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Terrorism: Global cause, common responsibilities and appropriate solution

TEHRAN- "A girl in pink jacket and heart earrings!" This is not a fiction similar to six-word stories by Ernest Hemingway, but the real tragedy of a beautiful two-year-old Iranian girl and a symbolic victim of the recent heinous terrorist explosions which took her life and the life of 94 more innocent people, shocking Iran, region and the whole civilized world.

These days the Iranian nation is mourning for 95 precious innocent lives, mostly women (55) and children (24), who were killed in two barbaric terrorist explosions that hit the ancient city of Kerman, an old civilization center in southeast Iran, famous for its rich culture, amiable inhabitants and welcoming posture toward immigrants. The explosions happened as tens of thousands of people from different ethnic and religious groups gathered in annual ceremonies to commemorate Major General Qasem Soleimani.

15 of the victims are from Sunni Islam whom ISIS pretends to defend, but only as a false political mantra. ▶ Page 2

Iran UN envoy warns any attacks will be met with response

TEHRAN - In a stern declaration on Tuesday, Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's permanent representative and ambassador to the United Nations, reinforced the nation's unwavering commitment to responding decisively to any potential attack.

Iravani, addressing reporters, asserted that retaliating firmly against threats is at the core of Iran's policy.

Amid speculation about diplomatic exchanges between the United States and Iran, Iravani refuted claims of messages being conveyed through intermediaries, making it clear that no such communication had taken place.

Iran restated its stance, deeming any attack on its soil a red line all while cautioning of a robust response.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council on Monday, Iravani clarified Iran's position, disavowing any responsibility for the actions of individuals or groups in the region. He emphasized that affiliated groups, whether in Iraq, Syria, or elsewhere, operate neither directly nor indirectly on behalf of Iran, reaffirming earlier communications from December 4, 2023, and January 2, 2024. ▶ Page 2

Iran will not let threats go unanswered: IRGC chief

TEHRAN - Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), has issued a warning amidst rising tensions in West Asia, fueled by Israel's actions in Gaza.

During the final session of the national congress of 24,000 martyrs of Tehran Province, Salami stated, "Sometimes, the enemies make threats. And these days too, we hear some threats in the U.S. officials' rhetoric. We tell them (the Americans) that you have tested us and we know each other. We will not leave any threat unanswered."

This comes after U.S. President Joe Biden attributed a deadly attack on a U.S. occupation base to Tehran.

Emphasizing that Iran is not actively seeking war but is not afraid of it, Salami's warning aligns with Iran's stance conveyed through its permanent mission to the UN, stating that Tehran would "respond decisively" to any attack on its territory, interests, and nationals.

Tensions have heightened due to the U.S.'s support for Israel in the Gaza war. Over the weekend, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq executed a drone strike on a military outpost in Jordan, referred to as Tower 22, resulting in the death of three U.S. soldiers and numerous injuries. ▶ Page 2

Are post-war Gaza scenarios realistic?

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Western countries have thrown their full weight behind the regime.

They have turned a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinians who have been subjected to atrocious crimes and mass ethnic cleansing campaigns carried out by the occupying regime.

Nonetheless, the October 7 military operation by the resistance movement Hamas which dealt a heavy blow to Israel's security and intelligence system, marked a turning point in the region.

The Hamas attack, which further shattered the image of Israel's invincibility, caught European officials and diplomats off-guard. Soon after Israel waged a deadly war on Gaza following the Hamas strike, the repercussions of the regime's onslaught pushed Europeans to place new plans on the agenda over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

EU proposal

One of these plans was drafted by the European Union in January. ▶ Page 5

Netanyahu's gang call for settlements in Gaza

By Ali Karbalaee

TEHRAN- Far-right Zionist ministers in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet and members of the Knesset (parliament) linked to his Likud party attended a conference calling for settlements to return to the Gaza Strip along with the migration of the Palestinian population from the enclave.

Some 1,000 people, including eleven cabinet ministers and 15 members of the Knesset, some of them members of Netanyahu's Likud party attended the controversial event in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Among the keynote speakers, who voiced their rhetoric, were well-known extremist settlers such as Netanyahu's security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich.

The attendance of government and parliamentary figures and their rhetoric at the conference is a clear violation of last week's International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling which ruled the Israeli regime must "take all measures within its power" to avoid acts of genocide in its war on Gaza, including the "prevention and punishment of genocidal rhetoric".

Both Ben-Gvir and Smotrich called for the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and north of the occupied West Bank, with Palestinians migrating elsewhere.

Prominent and influential rabbis, settlement leaders and other participants were shown maps and detailed preparations for the expansion of settler occupation to areas that are considered by the United Nations as part of the future of a possible Palestinian state. ▶ Page 5

Iran outperforms world major economies in 2023: IMF

TEHRAN - The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its latest quarterly report dubbed World Economic Outlook, has announced that the Iranian economy has outperformed many of the world powers in 2023 with a growth of 5.4 percent.

According to the IMF data, Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023 was higher than almost all of the world's major economies including the U.S., China, the UK, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and many more.

The Islamic Republic's economic growth in 2023 was nearly 1.6 percent more than the country's GDP growth in 2022.

The IMF has also reviewed its forecast of Iran's economic growth for 2024 from 2.5 percent in October to 3.8 percent. ▶ Page 4



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Leader pays tribute to founder of Islamic Republic ahead of revolution anniversary

TEHRAN - Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, paid homage to the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, on Wednesday ahead of the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

During his visit to Imam Khomeini's mausoleum in southern Tehran, he offered prayers and recited verses from the Holy Quran. Subsequently, he paid respect at the burial ground of martyrs who lost their lives during the popular uprising that led to the revolution or while upholding revolutionary values afterward, at Behesht-e Zahra, Tehran's main cemetery. ▶ Page 2

Iran earn hard-fought win over Syria in 2023 AFC Asian Cup

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Syria 5-3 in penalty shootout on Wednesday in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup knockout stage.

Mehdi Taremi was brought down by the Syrian defender and he converted the penalty with a right-footed shot in the 34th minute.

Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand fouled on Pablo Sabbag and the Korean referee awarded a penalty to Syria after VAR check.

Right-footed Omar Khrbin sent his to the center of the goal to equalize the match in the 74th minute. The condition went from bad to worse just after the 90th minute after Taremi received his second yellow card.

Team Melli defeated Syria 5-3 on penalties.

Iran will meet Japan on Saturday in the competition's quarterfinals.

Iran had stormed to the top of their group with three wins, finishing ahead of the United Arab Emirates in second but Syria finished third in their group behind Australia and Uzbekistan.

The West has problems with Iran’s progress

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

Kayhan dedicated its editorial to Iran’s strategic space success and wrote: The successful launch of Iranian satellites is a strategic success, and for this reason, the enemies of the Islamic Republic and the Islamic world, and the European troika in particular, evaluated this success as a threat to themselves and condemned Iran’s industrial action! This condemnation completely exposes Iran’s resistance to the anti-Iranian plans and claims of the West. Some claimed that the West opposes Iran’s nuclear power because it can be used for military purposes and has no problem with “industrial Iran” and its progress. This reaction proved that the West basically has a problem with the scientific progress of Iran and the Islamic world, and it also proves that the communication satellites of the West have a function other than this and are in the service of several mainly Western governments to control the world. The problem of the West with Iran is the breaking of the model of world control.

Iran: Do not intensify the tension in West Asia

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper discussed the drone attack on the headquarters of the American forces in Jordan and said: This attack led to many reactions. These reactions have been both inside America and outside the borders of this country. The latest international reaction to this event was adopted by China which, emphasizing the lack of connection between this attack and Iran, demanded prevention of any action that would lead to the spread of tension in West Asia. Finally, it seems that among the American media and think tanks, there is a movement that warns the American government against a direct military confrontation with Iran. Theorizing and analyzing these media reveal a reality; a reality called lobbies and behind-the-scenes currents in America, each of them tries to direct the public opinion and the government of this country based on their interests, or based on the degree of opposition to Iran. In any case, the problem is that a direct attack on Iranian targets is against the interests of the United States, and some believe that if Iran retaliates, the consequences of the expansion of conflicts cannot be calculated.

Sobh-e-No: America is the main culprit of tension in the region

Sobh-e-No dedicated its editorial to the presence of the U.S. in the region to create the

increase of tension and said: Since October 7, the intensity of conflict and tension in the region has increased and some incidents are out of control. The last example of these tensions was the attack on the American base. America itself knows that its response to this attack should not be in such a way that its consequences will once again focus on its interests because as a result of any strategic mistake by the U.S. or an attack on Iran, the situation after the attack becomes much more critical. America and its allies, in numerous messages, invite Iran to de-escalate and inhibit, but they provoke the war. If the U.S. had joined the majority of countries in the world that approved the Gaza ceasefire resolution in the United Nations and had not vetoed it, the region would not have seen this level of tension today. Therefore, the first defendant of any war in the region is America. America must try to end the war in Gaza, otherwise, any actor who supports the Israeli regime will suffer losses.

Etemad: The need for an urgent dialogue between Iran and America

In a note, Etemad addressed the critical situation in the West Asia region and wrote: In general, and especially in these conditions where the whispers of war have risen, and there is a possibility of the intervention of uncontrollable elements, and considering the unexpected costs of any direct conflict the best action is still dialogue and diplomacy between Iran and America. This is both for the benefit of the two countries, for the benefit of the regional balance, and for the benefit of humanity and the oppressed people of Gaza. The dialogue is an opportunity for the two countries to directly reach a relative understanding about regional tensions and increase the pressure on Israel to reach a ceasefire. In case of any conflict between Iran and America, the ceasefire will also be delayed, and in fact, the context and subject of the war will be transferred to another level and geography. This possibility will not have any meaning except to satisfy the demand of Israel, which is looking for a deviation of the global concentration from the failure and genocide of Gaza, and also to ensure the interests of Iran’s regional competitors and America’s global competitors such as Russia, China, etc. Direct and immediate dialogue to control the tension level is a win-win approach.

Iran remains steadfast despite threats: military

TEHRAN – In an official statement issued on Wednesday, the Iranian Armed Forces declared that Iran remains steadfast despite the efforts of enemies to weaken the country through sanctions and threats. The statement underscored the global arrogance’s pursuit to tarnish Iran’s image, fuelled by irreparable failures and sanctions. It emphasized, “Regardless of such negative forces, Iran remains unwavering and resolute against any potential attack on the nation, its interests, or its citizens.”

Highlighting the significance of this day as the glorious entry of the Islamic Revolution’s founder into his homeland, shaping the destiny of the Iranian nation, the statement reflected on the past 45 years since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution. Despite relentless conspiracies by adversaries seeking to undermine and dismantle the revolution, Iran and its people have dynamically and purposefully evolved toward building a modern Islamic civilization. “The self-

Iranian citizen held in Swedish jail denied medical care for broken leg

TEHRAN – The family of an Iranian citizen, unlawfully detained by the Swedish government, has disclosed that Hamid Nouri is being deprived of medical treatment for a leg injury he sustained while in custody. “We aren’t allowed to stay in touch with him. So, we don’t know how his leg got broken. But we know that despite his old age, he has been kept in a jail cell for at least a week without receiving any treatment for his broken leg,” Nouri’s son told Iranian media.

