated when their car was hit by the air strike on the village of Majdal Selm.

"This is a very painful strike," one security source told Reuters news agency. The killing comes as the US secretary of state arrived in Israel on Monday purportedly intended to calm burgeoning tensions and the threat of a wider war.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has warned, "Whoever thinks of war with us ... will regret it."

In a statement released on Monday afternoon, the Hezbollah resistance movement mourned the commander, publishing a number of photos that showed him alongside prominent Resistance leaders in the context of his line of work, according to Al Mayadeen.

## UN rapporteurs criticize ICC for being slow in indicting those guilty of war crimes in Gaza

The UN special rapporteur on Palestine, Francesca Albanese, and UN special rapporteur on the right to adequate housing Balakrishnan Rajagopal criticized the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Sunday for being slow in prosecuting those responsible for war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza.

Albanese quoted a post on X from a Save The Children official saying "more than 10 children per day, on average, have lost one or both of their legs in Gaza since (the) conflict erupted three months ago."

"Trials will also be needed. Criminals who have planned, ordered and executed such crimes must be brought to justice," she said. "National courts with jurisdiction over war crimes, CAH (crimes against humanity) & genocide must be activated, as the ICC is proving slow and ineffective on the situation of Palestine," she added.

Rajagopal also shared a post on X to support Albanese's call, saying: "Yes we need action now. Today. ICC is proving to be too slow."

UN rapporteurs and human rights organizations have called Israel's recent attacks targeting civilians in Gaza and acts of collective punishment "genocide."

## Why are so many journalists being killed in Gaza?

By Ali Karbalaee

When the Israeli regime began its indiscriminate airstrikes on Gaza, the killing of journalists was considered "collateral damage".

As the number of journalists and media workers killed by the Israeli military in the enclave has risen to 109, many experts have reached another conclusion. The regime has censored its own media from displaying any footage of the Gaza Strip that has been reduced to rubble.

The settler population will put pressure on the Netanyahu government to end the war if they realize that the army has failed to win over Hamas or recover Israeli captives despite killing 1% of the Gazans and flattening entire neighborhoods.

Foreign journalists have been largely forbidden by the regime from entering the enclave at their own free will. They have only done so very rarely in carefully calculated Israeli military tours.

Western journalists, in particular, have been prevented as they would naturally interview the displaced residents of Gaza, ► Page 5

## West Asia's water crisis deepens through cloud wars

TEHRAN - Despite earlier projections of abundant rainfall in Iran during autumn, the country has been confronted with severely low precipitation, raising concerns over its impact on water resources and agricultural sectors.

In marked contrast, neighboring countries in West Asia region, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, have enjoyed substantial rainfall and snowfall. Subsequently, the puzzling disparity sparked inquiries into the underlying causes of Iran's precipitation deficiency.

Several videos of the Iran-Turkey border went viral, exposing the stark contrast between snow-covered mountain ranges on the Turkish side and the barren landscape on the Iranian side.

These recordings have triggered discussions among experts who suggest that rain shadow, orographic effects, ► Page 7

## 16th Iran's Regional Music Festival underway in Tehran

TEHRAN-The national level of the 16th Iran's Regional Music Festival is underway at Roudaki Hall in Tehran.

The three-day cultural event kicked off on January 6, covering a wide range of traditional, folk and ethnic music from across Iran, ISNA reported.

Under direction of Mohammad Ali Merati, the festival is organized by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's department for art affairs. The closing ceremony of the festival will be held on Tuesday, when five veteran musicians will be honored as well.

© ISNA/ Alireza Sotakbar



## 'Kerman carnage result of using terror to achieve goals: Foreign Ministry

TEHRAN- Iran asserts that the individuals responsible for the horrific bombings in the city of Kerman utilize terrorism as a means to further their own goals.

Speaking on Monday at a weekly news briefing in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani vehemently denounced the Daesh terrorist group's two blasts in Kerman on Wednesday, which left 103 people dead and hundreds injured.

"The incident showed that terrorism is a pervasive peril to all governments and nations. Those who use terrorism as a tool to reach their objectives should be held accountable and bear responsibility for supporting terrorist movements," he added. ► Page 2



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Europe's concern about Tehran's harsh response to terrorists

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

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper discussed the regional consultations of high-ranking European officials with Iran to reduce tension in the West Asia region. It wrote: Upon the increase of tension in the Red Sea, the Zionist regime officials tried to make baseless accusations against Iran to persuade the Western countries that the security of their cargo ships in the Red Sea was under threat, and therefore, turn the war between Tel Aviv and Hamas into a war between the West and Iran. After failing to implement this goal, Israel sought to carry out assassination operations against senior Iranian military commanders and the resistance front and to support terrorist groups active in the region. Undoubtedly, these measures have been accelerated to open a third front so that the Israeli leaders minimize the consequences of the internal and external crisis caused by the Gaza war. Because of that, the European authorities were concerned about the response of the Islamic Republic to the crazy actions of Tel Aviv. Therefore, the European authorities have started their diplomatic consultations with the Iranian authorities and Blinken has rushed to the region to avoid deepening the dimensions of the crisis by sending direct and indirect messages to Iran.

**Shargh: Allegations are repeated, but ineffective**

In a commentary, Shargh dealt with France's baseless claims about Iran's connection with the operations of resistance groups in the region and said: French Minister of Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna, after a conversation with Hossein Amir Abdollahian, claimed that the risk of regional war in West Asia has never been greater and Tehran and its proxy groups should end their destabilizing activities because no one will benefit from the escalation of tensions. She believes that the Ansarullah are usually supported by Iran. These statements are made while the Yemeni National Army has announced that to support the people of Gaza, and until the end of the Zionist regime's all-out attack on Gaza, it will target only ships whose origin or destination is the Zionist regime, and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea for Other ships are completely safe. By repeating baseless claims and without providing any evidence, Western countries are trying to accuse other countries by projection of failures against attacks on ships in the Red Sea.

## Taliban official describes Daesh as common foe of Afghanistan, Iran

TEHRAN- A Taliban political leader referred to the terrorist group Daesh as Iran's and Afghanistan's shared enemy.

The deputy prime minister of the Taliban for political affairs, Mohammed Abdul Kabir, met on Monday with Iran's special envoy to Afghanistan, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, in Kabul.

During the discussion, he expressed condolences to Iran over the terrorist incident that occurred in the southern Iranian city of Kerman on January 3, which claimed the lives of over 90 persons.

Declaring the terrorist group Daesh to be the shared adversary of Iran and Afghanistan, Abdul Kabir asserted the group's goal is to kill innocent people and undermine regional stability.

Additionally, he expressed gratitude to Iran for its support of Afghanistan, stating that it encourages deeper ties with all of its neighbors.

The Taliban's explicit stance is that no danger emanating from Afghanistan should be directed at other countries, he noted, underlining Kabul's efforts to play a positive role in the building of regional peace and stability.

Kazemi Qomi, for his part, reiterated that Iran will not help Taliban opponents.

He said that Iran is attempting to include Afghanistan in regional cooperation.

The ambassador also expressed confidence that the people and parties attempting to sow hatred and division between Iran and Afghanistan will fail.

Aside from political issues, the two officials talked about measures to increase economic cooperation between the two Muslim neighbors.

**Siasat-e-Rooz: Iran's power in the Gaza crisis without getting involved in the war**

In a note, Siasat-e-Rooz discussed Iran's accurate strategy regarding the Gaza war and said: According to several members of the resistance groups and military analysts, the Gaza war has allowed Iran to show the capacity of its newly reconstructed network of allied groups. This network will show Tehran's strategic scope and at the same time allow it to stay away from the war. After the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel, every day one of these militia groups close to Iran in the region has carried out an attack somewhere in West Asia in different places. According to Joseph Votel, the former commander of CENTCOM, these attacks show the strength of this proxy network that Iran has created throughout the region, and this is very worrying. According to Hamidreza Azizi, a former professor of regional studies, Iran is both behind these activities of the resistance groups and is not. Iran has been able to consolidate its regional influence through various offensives without creating a major conflict that could endanger group allies and potentially bring Iran directly into war.

**Arman-e-Melli: Iran's harsh revenge is not the way of ISIS and Zionists**

Arman-e-Melli had a conversation with political activist Hossein Kanaani Moghaddam regarding the Kerman terrorist operation. It wrote: Some analysts believe that if we investigate the hidden hands in this operation, we will find the footprints of the Zionists. They take every step to drag Tehran's feet to the equations of the battle in Gaza. As the Leader of the Islamic Revolution declared, our revenge on the perpetrators of this incident will be hard but fair. Iran's way of revenge is not like the Zionists and ISIS, which take revenge by bombing and killing children, women, and innocents, but on the battlefield and face to face with the enemy. This harsh revenge will be taken in different ways. There is a possibility that the Zionist regime seeks to attribute some terrorist operations in the world to the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to bring America into a direct conflict with Iran. Therefore, we should be careful not to fall into the trap of the Zionists. Experience has shown that Tel Aviv uses every measure to create a global consensus against the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to bring America and its supporters into a long-term war against the Islamic Republic.



Last month in a meeting with an Iranian media delegation in Kabul, Amir Khan Muttaqi, Taliban's acting Foreign Minister characterized relations between Kabul and Tehran as progressing towards growth.

In a meeting with Muttaqi, in Tehran, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Foreign Minister of Iran, said that Afghanistan has to take practical steps to address the current issues, such as water sharing and border security, between the two nations.

He pointed out that Tehran and Kabul have established significant ties in a number of areas and expressed hope that the acting Taliban government in Afghanistan would work with Tehran to find practical solutions to some of its current issues.

The senior Iranian diplomat also pointed to a recent meeting in Tehran in favor of Palestine and praised the Afghan delegation, led by Muttaqi, for its active involvement in the gathering.

He also discussed developments in the besieged Gaza Strip and encouraged all Muslim and freedom-seeking countries to assist the Palestinian people in the face of the genocidal atrocities being committed by the occupying Israeli regime.

*Interview with the commander of the Khatam-al Anbiya Central Headquarters*

## Martyr Soleimani laid the foundations for the Islamic Republic's regional power

From page 1 ► In the early 2000s, the U.S. Army initially occupied Afghanistan and then Iraq, imposing new conditions on the region. Confronting the aggression of the U.S. Army and the army of the Zionist regime became a crucial requirement among nations.

