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Quds rallies held in Iran and dozens of countries across the globe

International Outcry on Quds Day



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India



Jordan



Malaysia



Yemen

► Page 3-5

Opinion



How should Iran respond to recent aggression by the Zionist regime?

By Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati
Managing Director

TEHRAN – The world was shocked when Israeli fighter jets provided by the United States attacked the consular part of Iran's embassy in Damascus, leading to the martyrdom of senior Iranian military advisors who were staying in the diplomatic building. For a regime that has made every effort in recent years to create a law-abiding and oppressed image for itself in international forums, what does such unusual behavior signify?

The fabricated history of the Zionist regime before and after Al-Aqsa Storm

On 7 October 2023 unbelievable news shook the global media space. Hamas fighters crossed the barrier wall between Gaza and the occupied territories entering Zionist settlements and dealing a heavy blow to Israel's first line of defense. In this attack, some of the Zionist regime's soldiers and settlers also fell into captivity. ► Page 2

What's awaiting West Asia?

Iran poised to respond to Israeli attack on embassy

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The Monday Israeli attack on Iran's embassy in Damascus is causing alarm across the world as people fear that the move has put the entire region in a parlous state.

Iran has vowed that its response to the attack will not be paltry. Pundits are of the mind that Tehran is not bluffing and that its response would make the regime regret its unprecedented decision, as warned by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. "The evil regime of Israel will be punished at the hands of our brave men," Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stated.

These remarks have mounted anxiety in the already unnerved Israeli society. People across the occupied territories especially in the port of Haifa are rushing towards shelters in fear of possible attacks from Iran. Israeli television spoke about the chaos, reporting that people were panicking and emptying supermarkets to prepare for a potential war with Iran. Military spokesman Daniel Hagari telling people that they do not need to "buy generators, stock up on food, and withdraw money from ATMs" did not manage to calm the waters either.

Israeli officials are doing no better than the panicked settlers. According to the Jerusalem Post, they have shut down 28 of the regime's embassies and consulates across the world, including the ones in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Turkmenistan. Envoys have also been advised to avoid showing their faces in public.

Additionally, the regime has canceled the weakened leave for all its soldiers, and footage circulating online shows it is relocating its fighter jets in anticipation of Iran's destructive response.

Tehran's response certain

Western countries including the U.S., UK, and France have refrained from condemning Israel's assault on diplomatic premises which is in breach of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. They have instead opted to turn the screw on Iran by accusing it of committing destabilizing acts and telling it to

exercise "restraint." Analysts and legal experts, however, believe that Tehran has the absolute right to respond to the attack.

"Iran has to respond to the attack because if it doesn't, none of its embassies in the region would be deemed safe in the future. The West is allowing Israel to violate international law and won't condemn the regime so Iran is forced to take the matter into its own hands, even though it does not wish to escalate tensions in the region and broaden the conflict," Ali Abdi, an expert on Israel and Palestine, told the Tehran Times.

Despite Israel being on high alert since Monday, Iran has not yet responded to the embassy attack. Israeli media had anticipated a retaliation on Friday, the day Iranians observe as International Quds Day, but it did not materialize. The regime is also struggling to predict the potential nature of Iran's reaction.

"Iranian officials did not rush an answer, which is commendable. It's important not to act hastily when the enemy is prepared. I believe the response should be unexpected and target something that the regime will find difficult to repair," Abdi said, adding that he doesn't think a full-blown conflict between Iran and the U.S. is on the way.

"Washington was aware of the attack. They allowed Israel to target Iran's embassy in exchange for the regime postponing an offensive on Rafah. However, the U.S. is not interested in a war with Iran. I think that if Iran retaliates, Washington will intervene and urge Netanyahu's government to end the exchange of fire."

Iranian officials have made it clear that they do not want the situation in the region to spiral out of control following Tehran's retaliation. Yet, Iran seems to be ready for an Israeli response to its retaliation. If Israel opts to respond to Iran's retaliatory move, pundits believe, Iran will be obliged to retaliate with greater force.

Iran pays tribute to consulate attack martyrs after Leader prays over their bodies

TEHRAN – Iranians gathered in solemn remembrance to pay tribute to seven members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) who lost their lives in a terrorist attack on Iran's consulate in Syria, perpetrated by Israeli forces.

The funeral procession held on Friday morning, coincided with the Quds Day commemoration, which is marked annually across the world on the last Friday of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. ► Page 3

Terror strikes, sabotage: tools of adversaries to distract Iran's Tel Aviv strategy

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN – The terrorist assault occurred in southeastern Iran on Thursday bears striking resemblance to previous incidents orchestrated by entities associated with Iran's adversaries. ► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

Kayhan: The answer to Israel should be like this

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

Kayhan wrote in its editorial: The regimes that are being destroyed, do anything to survive. The social gaps in Israel have deepened in an unprecedented way and the Zionists today do not want Netanyahu and his cabinet. Just yesterday, the Zionists attacked the Knesset building and occupied it for several hours. You should add international pressure, especially public opinion, on this regime. Netanyahu feels very well that these pressures are unprecedented. Today, no country in the world can defend this regime and its behavior. Today, the Zionist regime is in its most isolated and hated state, and this is "unbearable" for Netanyahu and other leaders of this regime. The Zionists know very well that their brutal attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus will be answered. They have declared this and it can be understood from the behaviors they show. We think that Iran's answer should be such that it is not included in the enemy's calculations. In this case, it will definitely have the necessary deterrence. Time is also "important".

Iran: Strange and illogical

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the United Nations Security Council meeting regarding the Zionist regime's attack on Iran's diplomatic building and said: The reaction and position of the representatives of Washington, London, and Paris in the Security Council meeting and the statements of American officials regarding the occurrence of this terrorist attack were strange and illogical because they claimed ignorance and created tension in the Security Council meeting. Robert Wood, the U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations, and John Kirby, the National Security Communications Advisor of the White House, claimed that they had no role in the attack on Damascus. This was while the representatives of England and France were silent and demanded self-restraint from the parties. These positions once again displayed the common features of Western countries' politics. They justified the brutal actions of Tel Aviv and instead of condemning this terrorist attack, they put the resistance in the place of the accused, and in a far-fetched interpretation, they claimed that the current tensions reflect Iran's support for the resistance movements.

Iran warned U.S. not to fall into Netanyahu's trap: official



TEHRAN – Tehran has sent Washington a written message, asking it to "step aside" as it responds to Israel's unprecedented attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, according to a political aide to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

"In a written message, the Islamic Republic of Iran warned U.S. leadership not to get dragged into the trap Netanyahu has set for Washington: back off so you won't get hurt. In response, the U.S. asked Iran not to target American facilities,"

'Palestine represents the foremost humanitarian issue worldwide,' says speaker

TEHRAN- Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has asserted that by participating in the Quds Day rally, both in Iran and globally, people have underscored that "the Palestine issue stands as the foremost concern for the Islamic Ummah and humanity as a whole."

Speaking at the Quds Day rally on Friday, Ghalibaf strongly condemned the Israeli assault on the consular section of the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital of Damascus, along with the ongoing crimes perpetrated by the occupying

Siasat-e-Rooz: Supporting Palestine is a global issue

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the diverting of the people's attitude towards the crimes of Israel by the Western media and wrote: A realistic view of the developments in Palestine expresses the truth that has been marginalized in the Western media companies and attempts are made to keep the people ignorant of it. The issue of Palestine is not the issue of a few million Palestinians, the Arab world, or even the Muslims, but the issue of all humanity, which is related to the fate of every human being. The important point is that attributing the Palestinian issue to the Islamic world is also a big lie that the West seeks to instill in humanity, while this regime is a threat against all divine religions, including Christianity and even Jews. At the same time, the Zionist and Persian-language media and opposition circles are trying to attribute the hostility to this regime only to Iran. Based on this, it can be said that confronting the Zionist regime and supporting Palestine is not only an Islamic matter but a global task and mission.

Etemad: Creating an opportunity for a terrorist attack by Israel on Iran

In a commentary, Etemad dealt with creating an opportunity from Israel's terrorist attack on Iran and said: Israel's attack on our country's consulate in Syria has various dimensions. Some groups consider this action to be a change in Israel's tactics on the battlefield. In order to get rid of severe internal deadlocks, it tries to move the scope of the conflict outside its borders. It is possible to think that the Prime Minister of Israel is at a deadlock in the Gaza war, and the result is his defeat. If he can turn the war into a war of attrition, he may find an outlet. Now the Islamic Republic of Iran has the upper hand in this field. On the one hand, it can negotiate with the Russians to somehow cover the security of the Syrian skies. The atmosphere at the level of the UN Security Council is also in the interest of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran can also form a kind of alliance with the Arab world. In addition, Tehran has the ability to design favorable cooperation with a country like Switzerland, which had an anti-Israel position in the Security Council.

Mohammad Jamshidi wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Israeli warplanes fired missiles at Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital on Monday. The unprecedented attack resulted in the death of 13 people, including a high-ranking Iranian military official and his deputy.

According to international law, the act of attacking an embassy of another country is deemed a violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. This convention explicitly states that embassies are considered inviolable and should be safeguarded from any form of intrusion or harm.

Several countries have denounced the regime for the Monday aggression. During a UN Security Council meeting, however, the U.S., UK, and France refrained from condemning Israel.

Iran has vowed to "make Israel regret" the barbaric move.

regime in Gaza and Palestine.

"This year's Quds Day rally witnessed a distinctive momentum, both in Iran and across the globe," remarked the parliament speaker, emphasizing that the true nature of the Zionist regime has been laid bare, characterized by its malice, disregard for human rights, and defiance of international laws.

He also expressed hope that the heightened awareness and vigilance, particularly within the Islamic world, could catalyze the dismantling of the cancerous regime (Israel).

Iran: All united for al-Quds

TEHRAN – People across Iran has rallied on the International Quds Day, marked on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan, to express their solidarity with Palestinians and condemn Israeli atrocities.

Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif, the spokesperson for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and director-general of the Intifada headquarters in Tehran, stated that pro-Palestine rallies occur in over 2,000 locations across Iran. This year's Quds Day march carries the slogan "Quds Day, from al-Aqsa Storm to al-Ahrar (freedom seekers) Storm."

In Tehran, the demonstrations coincided with a funeral procession for the victims of an Israeli airstrike on the consular building of the Iranian embassy in Damascus. Participants carried images of the martyrs and banners with slogans denouncing Israel and the United States.

Demonstrators from diverse backgrounds proudly displayed Iranian and Palestinian flags alongside banners demanding "Free Palestine" and "Al-Quds must be liberated."