Nouri is a former judiciary official in Iran. The Swedish government arrested him in 2019 upon his arrival at Amsterdam’s airport. An appeals court upheld a life sentence for the Iranian

awareness and identity cultivated by the Islamic Revolution have not only revitalized Iranians but also resonated across the Islamic world.”

The statement conveyed, “Amid irreversible battlefield defeats, global arrogance now faces condemnation in the court of awakened consciences worldwide. However, under the leadership of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the people have consistently thwarted sinister plans and safeguarded the lofty ideals of Ayatollah Khomeini.” Expressing gratitude for the valour, sacrifices, and wholehearted presence of the noble Iranian nation, the Armed Forces pledged to serve the Leader, defend the lofty ideals of Ayatollah Khomeini, and safeguard the achievements of the holy system of the Islamic Republic. This commitment reflects unwavering dedication to preserving the principles and progress of the Islamic Revolution for the prosperity of Iran and the Muslim world.

citizen in December, accusing him of “violation of international humanitarian law”.

Iran has slammed the ruling as baseless and informed authorities in Sweden that it will be filing a lawsuit against the Scandinavian state in the International Court of Justice.

Nouri was prosecuted based on claims made by the Mojahedin-e-Khalq organization, a terror outfit that has killed over 17,000 Iranians in the past years. Nouri’s family members routinely got harassed by the terror group as they attended court sessions in Sweden last year and have expressed concern about the deteriorating health of Nouri several times.

Leader pays tribute to founder of Islamic Republic ahead of revolution anniversary

From page 1 ▶ The Leader also paid homage to the grave of martyr Mohammad Amin Samadi (who was recently assassinated during an Israeli strike on Syria) and several other martyrs who helped defeat Daesh during Iran’s fight against the terror group in the 2010s.

The period from February 1st (Bahman 12th) to February 11th (Bahman 22nd) of 1977 (1357) is known as the “10-day Fajr” period. During this time, Imam Khomeini returned to Iran after fifteen years in exile, receiving a historically unprecedented welcome in Tehran.



Subsequently, the Pahlavi regime, which had oppressed the nation for over 50 years, came to an end on February 23rd. Following the success of the revolution, a referendum was held on July 28, 1979, resulting in the approval of the creation of the Islamic Republic by 98.2% of eligible citizens.

The beginning of the Fajr period is usually marked by the Leader’s visit to Imam Khomeini’s burial site. People celebrate the historic period in different parts of the country each year.

Iran UN envoy warns any attacks will be met with response

From page 1 ▶ On Sunday, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, carried out a drone strike on a military outpost in Jordan, known as Tower 22, killing three U.S. soldiers and injuring dozens. U.S. President Joe Biden pinned the blame on what

he called “radical Iran-backed militant groups” and vowed Washington would respond. Iran said it has no links to the attacks on American occupation troops in the region as they are related to the conflict between Resistance groups and the U.S. military.

Iravani also took aim at the United States, accusing it of violating international laws and the United Nations Charter through its military actions in Iraq and Syria, specifically citing Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter.

Iran will not let threats go unanswered: IRGC chief

From page 1 ▶ President Joe Biden attributed the incident to what he termed as “radical Iran-backed militant groups” and pledged that Washington would take action.

Iran, however, denied any involvement in the attacks on American occupation troops in the region, asserting that Resistance groups act independently.

Salami also expressed confidence in Palestine’s path to victory, stating, “The Zionists cannot keep a small territory in a war for months, and they will definitely lose.” The situation remains complex, with Iran asserting its readiness to respond to threats while emphasizing a preference for peace.



UK facilitating criminal acts by anti-Iran group: report

TEHRAN – A recent report reveals that the UK government is turning a blind eye to criminal activities by a notorious anti-Iran terrorist group on British soil.

According to information attained by the Tasnim News Agency, the Mojahedin-e-Khalq terror organization has been involved in illegal acts like drug trafficking and money laundering

despite London’s knowledge.

In 2012, the British National Anti-Crime Foundation arrested a group of five individuals under money-laundering accusations. One of the key members of the group, Siavash Pisheh Varz, along with his teammates helped illegally transfer at least 9 million pounds to centers planning to carry out terror attacks on Iranian soil. Pishe Varz, however,

ended up avoiding reckoning and has been freely attending MKO gatherings in Europe in the past years.

The report also reveals that a major drug trafficking network was dismantled by the MI6 in the past years. The UK government, however, did not allow the incident to go public and allowed the network, mostly consisting of MKO

members, to continue its illegal activities.

MKO’s TV studio also operates on British soil. The channel is not being regulated by Ofcom which is a government body regulating communications industries inside the UK. The MKO’s TV channel was brought out of Ofcom’s observation to enable it to preach armed violence among Iranian civilians.

Terrorism: Global cause, common responsibilities and appropriate solution

By Mir-Ali Mohammadi

TEHRAN- “A girl in pink jacket and heart earrings!” This is not a fiction similar to six-word stories by Ernest Hemingway, but the real tragedy of a beautiful two-year-old Iranian girl and a symbolic victim of the recent heinous terrorist explosions which took her life and the life of 94 more innocent people, shocking Iran, region and the whole civilized world.

These days the Iranian nation is mourning for 95 precious innocent lives, mostly women (55) and children (24), who were killed in two barbaric terrorist explosions that hit the ancient city of Kerman, an old civilization center in southeast Iran, famous for its rich culture, amiable inhabitants and welcoming posture toward immigrants. The explosions happened as tens of thousands of people from different ethnic and religious groups gathered in annual ceremonies to commemorate Major General Qasem Soleimani.

15 of the victims are from Sunni Islam whom ISIS pretends to defend, but only as a false political mantra.

General Soleimani remains a national hero and symbol of the fight against terrorism, particularly in defeating ISIS (Daesh) in Iraq and Syria, to whom Iranians and several nations in the region owe their peace and security to him.

The two desperate terrorists claimed to be members of the ISIS cult, detonated their advanced explosive belts outside the main rally hub, filled with hundreds of small pellets specially designed to kill more. Many more terrorist plots were discovered and thwarted by security forces in Kerman to exemplify the level of investment ISIS made in creating waves of horror and fear.

ISIS, which is neither Islamic nor a state, attempted on several occasions to assassinate the legendary anti-terror commander Soleimani. Instead, however, this malicious job was done on the order of former US President Donald Trump, whom Iran is trying to bring to justice.

New ISIS leaders, from shelters and safe havens provided by foreign forces, try to revive and plot terrorism against General Soleimani’s anti-terrorism legacy to send a message of strength, test Iran and the world community once again for their will in fighting terrorism, and take revenge of his supporters.

The new leaders of the terrorist group feel extremely humiliated as the legendary anti-terror

commander heroically aborted ISIS’s malicious intention to spread a criminal empire throughout West Asia.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran has always been the target and victim of terrorism, which has cost the lives of more than 17,000, mostly civilians. These evil acts have been conducted by different terrorist gangs, using all sorts of false flags to cover their vicious intentions. We have been serious and remain committed to fighting terrorists with their different names and ideologies, including the most recent one which hid under the name of Islam just to hit innocent Muslims, Sunni or Shia.

Many countries and international organizations expressed their sympathy with Iran at this hard time. Numerous foreign leaders called from around the globe extending warm empathy and support. However, there is still a small group of Western nations that refrain even from calling this tragic event terrorism. They refused to condemn the act in line with their international responsibilities as mentioned in the UN Security Council statement in this regard. Possibly they don’t want to help Iran fight terrorism.

The tragedy in Kerman reminds the world that terrorism has no religion as it has no border. The world must stop linking these acts of barbarism to Islam. Linking terrorism to Islam is a false tag, which is erroneously and dangerously used by Western political circles and media. Such characterization only serves terrorists’ evil intentions and encourages and helps them to deceit and recruit. Instead, we need to reveal their evil, sectarian and terroristic nature.

Contrary to their claim Islam is the religion of peace.

The local network of terrorists has been detected and dismantled in Iran. Still, we are serious and committed to finding the “real and hidden elements” who helped, planned, facilitated and committed such savage acts. It is clear for Iranian officials that terrorism in Kerman had no chance of success without foreign logistical, financial, or training support.

There is credible evidence that ISIS has received and continues to receive important financial and non-financial support from state actors or regimes that either neglect the impact of their wrong policies or benefit from regional wars and instability. In the last four weeks, some close

friends of General Soleimani were assassinated in Syria who were there to help the country in its long fight against the remaining elements of ISIS and other terrorist groups.

It is unfortunate and dangerous that some state and non-state actors have acted irresponsibly, either refraining from fighting the roots of terrorism inside their own borders, neglecting their international responsibilities, or worse, using terrorism as a foreign policy tool. Without such irresponsibility or wrong policies, without US disastrous wars and interventions in the region, and without safe haven and services in Syria or elsewhere, they would have been able to carry out such a brutal attack.

West Asia suffers from terrorism more than any other parts of the world and that is clearly the result of decades of foreign interventions, occupations and disastrous wars imposed on the region. To uproot ISIS terrorism, we need a region without foreign intervention, occupation or foreign military headquarters.

In the case of terrorism, we must notice some other terrorist groups that are now sheltered by Europe or the US. They receive generous financial help and ample chances to promote their radical ideologies in the name of political action in Western streets or inside political corridors and institutions, especially some parliaments. Their dark past and their dangers to global peace and security are simply ignored to let them be used as pawns or tools to push Iran towards some Western policies.

The world needs to act responsibly and send an unequivocal and united response that we won’t let ISIS or other terrorist groups re-root in West Asia and jeopardize regional and global peace and security. Other terrorists are watching and would do their calculations and planning accordingly.

Inside the region, Iran looks for a regional security mechanism that answers the original needs of the region for peace, security and prosperity.

Terrorism is the common threat and enemy for the entire region, trans-passes all our shared values. It can be countered more effectively if we oppose foreign interventions and work together based on our own potential.

“Mir-Ali Mohammadi is a Foreign Ministry diplomat

Covert and overt operations

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- In the wake of the recent attack on U.S. troops in Jordan, the White House finds itself at a crossroads, grappling with a range of unrealistic options in its quest to restore lost prestige.

Within Western think tanks, among U.S. politicians, and within parliamentary circles, there persists a resolute call for a direct assault on Iran's interests by Washington. This suggestion has not only sparked heated debates but has also prompted publications such as Politico and the Wall Street Journal to propose a bold strategy — sinking Iranian vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Drawing historical parallels, certain think tanks have invoked the specter of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's move against the Iranian Navy, claiming that Reagan's action was a necessary measure to safeguard U.S. interests in the region. This historical reference, however, demands careful scrutiny in the contemporary geopolitical landscape.

The path forward requires a comprehensive approach that considers both the immediate implications and the long-term consequences of any move. Rather than succumbing to unmeasured reactions, the Biden administration must prioritize diplomacy, seeking avenues to defuse tensions.

In the realm of international relations, rash decisions can have far-reaching ramifications. A measured response, grounded in a thorough understanding of the intricacies at play, is crucial in fostering stability in the volatile West Asia region. As the world watches, the White House faces a delicate balancing act — one that demands prudence, strategic thinking, and a commitment to diplomacy. In reassessing its options, the Biden administration must consider the complexities of the current geopolitical landscape effectively.As we distill the myriad suggestions put forth in recent discourse, it becomes evident that these recommendations are, at best, misaligned with U.S. interests and the overarching West Asia policy by President Biden.