It was an important opportunity for a person like General Soleimani to demonstrate his capabilities.

**What role did General Soleimani play in strengthening and developing the missions of the Quds Force?**

From the very beginning, the U.S. army's extensive presence in Afghanistan and Iraq was deemed a major threat to not only Iran but also other nations in the region. However, thanks to the efforts of our brothers in the Quds Force who were under the command of General Soleimani, the revolutionary forces in the region managed to turn this threat into an opportunity. As a result of the occupation in Afghanistan, the Taliban group was ousted from the government. [But] with assistance from the Quds Force to our Afghan Mujahid brothers, the United States failed to establish a government of their preference in Kabul. The Mujahid forces and the popular forces, including the Sunnis, Shias and Farsi-speaking people, who were all friends of Iran, created the main part of the government, and in the past two decades, the eastern part



of Iran has not faced any major issues. The victories achieved in Iraq were considerably more substantial, but this topic requires thorough discussion and time does not permit us to delve into it at this moment.

**Could you please tell us about Martyr Soleimani's role in fighting and defeating the Daesh terrorist group?**

Daesh was and is a group created by the CIA, the British, Saudi and Mossad [spy] services. This group was created with the support of the U.S. government and some regional and Arab countries, took advantage of the riots in Syria and the weakness of the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi security forces and was able to occupy parts of Syria and Iraq.

With the measures he took, Martyr Soleimani made the govern-

ments of Iraq and Syria optimistic about the possibility of defeating Daesh, and this issue was very important in the first step of the battle.

It was necessary to take advantage of Iran's experience in utilizing people as Basij forces, which General Soleimani effectively employed in Syria and Iraq.

In Iraq, following a fatwa that was issued by Ayatollah Sistani, a wave of sending young people to fight against Daesh began. Appropriate training and organization were imperative to prepare these forces for battle against the Daesh militants.

General Soleimani and other Iranian and Iraqi commanders assembled these mighty forces and led them in the war against Daesh. Today, Hashd al-Sha'bi, which has become a tried and tested army, is the

## Iran FM says Israel obtains none of declared goals in war on Gaza

TEHRAN- Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran's Foreign Minister, has asserted that the Israeli regime had failed to achieve any of its declared objectives in the Gaza War, including the elimination of Hamas.

Speaking on Sunday, Amir Abdollahian updated President Ebrahim Raisi and other cabinet members on the most recent events in Gaza, where the Israeli regime has been advancing its ruthless bombardment for more than three months.

Iran's top diplomat went on to add, "Over the course of more than 90 days, none of the goals of the Zionist regime has been achieved, including the annihilation of Hamas or even disarming it as well as releasing the captives held by the Palestinians in Gaza."

"For that reason, the Zionists have resorted to the environment outside Gaza and attempted to

establish a so-called fake victory for themselves by assassinating Saleh al-Arouri in Beirut," Amir Abdollahian stated in reference to an Israeli drone strike that killed deputy Hamas political leader al-Arouri in the Lebanese capital on January 2.

The Iranian foreign minister also discussed disagreements with the U.S. over its backing of the Israeli regime in the Gaza conflict, as well as divisions inside the Israeli cabinet.

Meanwhile, Amir Abdollahian stated that Iran places a high value on long-term security in the region and thinks that peace can return once war crimes are stopped in Gaza, humanitarian aid is delivered to the besieged area, the forced relocation of Gazans is halted, and they are given the opportunity to make their own decisions democratically.

Last week, in a speech at the University of Tehran, Amir Abdollahian said that the U.S. law-

## Kerman carnage result of using terror to achieve goals: Foreign Ministry

From page 1 ► Kanaani further said that the Daesh terrorist group served the goals of the Zionist regime, citing confessions concerning the U.S. participation in the alarming phenomenon.

He also stressed that Iran's intelligence forces had demonstrated their capabilities to ensure national security in the face of regional turmoil.

**"Israeli occupation is major issue"**

First and foremost, the Iranian spokesman stated, the West must cease giving Israel political and security backing in relation to its genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Second, he went on, Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people had to stop by utilizing the UN Security Council and other international bodies.

According to Kanaani, Iran upholds the rights of the Palestinian people despite phony threats from certain groups advocating unjust resolutions that benefit the Zionist regime.

"We believe that Iran's initiative can ... end the Palestinian crisis. We believe that the Israeli occupation is Palestine's major issue and that it must be resolved," he added.

Iran has long suggested that the best way to settle the protracted conflict in Palestine would be through a referendum in which all of the original inhabitants of the Palestinian territory and their descendants would take part.

**"Israeli crimes will lead to spread of Gaza war"**

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned that Israel's attack on Gaza might "metastasize" throughout West Asia.

Kanaani responded to the comments, saying, "If the atrocities of the Zionist regime are not halted, the scope of the conflict will extend. If we are seeing the growth of the conflict in the region, it is due to the United States' failure to address this issue."

## Defense Ministry sees impressive increase in sales

TEHRAN – Iran's defense minister announced on Monday that his government department has seen a surge in sales in the past two years.

Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani did not specify what products the ministry has been selling but said that countries trying to counter terrorism and drug trafficking are avid buyers of

Iranan-made equipment. "Our sales have more than tripled in the past two years," he noted.

The Iranian defense ministry attracted a lot of attention in August when it put several home-grown military systems and weapons on display at the International Military Forum ARMY-2023 in Russia.

## Security forces eliminate terrorist element in southeast Iran

TEHRAN- Iranian security forces apprehended and neutralized a key member of terrorist groups in a successful operation conducted in the southeastern city of Bampur.

The operation resulted in a confrontation with the armed terrorist element, leading to his elimination. The apprehended individual was identified as Mullah Akram Naroi, who was directly

involved in the recent terrorist attack on the Rask police headquarters.

The brutal assault on the police outpost in southeast Iran claimed the lives of 11 police officers and

result of this endeavor.

In your opinion, why is the character and personality of a military commander referred to as a «school of thought» and a «learning school» by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief [of Iran's Armed Forces]? Additionally, he [Imam Khamenei] stated in another place that, «Martyr Soleimani was not just a national hero. He was the region's hero. The role that Martyr Soleimani played in solving the problems of several countries in the region was significant and unparalleled." He also said, "Martyr Soleimani is more dangerous for his enemies than General Soleimani." What is your analysis on this?

General Soleimani was one of the students of Imam Khomeini's (ra) school of thought, who, in the field of jihad and armed combat, was able to draw attention to and bring the characteristics of this school to the fore in West Asia. What is important and necessary in this school of thought, is relying on God, selecting the right objective, strategic planning and courage.

He was shaped and raised under the influence of Imam Khomeini's school of thought during the Sacred Defense period. One of the miracles of the Islamic Revolution was that it transformed a talented young villain into a national hero.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

makers are stuck in a "quagmire" in the besieged region, making it expensive for them to escape, since they are supporting the Israeli regime in its "genocidal campaign" against the Gaza Strip.

"Today the politicians in the White House are facing a serious challenge. Some believe that Washington has gone too far and should not have provided full support for Israel's genocide and crimes over the past three months in Gaza and the West Bank," he said.

Iran's top diplomat went on to add that "today, the fact that American politicians have made a mistake and entered a quagmire in Gaza represents a challenge in the White House," he added. "Getting out of this quagmire will be quite costly."

He also underlined that the Tel Aviv regime followed its dreams of "destroying Hamas" but they did not come true.

Kanaani also stated that the recent events in the Red Sea were "a result of the situation in Palestine."

"The cause is the occupation and the war that is being waged against the oppressed people of Gaza with U.S. support over the past three months. The war has had consequences in the region and if it goes on, the consequences will continue."

**The Caucasus region**

Kanaani also said that Tehran has clear positions regarding the situation in the South Caucasus region and transit corridors.

"We are making a lot of efforts to establish peace, stability, and security in the regional countries."

Kanaani stated that "Tehran has repeatedly stressed that developing transit cooperation cannot be a basis for geopolitical changes and violation of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of countries."

For the past three decades, Iran has put huge efforts into developing advanced weapons and defense systems. According to previous statements by Iranian officials, at least 30 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America have expressed willingness to buy equipment from the Islamic Republic.

left at least six others injured.

Bampur is a strategically located city in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran, serving as the capital of both the county and the district.



# U.S. wants to save Israel, not region

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- The U.S. has said that it is seeking to resolve West Asian problems, yet Washington is actually the root cause of the spread of violence and unrest in the region.

Hossein Akbari, the Iranian Ambassador to Syria, revealed America's proposal to solve regional problems, saying, "10 days ago, we received a message from one of the Persian Gulf countries, which sent its delegation to Iran with a message from the Americans to resolve the problem in the entire region, and not just a partial solution to the war."

According to Akbari, Americans were scared that the war would spill over to other regions, leading to the destruction of the Zionist regime.

In the message to Iran, the United States has claimed that it is seeking a solution to regional tensions. However, Washington's actions paint a different picture. Its unwavering support for the Zionist regime, particularly since October 7, has only served to exacerbate the situation.

The U.S.'s attempt seems insincere when compared to its consistent support for Israel's aggressive actions. Its constant supply of military hardware and intelligence has enabled the Zionist regime to maintain its oppressive grip on the Palestinian people, further fueling the flames of resentment.



Ambassador Hossein Akbari

The U.S.'s actions have also spawned new resistance fronts.

Instead of addressing the root causes of the conflict, the U.S. seeks to view the resistance fronts as obstacles to regional peace. This misguided approach is akin to treating the symptoms of a disease without addressing the underlying pathology.

The U.S. needs to see that the resistance movements are born from the deep-seated suffering of the oppressed.

Resistance groups consistently assert that their actions are a direct response to Israel's transgressions in Gaza and the unwavering support from the White House for the Zionist regime's offenses.

The narrative propagated by these groups underscores a deeply

rooted belief that their activities are a form of counteraction against Israeli barbarities in the Gaza Strip, coupled with unequivocal backing from the highest echelons of the U.S. government to Tel Aviv.

The United States' combined financial and political support for Israel has created a more complicated situation in the region, eliciting a more robust response from resistance groups.