Senior Iranian officials, including President Ebrahim Raisi, Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, minister of foreign affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, Judiciary chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei, and IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani, joined the marches in Tehran.

The mass rally in the Iranian



capital was also attended by Palestine's Islamic Jihad Secretary General Ziyad Nakhalah and Abd al-Aziz al-Muhammadawi, chief of staff of Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units, better known as Hashd al-Sha'abi.

Ziyad Nakhalah delivered a significant address during the demonstrations, emphasizing the unity of all fronts within the resistance axis against the Zionist enemy. Nakhalah declared, "In conjunction with the unwavering steadfastness and resistance exhibited by the Palestinian people, victory is assured across these fronts." Highlighting the current strength of the resistance axis, he pointed to ongoing developments in southern Lebanon, Yemen, and operational activities in Iraq as testament to the unity, potency, and preparedness of this axis in combatting Israel.

Previously, the Secretary-General had underscored the importance of World Quds Day as a platform to bolster unity among the people and fighters, aligning their objectives. He further asserted, "Gaza stands

resolute alongside its valiant populace and fighters, serving as a pivotal juncture in our nation's journey towards Quds. With divine assistance, victory is imminent." Emphasizing the pivotal role of resistance forces across various sectors and fronts, he affirmed their parallel alignment with the Palestinian Resistance movement.

Al-Muhammadawi, on his part, asserted that Israel's decline is evident through the collective efforts of the Axis of Resistance. He emphasized the awaiting of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's guidance, expressing confidence in Palestinian victory and the eventual downfall of the occupying regime.

"Definitely, what is unfolding today among all the groups of the Axis of Resistance in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran is the declaration of Israel's decline," Muhammadawi, known as Abu Fadak, told reporters on Friday.

Nigerian students in Tehran also showed their support for Palestine and Iran. Leader of the

Islamic Movement of Nigeria Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky was also among the attendees.

In a statement on Quds Day this year, Iran's foreign ministry said the event has "now turned into a symbol of the unity of the entirety of humanity". The ministry also condemned the United States and Western states for lending support to Israel in its war on Gaza.

Iran determined to hold the Zionist regime accountable: IRGC chief

Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, delivered a powerful address to a large gathering during the Quds Day procession in Tehran. He began by condemning the Zionist regime as a tool of Western powers, originally facilitated by the British regime and later strengthened by the United States.

Salami emphasized the Israeli regime's role in destabilizing the security and peace of the Palestinian nation and other Islamic and Arab territories. He recounted historical battles waged by Western powers against the Palestinian people, aiming to uproot and displace them, and highlighted America's complicity in these actions.

Salami criticized the United States' shortsightedness in supporting a regime facing economic, political, and security challenges, warning of the global resentment it fuels against the United States. He noted America's declining influence in the region and the world but highlighted its continued support for the Zionist regime.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

How should Iran respond to recent aggression by the Zionist regime?

From page 1 ► According to Zionist media reports, this attack resulted in over 1000 casualties with more than 200 individuals taken captive. Although Hamas fighters did not intend to stay in the settlements and seemed to aim at striking a blow to the regime's prestige and taking captives for exchange with Palestinian prisoners, due to the unpreparedness of the Zionist army, the attack expanded further, leading to scattered battles in the settlements for two days following the operation.

In these circumstances, the extremist cabinet of Benjamin Netanyahu, formed by an alliance with the most hardline political groups, faced its toughest challenge since the establishment of the regime. Perhaps even contrary to the anticipation of some of the staunchest supporters of Israel, the extremists in the regime's political circle concluded that they needed to set three main objectives to overcome this newfound challenge.

Zionist's wish for the destruction of Hamas

5 months and 11 days have passed since October 27th, the day Israel began its ground offensive into Gaza. According to reports by the Israeli military, the regime has managed to occupy a significant part of Gaza's territory. There is however no evidence that the regime has managed to "eradicate" Hamas, or gain access to the vast majority of the enclave's underground tunnels.

The regime also says that it has so far killed over 13,000 Hamas fighters without providing any substantial evidence to back its claims. Besides, the high spirits of Palestinian fighters coupled with the untrammelled support of people seems to defy the Israeli reports.

It is natural that resistance against an enemy equipped with advanced weapons, superior air force, and control over vital infrastructure like water, electricity, and the internet would be nearly impossible, but this symmetric resistance withdrawal is not considered a defeat for Hamas even by the regime's experts.

Gaza, a land without Palestinian sovereignty

One of the things that, despite the emphasis of the regime's supporters, especially the U.S., Netanyahu never believed in was the two-state solution. The U.S. has revisited the two-state solution, stressing the formation of a post-war Palestinian state with the exclusion of Hamas. Some have even suggested that Gaza be governed by PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) or be under the supervision of Jordan as well as international observers. Netanyahu, however, seems to be completely averse to the two-state solution even under such conditions. His behaviors and interviews show that he only sees the destruction of Gaza as a solution to the regime's woes.

Netanyahu deeply disagrees with Arab and Western leaders on the governance of post-war Gaza and the forced displacement of the enclave's residents. This uncertainty over the future will inevitably lead to the resurgence of

resistance groups. Considering how Netanyahu has not managed to eliminate Gaza from the political geographical equations to date, and that Palestinians are refusing to let a second Nakba happen, the spirit of resistance and struggle will prevail as it did before the Al-Aqsa Storm in Gaza.

Proof of Anti-Semitism and the Claim of Victimhood by the Occupying Regime!

According to Netanyahu's cabinet, the attacks on Zionist settlements were seen as the best opportunity to portray the victimization of this regime and attract international support. The Zionist regime believed it could make the most of this opportunity to prove its claims, especially the claims of the hardline members of the current cabinet regarding the necessity of combating anti-Semitism.

Contrary to the initial assumption, this objective was not achieved, but it can be said that the image of peace and lawfulness that the regime had been trying to project over the past decades has also been lost during the recent war. The killing of more than 33,000 Palestinian civilians and even attacks on UN-affiliated institutions have severely tarnished the regime's credibility. South Africa's genocide case against the regime the global public's expressions of disgust, even in the face of Western governments' pro-Israel policies, serve as clear evidence in this regard.

The barbaric and bloodthirsty behavior of Israel's army has not only failed to garner public support for the regime but also caused Netanyahu's main supporters to refrain from backing him.

This War is with Iran

If we take a brief look at the current situation, we find that the intense war in Gaza in recent months will not last long because Gaza lacks the capacity for a prolonged war, and any further incidents from now on will only incur credibility costs and human rights violations for the regime.

In the current circumstances where even Netanyahu's supporters are distancing themselves from him, initiating an attack on Lebanon will not be met with unwavering support. The only remaining option is to involve Iran in a confrontation that Netanyahu needs to stay in power for a longer period. The leaders of the Zionist regime justify their abnormal behavior by claiming that it's necessary to strike in order to create deterrence in West Asia. Such justification has not even managed to convince their closest allies.

Despite the extensive efforts made by the Zionist regime from the beginning of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, neither Iran nor the U.S. have any plans for direct confrontation. Iran has always declared that the independent resistance movement is strong enough to manage itself and deal with potential issues. Meanwhile, although the U.S. and its allies know Iran is supporting and empowering the resistance front, they all

unanimously agree that Iran has not had a direct role in the recent regional battles. The points mentioned indicate that the Zionist regime has not achieved significant success in any of its four intended arenas.

What should Iran be like?

Iran's strategic position from the beginning of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm has been to strengthen the position of resistance and avoid escalating conflicts. Firstly, as mentioned, the power of resistance and the motivation of the people in Gaza are such that they can effectively strike blows against the regime, and secondly, the defeated game of the regime and the irreparable blow it has received should not turn into a regional challenge by extending the war beyond the borders of the Zionist regime. This fundamental policy requires clear conditions to be met.

1: Correct analysis and protection of human resources

Since the spirit of resistance and struggle against the Zionist regime has become an established culture among the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran the martyrdom of an individual is not the end of Iran's path. Rather, such incidents strengthen the motivation for more decisive actions against the regime. However, it is important not to forget that the loss of an experienced commander is not easily compensable. Therefore, it is necessary to truly believe that we are currently fighting an all-out war. That way we can shape the right mindset and manage every layer in accordance with the real circumstances. Preserving maximum security measures in neighboring regions and updating the standards in those areas seems to be one of the most important issues in this regard.

The recent attack on Damascus shows that the Zionist regime is not bound by any principle, and diplomatic sites are not immune from its aggression either. For this reason, it seems necessary for us to be ready to face the regime's crimes in a way that would protect our human resources as our most valuable assets, while we avoid entering a war with Israel that the regime has already lost.

2: Legal and diplomatic pursuit is necessary

One of our longstanding weaknesses from the era of the Sacred Defense until today has been the lack of balanced alignment between military, legal, and diplomatic layers in a way that has often not allowed achievements in various fields to complement each other. It is necessary to have diplomatic and legal teams continuously active in the face of such atrocities and to collaborate closely and effectively with other countries, especially those that have previously condemned the regime's crimes, in upholding our country's international rights. Legal processes, especially in the international arena, are complex and time-consuming.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Terror strikes, sabotage: tools of adversaries to distract Iran's Tel Aviv strategy

From Page 1 ▶ On Thursday, Southeast Iran witnessed a series of attacks targeting security outposts in the towns of Chabahar and Rask. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) reported thwarting the attempt to seize their headquarters, but at a cost of 10 security personnel killed. The Jaish al-Adl terrorist group, known for previous attacks in the region, claimed responsibility.

This incident raises a critical question: why does Iran face terrorist attacks during periods of heightened regional tension? The timing of this attack, following an Israeli airstrike in Damascus that killed Iranian personnel, is particularly dubious.

Sistan and Baluchestan province, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, has a history of violence, including clashes with Takfiri terrorists and drug traffickers. The Jaish al-Adl group is a familiar threat, having conducted similar operations in the past.

However, the recent surge in sabotage and terrorist acts suggests a more calculated strategy. The timing and nature of these attacks point towards a deliberate attempt to disrupt Iranian security and send a specific message.

After regaining control and securing the area following the terrorist attack, the IRGC Ground Forces' Southeast Security Headquarters announced the death of 18 terrorists and armed assailants. These individuals, reportedly affiliated with foreign intelligence agencies, planned to destabilize the region by targeting public areas, military installations,



and law enforcement facilities in Chabahar and Rask.

A closer examination of recent acts of sabotage and terrorist activities within Iran reveals a pattern.

The methods employed and the timing of these attacks suggest a coordinated effort with specific goals and intended messages too.