One of the options presented to Biden is the assassination of Iranian commanders outside Iran. According to some unconfirmed news, General Shahlai is one of the people on this assassination list. It should be noted that on January 3, 2020, at the same time as General Soleimani was assassinated in Iraq, General Shahlai was also supposed to be assassinated in Yemen, but the operation was not successful, and in this terrorist attack, an Iranian national named Mustafa Mirzaei was martyred. Shahlai's name is mentioned while this commander left Yemen a long time ago.

Attacking the Iranian vessels Behshad and Alborz is one of the other options presented to Biden. The Alborz frigate recently entered the Red Sea after passing through Bab al-Mandab.

The latest information received by the Tehran Times indicates that the Americans currently have not provided the conditions for an open and direct operation inside Iran, and they assess



the risk of such an action as high. Of course, this does not mean that they do not have a plan in this regard. The Americans have plans for a covert operation inside Iran, one that causes a damage, but the attacker does not accept responsibility and denies his involvement in it.American media has reported that the U.S. response would take a week and could include cyber attacks. Delving into the realm of potential U.S. military actions against Iran's interests, it is crucial to acknowledge the far-reaching consequences that may unfold across the political, military, and economic spectrums for the White House.

However, it is imperative to emphasize that any military intervention must be rooted in a legitimate objective; otherwise, it risks being perceived as a blatant violation of international laws.

The recent drone attack on U.S. troops in Jordan, occurred on a Sunday, was claimed by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq. Notably, Tehran has vehemently asserted the autonomy of the resistance groups, saying that the resistance front carries out its own directives not Tehran's. In the absence of concrete evidence implicating Tehran, any contemplated assault on Iran's interests by Washington faces a critical hurdle in establishing legitimacy. The cornerstone of international relations rests on credible information and just cause, both of which are essential in justifying any military action.

To retain its role, Washington must adhere to the principles of transparency and due diligence. Failure to ascertain Tehran's involvement in the alleged attack renders any potential targeting of Iran's interests ethically and legally precarious.

The intricacies of international law underscore the necessity for a thorough and impartial investigation before Washington can legitimately consider Iran as a target.

Beyond the geopolitical complexities at play, it is paramount to consider the legal implications associated with any military action. An intervention lacking a legitimate objective risks not only exacerbating tensions in the region but also undermining the credibility of the United States on the international stage.

As the world watches, the decisions made in response to this crisis will not only shape the region's future but also define the trajectory of U.S. foreign policy in West Asia for years to come.Also, the decision to pursue military action against Iran raises pressing questions about the legitimacy and consequences of such a move.

Internally, President Biden, a Democratic figure, is already navigating the intricacies of a closely contested election campaign with the Republicans. Opting for a military strike on Iran could unfold as a new chapter in a series of questionable actions, adding to the perception of Washington's unfinished business and incompetence. Such a move could lead to unprecedented losses for the Democrats in the upcoming presidential elections, as voters may question the wisdom and efficacy of such a decision.

On the foreign policy front, Washington's recent support for Tel Aviv's actions in the Gaza Strip has already drawn international criticism. The U.S.'s repeated vetoes of UN Security Council draft motions on a ceasefire in the besieged enclave in October and December 2023 have sparked widespread condemnation from politicians and nations globally. This prior criticism sets the stage for heightened scrutiny and skepticism regarding any further military endeavors by Biden's administration.

Beyond the political fallout, the U.S. faces potential military repercussions in West Asia. A surge in drone and missile attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria over the past four months reveals a region increasingly intolerant of perceived U.S. miscalculations and interventions. The resistance axis, explicitly linking U.S. military consequences to its support for Israeli actions in Gaza, have issued stern warnings that the severity of responses will escalate with continued U.S. backing of Israel.

Economically, a U.S. attack on Iran is further complicated by the existing challenges in the global economic landscape. Washington is already engaged in a tense economic competition with Beijing, while emerging powers and economic groups such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) seek to reshape the world economy. The dollar, already at risk of devaluation, faces additional vulnerability in the event of heightened military actions that could strain economic ties and alliances.

As Washington navigates this intricate web of challenges, the imperative lies in a thorough evaluation of evidence, a strategic recalibration of foreign policy, and a nuanced approach that carefully considers the multifaceted repercussions of any potential military engagement with Iran.

Amid an intricate global landscape, Washington finds itself grappling with the Moscow-Kyiv war, channeling substantial financial resources to support

Ukraine. As the White House juggles multiple fronts, a delicate balance emerges, emphasizing the imperative to chart a course aligned with America's overarching interests.

Amidst these geopolitical complexities, the proposed options for Biden's administration appear increasingly divorced from the prevailing realities, encompassing economic, military, and political dimensions, as well as the intricacies of Biden's appeasement policy in West Asia.

Crucially, Iran's formidable military capabilities and deterrence power emerge as significant obstacles deterring Biden from contemplating a direct attack on Tehran. The recognition of Iran's strength adds a layer of caution to any potential military maneuvers, forcing the White House to carefully reconsider the feasibility and prudence of such actions.As Washington treads through this complex terrain, a strategic recalibration is essential. The administration must seek a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges at play, aligning its actions with the evolving realities on the ground. In doing so, the White House can chart a path forward that not only addresses immediate concerns but also steers clear of actions that may inadvertently escalate tensions and jeopardize America's strategic interests.In a surprising turn of events, President Biden may opt for a calibrated and retaliatory response to the resistance axis, akin to the allegedly measured attack executed in Sanna recently. This potential move, carefully designed to minimize casualties, aims to assert Biden's administration's strength while reclaiming lost authority for the U.S. government. The proposed strategy reflects a calculated approach, strategically tailored to maintain the reputation of Biden's administration. The intention is not to unleash a devastating assault but rather to deliver a proportional response, striking a delicate balance between showcasing strength and avoiding a significant loss of life. This nuanced tactic serves a dual purpose—upholding Biden's administration's prestige and reestablishing the U.S. government's authority.

Examining historical precedents sheds light on the potential political motivations behind such a move. On the brink of an election, the ruling party often employs tactics to sway public sentiment, fostering trust and support. In this context, Biden may strategically leave the West Asian conflict unresolved, presenting it as a testament to his administration's ongoing commitment to tackling complex issues.

By keeping the conflict in West Asia lingering, Biden aims to position himself as a U.S. president who understands the intricacies of safeguarding U.S. interests while adeptly navigating complex geopolitical landscapes. The unfinished conflict serves as a rallying point, allowing Biden to appeal to the American nation's trust, portraying his administration as one capable of bringing the ongoing tensions to a strategic and satisfactory conclusion.

Daesh reconstruction in Afghanistan and expand its networks in the region.

Saudi Ambassador al-Anzi echoed Vahidi's remarks on fighting terrorism, strengthening Riyadh-Tehran ties, and providing humanitarian aid to Gazans, emphasizing that Iran is a "brotherly and important neighbor" for Saudi Arabia, noting various fields of cooperation between their interior ministries.

Al-Anzi suggested that activating security agreements made two decades ago could pave the way for enhanced cooperation, particularly in countering terrorism and drug trafficking.

Al-Anzi acknowledged Tehran's efforts against terrorist groups and emphasized the collective responsibility of regional countries in combating terrorism. He clarified that the halt in sending Iranian pilgrims was due to technical problems and expressed optimism that it would be resolved soon, "God willing."

Iran ready to defend reputation in World Cup: Ali Naderi

TEHRAN – Iran national beach soccer team head coach Ali Naderi says that they want to defend their reputation in the 2024 Beach Soccer World Cup.

Iran are drawn in Group B along with Spain, Tahiti and Argentina. Team Melli will face Spain in the opening match of the prestigious campaign on Feb. 15.

“We are drawn in a tough group because the World Cup always brings the best team together. The teams are well-prepared for the competition and we know that Team Melli have a difficult task ahead,” Naderi told in his interview with Tehran Times.

Iran beach soccer team played three warm-up matches with Belarus last week as part of preparation for the 2024 Beach Soccer World Cup. “We have done our best to prepare for the event and are holding our last training camp in Kish Island. We will travel to Dubai next week,” he added.

Iran are one of the powerhouses teams in beach soccer as the Persians won a bronze medal in the 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Team Melli are also the current champions in the Beach Soccer Intercontinental Cup. Russia and Iran are the most successful teams, having won four tournaments each.

“Iran are scheduled to play a friendly match with Colombia in Dubai because we want to enter the campaign in the best possible way. We want to defend our reputation in the competition,” Naderi concluded.

Esteghlal winger Yamga not available for rest of season

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team winger Kevin Yamga missed the rest of the Iran Professional League (IPL) season, team head coach Javad Nekounam confirmed.

The French striker has undergone several eye surgeries after suffering an injury in Esteghlal's training.Nekounam has said he will be out of action until the end of the season.

The 28-year-old striker joined Esteghlal in October 2021 and helped the team win the Iran league in the 2021-22 season.

Yamga's absence will be a big blow to Esteghlal.

Iran to compete at 2024 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Iran will travel to Dushanbe, Tajikistan on Thursday to compete at the third edition of the CAFA Women's Futsal Championship.Two-time champions Iran are going to add another trophy to their collection.

“The team well-prepared for the CAFA and we are going to win the title for the third time,” Iran coach Forouzan Soleymani said.

“The CAFA is an opportunity for us to test the young players because Team Melli needs to a generation shift,” she added.

The CAFA Women's Futsal Championship is the annual international futsal championship organized by CAFA for the women's national futsal teams of Central Asia.

A total of 5 (out of 6) CAFA member national teams entered the tournament. with Turkmenistan participating in the tournament for the first time since its establishment in 2022.

Tajikistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan will compete in the edition.

Iran football league to resume on Feb. 14

TEHRAN – Iran Professional League (IPL) will restart after the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

The 2023 Asian Cup will run until February 10 and the IPL will resume four days later.

Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal will also be held in early march.

At the end of first half of IPL, Esteghlal finished in top place with 32 points, followed by Sepahan (31) and Persepolis (30).

The 2023–24 Persian Gulf Pro League (formerly known as Iran Professional League) is the 41st season of Iran's Football League and 23rd as Persian Gulf Pro League since its establishment in 2001.

A total of 16 teams contest the league, including 14 sides from the 2022–23 season and two promoted from the 2022–23 Azadegan League. This includes the two top teams from the Azadegan League.

Persepolis eye Brazilian forward Willen: report

TEHRAN – Persepolis Brazilian coach Osmar Loss has reportedly wanted the Iranian club to sign Willen Mota Inácio in the January transfer window

The Brazilian forward currently plays in Thailand's Bangkok United.

Willen Mota Inácio started his playing career in Vasco da Gama in 2009 and has also played in his homeland clubs Capivariano, Avaí and Portuguesa.

Persepolis have previously completed the signing of Issa Alekasir and Qatari left-back Abdelkarim Hassan.

Persepolis currently hold a training camp in Dubai, the UAE.

Greek football team Aris complete signing of Ansarifard

TEHRAN – Greek football side Aris announced the signing of Iranian forward Karim Ansarifard on Wednesday.