In a stark demonstration of its commitment to the Israeli regime, the United States has twice vetoed resolutions at the UN Security Council that demanded Israel to stop war on the Gaza Strip.

Also, the U.S.'s attempt to resolve the conflict through Iran, considering it as the sole mediator of the resistance groups, is a flawed strategy. It disregards the

independence of these groups and their fundamental right to self-determination.

Another flawed assumption underlying America's approach is the belief that the relationship between Iran and the resistance groups is a hierarchical one, with Iran acting as the sole decision-maker. However, the connection between Iran and the resistance groups is not one of dominance but of solidarity and shared purpose, with both sides committed to upholding the principles of justice and freedom.

At the heart of the regional complexities lies Palestine's enduring and unresolved matter, which has persisted for over 75 years. The protracted nature of this issue underscores its significance, as the region grapples with multifaceted challenges.

It is evident that until the rightful aspirations of the Palestinian people are acknowledged and addressed, the United States cannot contribute to resolving the regional crisis by assigning blame to others.

The attainment of a more tranquil regional landscape hinges on a pivotal shift in the U.S. stance — one that refrains from endorsing Israel's transgressions in Gaza and unequivocally recognizes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

## We will show how strong Iran are: Ansarifard



TEHRAN – Iran national football team captain Karim Ansarifard says that they have to show how strong they are when they play Palestine in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup opening match.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet Palestine in Group C on Jan. 14, where the team will also play Hong Kong and the UAE.

"Our training camp in Kish Island and also friendly match against Burkina Faso will help us to make a big job in Qatar. All the team's members are ready for the competition. We want to make our people happy, that's why we are here," Ansarifard said.

"We will have to how strong we are when we meet Palestine in our first match. I think we can make splash in this edition. The tournament will bring the best Asian teams together but we are well-prepared also for the event," the Iran captain added.

## Iran's football delegation arrives in Doha

TEHRAN – Iran's national football team arrived in Doha, Qatar Monday noon.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet Indonesia in a friendly match on Tuesday as part of preparation for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group C along with Palestine, the UAE and Hong Kong.

Amir Ghalenoei's side will start the campaign with a match against Palestine on January 14.

## Lack of warm-up games will harm Team Melli: expert

TEHRAN – Former Iran and Persepolis football team midfielder Farzad Ashoubi says that Team Melli will have a difficult task ahead in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup since they lacked of good warm-up games.

Iran national football team are drawn in Group C along with the UAE, Hong Kong and Palestine and will be hoping for a turnaround in fortunes in Qatar.

Iran have not won the title since 1976.

"In my opinion, Team Melli have not been tested yet since they have not faced a strong opponent in their warm-up matches. Iran's group are easy and they will most likely qualify for the next round but there will be tough task ahead of them in the next staged.

"The team benefit of experienced players but that's not enough to succeed as we know that there are strong teams like Japan, South Korea and Saudi Arabia," he said in his exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

The experts hit out at Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei for not inviting the younger players as Team Melli are a team with high average age.

"I believe that Ghalenoei could call up the young players like Amin Hazbavi and Mohammadjavad Hosseini but we have to respect his selection. The young stars like Hazbavi can improve the quality of every team," he said.

"Iran football can stand on its own feet but the Federation has established the rules which hinder infrastructure progress," the ex-Persepolis midfielder added.

"As long as we don't perform what other countries are doing, we cannot be optimistic about the future. The federation should seriously consider caring age groups football if it wants to have a strong national team in the future," Ashoubi concluded.

## Taremi among biggest goal threats in AFC Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Mehdi Taremi of Iran is among the biggest goal threats at the upcoming AFC Asian Cup.

The AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 promises plenty of goals as Qatar is set to host 51 thrilling matches in the continental showpiece, starting with the curtain raiser between the hosts and Lebanon on Friday and culminating in the final on February 10.

The tournament, first played in 1956, has over the years witnessed plenty of incredible attackers – be it Iran legend Ali Daei in 1996, Iraq's inspirational leader Younis Mahmoud in 2007 or Almoez Ali who guided Qatar to their very first Asian crown in 2019.

The 18th edition of the tournament is also not short of attacking talent who will try to make an indelible mark in Asia, so the-AFC.com took a look at five individuals who could prove to be the biggest goal threats at the upcoming AFC Asian Cup.

Taremi is in the best form of his life for Iran and he is in Qatar trying to make some amends. The striker scored thrice as Team Melli reached the semi-finals in 2019 but lost 3-0 to Japan with Taremi suspended for the crucial fixture after picking up his second yellow card in the quarter-final win over China.

The 31-year-old amassed an impressive 12 international goals during the 2023 calendar year, which included hat-tricks against Afghanistan and Kyrgyz Republic in the CAFA (Central Asian Football Association) Nations Cup in June and goals against Hong Kong and Uzbekistan in November.

Taremi also remains a key player for FC Porto and won the Primeira Liga Golden Boot last season with a superb 22-goal haul as he continues to collect silverware in his fifth season in Portugal – all of which goes to show that he will be one to watch in Qatar.

## Teams learn fate: 2023/24 Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16

TEHRAN – Defending champions Persepolis are drawn with first tier Gaz Gachsaran in the 2023/24 Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16.

Persepolis archrivals Esteghlal will also meet Mes Rafsanjan in the round.

Sepahan have been handed a tough draw, where the Isfahan based football team are pitted against Shams Azar in Isfahan.

The Hazfi Cup was founded in 1975 and Esteghlal and Persepolis are the most successful clubs with seven titles each.

### Draw:

\*Nirooye Zamini Tehran v Fajr Sepasi Shiraz

\*Malavan Bandar Anzali v Shahr Raz Shiraz

\*Saipa Tehran v Pars Jonoubi Jam

\*Sepanta Torbat Heydarieh v Mes Kerman

\*Nassaji Mazandaran v Aluminum Arak

\*Foolad Khuzestan v Chadormalu Ardakan

\*Havadar Tehran v Esteghlal Khuzestan

\*Gol Gohar Sirjan v Nika Pars Chaloos

\*Sepahan Isfahan v Shams Azar Qazvin

\*Paykan Tehran v Setaregan Bahman Javan Tehran

\*Mes Rafsanjan v Esteghlal

\*Zob Ahan Isfahan v KIA Tehran

\*Persepolis v Gaz Gachsaran

\*Chooka Talesh v Tractor Tabriz

\*Mes Soongoun Varzaghan v Shenavar Sazi Qeshm

\*Sanat Naft Abadan v Abipooshan Jonoub

## Daesh mimicking Israel in massacre of women and children: Raisi



TEHRAN – Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has drawn parallels between the modus operandi of the Daesh terror group and the Israeli regime, saying both entities are looking to take the lives of innocent civilians as they are unable to face their opponents on the battlefield.

Raisi made the remarks during a meeting with the visiting speaker of the National Assembly of Tajikistan after the deadliest terrorist attack in the past 30 years ripped through the Southeastern Iranian city of Kerman, taking the lives of at least 85 people.

Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack.

## U.S. trains, aids terrorists in occupied territories: military chief

TEHRAN- Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff has accused the United States of training and providing support to terrorist groups in the occupied territories.

Addressing a conference in Tehran on Monday, General Mohammad Bagheri said that since October 7, a number of American commanders have been stationed in the region to coordinate the activities of these groups.

He added that the U.S. has been supplying the Zionist regime with bombs and other military equipment through a large number of cargo planes.

General Bagheri also lamented that some countries in the region have been assisting the Zionists by sending them military equipment by ship.

Despite all the support it is receiving, the general stressed, the sustainability of the Tel Aviv regime is under a serious threat.

He highlighted the role of the Yemeni fighters in disrupting the flow of supplies to the Zionist regime, pointing out that they have been able to block ships carrying military equipment to the occupied territories.

The Iranian general also commended the efforts of resistance forces in Iraq, Syria, and other countries, stating that their struggle is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Islamic Revolution.

"The spirit that the late founder of the Islamic Revolution breathed into the lives of Iranians and Muslims is being passed down from one generation to the next, growing and improving," he said.

"The resistance front is one of the fruits of this spirit," he added.

He emphasized that the path of resistance is one of growth, advancement, and ultimately victory and that the hardships endured along the way will lead to great rewards.

The top general praised the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, conducted by Hamas, as a turning point in the history of Palestinian struggles.

"These epic feats and victories should be considered blessings of the Islamic Revolution and the results of spreading the spirit and culture of the holy defense," he declared.

## Iran, Tajikistan strengthen ties with parliamentary cooperation pact

From Page 1 ► Imomali, for his part, emphasized the importance of preserving the common Persian cultural

heritage of the two states. "We must safeguard this heritage, ensuring that it remains within our grasp and

is not distorted by others," he remarked.

Imomali's visit to Tehran, undertaken at the invitation

of Ghalibaf, marked the commencement of a two-day agenda aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties.



## Iran Chamber of Guilds holds meeting to review next year budget

TEHRAN – The Planning and Budget Committee of Iran Chamber of Guilds held a meeting on Sunday to review the chamber's budget for the next Iranian calendar year 1403 (starts on March 21), the portal of Iran Chamber of Guilds reported.

The meeting was attended by Ghasem

Nodeh-Farahani, the secretary of the chamber's board of directors and the representative of the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade in the chamber.

As reported, during the meeting, the members of the committee discussed the budget-related challenges and concerns of the guild chambers across the country.

## Export from Ilam province increases 8% in 9 months yr/yr

TEHRAN- The value of export from Ilam province, in the west of Iran, rose eight percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Decemehr 21, 2023), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Mir-Aqa Abdi, the acting head of the province's Customs Department, said that 2.366 million tons of products valued at over \$1.346 billion were exported from the province in the mentioned nine-month period.

As previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported 101.904 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$36.43 billion during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Mohammad Rezvani-Far said that the nine-month non-oil export indicates 26.48 percent growth in weight, but 0.68 percent fall in value, year on year.

The official also said that the country's exports in the first nine months of this year, including oil, electricity, and technical and engineering services, and excluding the export via suitcase trade, reached \$63.97 billion.

Appreciating the cooperation of the Ministries of Oil, Energy, and Industry, Mining and Trade in providing relevant

statistics, he said: "It is for the first time that the statistics of the export of oil, electricity and technical and engineering services along with the export of non-oil goods are published by the customs. This government action is aimed at transparency in the performance of foreign trade."