In early January, tragedy struck in Kerman near the tomb of Iranian anti-terror commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani. During a ceremony marking four years since his martyrdom, two explosions occurred, resulting in 84 casualties and over 200 injuries, including three courageous paramedics. Among the victims were 44 women, children, and at least a dozen Afghan nationals. Iran declared a day of mourning, highlighting the gravity of the situation.

Days later, as Iran prepared for parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections, the city of Borujen witnessed sabotage. Gas pipelines were rocked by explosions, affecting crucial national gas lines responsible for transporting gas across the country.

the resolute response of the Iranian populace, demonstrated through their massive turnout at the 22 Bahman rally and the high voter turnout in the March 1 elections.

Additionally, Iran's security and intelligence apparatus have effectively thwarted numerous terrorist plots, showcasing the nation's preparedness to safeguard its citizens.

Of particular significance is the timing of the recent terrorist attack in Sistan and Baluchestan, occurring just before the International Quds Day rally and in the aftermath of Israel's brazen assault on the consular section of the Iranian embassy in Damascus.

In response to Israel's aggression, the Iranian leadership, including President Ebrahim Raisi and Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, vowed retaliatory action. This commitment to responding was echoed by President Raisi's declaration on April 2 that Israel's crime would not go unanswered, and Ayatollah Khamenei's statement affirming that Israel would receive a slap in the face for the Damascus attack.

In the wake of Iran's firm stance against Israel, speculation abounded in Israeli and Western media regarding the nature and timing of Iran's response.

However, these conjectures remained unanswered, leaving many questions unanswered. It's plausible that the Thursday terrorist attack in southeastern Iran serves as a deliberate ploy to distract or disrupt Iran's focus on its response to Tel Aviv.

In the meantime, the Tehran Times highlighted hostile governments' covert and overt strategies toward Iran, emphasizing the absence of conducive conditions for overt military operations within Iran's borders. However, the existence of covert operations aimed at causing damage with plausible deniability remains a concern, underscoring ongoing threats to Iran's stability.

Exploring reasons behind recent terrorist acts in Iran

A cursory examination of recent events, including the terrorist incident in Kerman, the sabotage in Borujen, and the attack on the police headquarters in Sistan and Baluchestan, reveals a common thread: these acts occur during critical junctures when Iran is gearing up for national events, drawing large crowds. Furthermore, they all share the intent of undermining Iran's national security and stability.

It's evident that the perpetrators behind these acts seek to convey a message to Tehran, suggesting that their affiliates within Iran pose a significant threat. However, their aspirations have been dashed by

Iran pays tribute to consulate attack martyrs after Leader prays over their bodies



From Page 1 ▶ Mourners flooded the streets of the Iranian capital Tehran, expressing solidarity and sorrow as they denounced Israel and its staunch ally, the United States. The ceremony, steeped in reverence and resolve, underscored Iran's steadfast opposition to acts of aggression and its unwavering commitment to defending its sovereignty.

After the funeral, the bodies of the martyrs will be laid to rest in their respective hometowns, symbolizing the sacrifices made in service to their nation and the profound loss felt by their families and communities.

The assault on the Iranian consulate in Damascus's Mezzeh district, carried out by Israeli warplanes on April 1st, has sparked condemnation from countries worldwide. Among the casualties were members of the IRGC, including Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and his deputy, General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, further intensifying tensions in the region.

Iran has vowed a firm response to the Israeli crime that violated all international obligations and conventions.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader

of the Islamic Revolution, led prayers over the bodies of the seven IRGC military members during a ceremony in Tehran on Thursday, which was attended by high-ranking military officials.

On an event on Tuesday, the Leader declared that Monday assault reflects the deteriorating position of the Israeli regime, and Israel will receive "a slap in the face" for this heinous crime.



"The Zionist regime's defeat in Gaza will continue and this regime will approach demise and collapse," stated Ayatollah Khamenei.

Furthermore, he reiterated Iran's unwavering commitment to confronting Israeli aggression and standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against oppression.

Ayatollah Khamenei denounced Israel's continued hostility towards Gaza, highlighting the resilience of the Palestinian population amidst ongoing violence and hardship.

Israel's military offensive on besieged Gaza, which started on October 7, so far has resulted in the death of at least 33,037 Palestinians, with 75,668 others injured, according to the latest statistics from the Gaza health ministry.

The conflict has resulted in 85% of Gaza's residents being internally displaced, facing severe scarcities of essential resources like food, clean water, and medicine, as the majority of the region's infrastructure lies in ruins.

Interior minister issues border control warning to Pakistan after terrorist attack

TEHRAN- The recent terrorist attack in southeastern Iran has prompted the Iranian Interior Minister to issue a stern notice to Pakistan regarding border control measures. Minister Ahmad Vahidi emphasized that such warnings have already been communicated to the Pakistani government and will persist.

On Thursday, a series of attacks

targeted security outposts in the towns of Chabahar and Rask in Southeast Iran. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully thwarted an attempt to seize their headquarters, albeit at the cost of 10 security personnel.

The Jaish al-Adl terrorist group, known for previous attacks in the region, claimed responsibility.

Minister Vahidi commended the efforts of the IRGC and Iran's police personnel in neutralizing the threat, highlighting the elimination of all 18 members involved in the failed terrorist incident.

"This incident was a failed attempt by terrorists under external control," Minister Vahidi stated, emphasizing the decisive action taken against

these elements.

In the aftermath of the attack, the IRGC Ground Forces' Southeast Security Headquarters revealed that the perpetrators were affiliated with foreign intelligence agencies. Their objective was to destabilize the region by targeting public areas, military installations, and law enforcement facilities in Chabahar and Rask.

Shahrdari into FIBA WASL-West Asia League final

TEHRAN - Shahrdari Gorgan came from behind and beat Al Shorta of Iraq, 88-83, to make it back to the FIBA WASL-West Asia League Final, Thursday night at the Al Shaeb Hall.

The Iranian champions erupted for 30 points in the fourth to complete the reversal after trailing for most of the night on the way to securing a return trip to the sub-zone tilt's title bout - and give themselves another chance at the gold after losing to Al Riyadi last season, fiba.basketball wrote.

Now they await the winners between the defending West Asia titlists and Sagesse for their opponents in the finale. The all-Lebanese Semis is tied at 1-1 following the Green Castle's epic overtime win last Wednesday in Ghazir, with Game 3 set on April 17.

Sina Vahedi starred in the victory with 28 points on 6-of-10 shooting from beyond the arc, alongside 5 rebounds, 3 assists, and a steal.

Navid Rezaeifar backed him up with 20 points on 72.7-percent shooting from the field.

Arsalan Kazemi only had 4 points but his all-around efforts proved big anew as the veteran forward collected 14 rebounds, 5 assists, and 6 steals in nearly 36 minutes of play.

The locals picked it up on a night Will Cherry got held to just 5 points in 19 minutes.

"It was possible that we lose this game and we go into a Game 3. But I really appreciate my players for playing really well in the fourth quarter with absolute dedication. I really appreciate them. It was crucial," Shahrdari head coach Mostafa Hashemi said.

"That was a really tough game for us. We didn't have [Will Cherry] in this game because he was not in good condition. I'm really happy that we won and reached the Final." - Sina Vahedi, Shahrdari Gorgan

Iran down Thailand at 2024 WPV Sitting Volleyball Final Qualifiers for Women

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Thailand 3-0 (25-11, 25-3, 25-14) on the third day of the 2024 WPV Sitting Volleyball Final Qualifier for Women, presented by Delin Company, at the Dali International Olympic Sports Centre on Friday.

Iran had defeated Japan 3-0 (25-7, 25-19, 25-6) in its first match.

Team Melli demonstrated their dominance on the court with a commanding victory over Thailand.

Iran's impressive performance marked their second consecutive win in the tournament, having previously defeated Japan.

With back-to-back victories against Asian rivals, Iran showcased their strength and determination as they continue their quest for qualification.

Iran still 20th in FIFA ranking

TEHRAN - Iran's men's football team remained unchanged in latest FIFA ranking released on Thursday.

Team Melli are 20th in the ranking.

Japan remained the best Asian team in the ranking and 18th in the world.

It is outside of the top 100, however, that the biggest movers are to be found. Libya (114th, up 6) and Afghanistan (151st, up 7) have made impressive progress, but it is Indonesia (134th, up 8) who are the biggest climbers on the back of their two victories over Vietnam during FIFA World Cup 26 qualifiers.

Finally, the performances of Qatar (34th, up 3) and Comoros (117th, up 4) are also worthy of mention as both teams are now currently in their highest-ever position in the ranking.

The top three nations in the world are world

champions, Argentina followed by France and Belgium in third.

The next edition of the FIFA Men's World Ranking will be published on 20 June.

Mahnaz Zokaei to officiate at 2024 CAFA U18- Women's C'ship

TEHRAN - Iranian woman referee Mahnaz Zokaei has been chosen to officiate at the 2024 CAFA U-18 Women's Championship.

Atena Lashani, another Iranian referee, will officiate as assistant in the competition.

Furthermore, Iran's Masoumeh Shakouri will be in the competition as the tournament's supervisor.

The 2024 edition will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from April 21 to 28.

Iran volleyball likely to play Cuba in friendly

TEHRAN - Iran's men's national volleyball team will likely play a friendly match with Cuba, newly-elected president of Iran volleyball federation Milad Taghavi said.

Taghavi hosted the ambassador of Cuba Alberto Gonzalez Casals in the federation's headquarters on Thursday.

Taghavi and Casals emphasized on increasing volleyball cooperation in the future.

"One of the important policies considered by the volleyball federation is to communicate with top level teams. Cuba is one of the strong volleyball teams in the world and if volleyball coach Mauricio Paes agrees, Iran will play the team in a warm-up game," Taghavi said.

Beiranvand sidelined with hand injury

TEHRAN - Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand is expected to miss four to six weeks after sustaining a hand injury.

Beiranvand has suffered a flexor tendon injury in international duty and MRI has confirmed that his rupture of flexor tendon.

His absence could be a big blow to Persepolis as the Reds are chasing the Iran Professional League (IPL) title for the second successive year.

Persepolis sits second in the IPL table, three points behind Esteghlal.

Taremi still an option, Conceicao says

TEHRAN - Porto coach Sergio Conceicao has commented on the absence of Inter-bound striker Mehdi Taremi, who has missed his current club's last two matches, insisting that he is still hoping to count on the Iranian until the end of his contract.

Taremi is out of contract with Porto at the end of the 2023-24 season and has reportedly agreed a deal to join Inter at the beginning of the summer transfer window.