The 34-year-old striker has joined Aris until the end of the current season with an option to renew it for another year.

He has most recently played for Omonia, where he scored six goals in 46 matches for the Cypriot club.

His professional career started from Saipa, where he competed 124 times (2007-2012) with a score of 56 goals and 6 assists.

He joined Persepolis in 2012. After playing for a season in Tractor on loan, the Iranian striker decided to move to Europe to join Osasuna (16 appearances in LaLiga 2).

In the summer of 2015, Karim Ansarifard came to Greece for the first time to join Panionios.

He has also played in Greek teams Olympiacos AEK Athens.

Ansarifard has been an integral part of the Iran national team for the past 15 years, representing Team Melli over 100 caps and scoring 30 goals.

Iran's Keshavarzi advances in ITTF ranking

TEHRAN – Iranian table tennis player Amir-Mehdi Keshavarzi was able to advance 16 places in the new ranking of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF).

The ranking released on Wednesday showed that Keshavarzi had improved his position among the international tennis players after shining in WTT Contender Doha 2023.

The International Table Tennis Federation announced the new ranking of players in January 2024, and according to the ranking, Amir-Mehdi Keshavarzi improved by 16 places and reached the 188th position in the world.

The ITTF and its subsidiary WTT hold international tournaments and the ITTF maintains official world ranking lists based on players' results in tournaments throughout the year.

Tehran-Riyadh cooperation beneficial for region, Islamic World: interior minister

TEHRAN- Iranian Interior Minister emphasizes the significance of constructive cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, stating that it is not only advantageous for the Islamic World but also for the broader region. During the Tuesday meeting with the Saudi Ambassador to Tehran, Abdullah bin Saud al-Anzi, Ahmad Vahidi expressed the commitment of both states to strengthening their relations.

Describing the roles of Iran and Saudi Arabia as “important and decisive” in the Islamic world, region, and globally, Vahidi addressed external attempts to interfere in Tehran-Riyadh relations, urging that such interventions should not be tolerated.

Addressing regional security challenges and acts of terrorism, Vahidi stressed the necessity of cooperation and consultation between the officials of the two states. He highlighted that when economic ties accompany political and security relations, stability and effectiveness are

achieved, emphasizing the inseparable nature of development and security.

Touching upon the issue of Palestine, Vahidi underscored its paramount importance for the Islamic world and global communities. He condemned the “endless war crimes” committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza and called for collective efforts from all nations to halt the genocide, advocating for a pathway to provide humanitarian aid to the Gazans.Regarding an agreement between the two states to dispatch Iranian pilgrims for Umrah Hajj, Vahidi expressed the Iranian people's expectation for resolving the hiatus in pilgrim transfers and ensuring the necessary preparations are made.

On the topic of terrorism, Vahidi acknowledged the efforts of some countries in the revival of the Daesh terrorist group. He asserted that Tehran is well aware of American intentions to support

Iran outperforms world major economies in 2023: IMF



From page 1 ► The increase in Iran's economic growth happens at a time when global growth has slowed to 3.1 percent. The average economic growth of the developed economies has been reported to be 1.6 percent in 2023 while the figure stood at 2.6 percent in 2022.

Developing countries have also had an average growth of 4.1 percent in 2023, indicating that Iran's economy increased more than the average of its equivalents.

Over 2.4m tons of steel products exported in 9 months

TEHRAN – As announced by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), 2.477 million tons of steel products were exported from the country during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-December 21, 2023).

The country's steel products export rose about one percent in the first nine months of the present year, from 2.458 million tons in the first nine months of the previous year.

As the association has announced, 16,626 million tons of steel products were produced in the country during the first nine months of the current year.

The country's steel products output rose 0.25 percent in the first nine months of the present year, from 16,586 million tons in the first nine months of the previous year.

According to the latest report released by the World Steel Association (WSA), Iran's steel production reached at 3.0 million tons in November, 2023, registering a 7.6 percent increase compared to the previous month.

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

Based on the WSA data, Iran maintained

TEDPIX drops 3000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 3,037 points (0.14 percent) to 2,107,760 on Wednesday, which is the fifth 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).

The deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has stressed the need for diverse financing tools in the country, noting that such tools are currently being provided by the stock market.

"To reduce the speculative and profit-

NIGC inks €500m MOU with Knowledge-based companies

TEHRAN - Iran's Vice President for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy Rouhollah Dehqani Firouzabadi said the country's knowledge-based companies active in gas industry have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) worth €500 million with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC).

Speaking to the national TV, Firouzabadi said that based on the mentioned MOU, 12

West Asian economies grew by an average of 2.0 percent. In that region, Saudi Arabia recorded -1.1 percent growth.

The economic growth of some other countries in 2023 was as follows: the U.S. 2.5 percent, Germany negative 0.3 percent, France 0.8 percent, UK 0.5 percent, China 5.2 percent, Russia 3.0 percent, Brazil 3.1 percent, Turkey 4.0 percent and Pakistan - 0.2 percent.

As announced by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the country's gross domestic product (GDP) including oil grew 4.7 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 - September 22, 2023) compared to the same period last year.

Based on the CBI data, the figure was 3.6 percent excluding oil.

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

its place as the world's 10th largest steel producer in the mentioned period.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

seeking activities of dealers in the country, financing tools should be diversified," Mohammad Shirijian said on Sunday.

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production in an efficient manner. Now, to accelerate the process of resource transfer and high productivity, the financing should be directed to the enterprises," the official explained.

Shirijian called on the government and the parliament to pay more attention to the stock market, saying: "If the government and parliament pay more attention to the capital market, we will see the withdrawal of resources from non-productive markets and the reduction of the bubble in other parallel markets (such as currency, coins, gold, housing, and cars)."

groups of strategic products will be made by the knowledge-based companies within four years, Shana reported.

According to the official, the vice presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy signed a similar MOU worth around \$2.0 billion with the companies on manufacturing seven groups of products.

Iran's oil exports rise 50% in 2023, reaching 5-year high: report

TEHRAN - Iran's crude oil exports grew by roughly 50 percent in 2023 to a five-year high of about 1.29 million barrels per day (bpd), with the vast majority going to China, Nikkei Asia reported.

The report, citing the International Energy Agency (IEA), put Iran's oil production at 2.99 million bpd last year, 440,000 barrels more than in 2022.

As reported, IEA predicts a further rise of 160,000 barrels of Iran's oil exports in 2024.

This increase is expected to contribute to a less tight market, alongside increases by the U.S. and Brazil. The IEA sees global supply rising by 1.5 million bpd to an all-time high this year.



The Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security forecasts the supply-demand balance flipping from a shortfall of 110,000 bpd last year to a 600,000-barrel surplus in 2024.

Brisk Chinese demand is encouraging Iran to ramp up production. Roughly 90 percent of Iran's crude oil exports went to China, data from European research firm Kpler shows.

While OPEC members and Russia have been coordinating output cuts, Iran is not subject to quotas despite being part of the bloc, due to its sanctions-fueled economic struggles.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's administration has been building ties with Beijing amid the tensions with the U.S. and Europe. Raisi and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping met in China last February and agreed to call for U.S. sanctions to be lifted.

China's 40-plus small and midsize independent refiners often buy oil from Iran with yuan, according to Reuters and other sources. Iranian crude traded at an average discount of \$13 to Brent last year.

Iranian carmakers manufacture about 1.1m vehicles in 10 months

TEHRAN - Iranian automakers produced about 1.107 million vehicles in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023-January 20, 2024), an official with the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry said.

According to Mehrdad Khosravi, the director general of the Iranian Industry Ministry's Auto Industry Office, Iranian carmakers managed to manufacture about 937,000 passenger cars in the mentioned 10 months which shows a growth of nine percent compared to the same period last year.

In the mentioned period, 135,000 trucks were also produced, registering a 34 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Manufacturing of heavy vehicles also increased by 18 percent in the said 10 months, Khosravi said.

According to the official, private carmakers accounted for 23 percent of the country's total automobile production in the first 10 months of the current year by producing 250,000 cars.

Car manufacturing in Iran increased by 39 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 as the Iranian carmakers manufactured 1,347,394 vehicles in the mentioned year.

In the past year, 1,182,078 passenger cars were manufactured in the country, registering a 35-percent rise year on year.

Vans accounted for the lion's share of the production in the past year, as 125,507 vans were manufactured, with a 56-percent growth.

In the past year, 34,136 trucks were manufactured, with a 150 percent rise.

The manufacturing of buses stood at 1,391,

and minibuses, and middle buses at 1,118, registering a growth of 88 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Also, about 450,000 motorcycles were manufactured in the previous year, with a 61.2 percent rise year on year.

Meanwhile, the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (known as OICA) ranked Iran sixth in the world in terms of car manufacturing growth in 2022.

According to the OICA data, car manufacturing in Iran increased by 19 percent in 2022, as the country manufactured 1.064 million vehicles in the mentioned year, while the figure was 894,000 in 2021.

The international organization in its annual report released in mid-March had ranked Iran as the world's 16th largest automaker in 2022.

Export from Aras Free Zone rises 30% in 9 months on year



TEHRAN- The value of export from Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone (AFZ), in Iran's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan, increased by 30 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, the managing director of Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization announced.

Majid Kiani said that commodities worth \$148 million were exported from the zone during the mentioned nine-month period.

He named greenhouse products, dried fruits, oil products, steel ingots, and plastic products as the main items exported from the zone, and

Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia, UAE, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

He also announced the increase in the production of goods in the zone in the

nine months of this year and said during this period, the production units of the region have supplied 148,000 tons of industrial products and 107,000 tons of agricultural products.

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

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

Some five other free trade zones have been also established in the country since then, including Chabahar in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province, Arvand

in southwestern Khuzestan Province, Anzali in northern Gilan Province, Aras in East-Azarbaijan Province and Maku in West-Azarbaijan Province, both in the northwest of the country.

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

On December 8, 2023, the Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki outlined 10 new strategies to increase investment and export in the country's free and special economic zones.

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

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

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

Implementing a comprehensive plan for developing logistics and re-export from free zones by using the capacities of combined transport and transit among free zones is another part of the mentioned strategies, the official said.

"The third strategy is the use

of the capacity of international organizations and agreements such as the Eurasian Economic Union. Shanghai, BRICS, ECO, etc.," he added.

The official stated that identifying the advantages and distinctive features of free zones and introducing them to each other to benefit from the relative advantages of each zone in the network structure is another part of the mentioned coordinated strategies.

"The fifth strategy is to use the passenger goods model to maximize the income of free zone organizations and the sixth strategy, is to attend exhibitions and domestic and international business events to introduce the investment opportunities of free zones in line with the continuation of the path taken this year," Abdolmaleki said.

The seventh strategy would be to determine a supply chain of goods among free zones in such a way that goods are exchanged, sold, or supplied in a cooperative network, the official said, adding: "using China's One Belt One Road plan with a focus on free zones, determining a comprehensive tourism network of free and special zones to outline the common interests and goals are the eighth and ninth parts of this program; and monetary, banking, and financial cooperation in the form of drawing up a cooperation style sheet to finance construction projects and investment is the tenth strategy."

760km of highways, roads to be inaugurated across Iran by late Mar.