The IRICA head put the value of the export of oil at \$26.46 billion, electricity at \$300 million, and technical and engineering services at \$780 million in the nine-month period.

Rezvani-Far further announced that Iran has imported 28.7 million tons of goods worth \$48.42 billion in the first nine months of the present year, of which \$60 million was the value of electricity import.

The nine-month import indicates 12.29 percent rise in value and six percent growth in weight, year on year, he added.

He named China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, and India as the major export destinations of Iranian goods in the said time span, and the UAE, China, Turkey, Germany, and India as the main sources of import.

The IRICA head said that the value of Iran's trade rose seven percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

## TEDPIX loses 799 points on Monday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 799 points (0.04 percent) to 2,153,957 million on Monday, which is the third day of Iranian calendar week.

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

Head of Iran's Securitas and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshqi has said that using the capacities of the country's private sector in the stock market has been one of the main strategies of the organization over the past year.

"One of the main approaches of the Securitas and Exchange Organization during the past year has been to use the power of the private sector, because government entities and the public sector do not have the necessary characteristics for economic prosperity, so we must increase the share of the private sector in the capital market," Eshqi said in a conference in Khorasan Razavi Province.

Large industries have their own problems and fluctuations, but small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can compensate for these fluctuations, the official said, adding that the main part of the world economy is moving towards small and medium-sized companies because value, employment, and innovation lie in such companies.

The SEO head further noted that the stock market should mainly focus on investment and financing, saying: "We need to direct the liquidity flow towards production."

Emphasizing the important role of the seventh National Development Plan (2022-2026) in securing the future of the capital market, Eshqi stated: "One of the major indicators of investment is predictability, so more action should be taken in the seventh development plan to make the economy

more predictable."

He pointed to the holding of investment and financing conferences in provinces as a starting point for a new movement towards promoting investment and said: "Economic enterprises do not have enough familiarity with the capital market and such conferences are bridges that provide the necessary platform in this regard."

Meanwhile, the SEO spokesman has said the entity is implementing 10 supervisory programs to ensure transparency and psychological security in the stock market.

"In order to promote healthy transactions and induce mental peace in the capital market, supervisory programs of the SEO will be followed around 10 major axes," Amir-Mehdi Sabaei said.

The first measure is to grade market violations based on their severity and take regulatory actions, such as issuing systemic notice and administrative warnings, restricting online access, filing violations, and reporting crimes to higher authorities, Sabaei said.

The second program is to develop an intelligent system for sending automatic monitoring alerts to violators, the official noted.

Periodical and regular publication of carried out supervisory measures, publication of the names of the violators after the issuance of final warning, according to the relevant regulations, controlling the stock exchange regulatory measures on a regular basis, intensification of the penalties for criminal and seductive activities in cyberspace, promoting education, culture, and information to facilitate the recognition of crimes and violations, determining the examples of market manipulation, and holding regular meetings with market participants in order to receive suggestions and criticisms are also among other programs that SEO is taking.

# Agro-food exports rise 22% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports of agricultural and foodstuff products increased by 22 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2023), the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian producers managed to export over 6.0 million tons of the mentioned products worth more than \$4.3 billion in the mentioned nine months, also registering a 7.2 percent rise in terms of weight, IRNA reported.

As reported, of the total exports, 4.36 million tons with a value of \$2.562 billion were crops, vegetables, and horticulture products, and the rest were fishery, livestock, and dairy products.

During the said nine months, the Islamic Republic exported agro-food products to more than 130 countries around the world, among which, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Russia, Pakistan,



Afghanistan, and Turkey were the top importers of Iranian products, according to Latifi.

China, India, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Germany, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Oman, Uzbekistan, Kuwait, Spain, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, and Syria were also among the top importers of Iran's food and agriculture.

According to the head of the

Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported 101.904 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$36.43 billion during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year.

Mohammad Rezvanifar said that the nine-month non-oil export indicates 26.48 percent growth in weight, but 0.68 percent fall in value, year on year.

The official also said that the country's exports in the first nine months of this year, including oil, electricity, and technical and engineering services, excluding the export via suitcase trade, reached \$63.97 billion.

The IRICA head put the value of the export of oil at \$26.46 billion, electricity at \$300 million, and technical and engineering services at \$780 million in the nine-month period.

## MAPNA breaks new record in electricity generation



TEHRAN – The electricity generation capacity of the power plants constructed by Iran's MAPNA Group has reached 50,220 megawatts (MW) which is more than the total generation capacity of 160 countries including Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, Argentina, and Norway.

According to the data published by the group, MAPNA's power plants currently account for over 50 percent of Iran's total power generation capacity.

Since its establishment in 1993, MAPNA Group has managed to build 36,355 MW of gas units, 1,950 MW of thermal steam units, 11,374 MW of combined steam units, 165 MW of wind and solar power plants, and 376 MW of medium, small, and mobile scale plants across Iran.

The company is still building numerous power plants both inside and outside the country.

The value of MAPNA's completed projects in the field of electricity is estimated at €24 billion, and the value of MAPNA's ongoing projects in the country is about €8.0 billion.

## Iran records West Asia's 2nd-highest economic growth in 2023: UN

TEHRAN – The United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs in its latest report on the global economy dubbed "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024" has said the Iranian economy grew by three percent in 2023, registering the second-biggest economic growth in West Asia after Bahrain.

The UN report has put the

growth of Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023 at 3.0 percent, higher than 99 countries all around the world. The entity expects the Iranian economy to grow by 2.4 percent in 2024.

The United Nations statistics show that the average economic growth of 12 countries in West Asia in 2023 was less than 1.0 percent. In other words, Iran's economy has grown three times

the regional average in 2023.

Kuwait, Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon registered negative economic growth in 2023. The economic growth of these countries has been reported as - 0.7 percent, - 3.5 percent, - 0.5 percent, and - 0.2 percent, respectively.

The economic growth of Oman is reported to be 1.2

percent, Qatar 2.3 percent, UAE 2.7 percent, Jordan 2.1 percent, and Syria 1.3 percent. Saudi Arabia's economy has also faced stagnation and reported zero growth this year.

The UN report also put Iran's inflation rate at 42.1 percent in 2023 and predicted that the figure will fall to 28.6 percent in 2024 with a significant decrease compared to the previous year.

## Iran settles railway dues with Russia, Turkmenistan: RAI head

TEHRAN – The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) has said the company has settled all its dues to Russia and Turkmenistan, the portal of Iran's Transport Ministry reported.

"International railway debts that remained unpaid for over 10 years have

been paid to Russia and Turkmenistan," Miad Salehi said at the meeting of the administrative council of the country's northwest railways on Sunday.

According to Salehi, some domestic companies have not paid their debts to RAI for more than seven years and in order for

RAI to be able to prosper, such debt should be paid.

Referring to the slogan of "a strong railway, a strong Iran", Salehi said: "One of the requirements for the realization of this slogan is the collection of dues and the payment of railway debts."

## Commodities worth over \$624m traded at IME in a week

TEHRAN- During the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed trade of 3,116,158 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$624 million on its physical market, posting growths of 1.7 percent and 13.1 percent in value and volume of trades compared to the figures of the previous week.

As reported by the IME's Public Relations and International Affairs Department, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,439,652 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$350 million.

On this floor the IME sold 1,250,716 tons of cement, 792,000 tons of iron ore, 255,597 tons of steel, 119,000 tons of sponge iron, 12,095 tons of aluminum, 10,121 tons of copper, 2,510 tons of zinc, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate and 9 tons of precious metals concentrate.

Moreover, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 667,115 tons of commodities worth more than \$270 million.

Commodities traded on this floor included 265,011 tons of bitumen, 176,900 tons of vacuum bottom, 100,623 tons of polymeric products, 57,000 tons of lube cut, 44,697 tons

of chemicals, 13,570 tons of sulfur, 5,560 tons of petroleum products, 3,818 tons of oil, 500 tons of waterproofing materials and 380 tons of feedstocks.

The IME also traded within the same week 9,390 tons of goods on its side market.

As previously reported, IME witnessed trade of 11,980,791 tons of commodities with a total trading value of nearly \$3 billion on its physical market during the past Iranian calendar month (ended on December 21, 2023).

The exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor, trade of 9,893,000 tons of commodities valued at nearly \$2 billion.

On this floor the IME sold 5,059,317 tons of cement, 2,279,000 tons of iron ore, 1,930,172 tons of steel, 545,000 tons of sponge iron, 58,805 tons of zinc, 39,140 tons of aluminum, 32,356 tons of copper, 2,275 tons of cast iron, 1,000 tons of coke, 800 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 175 tons of lead and 60 tons of precious metals concentrate.

It's worth noting that the IME also traded 5 tons of cotton on its agricultural trading floor.

Moreover, the exchange saw trade of 1,944,596 tons of commodities worth more than \$866 million on both domestic and export



rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

Items traded on this floor included 648,540 tons of vacuum bottom, 548,923 tons of bitumen, 387,000 tons of polymeric products, 190,000 tons of lube cut, 135,220 tons of chemicals, 23,470 tons of sulfur, 15,967 tons of oil, 11,652 tons of petroleum products, 1,925 tons of feedstocks, 1,000 tons of slop wax and 200 tons of waterproofing materials.

Last was the IME's side market on which the exchange traded 88,089 tons of goods.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).



# Why are so many journalists being killed in Gaza?

*Censoring what the regime doesn't want the world to know*

From page 1 ► travel through the enclave, and begin to observe and report about the regime's war crimes in the territory.

This would essentially spin the narrative of the Western media about the reality of what is unfolding in Gaza.

The only lifeline of information reaching the outside world is the brave work of local journalists and those who had been stationed in Gaza by regional media outlets before the war started.

This is the only source to counter the disinformation campaign that the regime is waging and is trying its very best to kill this source.

According to the Gaza Media Center?, the regime has killed 109 journalists and media workers in the enclave, over the past three months, turning the blockaded territory into the most dangerous place in the world to work in such a profession.

Moreover, the regime has used surgical strikes to destroy the Gaza media offices of some of the most well-known regional media outlets.