"Taremi is still an option and could possibly be involved in the next match depending on his physical condition, how he returned from the national team and the way he works. I am working to have him back.

"I have seen and read some reports that Taremi has had other medical visits and that I'm sad about that, but I'm not sad for anybody," the Porto coach insisted, reported via TMW.

"He has a contract until June and I'm counting on him until then, as I've counted on all of the players who have left us recently. So, there's no controversy, it's a question of being fit for work and a question of opportunities. Players of this quality can help us," he concluded.

Mazandaran exports over \$318 million of goods in a year



TEHRAN - An official at the customs offices of Iran's Mazandaran province announced the export of more than \$318 million of goods from the customs of this northern province in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), showing a 14 percent growth compared to a year earlier.

In this period, more than 1,506 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$318.124 million, were exported from the customs offices of Mazandaran province, registering a 52 and a 14 percent growth in volume and value respectively compared to a year earlier, Amir Jamshidi added.

The director general of Noshahr Customs pointed to the export of 298 items of goods exported from the customs offices of this northern province and added that \$116 million, \$33 million, \$35 million, \$28 million and \$19 million worth of dairy products, cement, plastic materials, citrus fruits and different types of edibles were exported from the customs offices of Mazandaran province respectively to 50 countries in the world, accounted for the 73 percent share of

the total goods exported from the customs of this province, according to IRNA.

Iraq, Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan were the five main trade partners of Mazandaran province's customs in this period, Jamshidi emphasized.

In this period, more than \$140 million of non-oil goods were exported from the customs of Mazandaran province to neighboring Iraq, he added. More than \$282 million worth of non-oil products were exported from Mazandaran province in the first 11 months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023-February 21, 2024), showing a 13 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

According to Jamshidi, over 298 commodity items with a total weight of over 1.377 million tons were exported from the provincial customs offices. The exports increased by 52 percent in the mentioned 11 months in terms of weight, compared to the same period last year, the official said.

According to Jamshidi dairy products, cement, plastic materials, citrus fruits, and edible products were the top exported goods from the customs offices of Mazandaran province between March 21, 2023, and February 24, 2024.

The non-oil goods were exported to forty-nine countries, mainly to Iraq (\$127 million), Russia (\$65 million), Turkmenistan (\$15 million), Kazakhstan (\$12 million) and Uzbekistan (\$9 million), he added.

Annual exports from Iran's Isfahan reach \$1.5b

TEHRAN - An official at the customs offices of Iran's Isfahan province said that 2.268 million tons of goods, valued at \$1.429 billion, were exported from the customs offices of the province in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024).

Cast iron, steel and steel products, oil and petrochemicals, machine- and handwoven carpets, dairy products, copper were of the main products exported from the customs offices of this province overseas last year, the director general of customs offices of Isfahan province added.

Kouhestani Pajouh went on to say that 82% of these products were exported to five countries, namely Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the products imported into the province and noted that import of products from the customs of this province registered a 21 and a 9 percent hike in volume and value respectively compared to a year earlier, Mehr news agency reported.

Equipment and machinery for the production lines, components and raw materials needed by the industrial and production units were among the main products imported into the customs of this province in this period, he said, adding that these equipment were imported to this province from the United Arab Emirates,

China, Turkey, Germany and Italy.

The value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.178 billion in the last Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

According to Mohammad Rezvani, the value of the Islamic Republic's trade with the partners in the previous year increased by 2.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

The official put the country's non-oil exports, excluding exports of electricity, crude oil, and techno-engineering services, at 136.4 million tons worth \$49.33 billion which shows a 9.82 percent rise in terms of tonnage and an 8.87 percent decline in terms of value.

Iran exported \$35.87 billion of crude oil, \$370 million of electricity, and \$1.293 billion of technical engineering services in the mentioned year, according to Rezvanifar.

According to him, during this period, 48.8 million tons of petrochemical products worth \$19.4 billion were also exported, which shows a decrease of 11.32 percent and 28.59 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

During this period, liquefied natural gas with \$3.9 billion, liquefied propane with \$3.62 billion, and bitumen-oil with \$2.19 billion were Iran's top exported items.

Iran, Turkey hold talks to expand energy cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and Turkey on Thursday expressed willingness to enhance cooperation in the energy sector, particularly in the gas industry, Shana reported.

During a meeting in Tehran, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar discussed the expansion of cooperation between Tehran and Ankara in the energy sector and boosting bilateral trade, the report said.

Oji voiced Iran's readiness to expand relations with Turkey in the oil industry's upstream and downstream sectors.

He said Iran welcomes Turkish companies' participation in projects of its oil industry.

Pointing to Turkish companies' willingness to be involved in Iran's upstream projects, particularly the development of oil fields, the official added that bilateral agreements and the \$30 billion annual trade target underlined by the two countries' presidents were also discussed



during the meeting.

According to Oji, Bayraktar offered a list of Turkish companies, which are eager to engage in Iran's oil projects.

Several oil contracts worth more than \$33 billion have been recently signed with Iranian knowledge-based companies, said the oil minister, adding the energy sector can contribute largely to the achievement of Tehran-Ankara's \$30 billion trade target.

Further in the meeting, Bayraktar said his visit to Tehran reveals

Turkey's firm determination to extend the contract on importing gas from Iran.

Gas plays a vital role in Turkey, as it meets the energy needs of a major part of the household, commercial, and industrial sectors of the country, he added. "We are seeking to diversify our gas import routes," pointed out the visiting energy minister, referring to Iran as one of the leading gas suppliers to Turkey.

The official pointed to Turkish companies' investment in

development projects of Iran's gas fields and renovation of gas transmission infrastructure as one of the main topics he discussed with his Iranian counterpart.

The two sides will surely continue their talks, he concluded.

In 2001, Iran signed a 25-year gas export contract with its northwestern neighbor Turkey, which is set to expire in 2026.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Oji told reporters that negotiations officially started on Thursday between the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and Turkish state-owned BOTAS Petroleum Pipeline Corporation on technical issues related to the contract's renewal.

Speaking to reporters, the Turkish minister said his country was willing to extend the contract.

Bayraktar said their discussions had focused on Turkish firms' investment in the development of the Iranian gas fields and the renovation of Iran's gas transfer infrastructure.

Iran's maritime transportation capacity increases by 6,000 tons

TEHRAN - The capacity of Iran's commercial maritime fleet has increased by 6,000 tons after a new cargo vessel joined the Caspian Sea fleet, an official at Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said.

In the early days of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024) and in line with promoting the quality and renovating and developing the maritime fleet of the country in the Caspian Sea, an equipped vessel with the capacity of transporting more than 6,000 tons of goods was joined the maritime fleet, the head of the PMO office of maritime affairs stated.

Allah-Morad Afifi said materializing the development of sea-based objectives and increasing the maritime fleet of the country in the Caspian Sea are seriously followed up by the Ports and Maritime Organization.

Turning to the increase of the capacity of transportation of cargo at the organization, he

added that about 50 percent was added to the number of the country's maritime fleet in the Caspian Sea last year (ended March 19, 2024).

Back in June 2023, PMO Head Ali-Akbar Safaei said 15 ships were added to the country's trade maritime fleet in the Caspian Sea amid growing trade ties with Russia and other countries located to the north of Iran.

Safaei said that expanding Iran's northern fleet of commercial vessels has become a priority for the country's Transport and Urban Development Ministry, of which the PMO is a subsidiary.

"Given that the volume of trade with neighboring countries to the north is growing, the first priority for the ministry is to expand the fleet and to increase the capacity in the Caspian Sea," the official said.

Safaei said Iran's Caspian Sea merchant fleet will further expand in the near future with the arrival of new ships from the Volga River.

The announcement comes amid growing shipping activity in the Caspian Sea as Russia and other countries have ramped up their exports and imports via Iran and its southern ports.

Media reports and statements by Iranian authorities show there has been a major surge in trade via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a route that connects the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to countries to the north of Iran via the Iranian road and rail transportation network.

Iran has created new infrastructure, including modern port operation systems, in its northern ports to both facilitate cargo transit via the INSTC and to increase its own exports to Russia and other countries.

Last month, Iran and Russia signed a contract to build a key railway along the Caspian Sea that would significantly boost trade via INSTC's western branch.

Over 230m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iranian ports in a year

TEHRAN - About 236,512,240 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded at ports affiliated to the Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19), showing a 10 percent hike compared to a year earlier.

More than 29 million tons of oil products were unloaded at the Iranian ports from March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024.

In this period, over 51 million tons of non-oil goods were unloaded at the ports.

Totally, more than 80 million tons of oil and non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports in the previous Iranian calendar year, IRIB news agency reported.

More than 81 million tons of oil products were loaded at the ports from March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024, while over 74 million

tons of non-oil goods were loaded at the country's ports.

In total, over 155 million tons of oil- and non-oil goods were loaded at the Iranian ports in the last Iranian calendar year.

The loading and unloading of goods in the containerized operation sector registered a five percent growth in the 12-month period compared to a year before.

Iran manages to reduce food inflation by 48% in a year: WB

TEHRAN - In its new report on food security, the World Bank (WB) has announced that Iran was able to reduce inflation of food products by 48 percent in one year, IRNA reported.

Based on the mentioned report, food inflation in Iran was about 79.5 percent in March 2023, which has decreased by 48 percentage points to 31.2 percent in February 2024, and Iran is among the successful countries in reducing food inflation.

Argentina had the highest food inflation rate among the countries in the world; the food inflation rate of this country in February 2024 was reported to be 303 percent, higher than any other country.

Among the 10 countries with the highest food inflation in the world, some West Asian and North African countries, including Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine can be seen.

Lebanon with 103 percent food inflation and Zimbabwe with 84 percent inflation have been ranked second and third respectively. Turkey ranks fourth with 71 percent inflation and Venezuela

ranks fifth with 61 percent inflation.

Egypt with 51 percent, Sierra Leone and Myanmar with 50 percent, Palestine with 42 percent, and Nigeria with 38 percent are ranked sixth to tenth in this regard.

"According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), there is an urgent need for foreign food aid in 45 countries around the world: 33 countries in Africa, nine countries in Asia, two countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one country in Europe," the report said.



Call for Tender 2st Announcement for the Purchase of Smart Clamp & Smart Flange for South Pars Gas Field Development Phase 11 Pipeline Project, Tender No. 953291

Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company intends to Purchase of Smart Clamp & Smart Flange for South Pars Gas Field Development Phase 11 Pipeline through a public tender. Therefore, the applicants are allowed to have 20 days after the date of 1st publication of the tender notice in the newspaper to participate in this tender.