TEHRAN - Some 760 kilometers of roads and highways are going to be inaugurated across Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19), said an official at the Ministry of Transport and Urban

Development.

According to Mohammad-Reza Kakhodazadeh, the deputy head of the Construction and Development of

Transportation Infrastructures Company, affiliated to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the mentioned projects are going to go operational in 16 different provinces, IRNA reported.

Are post-war Gaza scenarios realistic?

From page 1 ► News sources said the EU proposal includes a series of steps that could eventually bring peace to the Gaza Strip, establish an independent Palestinian state, normalize relations between Israel and the Arab world, and guarantee long-term security in West Asia.

The bloc has conducted preliminary consultations with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the League of Arab States, and other key partners in this regard.

The EU plan largely focuses on Gaza's post-war era.

It indicates that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would be represented by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), rather than Hamas.

According to the draft, a peace conference should be held via the participation of Arab countries, the U.S., the EU and the UN. The conference would have one year to design the framework for a peace plan, taking into account the feedback from all involved parties, UN resolutions, European Council conclusions and previous mediation efforts.

One of the main goals of the EU measure was aimed at bringing an end to Israel's war on Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, has poured cold water on such ideas.

Paris conference

France hosted a conference on Sunday in an effort to help establish a ceasefire in Gaza.

CIA chief William Burns, top Egyptian and Qatari officials as well as the heads of the Israeli Mossad intelligence agency and Shin Bet attended the Paris meeting.

U.S. media outlets revealed that an agreement was discussed under which Israel suspends its war in



Gaza for about two months in return for the release of more than 100 captives held in Gaza. The yet-to-be-sealed deal would also allow the release of large numbers of Palestinian prisoners who are in Israeli jails and more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The proposed deal, however, would not end the war. This is because Hamas demands that Israel completely stop fighting, and pull its forces out of Gaza. But Netanyahu insists that the regime's army will continue the Gaza onslaught till the elimination of Hamas.

Some two weeks ago, Netanyahu said the war on Gaza will continue till 2025, threatening that the fighting won't stop till Hamas is completely destroyed.

But his previous comments indicate that the eradication of Hamas is just an excuse to press ahead with the war.

The embattled premier reiterated last month that Israel must retain security control over Gaza after Hamas is "destroyed", a move that contradicts the demand for Palestinian sovereignty.

Weeks after Israel launched its onslaught on Gaza, it also floated the idea of pushing Palestinians from Gaza to Egypt — and not allow

them to return after the war.

Saudi meeting

Last month, U.S. media also revealed that senior national security officials from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority secretly met in the Saudi capital to coordinate plans for Gaza's post-war era and discuss ways to involve a revitalized Palestinian Authority in governing the enclave.

According to Axios, Saudi Arabia's national security adviser Musaed bin Mohammed al-Aiban hosted the meeting in Riyadh. The other participants were the director of Palestinian general intelligence service Majed Faraj and his Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts.

They discussed how a new prime minister will receive some of the authority that has been centralized under President Mahmoud Abbas in recent years, if a new Palestinian government is formed, according to the news outlet.

The three Arab countries stressed that reforms are needed for the Palestinian Authority to return to governing Gaza after a post-war transition period.

Regardless of the positions of participants in the Paris and Riyadh meetings and the EU's stance, it seems that Netanyahu and his far-

right cabinet are a major stumbling block in the face of efforts to end the Gaza war.

Netanyahu believes that a permanent state of war offers him a lifeline because he is under fire for the regime's failure to prevent the October 7 attack by Hamas. This is in addition to other Netanyahu's headaches including corruption charges and previous mass protests over his judicial overhaul plan.

Arab and Western countries are pressing ahead with plans for Gaza's post-war era. However, several questions in this regard remain unanswered.

First, Israel was humiliated over its intelligence and security failure on October 7 and it is now more vulnerable than ever. The regime has committed massacres in Gaza to whitewash its vulnerability. So, how can it contribute to regional security?

Second, the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank is another sore point. Israeli forces routinely kill Palestinians who protest against home demolitions and the regime's land grand policy. While tensions remain high in the West Bank, is it possible to ensure security?

Third, occupation is the root cause of instability and insecurity in West Asia. What should be done with regard to Israel's occupation of Syria's Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon?

Fourth, the Palestinian Authority remains unpopular in the West Bank over its inaction towards Israel's atrocities. How can it represent the entire Palestine?

These are among the questions that should be taken into consideration in line with efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue and bring peace to the region.

Netanyahu's gang call for settlements in Gaza

Ben-Gvir told the conference, "We must encourage voluntary migration. Let them leave. Part of correcting the mistake of the sin of the preconception that brought us to 7 October is to return home to southern Gaza and the northern West Bank."

He added, "We have to return home, because that is the Torah, that is morality, that is historic justice, that is logic and that is the right thing."

Smotrich reiterated his support for bringing back the death sentence for Palestinian prisoners, while other speakers included Rabbi Uzi Sharbag, the former leader of the Israeli terrorist group Jewish Underground.

Shlomo Karhi, the Likud communications minister; Orit Stroom, a member of the far-right Religious Zionist party and the minister of settlements and national missions; Yitzhak Goldknopf, the leader of the Ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party and the housing minister; and Likud member of the Knesset Haim Katz were other members of the coalition government who attended the event.

Outside the conference hall shirts reading: "Gaza is part of the land of Israel" were being distributed in yet another violation of the UN Convention on Genocide.

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war on Gaza with "plausible" genocidal intent, despite Israeli soldiers suffering mass casualties.

A report by the Daily Telegraph on Tuesday citing a senior Israeli army medical official said the number of troops suffering severe injuries in

Gaza is twice as high as in the occupation's last major conflict.

Israeli soldiers are losing limbs and sustaining life-changing eye and facial injuries as a result of the "military-graded" explosives used by Hamas on the battlefield, according to Avi Banov, the Deputy Surgeon General of the Israeli Medical Corps.

"In the past four months, we have had more casualties than we have had in the past four decades," Banov said.

"In the past four months, we have had more casualties than we have had in the past four decades," says Deputy Surgeon General of the Israeli Medical Corps.

Abu Hamza, the spokesman for the al-Quds brigades (the armed wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad), vowed that "Netanyahu's threats to continue the war will be of no use," stressing that the Israeli captives will not return except by a decision from the resistance.

Earlier the Palestinian resistance announced

that they were engaged in fierce clashes with Israeli soldiers and vehicles in the two directions that the regime's ground forces are trying to advance in the enclave.

The resistance in Gaza has issued a statement saying, "We bombarded enemy soldiers and vehicles with mortar shells in the direction of their advance, east of Bureij camp".

The armed wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam brigades, said it targeted another "Zionist Merkava tank with an Al-Yassin 105 shell, west of the city of Khan Younis, south of the Gaza Strip".

This follows reports that Hamas has resumed its governance and power in the northern Gaza Strip, running the day-to-day affairs of the region, which has been largely reduced to rubble by the regime after the Israeli military was forced to withdraw under Palestinian fire.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military announced the names of another three troops killed while fighting in Gaza.

The number of Israeli troops killed since the start of the ground invasion of the Gaza Strip now stands at 223, according to the regime's military, raising the number of troops killed since October 7 to 560.

Experts say the number of Israeli military death toll is higher, especially considering the ratio of casualties to fatalities.

More than 4,000 troops have been disabled for life, according to Israeli media, while thousands of others have sustained serious, moderate and mild injuries.

and any existing cooperation mechanism would be reviewed as a countermeasure to the deliberate attempt to strike a blow to the Venezuelan oil and gas industry."

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller announced Tuesday that the Biden administration would

revoke the relief from the sanctions against Venezuela granted last year to the country after a high Venezuelan court blocked the candidacy of Maria Corina Machado, the main opposition candidate for the 2024 presidential elections.

delayed, said Tedros.

"Due to delays around the checkpoint, the crowds took food being delivered, and once again it did not reach Nasser. This underscores the utter desperation of people in Gaza, who live in hellish conditions, including severe hunger. We continue to seek permission to deliver the fuel to the hospital," he added.

assault from Israeli forces.

Although the WHO says it was able to deliver some medical supplies on Monday, there remains shortages of "specialized medical practitioners", "medicines, oxygen, food, fuel" and "ways to dispose of solid waste".

Efforts to deliver food to the hospital were

WORLD HEADLINES

Palestinians condemn Israel for killing handcuffed, blindfolded civilians

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called for the formation of an international investigation team to look into accusations that Israeli forces executed prisoners.

"According to testimonies of Palestinian citizens, more than 30 decomposing bodies of Palestinian martyrs were discovered buried in the northern Gaza Strip," the ministry said in a statement, Al-Jazeera reported. "They were killed while blindfolded and with their hands tied, as clear evidence that they were executed... in the most horrific forms."

"The ministry believes that the discovery of this mass grave in this brutal form reflects the scale of the tragedy to which Palestinian civilians are exposed, the mass massacres and executions of even detainees, in flagrant and gross violation of all relevant international norms and laws." Hamas also condemned the murder of the Palestinians.

The Hamas government media office called on human rights organizations "to document this horrific crime".

It said on Telegram that Israel was continuing to "exterminate" the Palestinian people without regard to the decisions of the International Court of Justice, "which demanded that they stop the crime of genocide and ethnic cleansing".

UN agencies say UNRWA funding cut 'catastrophic'

The heads of United Nations humanitarian agencies said that cutting funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) would have "catastrophic consequences" for Gaza.

A statement issued by the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which includes the main partners concerned with humanitarian affairs inside and outside the organization, said: "Withdrawing funding from UNRWA is dangerous and may lead to the collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza, with far-reaching humanitarian and human rights consequences in the occupied Palestinian territories and in all over the region."

Ansarullah threaten more attacks against US, UK warships

Yemane's Ansarullah movement has stated it

plans more attacks on United States and British warships.

In a statement released on Wednesday, it said all U.S. and British warships participating in "aggression" against Yemen are targets.

The Ansarullah, who control the most populous parts of Yemen, have launched drones and missiles at Israeli-affiliated shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 19.

The group said the attacks are a response to Israel's military operations in Gaza.

The U.S. and Britain have struck back at Ansarullah targets in Yemen.

In the latest exchange, the Ansarullah fired missiles at the U.S. warship USS Gravely. On Tuesday night, U.S. Central Command said its forces had shot down an antiship cruise missile.

Several shipping companies have suspended transits through the Red Sea, which is accessed from the Gulf of Aden, instead taking much longer and costlier journeys around Africa to avoid being attacked.

The Ansarullah said they will persist with their military operations until a ceasefire is agreed in the Gaza Strip and food and medicine are allowed into the territory to ease a humanitarian crisis.

Pakistan ex-PM Imran Khan hit with new -14year jail sentence

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was hit with a fresh 14-year jail sentence on Wednesday after a state court found him guilty of graft, just one day after being handed a 10-year term on a conviction of leaking state secrets.

His wife Bushra Bibi was also sentenced to a 14-year jail term for graft; the case implicating the couple involved the illegal sale of state gifts for profit while Khan was in office, CNBC News wrote.

"Another sad day in our judicial system history, which is being dismantled," a spokesperson for Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the largest political party in the country, said in a statement.