These are the same news outlets that are using their cameras to highlight just part of the killings and destructions that the Israeli military is committing in Gaza.

The media has become the number one enemy of the regime, which is trying its best to silence the information getting out of Gaza.

In a post on X, Professor Farhang Jahanpour, a former lecturer at Cambridge, Harvard and Oxford universities, wrote on Monday that at least CNN admits that its coverage of Arab-Israeli news is run through and reviewed by the CNN Jerusalem bureau—which is subject to the IDF's censor.» Jahanpour asks: How many more Western media follow this practice without the public knowing about it?

To silence the media in Gaza, the



Speaking at his son's funeral, Wael al Dahdouh, a veteran journalist, said, "To Hamza and to all the martyrs I say we will remain faithful. This is the road that we have chosen consciously. We have offered much, and we have offered a lot of blood because this is our destiny. We shall continue."

occupation regime has also cut communications in the enclave so that live bloggers who connect with the outside world and speak about the latest developments are prevented from doing so as internet services continue to go down on a regular basis.

UN workers can speak out against the regime for the most heinous crimes it is committing in Gaza, which they have been reporting on, but streaming live images from the Strip is a totally different ball game.

Reporting from hospitals or shelters will change the entire mind frame of the audience.

The Israeli regime has killed some of the most well-known and veteran Gaza journalists trusted by the people in the region. Some have been killed by airstrikes and others on the battlefield by the Israeli military

that has invaded the enclave.

This is despite the fact that journalists wear a bright blue flak jacket with PRESS written on it as well as a bright blue helmet with PRESS clearly written on it to identify themselves. They are non-combatants.

An analysis by the International Federation of Journalists last month said that during the first 10 weeks of the Israeli war on Gaza alone, more journalists had been killed in the enclave than in any other country in history over an entire year.

Reports have also emerged of other journalists going missing, detained, hurt, threatened, or intentionally their homes have been damaged.

This fits into the regime's determination to harass the journalists still alive and reporting in Gaza to leave the enclave.

Yet many have said they will continue to fulfill their duty until their death.

It is a very courageous stance, having witnessed everything that has happened to continue working and reporting from Gaza.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said it was "particularly concerned about an apparent pattern of targeting of journalists and their families by the Israeli military."

The organization also said it was further investigating the circumstances of all journalists that the Israeli military has killed.

However, it pointed out that such efforts in Gaza are being hampered by widespread destruction and by the killing of journalists' family members, who typically serve as sources for investigators looking into how the journalists had been killed.

Hamza al-Dadoun and his colleague from Al Jazeera were killed in the southern city of Khan Younis when their car was reportedly attacked by the Israeli military.

Hamza al-Dadoun was the son of Al Jazeera Gaza's bureau chief, Wael al Dahdouh, who had already seen his wife, another son, and a daughter as well as a grandson killed by the Israeli military since the regime's war on Gaza began more than three months ago.

Speaking at his son's funeral, Wael al Dahdouh said, "To Hamza and to all the martyrs I say we will remain faithful. This is the road that we have chosen consciously. We have offered much, and we have offered a lot of blood because this is our destiny. We shall continue."

The world relies on these brave journalists to continue reporting on the crimes against humanity being committed by the Israeli military against the civilian population of Gaza.



In December, a New York Times investigation revealed that during the first month and a half of the war, Israel "routinely used one of its biggest and most destructive bombs in areas it designated safe for civilians".

blaming the Tamil Tigers for allegedly using the refugees concentrated in the safe zones as "human shields".

Similarly, in Gaza, Israel is imposing unilaterally what and where is "safe" for Palestinian civilians. In doing so, it is deploying the discourse of safety and its associated legal technologies – warnings, safe zones, safe corridors, evacuation grids – as a lethal tool to implement the ethnic cleansing of different areas of the territory designated as safe/unsafe.

Areas or parts of the territories defined as safe serve to concentrate the displaced population and better manage the military operations and the killing of civilians. As one poignant Reuters headline put it: "Israel orders Gazans to flee, bombs where it sends them".

*Nicola Perugini is senior lecturer in international relations at the University of Edinburgh (See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))*



# INTERNATIONAL

JANUARY 9, 2024

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

# 5

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Germany will no longer block sale of Eurofighter jets to S. Arabia



Germany will no longer block the sale of Eurofighter jets to Saudi Arabia, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock says.

The announcement means a deal for 48 Eurofighter jets signed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in London can go ahead.

"Saudi Arabia is a key contributor to Israel's security, even these days, and is helping to stem the risk of a regional conflagration," Baerbock told journalists in Israel.

"The fact that Saudi Arabia is now intercepting missiles fired by the Houthis at Israel underlines this, and we are grateful for that," she added, describing this role as an "open secret".

Baerbock also noted Saudi Arabia and Israel have "not renounced their policy of normalization".

Germany stopped selling arms to Saudi Arabia after the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Germany, the UK, Italy, and Spain jointly build the Eurofighter jet and can each veto deals.

### IDF claims it found proof Hamas developed cruise missile capabilities

Israeli soldiers in Gaza claimed they had uncovered equipment being used by Hamas to develop precision-guided missiles, the military said Sunday.

Such technology would represent a dangerous upgrade to the group's weapons capabilities, the Times of Israel said.

The announcement came as fighting in Gaza entered a third month since war broke out on October 7.

The Hamas group's arsenal of projectiles has been thought to be primarily made up of unguided rockets, with only anti-tank guided missiles and small explosive drones – used at short range – possessing guided capabilities, along with explosives-laden underwater drones and shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles.

### 'No choice but to stop the aggression': Hezbollah to Israel

Sheikh Ali Damoush, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's executive council, says the Lebanese armed group will not engage in any discussion on cross-border clashes until the Israelis stop their "aggression against Gaza".

According to Lebanon's National News Agency, he spoke at a ceremony commemorating a Hezbollah fighter, Abdul Jalil Ali Hamza, who was killed in the town of al-Khader in the Bekaa Valley.

"The Israeli predicament is deepening day after day as the war lasts, because the longer the aggression continues the more and more exhausted the enemy becomes, whether on the Gaza front or on the Lebanon front," Damoush said.

"There is no choice but to stop the aggression."

### G7 working with Israel on 'rapid' end to Gaza conflict: Italian FM

Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, says G7 countries should reduce civilian casualties in Gaza and pressure Israel to end its war on the besieged enclave.

Tajani added he discussed the conflict with his British and French counterparts as Italy begins its one-year presidency of the Group of Seven.

The Italian Foreign Ministry quoted Tajani as saying G7 nations are working with the Israeli government "to find a rapid way out of the military phase".

### Islamic Resistance in Iraq fires cruise missile at Haifa

The umbrella group Islamic Resistance in Iraq says it launched an "advanced cruise missile" at the Israeli city of Haifa.

A long-range missile called al-Arqaab was used to attack a "vital target in occupied Haifa" on an unspecified date, it said in a statement.

The attack was in support of Palestinians and a response to "massacres" committed by Israel, the resistance group said. The statement was accompanied by a short video showing the night-time launch of the missile.

It promised more launches would be forthcoming. The group recently launched several rocket on US bases in Iraq and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in Syria. This is the first time it said it targeted Haifa.

### UK citizens call for expulsion of Israeli ambassador

An online petition to expel the Israeli ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, for her support for "destroying" Gaza has now gathered more than 100,000 signatures.

The Change.org petition, filed less than a month ago, says the role of political envoys is to foster good relations between countries, and they must face consequences when they achieve the opposite.

"This petition is not against Israel or its people, but against actions that could potentially harm our society's fabric," it reads.

Hotovely made several highly controversial comments about how much, if not all, of Gaza needs to be destroyed in order to destroy Hamas and its large network of underground tunnels.

"Do you have another solution to destroy the underground tunnel city? This is the place where the terrorists hide, where they have all their ammunitions," she said last week after a UK radio program host asked whether she supports "destroying the whole of Gaza, every single building in it?"

### Israeli authorities, illegal settlers carried out over 12,000 attacks in 2023

More than 12,000 attacks were carried out by Israeli authorities and illegal settlers in 2023, a Palestinian official said on Monday.

"The occupation authorities and their settlers carried out 12,161 attacks, including 5,308 after Oct. 7," head of the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission, Moayad Shaaban, told reporters in Ramallah.

Israeli settlers carried out 2,410 of the attacks, he added.

He said as many as 22 Palestinians were killed in firing by settlers, including 10 after Oct. 7.



## Prisoners in Kordestan to receive handicraft training for job opportunities



TEHRAN- Training courses in various areas of handicrafts are set to be offered in prisons across the western province of Kordestan, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The courses aim to create job opportunities for released prisoners as well as serve as a source of income for those currently incarcerated, Mansour Mehrzad explained on Sunday.

Efforts have been made to secure a booth to exhibit the products crafted by prisoners at both domestic and international handicraft exhibitions, he added.

“Our aspiration is that these activities and endeavors not only provide handicraft training for prisoners but also extend the opportunity to their families,” he noted.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a memorandum of understanding with the Prisons, Security, and Corrective Measures Organization to create jobs and make income for prisoners.

The MOU also aimed at implementing special educational and promotional programs, identifying talented prisoners, and improving their social status.

As mentioned by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the value of Iran’s handicraft exports stood at \$400 million during the first ten months of the past Iranian

calendar year 1401 (Mar. 21, 2022—Jan. 20, 2023). “Compared to the same period a year earlier, the figure represents some 30 percent growth.”

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

Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council. For instance, Shiraz is named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”, Malayer is a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture, while Zanjan has gained the title of a “world city of filigree”.

In addition, the ancient city of Shiraz was chosen to host the 39th General Assembly of the World Crafts Council-Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR) in May 2023. Shiraz has a remarkable amount of handicraft pioneers. With an average age of 70, some of these pioneers are still active at their workshops. The occupational records of about 100 pioneers are collected and are annually praised by the custodians of the WCC General Office.

## Qajar-era Tekyeh in Mashhad made national heritage

TEHRAN- The Qajar-era (1789–1925) Darugheh Tekyeh in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province, has recently been inscribed on the national heritage list, a local tourism official has said.

This historical monument is located on the pedestrian route towards the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) and has a history of over 120 years, Mahmoud Toghray said on Monday.