To download the tender documents, please visit the tender's section of the IOEC's website: WWW.IOEC.COM/EN/TENDERS, and Please do not hesitate to contact with Transaction Committee office with Mr Amir Nosratzadeh with Tel: +9821-82841533 under sign for any inquiries and more information.

Beijing's historical mosque hosts world's Muslims in Ramadan

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING - Nanxiapo Mosque is located outside Chaoyangmen Gate closed to Yabao Road market in Beijing with a history of over 300 years.

The building was built by the Hui people during the Guangxu Period of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

The layout of Nanxiapo Mosque is east-west arrangement with the prayer hall located in the center. Covering 132 square meters, the prayer hall is typical of traditional Chinese architecture from outside but Arabic inside.

The south and the north side halls with side rooms occupy a total area of 68

square meters.

The building is structured in simplicity and elegance. The main hall, well carpeted and equipped with heating facilities, can hold 800 people for prayer.

The place has served as a place of prayer for the local Muslim people, and is the funeral management place for the Hui people in Beijing.

Nanxiapo Mosque hosts Muslims every day during Ramadan. Some Muslim ladies, as volunteers, cook delicious foods at their home or in the highly hygienic kitchen of the mosque during this holy month and together with the volunteer Muslim men, they serve the foods during Iftar (breaking



the fasting) time.

Every day in Ramadan, Muslims, who are Chinese or from other countries, gather together in this place for Iftar, prayer, and accompanying in a very friendly and hospitable environment.

Intl. Quds Day marked worldwide

Protesters condemn Israeli genocide in Gaza

TEHRAN- Millions of people across the world held huge rallies to mark International Quds Day to express solidarity with Palestinian people and condemn Israeli crimes.

The event which falls on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan is commemorated by Palestinian supporters every year.

But, Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip has attached significance to this year's rallies.

Pakistanis support Palestine

In Pakistan, political parties including Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) staged rallies across the country in support of the Palestinians and against the Israeli aggression on Gaza.

The protests were held in different cities including Quetta, Muzaffarabad, Kashmir, Bhalwal, Parachinar, Chichawatni, Rajanpur and Jacobabad.

On the occasion of International Quds Day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to halt its oppression of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

He underscored Pakistan's unwavering backing for Palestine, advocating for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The premier pointed to decades-long Israeli occupation of Palestine and denounced the international community's silence in the face of human rights violations by the regime.

'End genocide'

On the outskirts of Srinagar in Indian controlled Kashmir, Muslims



slammed the Israeli massacres in Gaza. They called for ending the Israeli violence and genocide in the Palestinian territory.

A massive rally also took place in Mumbai. The protesters expressed support for the Palestinians and their cause. They also slammed the Israeli genocide in Gaza which has left 33,000 people dead since October 7.

U.S. complicity

Indonesia was also the scene of protests against Israel on Quds Day.

The protesters denounced the regime's war of genocide on Gaza. They blamed the U.S. for standing by the regime.

The demonstrators displayed a poster depicting President Joe Biden as a clown during a rally outside the U.S. embassy in Jakarta.

Malaysians also rallied to express solidarity with Palestinian people and the cause of Palestine.

In Thailand, people took part in a rally in support of Palestinians in front of the Israeli embassy in Bangkok.

Bahrainis demand closure of Israeli embassy

Bahraini people also hit the streets to voice support for Palestinians, particularly the residents of the Gaza Strip. They condemned the Israeli brutality against the Gazans.

The protesters called for the closure of the Israeli embassy in Manama and the expulsion of the regime's diplomats from the Arab country.

Bahrain and the Israeli regime established diplomatic relations in 2020 as part of the United States-brokered Abraham Accords.

U.S.-Israel savagery

Millions of Yemenis also marked International Quds Day. Protesters in the capital Sana'a condemned Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

In a statement, the protesters said the Palestinian nation has been subjected to the U.S.-Israeli genocide for six months.

The statement called on all Arab and Islamic countries to fulfill their responsibilities in the face of the savagery of the U.S. and the Israeli

regime.

Other countries in the Arab world including Iraq and Jordan saw huge protests on International Quds Day.

Slamming vicious crimes

Protesters in Tanzania's coastal city of Dar es Salaam also rallied as they were holding the Palestinian flag.

The protesters chanted anti-Israeli slogans and condemned the regime's vicious crimes against Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Nigerian police attack protesters

The Quds Day rallies in Nigeria turned deadly as police clashed with protesters.

Reports suggest security forces killed several people in the city of Kaduna who were protesting against the Israeli crimes.

Police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse the pro-Palestine demonstrators.

Pro-Palestine march in UK

Europe also saw rallies marking International Quds Day.

In the UK, demonstrators gathered outside the Home Office in Marsham Street before heading into Horseferry Road, along Millbank, past the front of the Houses of Parliament and finishing in Whitehall where speeches took place.

Prior to the rallies, more than 500 officers were deployed in central London.

In Poland, protesters held banners as they gathered to spend night near the U.S. Consulate in Krakow to protest against Israeli attacks in Gaza.

WORLD HEADLINES

UN resolution demands Israel be held accountable for war crimes

The United Nations Human Rights Council on Friday adopted a resolution calling for Israel to be held accountable for possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip, although Israel dismissed it as a "distorted text".

Twenty-eight countries voted in favor, 13 abstained and six opposed the resolution, including the United States and Germany, Reuters reported.

The adoption prompted several representatives to the Council to cheer and clap.

The resolution stressed "the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity".

It also expressed "grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory".

The United States had pledged to vote against the resolution because it did not contain a specific condemnation of Hamas for the Oct. 7 attacks.

pared to the 64 they won in the November 2022 elections, while parties in the previous ruling coalition would win 66 seats in the 120-member Knesset — down from 71 last month before the National Unity faction split.

The poll also says opposition leader Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid party would gain three mandates putting it up to 15 seats, while Netanyahu's Likud party would lose two, bringing it down to 17.

Australian senator: Stop feeding Israeli war machine

An Australian senator has questioned a government contract with Elbit Systems amid media reports the Israeli company manufactured the drone that killed an Australian and six other aid workers in Gaza.

"Flowers are an insult when Labor is handing \$917m (Australian dollars) [\$600m] of public money to Elbit Systems, the company whose drones killed Zomi Frankcom and so many others in Gaza," Lidia Thorpe said.

She added that Australia's Labor government "should look in a mirror" when calling for accountability over Frankcom's death.

"Stop feeding the war machine and cancel this contract," the senator said.

Turkey captures 8 suspected of spying for Mossad

Eight suspects accused of spying for the Israeli intelligence service Mossad were detained in a joint operation by the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) and Istanbul police, Turkish authorities said Friday.

The suspects were gathering information on Mossad targets including individuals and companies, in Turkey and sending reports to the Israeli agency, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on X, the Daily Sabah reported.

Two were arrested while six were released under judicial control.

Turkey has recently ramped up targeting alleged Mossad members inside the country.

Ankara fears Mossad is recruiting operatives on Turkish territory to target foreign nationals.

A Turkish court in January ordered the arrest of 15 people and the deportation of eight suspected of having links to Mossad and targeting Palestinians living in Turkey.

Russia: U.S. intelligence services use journalists as their agents

U.S. special services use journalists as their agents in violation of U.S. laws, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Commenting on how the United States "celebrated" a year since the arrest of Evan Gershkovich, the Wall Street Journal journalist accused of espionage in Russia, the diplomat drew attention to the way one of the latest March issues of the Wall Street Journal looks - almost the entire front page is blank. "And only the black and white face of Evan Gershkovich, a US citizen detained on suspicion of espionage, caught in the act, with the phrase 'His story should be here,'" she wrote on her Telegram channel. "Evan Gershkovich could have written about the terrorist bombing of Russian cities by the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev in recent months. The militants are also shelling journalists, including American journalists - it could be a report from a hot spot that the Americans themselves created by pumping weapons and intelligence into the militants," she pointed out.

"He could have written a great article about all the fellow journalists killed by the Kiev regime: Oles Buzina, Pavel Sheremet, Andrey Stenin, Anatoly Klein, Igor Kornelyuk, Anton Voloshin, and many others. He could have, but for some reason he didn't write [about it] all those years he had worked in Russia. He could have, if he had been practicing journalism and not spying," the spokeswoman emphasized.

Is Western anger over foreigners killed in Gaza justified?

One policy for Westerners, another for Palestinians

By Wesam Bahraini

TEHRAN- The killing of Western aid workers by the Israeli occupation forces was very deliberate. The nature of the attack leaves no room for debate.

The deadly assault that has been described in forensic detail in various media makes it impossible to claim any form of error.

Israeli media reports on the breakdown in discipline at the Israeli front line with the regime's military commanders across Gaza essentially pursuing their own idea of what is and what is not a justifiable target has only come to light after the killing of the foreign aid volunteers.

This is a crucial part of the tragedy that has unfolded in Gaza as many senior UN officials had indicated the same lack of Israeli army discipline over the past six months. Children have reportedly been shot at point blank range at hospitals.

The speed with which Western leaders and media have turned against the Israeli occupation has taken many by surprise.

On Friday, the White House released a readout of a phone call between Joe Biden and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu.

According to the White House, the U.S. president "made clear the need for Israel" to implement "concrete" steps to address civilian harm and the safety of humanitarian workers.

British officials and media have expressed outrage as six foreign nationals were killed by Israeli drones while trying to distribute aid for the international food charity, World Central Kitchen.

Critics have questioned why the Western news

coverage and narrative has twisted so suddenly now.

While every death by the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza is a tragedy, the only real aspect that has changed is the passport and nationality of the victims.

The Israeli air and ground assaults have killed more than 33,000 Palestinians since October 7, the majority of whom have been women and children.

The dead Palestinians did not receive any sympathy from the Israeli regime's staunchest allies, which continuously carried a political and media narrative that defended the oppressor and invader against the oppressed Palestinians.

Yet since the deadly Israeli attack against foreigners on Tuesday, strong Western criticism against the Israeli occupation has been made from presidents, prime ministers and all the way down.

On the protection of aid workers following the deaths of foreign humanitarian volunteers in Gaza, the White House said "President Biden emphasized [to Netanyahu] that the strikes on humanitarian workers and the overall humanitarian situation are unacceptable.

"He made clear the need for Israel to announce and implement a series of specific, concrete, and measurable steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering, and the safety of aid workers."

Biden has spoken out strongly as one of the six foreign aid workers was an American-Canadian citizen.