Khan is also barred from serving in office for 10 years as part of his punishment handed down by the state's National Accountability Bureau, which additionally imposed a fine of 15 billion Pakistani rupees (\$5.3 million) on the former leader and his wife. Previously, many political analysts saw him as the likely winner of Pakistan's upcoming general election on Feb. 8.

A towering figure in Pakistani politics for decades, Khan — along with his supporters — says the charges and arrests are politically motivated. It is not clear whether the 10 and 14-year-sentences will be served consecutively or concurrently, though some media reports say the terms will be concurrent.



Venezuela rejects US 'blackmail' after reimposition of sanctions

Venezuela lashed out at the Biden administration's decision to reimpose sanctions on its oil and gas exports and threatened to stop accepting deportation flights for Venezuelan migrants living in the U.S. without documents.

"All of Venezuela rejects the

rude and improper blackmail and ultimatum expressed by the U.S. government," Vice President Delcy Rodriguez said, according to Turkish Anadolu news agency.

As of February 13, repatriation flights for Venezuelan migrants would be immediately revoked,

WHO: Gaza situation hellish

WHO chief Dr.Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that Nasser hospital in southern Gaza is only "minimally functioning" and facing shortages of major resources.

The hospital – Gaza's largest remaining healthcare facility – is situated in the southern city of Khan Younis which has been under sustained

Rare Martian meteorites put on view at Tehran exhibit



TEHRAN – On Tuesday, two Martian meteorites were put on show following an unveiling ceremony held at the Azadi Tower's Meteorite Museum in Tehran.

The ceremony was attended by a number of key figures in science and culture as well as Hojjat Kamali, the museum director, who is a record holder spotter, and collector of such outer space rocks, Mehr reported.

Addressing the event, Kamali shared details about the Martian meteorites, emphasizing their uniqueness and recent origin, estimating their age to be under 100 years.

"The authenticity of these specimens has been confirmed by France's CEREGE (European Research and Education Centre), earning them a spot in the world's registry."

Highlighting the global significance of this achievement, Kamali stated that the international recognition of Iranian Martian meteorites would elevate Iran's position in the scientific community worldwide.

Moreover, the event extended beyond Martian marvels, as a rare and precious gemstone named Alexandrite was also unveiled. Noted as one of the world's most expensive jewels, Alexandrite's distinguishing feature is its color-changing property under different

light conditions and viewing angles.

According to organizers, exhibiting hues of emerald green, purple, blue, gray, yellow, pink, and red, Alexandrite caters to collectors' tastes for exceptionally rare and valuable gemstones.

The museum features over 1200 meteorites, mostly collected from the UNESCO-designated Lut and other scorching Iranian deserts.

Meteorites, whether more iron-rich or "stony," are generally silvery or black, and therefore stand out in two major environments – sandy deserts, or icy realms. According to experts, the dry conditions of a desert help to preserve the space rocks in as original a condition as possible.

Martian meteorites

A Martian meteorite is a rock that originated on Mars, having been expelled from the planet due to an impact event. It subsequently traversed interplanetary space before finally landing on Earth as a meteorite.

As of September 2020, a total of 277 meteorites have been identified as Martian, constituting less than half a percent of the 72,000 classified meteorites. The largest complete, uncut Martian meteorite, Taoudenni 002, was discovered in Mali in early 2021, weighing 14.5 kilograms. It is currently showcased at the Maine Mineral & Gem Museum.

Martian meteorites fall into three categories: shergottites, nakhlites, and chassignites, collectively referred to as SNC meteorites. Additionally, there are several ungrouped Martian meteorites. These meteorites are considered Martian due to their elemental and isotopic compositions, which closely resemble the rocks and atmospheric gases found on Mars. These compositions have been measured by orbiting spacecraft, surface landers, and rovers.

settlements on the banks of the Hari River as well as to the east of the Minaret.

The Minaret of Jam is one of the few well-preserved monuments representing the exceptional artistic creativity and mastery of structural engineering of the time.

Its architecture and ornamentation are outstanding from the point of view of art history, fusing together elements from earlier developments in the region in an exceptional way and exerting a strong influence on later architecture in the region.

This graceful soaring structure is an outstanding example of the architecture and ornamentation of the Islamic period in Central Asia and played a significant role in their further dissemination as far as India as demonstrated by the Qutb Minar, Delhi, begun in 1202 and completed in the early 14th century.

(Source: UNESCO)

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Minaret of Jam

At 1,900 m above sea level and far from any town, the Minaret of Jam rises within a rugged valley along the Hari-rud River at its junction with the river Jam around 215 km east of Herat.

Rising to 65m from a 9m diameter octagonal base, its four superimposed, tapering cylindrical shafts are constructed from fired bricks. The Minaret is completely covered with geometric decoration in relief enhanced with a Kufic inscription in turquoise tiles. Built in 1194 by the great Ghurid Sultan Ghiyas-od-din (1153-1203), its emplacement probably marks the site of the ancient city of Firuzkuh, believed to have been the summer capital of the Ghurid dynasty.

Surrounding remains include a group of stones with Hebrew inscriptions from the 11th to 12th centuries on the Kushkak hill, and vestiges of castles and towers of the Ghurid

Iran in frames



A family radiates warmth against an icy backdrop at Dizin Ski Resort. Situated in the Alborz mountain range just north of Tehran, Dizin stands as one of the premier ski destinations in West Asia.

Iran to implement visa waiver for 32 countries on Feb. 4

TEHRAN – Iran's unilateral abolition of visa requirements for citizens of 32 countries is set to take effect on February 4.

"Citizens of the designated countries, as announced earlier, will no longer require visas to travel to Iran starting from February 4. Instead, they can simply purchase a ticket to visit the country," Deputy Foreign Minister for Consular, Parliamentary, and Iranian Expatriates Affairs said on Wednesday.

This move is part of an initiative aimed at promoting tourism and easing travel restrictions for visitors from selected nations, Alireza Bigdeli said.

The official noted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has communicated the executive guidelines for the unilateral visa waiver with certain countries to the relevant authorities. He further emphasized that citizens of these countries intending to explore Iran can travel without the need for visas, and they can enter the country by simply acquiring a ticket.

While detailing the specifics for Indian citizens, Alireza Bigdeli clarified that travelers from India can enter Iran through air entry points without the necessity of visas. However, for those choosing land border crossings, they will still be required to obtain visas.

This significant development is anticipated to boost tourism and foster international relations as



Iran opens its doors to visitors from selected countries without the traditional visa hurdles.

"The government intends to open the country's doors to the world.... And this decision is both courageous and deliberate by the government," the tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami said.

"The decision helps foil negative advertisements, rumors, and fear-mongering about Iran," Zarghami said. "The scheme is expected to usher in a new era of tourism development for Iran; a new chapter of prosperity and tourism development that puts an end to negative propaganda and Iranophobia."

The visa-waiver program was reportedly approved for India, Unit-

ed Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Belarus, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, and Seychelles.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic had previously had visited cancellations with some countries like Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Oman, China, Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria, in various forms – unilateral, bilateral, and group visa cancellations, including airport visas, which were implemented in some cases. The privilege has been granted to tourist groups from Russia based on a mutual agreement inked between Tehran and Moscow.

Inclusive plan devised to safeguard Yazd's historical heritage

TEHRAN – In an effort to preserve and protect the historical core of Yazd, registered as a UNESCO World Heritage, a comprehensive monitoring plan has been devised to ensure the conservation of its cultural heritage elements, especially during the influx of New Persian Year.

On Wednesday, Majid Oloumi, who presides over a local office dedicated to World Heritage, revealed that a monitoring and damage assessment strategy for the city's historical circuit has been meticulously developed.

This initiative, undertaken in collaboration with Yazd's department for cultural heritage, involves the participation of various local museums and historical sites.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Oloumi underlined the significance of Yazd's historical fabric, stating that it encapsulates a living museum with rich historical, cultural, and social components.

"The city's historical core is renowned as one of the largest and richest living museums globally, attracting countless domestic and international tourists."

The official explained that exploring this ancient fabric allows visitors to delve into the cultural tapestry of Yazd, unraveling the origins of historical figures, cultural facets, and various aspects of its venerable civilization.

"Tourism presents both economic and cultural opportunities for cities. Without proper planning, however, this opportunity can turn into a crisis for local communities," warned Oloumi, underscoring the importance of strategic planning for the city's urban areas.

According to Oloumi, the monitoring plan adheres to the principles outlined in the 1999 International Cultural Tourism Charter.

He explained that this charter promotes two key concepts: the comprehensive protection of historical fabric, allowing the place's credibility to be accessible to visitors and the host commu-

nity through effective management. The second concept emphasizes collaboration between the preservation community and the tourism industry, provided both entities mutually respect and acknowledge the vulnerability of the targeted heritage.

Throughout the development of the plan, every aspect of the historical fabric, including infrastructural, service-related, heritage, cultural, and scenic elements, has been scrutinized. For each identified need, proposals have been put forth, outlining the specific agencies responsible for addressing them.

Oloumi clarified that the scope of this initiative extends beyond the designated tourist zone, encompassing the entire 660 hectares of the historical fabric.

"The objective is to strategize tourism planning for the entirety of Yazd's historical area, fostering a sustainable and enriching experience for tourists while contributing to the prosperity of the city's historical legacy."

A "don't miss" destination

With its atmospheric bazaars, winding lanes, a forest of badgirs, mud-brick houses, and delightful places to stay, Yazd is a "don't miss" destination. Heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testament to the intelligent use of the limited resources available in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city through the ancient qanat system.

Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. In addition, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Homes are built with underground courtyards that serve underground areas. Wind catchers, inner courtyards, and thick earth walls ensure a pleasant microclimate.

The man-made underground qanat system is based on snow-fed streams that flow down the foothills of the surrounding mountains. Yazd's earliest water supply is estimated to date from



the Sassanid period (224 CE to 651). However, many others have been continuously repaired and used over time, and most surviving ab-anbars (traditional mud-brick cisterns) today can be dated to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

A top destination, the Yazd Water Museum, is a must-see for anyone wanting to learn more about the brave men who built such underground aqueducts in the past. Housed in a restored manor house with a visible qanat running underneath, the museum offers visitors a fascinating insight into the hidden world of the qanats through a series of photographs, exhibitions, and architectural drawings. It represents almost 2000 years of unique irrigation structure that was in operation but also describes the drilling of mother wells and associated underground water networks that extended to the ancient city.

"The city of Yazd is located in the deserts of Iran close to the Spice and Silk Roads. It is a living testimony to intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival," the UN body wrote on its website.

"Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares, and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities."

From a divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

Nearly 400 ancient medical tools from Turkey hint at rare Roman doctors' offices

Hundreds of Roman-era medical instruments now being examined by scientists may come from one of the earliest known examples of a group medical practice, or at least a place where health care workers congregated to treat people.

A total of 348 artifacts linked to medicine were found at the site of Alliano, an ancient town that also hosted a large spa-like bath in what is now Turkey. The vast number of the 1,800-year-old artifacts may indicate the site once featured an ancient medical center. The instruments were discovered during rescue excavations that were carried out between 1998 and 2006, before the construction of a dam that flooded the site. Most of the arti-

facts, which have been studied over the years, were found within two buildings in a larger complex.