This building, designed in the common style of late Qajar period Tekyehs or Hus-sainiyas, which have a central courtyard surrounded by covered spaces, has a noticeable architectural identity and is still used and respected by the custodians and the local people, he added.

During Muharram, apart from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its establishment for the ceremonial processions of the month known as Tekyeh (or Tekkiyeh), which are venues for the gathering of mourners known as ‘heyat’ (literally meaning group or delegation) honor the life of

Imam Hussein (AS).

Tekkiyeh (stemming from the word eteka, meaning backup or reliable) was historically a staying place for visiting pilgrims and dervishes who relied on the goodness of the benefactors for daily sustenance. Today, Tekkiyehs, however, are specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in religious gatherings after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade dramatic mourning.

Mashhad is Iran’s holiest and second-largest city. Its raison d’être and main sight is the striking massive shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam. Mashhad attracts millions of pilgrims each year.

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

## Japanese city recruiting ninjas for new tourism scheme

You may have heard about Japan’s demographic crisis, but the country is facing another, lesser known crisis as well.

Japan does not have enough ninjas.

In an episode of NPR’s (National Public Radio) “Planet Money” podcast, Sally Herships visited Iga, a small city in the center of the country that claims to be the birthplace of the ninja.

Each year the city of approximately 100,000 swells by about 30,000, as tourists come to experience the annual ninja festival.

Iga, however, is suffering from depopulation. “It’s facing a shortage of those two key things you need to

keep an economy humming: stuff to sell and people to buy the stuff,” Ms Herships’ cohost Stacey Vanek Smith says.

Iga is also losing young people who don’t want to live in the rural countryside. To revive the local economy, the mayor of Iga, Sakae Okamoto, is promoting the city’s ninja heritage with the aim of drawing more tourists.

“Right now in Iga, we are working very hard to promote ninja tourism and get the most economic outcome,” he said. “For example, we hold this ninja festival between late April to around the beginning of May. During this period visitors and

also local people come here. Everybody will be dressed like a ninja and walks around and enjoys themselves – but recently I feel that it’s not enough.”

Japan is experiencing a major tourist boom – the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) estimates that almost 29 million tourists visited Japan in 2017. That’s an increase of almost 20 per cent from the year before.

While some cities are benefiting economically from the influx of tourists, rural ones like Iga are apparently being left out.

With the hope of encouraging tourists to stay longer than a day

# Historical mosque in ancient Belad Shapur restored

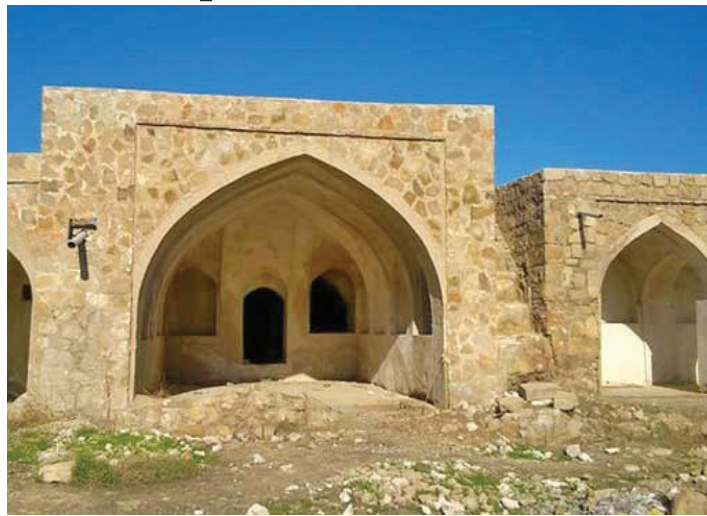
TEHRAN- The first phase of restoration work has been completed on the historical Chehel Sotun Mosque in the ancient town of Belad Shapur in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province.

This phase of the restoration involved replacing worn-out materials and repairing the damaged parts, the provincial tourism chief explained on Monday.

A budget of 10 billion rials (\$20,000) was allocated to the project, Saeid Talebipour said.

The restoration of this historical structure plays a crucial role in expanding religious tourism in the region, he added.

Despite all the destruction that took place in the historical city of Belad Shapur in different eras, with an area of more than



45 hectares, it is currently considered as one of the largest historical structures in the country in terms of size and number of historical buildings. Inscribed on

the National Heritage list in 1985, the ancient city of Belad Shapur is one of the top tourist sites of the province.

Belad Shapur, known by its

current name Dehdasht, was built at the time of Shapur I, also known as Shapur the Great, (reigned 241 CE–272), the second king of the Sassanid Dynasty. Under his leadership, the empire stretched from Sogdiana and Iberia (Georgia) in the north to the Mazun region of Arabia in the south; in the east, it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

## Restoration completed on Sassanid arch bridge



TEHRAN- A restoration project on a Sassanid-era (224 CE to 651) arch bridge in the southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province has come to an end, the provincial tourism chief has said.

A budget of 10 billion rials (\$20,000) was allocated to the project, Saeid Talebipour explained on Monday.

The historical structure has undergone eight stages of restoration and renovation so far, he added.

An arch bridge carries loads primarily by compression, which exerts on the foundation both vertical and horizontal forces. Arch foundations must therefore prevent both vertical settling and horizontal sliding. Despite the more complicated foundation design, the structure itself normally requires less material than a beam bridge of the same span.

Arch bridges can be classified into deck

arch bridges (featuring arches below the deck) and through arch bridges (those with arches above the deck, generally tied arches). In all arch bridges, structural difficulty can be found in the minimization of the misalignment of the arch axis and the line of thrust, as well as sufficient bending and buckling resistance. General design recommendations focus principally on the arch-to-span ratio, the arch and deck slenderness, and the number of hangers or piers.

Recent innovative arch bridges include high-speed railway (HSR) bridges, concrete-filled steel tubular and precast concrete arches, high-performance concrete or ultra-high-performance concrete arches, and steel-concrete composite arches, and feature innovative erection methods. Recent research has been dedicated to the shape and magnitude of equivalent geometric imperfections, fatigue detailing, erection methods, reduction of the arch’s self-weight, and new materials for arches, hangers, and ties.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under the Sassanids, Persian architecture and the arts experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Generally, a Sassanid archaeological land-

scape represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic usage of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization.

In 2018, an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, titled “Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region,” was named a UNESCO site. The ensemble comprises eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bis-hapur, and Sarvestan.

The World Heritage reflects the optimized usage of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and of Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

Apart from architecture, crafts such as metalwork and gem-engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province is known for its nomads and nomadic life. Sightseers may live with a nomadic or rural family for a while or enjoy an independent stay and assist them with day-to-day life. It also opens up an opportunity to feel rustic routines, their agriculture, traditions, arts, and culture.

## Dyeing to remember: Pompeii’s ancient textile techniques resurrected in modern day

Pompeii’s director, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, has been overseeing a project reviving ancient crafts and production techniques within the archaeological park.

Inside the Pompeii archaeological site, a new project is reviving ancient textile dyeing techniques to show another side of daily life before the city was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

The inspiration for this endeavor stems from frescoes discovered within the archaeological site depicting winged cupids dyeing cloth, harvesting grapes for wine, and crafting perfumes.

Describing the connection between the frescoes and reality, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, the director of the archaeological site, remarked, “It is very close to the actual reality.”

For Zuchtriegel, textile dyeing is another way to bring Pompeii back to life for modern visitors.

“It is part of a scientific and cultural project to create awareness that history is not only the big monuments and beautiful paintings,” he said. “There’s also another history, of the economy, the daily life, the lives of the majority which often are not represented in the great narratives.”

To bring this project to fruition, Zuchtriegel enlisted the expertise of Claudio Cutuli, one of the world’s few remaining master dyer.

Cutuli utilizes dyes derived from plants in his own Pompeii-inspired clothing line.

For instance, he employs the root of “rubia tinctorum,” or rose madder, to achieve the renowned

Pompeian red. Additionally, walnut husks contribute to brown, elderberries to black and gray, and cardamom to amber, yellow, and various shades of green.

Using this Pompeian color palette, Cutuli dyes scarves adorned with motifs inspired by the frescoes found in the House of Vetti, including those featuring cupids. The opulent residence, much like the entirety of Pompeii, was entombed under volcanic ash.

Half of the profits from the scarves’ sale will help fund further restoration efforts at the once-sprawling city, where gardeners recently recreated a nursery that includes plants that were used for dyeing before Pompeii’s destruction.

Garden historian Maurizio Bar-

tolini said that roots, bark and flowers were often used in dyeing.

Rosehip, for example, made a soft pink “that was one of the most used colors,” he said.

Frescoes in the archaeological site show wealthy Pompeians dressed brightly in purple, green, pinks, blues and yellows. The hues were achieved by boiling the dyed textiles in metal-lined vats at workshops run by slaves who, by contrast, wore plain, brown tunics.

“It’s quite unpleasant conditions for the slaves who worked here,” archaeologist Sophie Hay said. “You have got the furnaces going, and it would be hot, crowded and noisy, because people would be shouting when they come in to see if their stuff is ready yet.”

(Source: Euronews)

\$23,000 (£17,600) to about \$85,000 (£65,300) – which is a really solid salary, and in fact, a lot more than real ninjas used to earn in medieval Japan.”

Ms Herships quotes the International Ninja Research Centre, which states that in Iga, the typical ninja earned an inflation-adjusted \$8,000 (£6,000) to \$17,000 (£13,000) a year.

Mr Okamoto faces an uphill battle, though. The Mie Prefecture, where Iga is located, as a whole attracted just 43 new young residents last year; Iga alone lost 1,000 residents.

(Source: Independent)



# Iranian universities advance in URAP ranking 2023-2024

TEHRAN –According to the results of the 2023-2024 edition of the University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), 71 Iranian institutions are included in the ranking compared to 64 institutions in the 2022-2023 edition.

URAP World Ranking is based on six academic performance indicators including number of articles, citations, total document, scientific productivity, research impact, and international collaboration.

In the academic performance ranking of 71 universities in Iran, Tehran University is ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231, IRNA reported.

Tehran University of Medical Science (277), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (436) were ranked second and third, respectively.

In the 2023 edition of URAP, the University of Tehran is ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231.