Critics have questioned why Biden did not speak out over the roughly 200 Palestinian aid workers murdered by Israeli forces in Gaza over the past six months?

Al Quds Day

had turned Iran into a market flooded with Israeli goods, while Israel had become the main importer of Iranian oil.

On the other hand, it cannot be forgotten that in the years leading up to the Revolution, the repression of the Pahlavi regime was in the hands of the secret service, SAVAK, which was established and supported by both Israel's Mossad and the United States' CIA.

All of the above can be summed up in the question posed by Khomeini in one of his sermons: "Is the Shah an Israeli?" It was these types of public accusations by Khomeini against the "traitor Shah" that led to his arrest in June 1963. As a result of his detention, a popular uprising in support of Khomeini was unleashed, known as the 15th Khordad Movement, which many experts consider as the first revolutionary episode that culminated in 1979.

The testimonies of the families and former colleagues of the Western victims have been widely reported on by the Western media (and rightly so).

The testimonies of the families of more than 33,000 Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes, drones, tanks and artillery fire have been largely ignored by Western media?

In an ideal world, the loss of innocent life in Gaza would be universally abhorrent.

This is despite footage that has been aired on Western media (albeit on a limited scale to what regional media are broadcasting), showing the scale of the death and destruction in Gaza.

If anything, the killing of foreign nationals should throw into disarray any attempt to portray the Israeli occupation forces as having conducted their attacks responsibly or targeting military sites.

The speedy Israeli military investigation on Friday makes it abundantly evident that the regime's military has made the same "errors" when killing Palestinian civilians, whose cases haven't even been investigated.

Questions have been raised about a certain level of racism.

Did the color and ethnicity of the six foreign victims bring the calamity in Gaza closer to the West? In which case does that make the record number of Palestinians killed by Israeli bombs less human than the white victims of Israeli bombs in Gaza?

The matter is a stark reminder of how Ukrainian refugees fleeing a warzone were welcomed into Europe for being White and African refugees fleeing warzones as well were turned away, at the same time, for being black.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Alongside calls for the liberation of Iran from imperialism, Khomeini also expressed his desire to free Palestine from Zionist oppression and occupation. In this context, in 1968, Khomeini issued a fatwa, an Islamic decree, declaring it obligatory for all Muslims to allocate a portion of what is known as khums, an Islamic tax similar to alms, to assist Palestinian fighters in their struggle against Zionists.

Once the Islamic Republic was established in 1979, the issue of Palestine acquired a decisive role in Iran's ideological orientation. At the same time, Imam Khomeini declared that the last Friday of the month of Ramadan would be commemorated as "Al-Quds Day" and explained that this day symbolizes the solidarity of the umma with the Palestinian cause.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Poland calls for Israeli soldiers to face criminal inquiry

Poland is demanding criminal action be brought against the Israeli soldiers responsible for what it called the "murder" of seven aid workers, including a Polish national, in Gaza.

"We want [Polish] prosecutors to be added and implicated in the explanations and in the entire criminal and disciplinary procedure for the soldiers responsible for this ... murder," Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Szepka said, Al Jazeera reported.

PM: Israeli strikes have made south Lebanon a devastated agricultural area

Lebanon's caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, has said Israeli air strikes have turned southern Lebanon into a "devastated agricultural area".

The Israeli strikes have burned tens of thousands of olive trees and torched farmland across southern Lebanon, hurting herders and farmers already suffering from a deep economic crisis that has made it even more important for Lebanon to produce its own food.

"Eight hundred hectares have been completely damaged, 340,000 heads of livestock have died, and about 75% of farmers have lost their final source of income," Lebanon's National News Agency quoted Mikati as saying.

"This problem will extend to the coming years."

Agriculture Minister Abbas Hajj Hassan sounded the alarm last month, saying the Israeli strikes were preventing farmers in villages and towns near the border reaching their fields, affecting up to 30% of Lebanon's agricultural output.

Poll: Gantz holds his lead over Netanyahu

Benny Gantz, a war cabinet minister and head of the National Unity party, would be able to form a ruling coalition if elections were held today, according to a new poll.

The poll, published by Israeli newspaper Maariv, gives Gantz's party 32 seats, down from 33 in the newspaper's previous poll last month but soaring from its current 12.

The parties in Benjamin Netanyahu's pre-war coalition would win just 44 Knesset seats com-

Roofing covers to help safeguard site of Iron Age in northwest Iran

TEHRAN – In an effort to preserve the historical significance of the Qareh Hasanlu site, nestled in the Namin county of Ardabil province, custom-made roofing covers are slated for installation within the next six months.

On Thursday, the governor of Namin county highlighted the importance of the ongoing efforts to help safeguard the Qareh Hasanlu site. Tabib Amini emphasized that the preservation of this ancient site is not only a serious demand of the local community but also a priority for archaeologists and cultural heritage enthusiasts in the region.

The official mentioned the forthcoming installation of roofing covers over the Qareh Hasanlu archaeological site within the next six months. He underscored the significance of the Qareh Hasanlu site, dating back to the Iron Age and the Parthian period, which has garnered attention from archaeologists and experts in the field.

The governor elaborated that the construction of the roofing covers is being carried out while adhering to necessary technical conditions. He further added that the implementation of the roofing project at the Qareh Hasanlu

site is being financed through collaboration with project investors.

Some two years ago, archaeologists discovered an array of relics and the ruins of an ancient building in the northwestern site, estimated to date from the Parthian era. Their excavation was launched to safeguard and protect the historical site against further destruction on the one hand, and to identify comprehensive information on possible cultural layers, particularly Iron Age settlements, on the other hand.

Ardabil's cultural heritage department hopes to win national recognition for Qareh Hasanlu, which has yielded relics and ruins in previous excavations.

Sprawling on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well-known for having lush natural beauties, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble. The province is very cold in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year. The capital city of Ardabil is usually recorded as one of the coldest cities in the country in winter.

'Remarkable' Roman villa discovered under housing development

Archaeologists have unearthed a "remarkable" Roman villa complex on a housing development site in a small English village.

The complex was decorated with painted plaster, mosaics and there was a collection of tiny, tightly-coiled lead scrolls suggesting some sort of ritual or pilgrimage might have taken place there, according to a press release.

The villa in Grove would have been "central for this area of Oxfordshire," Francesca Giarelli, project officer for Red River Archaeology Group and the site's director, told CNN on Thursday.

She described a building that likely had multiple levels. The structure, which stretched across 1,000 square meters (10,800 square feet) on just the ground floor, was probably visible for miles, Giarelli added.

Hundreds of coins, plus rings, brooches, mosaic tesserae and painted plaster with floral motifs have been uncovered during the year-long excavation, allowing archaeologists to pinpoint a long period of Roman activity at the site from the 1st or 2nd century into the late 4th or early 5th century.

Archaeologists also discovered an aisled building, a bigger and more impressive hall-like structure built after the villa once the family that owned it became richer over time, Giarelli said.

In Roman times, villas were not simply residential dwellings but more like "small administrative centers," Giarelli explained, often with

responsibilities for maintaining roads, planning the crops surrounding it and acting as a "safe space" to store food products during unstable times.

Even in the late Roman period, this particular villa continued to show signs of human activity.

A horse-headed buckle, dated to 350-450 AD, suggests the presence of late Roman elites or someone who still wished to be associated with that period, though such buckles can also be associated with early Anglo-Saxon burials, archaeologists said in a statement to CNN.

Excavating the site, described as "remarkable" in a press statement, began before the housing developers Barratt and David Wilson Homes started their building work and after two evaluation trenches had been dug.

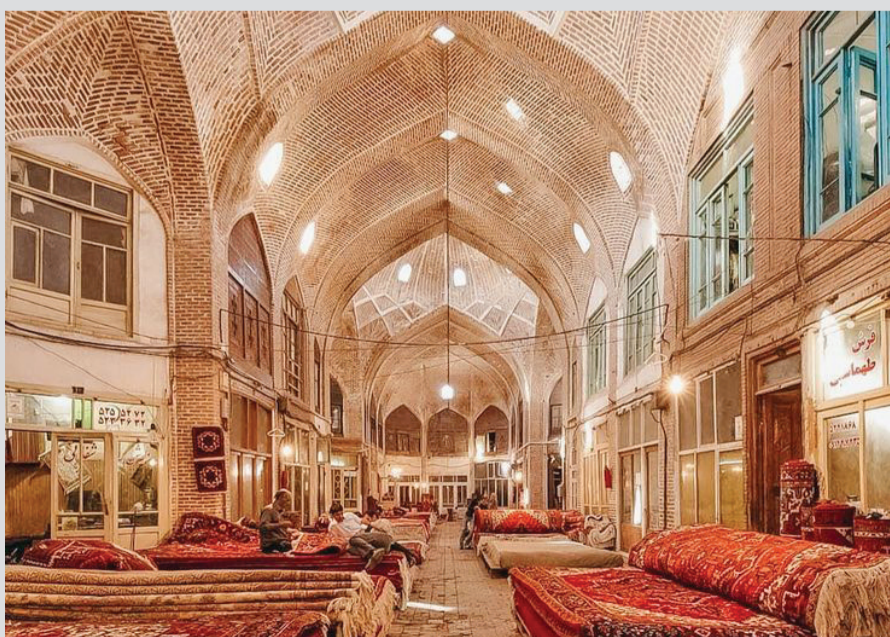
The trenches revealed a "high potential for archaeological presence," Giarelli said, prompting an archaeological investigation, which began two months before the building work and is still ongoing.

The site still holds some mysteries to unravel in the continuing excavations.

Archaeologists haven't yet found "where all the people ended up," Giarelli said, though they believe there is a burial somewhere on the site, and there have been some artifacts, such as the lead scrolls, that point toward a sanctuary present, but still hidden underground.

(Source: CNN)

Iran in frames



Step into a world of tradition and craftsmanship at Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, where centuries-old handwoven carpets weave tales of cultural exchange and commerce along the famed east-west trade routes. The UNESCO-recognized bazaar enjoys labyrinths of interconnected shops, steeped in history and adorned with the vibrant hues of Persian artistry.

'Important' ruins unearthed in downtown Isfahan

TEHRAN – Archaeologists have unearthed an array of "important" ruins and centuries-old structures in Isfahan, which was once the capital of Persia during the Safavid era (1501-1736).

The discovery was made in the Zarrin-Kamar passageway situated in downtown Isfahan adjacent to the UNESCO-registered Jameh Mosque of Isfahan, IRNA reported on Thursday.