"Alliano was, perhaps, one of the earliest known cases of an organized, group medical practice," Sarah Yeomans, an archaeologist at St. Mary's College of Maryland, wrote in the abstract of a paper she presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, which ran from Jan. 4 to 7 in Chicago.

"The categories and variety of surgical instruments indicate that relatively sophisticated surgical procedures were undertaken at Alliano," Yeomans wrote. These include instruments used to remove hemorrhoids, as well as tools to extract bladder and

kidney stones. Other instruments indicate that cataract surgery, or the removal of a person's cloudy eye lens, and the suturing of wounds may also have taken place at the center.

The researchers don't know how many medical practitioners worked at the site at any one time, "though it was likely dozens or more, depending on the time period," Yeomans told Live Science in an email.

However, while these health care

workers may have gathered in the same spot, that doesn't mean they were colleagues. "Please keep in mind that this wasn't an organized 'practice' in the sense that they were all working for a single business, like today," Yeomans said. "Rather, it would have been more like Harley Street in London in the 19th century where all sorts of practitioners or specialists set up shop in the same location."

(Source: Live Science)

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Knowledge-based companies attending Arab Health 2024

TEHRAN – Ten Iranian knowledge-based companies are presenting their latest healthcare products and achievements in Arab Health 2024 exhibition. Supported by the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, the companies are attending the three-day event started on January 29, ISNA reported.

Physical therapy equipment, electronic surgical devices, therapeutic tools for musculoskeletal disorders, artificial intelligence software, liquid oxygen reservoirs, advanced dressings, pregnancy equipment, allograft transplantation, granules, and biological products are the fields of activity of the Iranian companies.

Arab Health

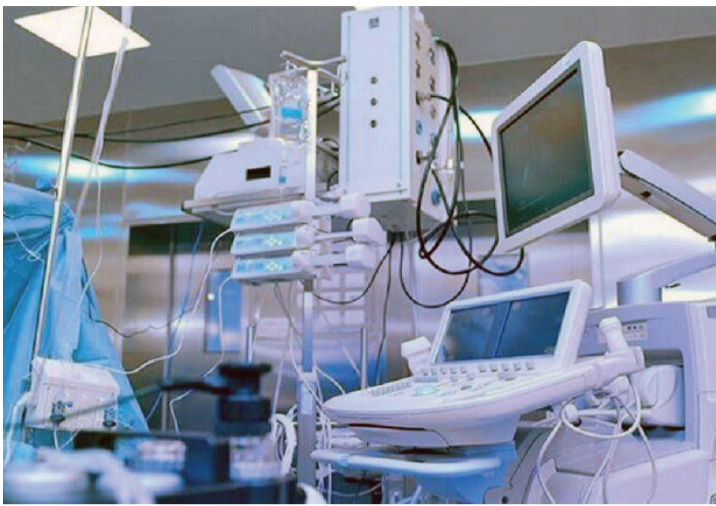
Established 48 years ago, Arab Health provides a platform for the world's leading manufacturers, wholesalers, and distributors to meet the medical and scientific community in the Middle East and subcontinent. The 49th edition of the Arab Health Exhibition is hosted by Dubai. It is held at the Dubai World Trade Centre and will wrap up today, ISNA reported.

Arab Health Dubai is the largest Middle Eastern healthcare exhibition and congress, and the second-largest medical expo in the world.

More than 3,000 exhibitors from across the world are showcasing an exceeding range of healthcare products and services.

Over 60 countries import Iranian medical equipment

On January 13, the head of Iran's



Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually,

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, IRNA quoted Abdolreza Yaqoubzadeh as saying. Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, he added.

Yaqoubzadeh went on to say that the country's need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported.

Exporting to neighbors

On December 30, 2023, Vice Pres-

ident for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy, Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, said the country is planning to export laboratory equipment to neighboring countries.

Knowledge-based companies started to meet the country's technological needs in the past decade, he said, adding that the Vice Presidency supported the companies to manufacture laboratory equipment, Mehr News Agency reported.

Now, various pieces of laboratory equipment are manufactured at prices much lower than the same foreign products, Dehqani-Firouzabadi noted.

Foreign delegations that attend Iranian exhibitions will be familiarized with the country's capabilities, he said, adding that the export of knowledge-based products was \$300 million in the year to March 2021, but increased to \$600 million

the year after.

The export has surged to \$1.5 billion so far in the current Iranian calendar year and is forecast to hit \$2 billion by the end of the year, he said.

Rise in exports

Iran experienced a significant rise in exports of medicine and medical equipment in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year that started on March 21, 2023.

"Exports of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment grew by 300 percent in the first four months of the year," IRNA quoted Heidar Mohammadi, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, as saying.

Around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market is produced by Iranian companies, he highlighted.

Currently, the production of medicine, medical equipment, and powdered milk is supported by subsidies. So, their exports were very limited, but it is hoped that their exports will increase next year, he explained.

Referring to the shortage of 100 drug items in the country, he said: "Currently, nearly one and a half percent of the country's pharmaceutical need is imported. Along with domestic production, it is done as soon as the domestic production meets the demand."

A total of 227 knowledge-based firms are supplying medical equipment for health centers across the country, according to the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Domestically-made 'compost turner' aims to improve waste management



TEHRAN –An Iranian knowledge-based company has managed to build a 'windrow turner' machinery that converts organic and wet waste into compost.

It is one of the most applied methods in the world for waste recycling with the aim of improving efficiency in waste management, ISNA reported.

Due to the lack of primary resources on the earth and the importance of recycling, many techniques with different methods have been proposed to recycle waste.

Items such as paper, glass, plastic, and metal are separated from waste and recycled, but a large amount of urban waste is made up of wet waste produced in kitchens, including fruit peels, food waste, and other wet waste.

Sometimes the percentage of wet waste reaches more than 70 percent. Therefore, recycling this amount of waste is very essential. By localizing a self-propelled compost turner, wet waste will easily turn into compost that can be used in agri-

culture, gardening, and horticulture.

Since more than 70 percent of the amount of urban waste in Iran is also made up of organic materials, recycling them to be used as agricultural fertilizer will greatly benefit the environment and significantly reduce the volume of burial waste materials. Meanwhile, bio-compost production can be placed at the top of recycling and sanitary waste disposal programs in the country.

Improper management of waste

Today, one of the most serious problems of the country's environment is improper management of all municipal, household, industrial, hospital, and hazardous wastes, which has caused environmental pollution and a negative impact on the quality and quantity of biological resources (water, soil, and air) and incurs a loss of huge sum of money annually.

Improper management of waste in the country causes 870 trillion rials (some \$1.7 billion) in damage to the environment and natural resources every year, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE) said on January 29.

Some 445 thousand tons of urban, rural, medical, agricultural, and industrial waste are generated per day, equaling 164 million tons per year, leading to land, water, and air pollution, IRNA quoted Mehdi Khadem-Sameni as saying.

Converting waste into fertilizer and energy, using standard waste incinerators, and mod-

ern methods such as digesters and pyrolysis are among the known strategies used in the world for handling waste, but these methods do not exist in the country, he added.

The current methods used in the country for waste management are old, the official noted, regretting that up to 80 percent of the waste that can be recycled to be used for different purposes is discarded.

"Out of around 600 waste management centers across the country, just four to five are standardized. In other words, some 96 percent of the waste is just dumped in landfills."

According to World Bank, the pollution of resources in 2004 incurred a loss of about 8 billion dollars to the country, and the figure rose to about 10 billion dollars in 2009.

According to the DOE, an estimated 10 to 17 percent of the total produced waste is recycled. While in developed countries this number reaches up to 70 percent.

In 2021, Iran ranked 17th in terms of waste production, according to the World Population Review.

Although there will be pollution as long as there is consumption in any way, it can be kept to an acceptable level by considering green options so as not to cause excessive pollution of the environment.

Some 65 percent of waste is "wet" and 35 percent is "dry", while 25 percent is processed and the remaining 75 percent without processing is buried directly and only 10 percent is separated at the source.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Special clinic to be launched to relieve coronavirus families

A special clinic will be opened for the first time in the country to provide free psychological services to families who have lost their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. The clinic is called "Soog" (literally meaning mourn) will be inaugurated at Shahid Beheshti Educational and Medical Center in Zanjan province on Wednesday. The outbreak of coronavirus has changed the lifestyle of many families, Ehsan Fakoor, head of the mental health department of Zanjan University of Medical Sciences said.

Sudden changes in life cause stress, while the coronavirus itself has doubled the stress due to its contagion and the number of lives it has claimed in the world to date, he regretted. Psychological services for parenting and family counseling, especially counseling related to coronavirus such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression and anxiety, etc. will be provided free of charge in this center, Fakoor noted.

افتتاح کلینیک سوگ، برای تسکین خانواده‌هایی که اعضای خود را بر اثر کرونا از دست داده‌اند

رئیس گروه بهداشت روان دانشگاه علوم پزشکی زنجان از افتتاح نخستین کلینیک سوگ در کشور برای ارائه خدمات رایگان روان‌شناختی به خانواده‌هایی که اعضای خانواده خود را به دلیل ابتلا به کرونا از دست داده‌اند خبر داد و اظهار کرد: این کلینیک ۲۳ مهرماه امسال در مرکز آموزشی درمانی شهید بهشتی زنجان کار خود را آغاز خواهد کرد. فکور با بیان اینکه شیوع ویروس کرونا باعث شده است تا سبک زندگی بسیاری از خانواده‌ها دچار تغییر شود، ادامه داد: ایجاد تغییرات ناگهانی در زندگی باعث ایجاد استرس می‌شود، این در حالی است که خود ویروس کرونا به دلیل واگیردار بودن و نیز آمار فوتی‌هایی که تا به امروز در دنیا به جا گذاشته، این استرس را دوجندان کرده است. وی اظهار داشت: خدمات روانشناختی فرزندپروری و مشاوره خانواده، به ویژه مشاوره‌هایی که مرتبط با کرونا مانند وسواس و افسردگی و اضطراب و غیره به صورت رایگان در این مرکز ارائه خواهد شد.



Gulls wintering at Anzali Wetland

Anzali Wetland in the northern Gilan province is hosting gulls. Every year, from early September to late February, Iran hosts rare species of migratory birds heading from north to southern countries due to reduced seasonal temperatures and food availability.



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FEBRUARY 1, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be generous but not extravagant, be frugal but not miserly.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:18 Evening: 17:50 Dawn: 5:38 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:04 (tomorrow)

Powerful street art campaign spotlighting Israel's war on Gaza



Unmute Gaza teamed up with Greenpeace to unfurl a gigantic banner on the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, Spain.

Street artists worldwide are showing solidarity with photojournalists who are risking their lives covering Israel's war on Gaza.

Shepard Fairey - of Barack Obama "HOPE" poster fame - is among the dozens of artists who've joined the Unmute Gaza project that is amplifying the work of local photojournalists on the ground amid Israel's continued ban on international media from entering the territory, Huffpost website reported.

Fairey and others have recreated some of the harrowing images emerging from Gaza as paintings and sketches, with a mute symbol in the middle.

The artworks are downloadable for free from the project's website. People are urged to print them out and paste them on walls in their own cities and towns to raise awareness of the conflict.