Golestan University of Medical Science (1307), University of Hormozgan, Amol University of Special Modern Technologies, Vali-e-Asr University of Rafsanjan, Ilam University, University of Science and Technology of Mazandaran are institutions that have recently been ranked among the best in the world in the 2023-2024 edition.

Harvard University, University of Toronto, and University College London were ranked first to third respectively.

## URAP system

The main objective of URAP is to develop a ranking system for world universities based on academic performance indicators that reflect the quality and the quantity of their scholarly publications.

In line with this objective URAP has been annually releasing the World Ranking of Higher Education



Institutions since 2010, and Field Rankings since 2011.

The most recent ranking has gathered data about 3,000 Higher Education Institutes (HEI) in an effort to rank these organizations by their academic performance. The overall score of each HEI is based upon its performance over several indicators.

Since URAP is an academic performance-based ranking, publications constitute the basis of the ranking methodology. Both quality and quantity of publications and international research collaboration performance are used as indicators.

## Global rankings

In December 2023, the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) released a report, ranking 115 governmental and 17 non-governmental universities according to six indices.

Education counts for 30 percent, Research counts for 25 percent, Technology and Innovation counts for 20 percent, International Outlook counts for 10 percent, and Social Services, Infrastructure, and Facilities counts for 5 percent, ISNA quoted the ISC head Ahmad Fazelzadeh as saying.

The universities of Tehran, Far-

dowsi of Mashhad, Tarbiat Modarres, Shahid Beheshti, and Shiraz were placed first to fifth in the ranking.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2024 has listed 36 Iranian universities among the world's top 1,000 institutions, compared with 29 universities in 2023.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 include 1,904 universities across 108 countries and regions.

The ranking is based on 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five areas: teaching, research environment, research quality, industry, and international outlook.

Sharif University of Technology ranks first among Iranian universities with a rank in the range of 301-350.

Amirkabir University comes next with a rank in the range of 351-400.

The University of Tehran and Iran University of Science and Technology both are in the range of 401-500.

Shahid Beheshti Medical University, Tehran Medical University, and Iran Medical University are in the range of 601-800.

This year's ranking analyzed over

134 million citations across 16.5 million research publications and included survey responses from 68,402 scholars globally. Overall, it collected 411,789 data points from more than 2,673 institutions that submitted data.

Oxford University is at the top of this ranking for the eighth year in a row. The highest new entry in this ranking is the Catholic University of Italy, which is ranked 301-350. However, most of the institutions joining the rankings for the first time this year are in Asia.

The United States is the most represented country with 169 institutions, as well as the most represented among the top 200 institutions, with 56 universities.

India, with 91 institutions of higher education, is currently the fourth most represented country and has surpassed China (86).

Four countries entered this ranking for the first time, all of them in Europe. The addition of Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Armenia is contrary to last year's trend, which has caused these countries to be represented in the ranking of the world's top universities.

In addition to the 1,904 ranked institutions, an additional 769 universities are listed with "reporter" status, meaning they submitted data but did not meet the eligibility criteria to receive a rank and agreed to appear as reporters in the final table.

The world's top ten universities in 2024 are as follows:

University of Oxford, Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, University of Cambridge, California Institute of Technology, Imperial College London, University of California, Berkeley, and Yale University.

# SOCIETY

JANUARY 9, 2024  
Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

7

## Blood storage duration rises to 8 days

TEHRAN –The country's blood storage has increased from four days to eight days, Mostafa Jamali, CEO of the Blood Transfusion Organization, has said.

By offering molecular screening tests, viral agents such as HIV can be detected in less than three or four days, IRNA quoted Jamali as saying.

Currently, the country's blood and blood products have been fully provided with no blood supply shortage, he said, adding that the blood storage has reached from four days to eight days, he added.

He went on to say that a total of 2.7 million people voluntarily donate blood yearly. "Some 2.22 million individuals donated blood last year."

## 4% increase in last 9 months

Blood donation in Iran increased by more than four percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year which started in March 2023 compared to the same period last year.

A total of 1,759,734 Iranians donated blood over the mentioned period, IRNA quoted Bashir Haji-Beigi, the Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman, as saying.

He went on to say that the highest blood donation growth was recorded in Lorestan, North Khorasan, and Kerman provinces with 29 percent, 20 percent, and 13 percent rise, respectively, IRNA



reported.

The continuous blood donation growth rate in the country is around 54 percent, he said, adding that the provinces of Semnan, Yazd, and Golestan hold the highest rates with 69 percent, 64 percent, and 63 percent, respectively.

Referring to over four percent of women's share of blood donation in the country, he said: "Women should get more involved in blood donation than in the past." Continuous and regular blood donation (at least twice a year) has increased slightly to 53 percent in the first five months of the year compared to the same period last year, as 527,385 units of blood were donated by regular donors, the official noted.

## West Asia's water crisis deepens through cloud wars

From page 1 ► and pollution in cities, coupled with climate change, may account for these irregularities. However, such explanations failed to address the abnormally low precipitation in Iran.

The divergence in precipitation levels between these two regions in borders highlighted a notable discrepancy, prompting questions about the situation in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

While some experts argued that snow and rain are not uncommon in Arab countries, referring to historical records of snowfall in certain cities, again, their explanations had yet to fully convince skeptics.

In response to growing concerns, Ali Salajegheh, head of the Department of Environment, recently announced plans for a ground-breaking study on the causes of low rainfall in the current water year and the consequences of climate change.

Nonetheless, it is challenging to attribute precipitation patterns solely to climate change; maybe extreme events like drought or heavy rainfall can be influenced by it, although with limited certainty. Moreover, Climate change is expected to have a significant impact on the entire West Asia region.

Some rumors were spread surrounding the existence of anti-hail devices near Mount Sabalan whose primary purpose is to convert hail within clouds into rain, safeguarding crops in the area from potential damage. Addressing the issue, the director general of Ardabil province's Meteorology Department, Majid Kohi, stated that there is no scientific evidence to

support the ability of these devices to disperse clouds or inhibit rainfall.

However, a report from IRNA news agency in 2021 featured the head of the Maragheh Environmental Protection Department, Gholamreza Zare, who highlighted the potential impact of anti-hail devices on local rainfall.

Zare noted that in recent years, these devices have been used in the apple orchards of the city, and irregular usage has led to cloud dispersal and decreased rainfall, particularly on the southern slopes of Sahand.

Anti-hail devices have gained widespread use in Iran, particularly within the agricultural sector, for more than a decade. The Parliament Research Center's report (2014) has also mentioned the counteractive nature of anti-hail devices in contrast to cloud seeding methods.

All this while official statements from the Iranian government have recently confirmed the country's precipitation levels have fallen 30% below the average recorded over the past three decades.

Mansour Sohrabi, an agroecologist, has also expressed concerns over the Urmia Lake basin that have witnessed a drastic 40% reduction in rainfall and changes in precipitation patterns from autumn into late winter and early spring.

According to long-term data, more than 45% of rainfall in the basin historically occurred during the autumn season. In this sense, only abnormal winter conditions until mid-April 2024 can compensate for this rainfall deficit.

By Aylin Javadi  
(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols to protect teachers, staff, and students against the coronavirus pandemic.

The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran.

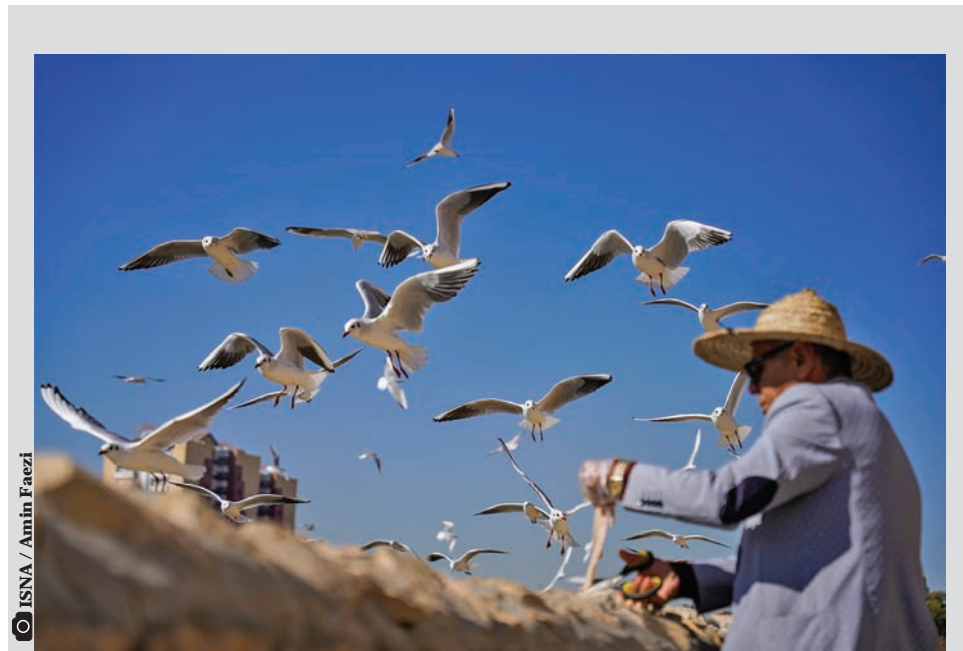
Education Minister Mohsen Haji Mirzaei said this year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, he noted, highlighting, all schools should strictly follow the health regulations so that the students are protected.

## بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور حسن روحانی رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: امسال آموزش دانش آموزان به سه شکل حضوری، مجازی، و تلویزیونی دنبال می شود، اما اولویت ما آموزش حضوری دانش آموزان است. او افزود: همه مدارس باید شیوه نامه های بهداشتی را به طور جدی رعایت کنند تا مشکلی برای دانش آموزان پیش نیاید.



## Gulls spending winter in Shiraz

Every year, gulls migrating from Siberia travel more than 4,000 kilometers to reach the city of Shiraz, southern Iran, during the winter season.

Wintering species also include Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia, Osprey Pandion haliaetus, White-tailed Eagle Haliaeetus albicilla, and Terns Sterna spp to name a few.