"The passageway is situated in the heart of the historical fabric of Isfahan, and significant evidence from various historical periods has been discovered within it," Ali Shojai Isfahani, who presides over the archaeological team, said.

"Archaeological findings unearthed from the Zarrin-Kamar passageway span from pre-Islamic times to the Qajar era."

Recently, a routine urban dig revealed evidence of two architectural structures. Consequently, that operation was halted, and urban archaeological operations began with an agreement between the Cultural Heritage Research Institute, Isfahan's Urban Revitalization Organization, and the Art University.

Shojai Isfahani, referring to the digging of five trenches during the archaeological operation, stated: "Under the sediments of the first trench, evidence of a series of engraved objects (related to irrigation and water supply) were found, which requires further examination to pre-



dict their antiquity, but it is likely that these artifacts date back to the period before the Mongol invasion of Isfahan."

"These engraved objects raise the question of why these water structures were decorated, which needs further investigation."

The archaeologist continued: "It is probable that these water structures were [once] visible and aesthetically pleasing."

Furthermore, another trench led to the discovery of a kiln, which is of great importance from a historical studies' perspective, he explained.

"It appears that this kiln was dedicated to baking a specific type of pottery, but there is still doubt in this regard," Shojai Isfahani added.

He continued: "The antiquity of this kiln may be attributed to the 7th century, indicating that we are facing an industrial complex on a part of this passageway."

The archaeologist said: "Another trench led to the discovery of an architectural structure that appears to belong to the late Islamic period."

"Here, stone walls and brick floors came to light, which requires further examination and research for dating."

"One of the existing pieces of evidence is that the dimensions of one of the brick floors found in this passage are identical to the dimensions of bricks found in the dome chamber of the Jameh Mosque of Isfahan, suggesting that these structures may belong to the Seljuk period. However, this requires further investigation."

Isfahan was once been a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons as it is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for

walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The ancient city is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. Isfahan has long been nicknamed Nesf-e-Jahan, which is translated into "half the world"; meaning seeing it is relevant to see half the world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region with a population of nearly one million.

The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside. The huge Imam Square, best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning "Image of the World"), is one of the largest in the world (500m by 160m), and a majestic example of town planning. Constructed in the early 17th century, the UNESCO-registered square is punctuated with the most interesting sights in Isfahan.

Apart from its cultural heritage gems, Isfahan is home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts. A top destination when it comes to medical tourism, the ancient city is also home to a gigantic, professional, and state-of-the-art healthcare city, which is a major destination in the realm of medical tourism.

Anar county welcomes double its population for Nowruz

TEHRAN – Situated in the northern part of Kerman province, Anar county has accommodated 74,276 travelers which is twice its population in the course of the Nowruz holidays.

The governor of Anar county announced that a total number of 74,276 New Year holidaymakers stayed in the county from March 15 to April 2.

Mohsen Salehi further detailed the figure, stating that throughout the two-week spring holidays, 22,176 Nowruz travelers found accommodation in various facilities including hotels and eco-lodges staying at least one night in the county.

Additionally, 52,100 travelers temporarily lodged in the county's facilities for shorter durations, according to the governor.

Salehi also stated that Anar county due to its strategic location is known as 'the gateway to Kerman province'.

"Anar serves as the entry point for over 20 provinces heading towards the southern and southeastern regions of Iran," the governor noted "making it a hotspot for Nowruz holidaymakers."

The official also pointed to one of the longstanding customs of the people of Anar county known as "Ash Shanbe Sal" which is cooking Ash-reshteh on the first Saturday of the new year.

As stated by the governor, although this year the blessed month of Ramadan coincided with the arrival of spring, despite fasting, the people of this region have not forgotten this custom and cooked

Ash-reshteh on this day to enjoy it at iftar, sharing the joy with travelers.

"Efforts to boost tourism in Anar are underway, as evidenced by the unveiling plans for an "Anar Studies" seminar..." Salehi stated.

Anar county, with a population of approximately 37,000, boasts numerous historical landmarks such as a Sasanian palace, a Shah Abbasi caravanserai, Davoudabad Castle, Yakhdan (icehouse), Abul-Hasan Khan's House, a historical Imamzadeh, an Ilkhanid shrine, and Aminabad water reservoir.

Renowned for its 18,000 hectares of pistachio orchards, Anar county is celebrated as Iran's finest pistachio producer.

Khuzestan's tourism flourishes with 3m overnight stays, 20m visits to attractions

TEHRAN – As the Nowruz holidays came officially to an end, Khuzestan's travel services chief has announced that about 20 million visits to the province's attractions have been registered along with three million overnight stays.

Pointing to the province's historical places of interest as the main draw, Mohammad-Hossein Arastouzadeh on Wednesday noted that from March 14 to April 4, a total of 19,619,348 visits to Khuzestan's tourist attractions were recorded, featuring historical, natural, religious, recreational and cultural sites.

Arastouzadeh further elaborated on the accommodation statistics of tourists in the province, stating that throughout the spring holidays, 2,969,821 overnight stays were recorded in official, unofficial, and emergency accommodations across the province.

He highlighted that approximately 66% of tourists stayed in unofficial accommodations (1,937,699 overnight stays), while around 14% stayed in official accommodations (439,955 overnight stays), and about 20% stayed in emergency accommodations (592,167 overnight stays).

Regarding inspections, the official mentioned that 198 inspections were conducted across the province during the Nowruz holidays, including visits to accommodation centers, travel service offices, and restaurants to ensure holidaymakers are deservedly catered.

In his concluding remarks, the official mentioned that the executive headquarters of Nowruz travel services in the province has been extended until April 12, to provide services to tourists and travelers during the upcoming Eid al-Fitr holidays.

Shushtar Historic Hydraulic Structures shines in Iran's top 10 destination

Amin Mahdavia who presides over the World Heritage site of Historical Hydraulic Structures in Shushtar announced that in the course of the Nowruz holidays, 122,500 tickets were sold to enthusiasts.

In terms of the number of visits, the Historical Hydraulic Structures of Shushtar ranked ninth among the most frequented destinations across the country," Mahdavia noted, "and also for the second consecutive year, it ranked first in Khuzestan province."

The director of the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic Structures emphasized that a total of 122,500 electronic tickets were sold which indicates an increase of nearly 30,000 visitors compared to the past year.

The hydraulic ensemble comprises bridges, weirs, tunnels, canals, and a series of ancient watermills powered by human-made waterfalls. It is named after an ancient city of the same name with its history dating back to the time of Darius, the Great, the Achaemenid king.

It boasts a rich diversity of civil engineering structures and constructions, as in the diversity of its uses (urban water supply, mills, irrigation, river transport, and defensive system).

In fact, the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System testifies to the heritage and the synthesis of earlier Elamite and Mesopotamian know-how; it was probably influenced by the Petra dam and tunnel and by Roman civil engineering.

"The hydraulic system has been considered a Wonder of the World not only by the Persians but also by the Arab-Muslims at the peak of their civilization," according to the



UN cultural body.

Furthermore, one of its main canals is a veritable artificial watercourse that made possible the construction of a new town and the irrigation of a vast plain, at the time semi-desert.

UNESCO says that the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System demonstrates outstanding universal value as in its present form, it dates from the 3rd century CE, probably on older bases from the 5th century BC. It is complete, with numerous functions, and large-scale, making it exceptional.

Albeit it is said all good things must come to an end, in the holidays' case, Iran is poised to provide services to travelers during the upcoming Eid al-Fitr holidays only a week after Nowruz vacations which means the statistics are expected to grow.

Khorasan Razavi historical sites receive 220,000 New Year visits

TEHRAN – More than 220,000 people visited the historical and cultural attractions of Khorasan Razavi during the two-week Nowruz holidays, the deputy provincial tourism chief has said.

In an interview with ISNA regarding the visitation rate to the historical, recreational, and tourist centers of Khorasan Razavi during Nowruz 1403, Ehsan Zohrevandi stated: "A total of 220,632 visits were made to the historical and cultural attractions of Khorasan Razavi during Nowruz 1403."

"Of this figure, 220,437 visitors were domestic, and 195 were foreign tourists," the official said.

The official said the mausoleum of Ferdowsi with over 100,000 visits stands at the top of the list of Nowruz visitors to historical and cultural sites of the province.

"The tomb of Khayyam with over 45,000 visits, the tomb of Attar with over 25,000 visits, Naderi Museum with over 22,000 visits, Harounieh with approximately 5,000 visits, the Great Museum of Khorasan with around 3,000 visits, and Kalat Museum with 3,500 visits are placed in the subsequent rankings."

The history of the Khorasan region, which ex-

tends, along the north, from the Amu Darya (Oxus River) westward to the Caspian Sea and, along the south, from the fringes of the central Iranian deserts eastward to the mountains of central Afghanistan, stretches back to very ancient times.

As mentioned by Britannica, the Khorasan region was part of the Achaemenian Empire of the 6th to 4th century BC and the Parthian Empire, which spanned from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century CE.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

16 cheetahs registered in Turan National Park

TEHRAN – A total of 16 cheetahs have so far been registered in Turan National Park in the northcentral Semnan province, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE) has said.

Growing the population of cheetahs in the wild is the top priority of the DOE, but their breeding in captivity is also scientifically monitored at the Turan National Park Research Center in the city of Shahrud, IRNA quoted Bahram-Ali Zahiri as saying.

Measures are being taken to preserve cheetahs from extinction by raising their population to 50, he added.

Cheetahs are polygamous mammals. Asiatic cheetahs reach maturity at 2 to 3 years of age and can reproduce until 8 years of age. Female Asiatic cheetahs give birth to multiple cubs, he explained.

A document on the growth and maintenance of Asiatic cheetahs as a valuable and endangered species has been compiled for the first time in Iran marking a valuable scientific achievement by local experts, Zahiri said.

The official went on to say that five cheetahs namely "Iran", "Firouz", "Turan", "Azar", and "Delbar" are residing in the breeding site located in Turan National Park in Shahrud, under favorable physical conditions.

Studying the physical conditions of these cheetahs from birth to old age has contributed to the development of the growth and maintenance document for Asiatic cheetahs.

According to experts, the best habitat for the Iranian cheetah is the 100,000-hectare area of Turan National Park in the east of Semnan province. However, the biological territory of this valuable species is



reported to be 100 to 300 km beyond this national park necessitating measures to be taken to save their lives in the entire Turan region.

Threats to Asiatic cheetahs include the lack of speed control cameras, improper lighting, allowing the livestock to graze beyond the permitted hours, and the presence of herding dogs.

Public participation cuts road fatality to zero

More than 250 people have voluntarily participated in a program to save Asiatic cheetahs that are usually killed in road accidents in the northeast of the country.