"By creating artworks based on the images of these professional photojournalists, we wish to build a bridge between our community of artists and those facing death every second in Gaza," the Unmute Gaza collective, whose members are donating their time and resources freely, wrote on Instagram. "It's a simple way to support while showing the truth of what is happening".

Fairey was compelled to join the initiative "because I'm a pacifist," he wrote on his website. "I was inspired to work from Belal Khaled's photo of a young boy who is crying out in pain from his

injuries as blood runs down his face. An image like this (and thousands of others) can strip away the superficial overlay of country, ethnicity, and religion and illuminate the basic human suffering that is happening in Gaza."

The campaign went public last November when Unmute Gaza members unfurled banners featuring Spanish street artist Escif's recreations of photos that were taken by Khaled and Mahmoud Bassam from the third floor of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

The stunt temporarily forced the museum to close its entrance. Since then, artists' reworked images have appeared in 80 cities across 29 countries — from Bogota, Colombia to Bristol, England.

Last week, environmental activist organization Greenpeace joined Unmute Gaza to unfurl a gigantic banner featuring Fairey's interpretation of Khaled's image on Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum, the home of Pablo Picasso's "Guernica" painting which shows the horrors of the Nazi German bombing campaign on the Spanish town of the same name.

Picasso's haunting painting is "a symbol of the suffering of civilians in war," Greenpeace executive director Eva Saldaña said in a statement. "There is no better place to denounce what is happening in Gaza, to reconnect with our humanity in order to put life before everything else, to demand respect for current international law and to call for a ceasefire through the work of two great artists".

Israel launched its war on Gaza in response to Hamas' surprise Oct. 7 attack and has, to date, killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, about half of them women and children. Some 85% of the territory's 2.3 million residents have been forced from their homes.

On its website, the Unmute Gaza group slammed the "disproportionate response of the Israeli government" for creating "mass humanitarian suffering".

"We see ourselves as humanitarians. We stand in solidarity with all oppressed people, including the Palestinian people, and advocate for people's inherent dignity," it added.

Exhibition of 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival on show at Saba Cultural-Artistic Institute

TEHRAN-The exhibition of the competition sections of the 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival as well as its Art Market was inaugurated on Tuesday at the Saba Cultural-Artistic Institute in Tehran.

A total of 854 artworks by 606 artists have been presented in the competition sections and Art Market, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The Art Market contains works by renowned masters including Mohammadali Taraghijah, Mokarrameh Ghanbari, Manouchehr Niazi, Hadi Roshanzamir, Nasrollah Afjei, Jalal Shabahangi, Nasser Ovissi, Reza Derakhshani, Ahmadreza Ahmadi, Kamyar Sadeghi, and Sadegh Tabrizi among others.

The presented works include a variety of themes, techniques and artistic approaches from realistic to abstract and conceptual and have displayed a wide range of creativity, innovations and new experiences.

The 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival showcases a variety of works in 10 categories including painting, illustration, graphic



design, photography, calligraphy, cartoon and caricature, sculpture, ceramics, Persian painting, and modern artistic mediums.

According to Mohammad Khorasanizadeh, the Director-General of Visual Arts Office at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic

Guidance, in the middle of February, a selection of documentary films regarding the visual arts will be displayed at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

As he said, from among the presented mural designs, the Tehran Municipality will help create

the top three ones on the city walls.

The exhibition of the artworks will be open to the public until February 11, when the winners of Golden Touba awards in the competition sections will be announced.

Four cineastes to receive Fajr lifetime achievement awards

TEHRAN-The organizers of the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival will honor four Iranian cineastes with lifetime achievement awards during the opening ceremony of the event on Thursday.

The honorees include Mohammadreza Aliqoli for his contribution to music, Parviz Sheikhtadi for his directing skills, and Fariba Kosari and Abolfazl Pourarab for their outstanding performances in acting.

A selection of the festival's awards will also be unveiled and presented during at the opening ceremony.

Earlier this week, the festival's organizers announced that the international section of the event will start on February 6 in Tehran.

According to the public relations of the festival, the international section of the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival will include the International Competition (Cinema Salvation), Eastern Vista (Films from Asian-Islamic Countries), and Festival of Festivals.

This edition of the festival has received a total of 621 submissions from 87 countries. The final line-up for the international section has not yet been announced.

In addition to Iran, countries such as the U.S., France, India, Turkey, Italy, Yemen, Brazil, Russia, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Mexico, China, Britain, Ireland, Iraq, South Korea, Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden, Greece, Australia, Poland, Lebanon, Japan, Hong Kong, and Syria have registered their works for participation in the international section of this edition.

The international section aims to identify quality international and national films and to strengthen and encourage the production of works aligned with Iranian cinema. In this section, priority is given to films dealing with topics seeking justice, discouraging oppression, arrogance, global terrorism, violence and extremism, encouraging Islamic awakening, transcendent lifestyle, family orientation, human rights, highlighting moral, spiritual and religious teachings, fighting against

discrimination, highlighting culture and civilization through artistic expression, and thus striving to guide contemporary man towards happiness.

The national section of the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival will kick off earlier than its international section on February 1. A total of 37 movies are to compete in three sections, Sodaye-Simorgh (the festival's main competition section), New Perspective (first-time filmmakers), and Animations.

The line-up comprises 22 Iranian feature films in the main competition section, 11 films in the New Perspective section, and 4 animated films in their own specified section.

Hozeh Honari (Art Bureau) has a strong presence at this year's edition with six films, promising a cinematic journey through varied genres, showcasing the depth and diversity of the Iranian film industry.

Winners of various categories in both national and international sections will be announced on the last day of the festival on February 11.

Albert Camus' "Requiem for a Nun" performed at Ahura Theater

TEHRAN-The play "Requiem for a Nun" written by Albert Camus and directed by Mohsen Alimohammadi was launched at Ahura Theater in Tehran on Wednesday.

Alimohammadi also performs in the play along with Samira Salimi, Baran Sotoudeh, Farshad Kokabian, Yahya Golnesaei, Mehdi Fartash, and Arman Karkhaneh, IRNA reported.

Published in 1962, the play was adapted from William Faulkner's 1951 novel of the same name, as Camus had a great admiration for Faulkner.

A work of fiction, it is a sequel to Faulkner's early novel "Sanctuary," which introduced the characters of Temple Drake, her friend (later husband) Gowan Stevens, and Gowan's uncle Gavin Stevens.

The events in "Requiem for a Nun" are set in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County and Jackson, Mississippi, in November 1937 and March 1938, eight years after the events of "Sanctuary". In the play, Temple, now married with a child, must learn to deal with her violent, turbulent past.

The story begins when the death sentence is pronounced on the nurse Nancy for the murder of Temple and Gowan's child. Told



partly in prose, partly in play form, "Requiem for a Nun" is a haunting exploration of the impact of the past on the present.

Like many of Faulkner's works, "Requiem for a Nun" experiments with narrative technique. The main narrative, which is presented in dramatic form, is interspersed

with prose sections recounting the history of the fictional Yoknapatawpha County. Each prose section focuses on a specific institution (the courthouse, state house, and jailhouse respectively) that serves as the setting for the following dramatic section of the story.

The major theme of the story concerns spiritual redemption for past evil deeds through suffering and the recognition of one's guilt.

Faulkner (1897-1962) was a Nobel Prize-winning American novelist and short story writer. One of the most influential writers of the twentieth century, his reputation is based mostly on his novels, novellas, and short stories. He was also a published poet and an occasional screenwriter.

Camus (1913-1960) was a French philosopher, author, dramatist, journalist, and political activist. He was the recipient of the 1957 Nobel Prize in Literature at the age of 44, the second-youngest recipient in history. Two of his works also won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

The play will be performed until February 23 at Ahura Theater located at Erfan Art Complex, South Mofatteh Ave., Haft-e-Tir Square.

"The Anomaly" at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN- French writer Hervé Le Tellier's novel "The Anomaly" has recently been published in Persian by Now Publications.

Fatemeh Ebrahimian and Mohammad-Amin Beik are the translators of the book, which was originally published in 2020.

"The Anomaly" is structured around three parts, each named after a poem by Raymond Queneau: "As Black as the Sky," "Life Is a Dream, They Say," and "Song of Oblivion." This Oulipian work delves into the realm of reality and fiction, posing thought-provoking questions.

Set in June 2021, the story unravels after a bizarre incident disrupts the lives of the

passengers aboard a flight from Paris to New York. Among the hundreds of individuals affected, we encounter an array of captivating characters.

Blake, for instance, may appear to be an ordinary family man, but he secretly works as a contract killer. Slimboy, a Nigerian pop star, has grown weary of his façade. Joanna, a formidable lawyer, finds herself confronted with the consequences of her flaws. Lastly, there's Victor Miesel, a writer highly regarded by critics but commercially unsuccessful, who suddenly witnesses his work become a cult hit.

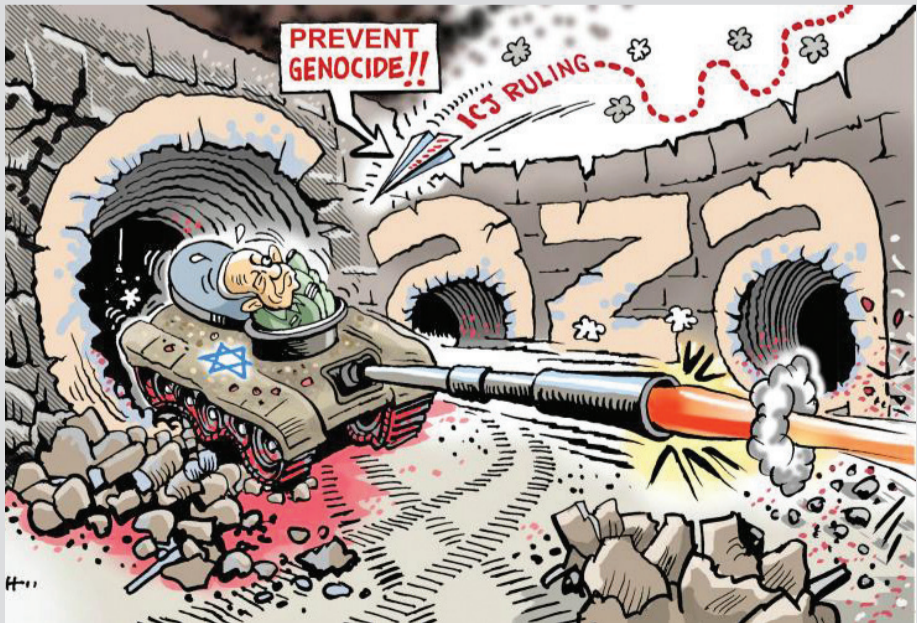
As the narrative unfolds, it becomes apparent that all these individuals believed they led double lives. However, none of them

had ever fathomed just how true that notion truly was.

Le Tellier weaves a witty exploration of the doppelgänger theme, transporting readers across continents, from Lagos and Mumbai to the corridors of power in the White House.

"The Anomaly" is Le Tellier's most ambitious work to date, garnering praise from literary critics. In recognition of its merits, the novel was awarded the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 2020. With its clever storytelling and the profound questions, it raises about perception and truth, this novel captivates readers, inviting them to ponder the boundaries between reality and fiction.

Cartoon of Day



ICJ ruling on Israel

Cartoonist: Paresh Nath from India