# TEHRAN TIMES



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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The faithful are tied in kindness and affection together like members of a body, one's pain and hardship affect the others.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

**Prayer Times** » Noon:12:11    Evening: 17:28    Dawn: 5:46 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 7:15 (tomorrow)

## Cinema Museum to show the restored version of Kimiai's "Snake's Fang"

TEHRAN-The Cinema Museum of Iran will screen the restored version of Masoud Kimiai's 1990 war film "Snake's Fang" on Wednesday.

Modified and restored by the National Film Archives of Iran, the 110-minute movie will be shown at 4 p.m. at the Ferdow Hall of the museum, ILNA reported on Monday.

The film screening will be followed by a review session with the presence of film critics Javad Toosi and Shapour Azimi, who will discuss about "Snake's Fang" as well as Kimiai's filmmaking style.

Reza, the veteran worker of a print house whose sight is adversely affected because of his job, loses his mother. Finding the gloom reigning over the home beyond bearing, he departs to overcome his sorrows. He ends up at a hostel where he shares his room with a southern guy called Ahmad who has a group of orphan war-stricken children under his wing. They become friends, until Reza discovers the true nature of his friend's deals.

Iraq drew Iran into a long and destructive eight-year war in which Iran justifiably defended its borders and people. During that war, corruption and extortion flourished and a black market developed. This film takes place after that war and deals with the loneliness - which ensued as the Iranians - including many orphans - tried to build a new life in the post-war chaos.

The cast includes Golchehre Sajadieh, Ahmad Najafi, Faramarz Sadighi, Hassan Rafi'i, Fariba Kowsari, Jalal Moghadam, Nosratollah Karimi, Saeid Pirdoost, Mohammad Vali Ahmadloo, Shahed Ahmadloo, Hossein Memarzadeh, and Nersi Gorgia among others.

"Snake's Fang" was entered into the 41st Berlin International Film Festival in 1991, where it was nominated for the Golden Bear

for the Best Picture and won an Honorable Mention for the director. It also grabbed the Special Jury Prize at the Montreal World Film Festival in 1992.

This was not his sole international prize for Kimiai. At the Cairo International Film festival in 1979, he received from the International Catholic Organization for Cinema (OCIC), the OCIC Prize for his film "The Journey of the Stone". The international OCIC jury gave its award to this film because it denounced the exploitation of mankind by mankind and called for a more just social order. About 30 years later, "Crime" won Crystal Simorgh for the Best Film at Fajr International Film Festival in 2011.

Masoud Kimiai, 82, is a veteran director, screenwriter and producer, who is considered as one of the pioneers of Iranian New Wave.

With his second film, "Qeysar" (1969), he and Dariush Mehrjui with the film "The Cow" caused a historical change in Iranian film industry. "Qeysar" became a great success at the box office and opened the way for young, talented filmmakers who never had a chance in the industry before.

His films deal with people at the margin of the society with his anti-hero characters that die at the end. He usually writes his screenplays, using slang dialogue based on ordinary traditional people's dialect.

During 55 years of professional career, Kimiai has made over 30 films, winning 10 local and international awards for them. He has also penned two novels and a poetry book.

Kimiai has also supported the careers of other award-winning filmmakers in Iran such as Abbas Kiarostami and Asghar Farhadi who worked with him as assistant director and title sequence designer.

TEHRAN-The 14th edition of Ammar Popular Film Festival has received over 3,300 works including documentaries, fictions, animations, and scripts among others, the executive secretary of the festival said at a press conference on Monday.

"Documentaries and scripts form the highest number of submissions," Hamid Salehi said adding that the festival will be held from January 11 to 19 at Felestin Cinema in Tehran, IRNA reported him as saying.

"This year, the winner of the award in the resistance field will receive a symbolic Yemeni dagger," he noted.

Introducing the other parts of this year's edition of the festival, Salehi said: "We will also have expert meetings, educational workshops, and a special program for Gaza and the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation among other programs".

In addition, "The book 'Cinema People,' will be unveiled at the festival, which contains a complete introduction of different periods of Ammar Festival," he added.

According to Salehi, a number some artists and cultural figures will be honored at the festival as well, including cartoonist Maziyar Bijani, film director Mohammad-Hossein Latifi, the late actress Parvaneh Masoumi, and the war veteran Seyyed Mohammad Jozi.

Bijani, 50, is known for his bitter criticism of reformers and pro-Western capitalists. Before becoming a cartoonist, he studied politics. Bijani's work has been featured in various websites promoting Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation.



Latifi, 60, will be honored for his works regarding the Sacred Defense and Palestine such as "Vafa" (2006), "The Third Day" (2007), and "Unknown" (2023).

Massoumi, who passed away last November, at the age of 78, performed in over 30 feature films and more than 20 TV series during 40 years of professional experience. Her notable religious works include TV series "Traveller of Rey" and "Martyr of Kufa" both by Davood Mir-Bagheri and "Prophet Joseph" by Farajollah Salahshour.

Jozi, 58, has collected the memories of the parents of Iranian martyrs of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in the past 25 years.

Salehi also expressed that the festival will present several new awards in various sections, whose details will be announced in the coming days.

Ammar Popular Film Festival was established in 2010 by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures to honor film and art products promoting topics such as resistance and revolution. It was named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The festival serves as a platform and voice for artists involved in the resistance movement, offering support to the global artistic community that is often overlooked by the world.

The 14th edition of the festival will be held in five sections: Main Competition, People's Awards, Our Film, People's Screening and Our Story. In the Main Competition section, the received works compete in the formats of fiction films, documentaries, animations, music videos, television productions, screenplays, screenplays and the new format of virtual space productions.

The topics of this year's edition of the festival include the new world order, the ideal of Ruhollah, the Iranian dream, criticism within the discourse, national memory, the global movement of the oppressed, economic war, heroic nation, and soft war.

## Mehregan Theater to host Stefano Benni's "Le Beatrici"



TEHRAN-The play "Le Beatrici" written by the Italian writer Stefano Benni and directed by Mohammad-Ali Mirghorbani will hit the stage of Mehregan Theater in Tehran on January 16.

The performance is a women's narrative from the past to the present. It consists of monologues of eight different women who are somehow connected, including a frenzied nun, an anxious woman and a career woman, an old shrew and a dreamy old woman, a restless young woman, a cruel teenager and a wolf-woman.

The show is a continuum of angry insults, invectives, amorous spasms, doll-ups, rants, pompous pronouncements, winking confidences, dreamy whispers, strutting deliberations. It is a unique work, between theater and story.

Melika Naderi, Kimia Ali, Nafiseh

Nourmohammadi, Tina Nemati, and Zahra Abdollahi act in the one-hour play.

Stefano Benni, 76, is an Italian satirical writer, poet and journalist. His books have been translated into around 20 foreign languages and scored notable commercial success. 2.5 million copies of his books have been sold in Italy.

Benni has written many successful novels and anthologies. He has worked with several magazines and newspapers, and co-directed a film as well.

His novels contain, within imaginary worlds and situations, a strong satire of Italian society over the last few decades. His writing style includes many puns, neologisms and parodies of other literary styles.

"Le Beatrici" will remain on the stage of Mehregan Theater until January 26.

## Al Jazeera accuses Israel of deliberately targeting reporters killed in southern Gaza airstrike

An apparent Israeli airstrike killed two Palestinian journalists in southern Gaza on Sunday, including the son of veteran Al Jazeera correspondent Wael Dahdouh, who lost his wife, two other children and a grandson — and was nearly killed himself — earlier in the war.

Dahdouh has continued to report on the fighting between Israel and Hamas even as it has taken a devastating toll on his own family, becoming a symbol for many of the perils faced by Palestinian journalists, dozens of whom have been killed while covering the conflict, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported.

Hamza Dahdouh, who was also working for Al Jazeera, and Mustafa Tharaya, a freelance journalist, were killed when a strike hit their car while they were driving to an assignment in southern Gaza. A third journalist, Hazem Rajab, was seriously wounded.

Amer Abu Amr, a photojournalist, said in a Facebook post that he and another journalist, Ahmed al-Bursh, survived the strike.

Wael Dahdouh, 53, has been

the face of Al Jazeera's 24-hour coverage of this war and previous rounds of fighting for millions of Arabic-speaking viewers across the region, nearly always appearing on air in the blue helmet and flak jacket worn to identify journalists in the Palestinian territories.

Speaking to Al Jazeera after his son's burial, Dahdouh vowed to continue reporting on the war. "The whole world must look at what is happening here in the Gaza Strip," he said. "What is happening is a great injustice to defenseless people, civilian people. It is also unfair for us as journalists."

In a statement, Al Jazeera accused Israel of deliberately targeting the reporters and condemned the "ongoing crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against journalists and media professionals in Gaza." It also vowed to take "all legal measures to prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes."

Dahdouh was reporting on the offensive in late October when he received word that his wife, daughter and another son had been killed in an

Israeli airstrike. His grandson, wounded in the same strike, died hours later. The Qatar-based broadcaster later aired footage of him weeping over the body of his son while still wearing his blue press vest.

In December, an Israeli strike on a school in Khan Younis wounded Dahdouh and Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa. Dahdouh was able to run for help, but Abu Daqqa bled to death hours later as ambulances were unable to reach him because of blocked roads.

Earlier in December, a strike killed the father, mother and 20 other family members of another Al Jazeera correspondent, Momen Al Sharafi.

The Committee to Protect Journalists says at least 70 Palestinian reporters, as well as four Israeli and three Lebanese reporters, have been killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza and an escalation in fighting along Israel's border with Lebanon.

Over 22,800 Palestinians have been killed in the war, mostly

women and minors, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza. Some 1,200 people were killed in Israel during the initial Hamas attack.

Israel denies targeting journalists and says it makes every effort to avoid harming civilians, blaming the high death toll on the fact that Hamas fights in densely populated urban areas.

Some 85% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes, with most seeking shelter in Israeli-designated safe zones in southern Gaza. But Israel also regularly carries out strikes in those areas, leading many Palestinians to feel that nowhere in the besieged territory is safe.

Palestinian journalists have played an essential role in reporting on the conflict for local and international media outlets, even as many have lost loved ones and been forced to flee their own homes because of the fighting.

Israel and Egypt, which maintain a blockade on Gaza, have largely barred foreign reporters from entering Gaza since the war began three months ago.

## Cartoon of Day



Journalists in Gaza

**Cartoonist:** Doaa Eladl from Egypt