The program started on March 18 just before the New Year holidays, ISNA quoted Ali-Akbar Qorbanlou, the director of the Turan National Park – a main habitat of Asiatic cheetah – as saying.

Each year, an average of 8 accidents in the Mayami-Abbasabad Road, Semnan Province, led to the killing of cheetahs, he said, noting, "Thank God, no accidents have hap-

pened this year so far."

In July 2023, a two-year-old cheetah was killed on the Abbasabad-Mayami Road.

Also in March last year, another cheetah, pregnant with three cubs, was killed in an accident on the same road.

Since 2010, at least 10 cheetahs have been killed in car collisions on this 'killer' road.

Hassan Akbari, an official with the Department of Environment, said last year that some notable progress had been made to reduce wildlife mortality on this road.

Akbari told Press TV that speed enforcement cameras would be installed along the road to monitor drivers' compliance with speed limits in the region.

Since 2010, World Cheetah Day has been celebrated annually on December 4 in different countries with the aim of raising public awareness about the menace of extinction the species faces.

Considering the fact that Iran is

the last remaining habitat of the Asiatic cheetah, this species is of particular importance.

The Department of Environment has focused on breeding in captivity, and maintaining the cheetah population in the habitat.

Expanding Persian cheetah's habitat

With the cooperation of the private sector, the DOE plans to expand the Persian cheetah habitat within the protected area of Turan, north-central Semnan province.

The Department of Environment also plans to increase the number of prey and rangers in these areas, ISNA quoted Hassan Akbari, the DOE's director for natural environment and biodiversity, as saying.

Also known as the Asiatic cheetah, the animal is an endangered species whose territory is currently limited to some parts of Iran and its number is dangerously low.

To protect this species in the habitat, several measures have been taken so far. As a result, the number of cheetahs has increased and some have also been observed in areas outside Turan's protected area.

Moreover, the DOE has placed priority on increasing the variety and number of prey in Turan and its marginal habitats. Deer, ram, sheep, and rabbits are among the main prey.

Increasing the number of rangers in the Turan protected area and other habitats around it to ensure the security of the cheetahs is the other measure taken by the DOE.

Educational programs provided to people in surrounding villages and other areas are among other steps taken to protect the Persian cheetah.

Tehran to host 1st Asian Cities Innovation Challenges

TEHRAN –The first international Asian Cities Innovation Challenges will be held in Tehran from April 24 to 26.

This event is planned by the incity platform in the Asian Mayors Forum with the aim of using citizens' creativity and innovation to solve urban problems and challenges across Asia.

It is a unique opportunity for Asian cities to investigate urban challenges and find solutions for them with the participation of citizens, startups, and city managers in a creative context.

By collecting real challenges from these cities, interested citizens will be brought together to solve these challenges in the form of innovative businesses by presenting their ideas, plans, and products. This event can improve the urban business environment.

The main objectives are reducing urban pollution, managing natural disasters and mitigating crises, reducing the effects of climate change, managing and protecting natural resources in the urban environment, managing waste, and reducing consumption.

It also aims at preserving green spaces and urban ecosystems, optimizing energy consumption and using clean energy, reconstructing public spaces, restoring historical buildings, recovering urban architecture, revival of urban cultural heritage, restoring worn-out urban areas, and managing informal settlements.

Smartification of urban infrastructures, digitalization of cities, smart architecture, improving urban health, equal rights for all citizens, improving all kinds of tourism in the urban environment, and optimizing the roads and passages are among other main categories.

About the event

Cities serve as crucial hubs for the daily lives, work, and activities of billions of people worldwide. The growing global population and heightened risks stemming from human activities have



given rise to numerous problems and challenges in the daily lives of urban dwellers, disrupting sustainable and balanced development in urban environments.

The first innovation challenge event in Asian cities strives to engage citizens across this vast continent, harnessing their innovation and creativity to address urban challenges. This event not only seeks to support the business environment in this domain but also aims to assist cities in solving small and medium-scale challenges, contributing to their overall development.

Asian Mayors Forum

Asian Mayors Forum (AMF) is an international non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to expanding and exalting the relations and cooperation between mayors and city managers in Asia.

AMF aims to help cities develop urban and public diplomacy, knowledge exchange, technical know-how, and experiences of urban management as well as specialized cooperation between members and also strengthen the integration between the Asian cities, mayors, and citizens toward a better life.

AMF was created by the initiative of Tehran Municipality and the support of the Asian Governments and Parliaments and its first official meeting conducted in 2008 coincided with the inauguration of Milad Tower in Tehran hosted by Tehran Municipality with the attendance of more than 100 mayors and urban managers.

The founding belief behind the forum is 'Asia for citizens, Integration for a better life'.

Iran to play host to IPHO 2024

TEHRAN –The International Physics Olympiad 2024 will be held in Isfahan, Iran, an official with the Ministry of Education has said.

Participants from around 80 countries are forecast to attend the event, IRNA quoted Reza Hosseini as saying.

Olympiad students make up one percent of the 1.5 percent of gifted students in the country, and every year they make the country proud with their remarkable achievements.

The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has approved 14 disciplines, allowing Iranian students to compete with foreign students in international Olympiads.

The country holds a top regional position and ranks within the top 10 globally.

Last year, Iran held a joint camp with China, and two joint mathematics and astronomy Olympiads with Russia to further boost educational interactions. Iran is planning to hold joint online events with Brazil, Belarus, and other countries.

Achievements in 2023

The robotics team of Iran won a gold medal and three silver medals in the Dubai International Inventions Show (DIS) 2023.

The event provided a business platform for inventors, manufacturers, and dealers to present their latest products and innovations and exchange information.

For this occasion, delegations from different countries came to Dubai to present their patented inventions and new ideas, the competition brings together many participants and inventions in many diverse areas.

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

Over 20 countries including Iran, Canada, Russia, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Romania, and Oman participated in the competition, ISNA reported.

The competition was held both in person and online.

In the face-to-face competition, the Iranian team won a gold medal for constructing a safety package and two silver medals for making a smart mug and skin protection application.

Also, in the online section of the competition, Iran

won a silver medal by presenting a smart bag reminder.

Elite students from Iran ranked first in the UniKL International Robattle Competition (UIRC) 2023 and became champions in the category of Innovation.

The competition was hosted by Malaysia and held from December 10 –13, IRIB reported.

The event brought together more than 420 participants, under the age of 17, underscoring its widespread appeal and global representation.

A group of four students from the Iranian team was able to present the best design of the innovation league and was awarded first place in this section.

"The remarkable thing about the Iranian team was the strong participation of talented girls and their unprecedented brilliance in the competitions," IRIB quoted Nader Nobakht, the head of the Iranian robotic teams, as saying.

The outstanding achievements of Iranian students in international Olympiads have placed the

Participants from around 80 countries are forecast to attend the event.

country among the top five nations in the world.

Iranian schoolchildren ranked second and grabbed six gold medals in the Second Open World Astronomy Olympiad.

The tournament was hosted by Russia at the Sirius Educational Center from November 14 to 22, IRNA reported.

Iran grabbed one gold medal and three silver medals at the 35th International Olympiad in Informatics, ranking seventh in the world among 91 countries.

The IOI 2023 was held in Szeged, Hungary, from August 28th to September 4th.

The Iranian team took five medals, ranking third in the 16th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics held on August 10-20 in Chorzow, Poland.

Also, Iranian students took six medals, ranking 11th at the 64th International Mathematical Olympiad which was held in Japan on July 2-13.

nomical Society of Iran.

The main objective is to promote science and make people interested in astronomy. There will be day and night observations, webinars and scientific conferences, and pavilions that provide ed-

The main objective is to promote science and make people interested in astronomy.

ucational and scientific services to the people.

International Astronomy Day serves as an avenue for astronomy enthusiasts and professionals to share their knowledge and love of outer space with the general public.

It is also a way for everyone interested in space to explore their passion and increase their knowledge.

Lack of infrastructure development hinders scientific development. There is usually no or weak

infrastructure for the development of astronomy in different cities of Iran.

And even when such infrastructures exist, they are not accessible to the people to take advantage of them.

Astronomy Day was started in 1973 by Doug Berger, the president of the Astronomical Association of Northern California.

His intent was to set up various telescopes in busy urban locations so that passersby could enjoy views of the heavens. Since then the event has expanded and is now sponsored by a number of organizations associated with astronomy.

In 2007, an autumn Astronomy Day was added. It was scheduled to occur on a Saturday between mid-September and mid-October so as to be on or close to the first quarter Moon.

This holiday is a bit unusual in that it occurs twice a year on a Saturday, both between mid-April and mid-May and between mid-September and mid-October. Each year the dates are as close as possible to the first quarter moon of the two seasons.

The spring event in 2024 will be held on the 18th of May, and then the autumn event will happen on the 12th of October.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

50bcm of groundwater withdrawn annually in Iran

An annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran, a researcher in the field of water resources has stated.

The amount is 10 times greater than the water covering Lake Urmia, amounting to 5 billion cubic meters, ISNA news agency quoted Mohammad Reza Goldansaz as saying on Sunday.

About 60 percent of drinking water and the water used in industrial sector and 50 percent of the water consumed in agriculture sector is pumped from aquifers, he noted.

Referring to the country being highly dependent on underground water, Goldansaz said that if the resource runs out, we will face serious problems.

سالی ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از آب‌های زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود

یک پژوهشگر حوزه منابع آب با اشاره به اینکه سالانه ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برای مصارف خانگی، صنعت و مصارف کشاورزی برداشت می‌شود.

محمدرضا گلدانساز در گفت و گو با ایسنا اظهار داشت: سالانه حدود ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود که این مقدار به اندازه حجم ۱۰ دریاچه ارومیه است.

وی با بیان اینکه وابستگی ما به آب زیرزمینی بسیار زیاد است و اگر روزی این منبع تمام شود با مشکلات زیادی روبرو می‌شویم، اظهار کرد: در کشور ما به دلیل وجود شرایط اقلیمی خشک و نیمه خشک، وابستگی به منابع آب زیرزمینی قابل توجه است و حدود ۶۰ درصد مصارف خانگی و صنعت و حدود ۵۰ درصد مصارف کشاورزی توسط آب زیرزمینی تأمین می‌شود.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Contentment is eternal wealth.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 12:07 Evening: 18:49 Dawn: 4:16 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:42 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* A collection of paintings by a group of artists including Tajesar Jafari, Negareh Ayat, Dina Daneshvar, Mehdi Sahabi and Mohammad Zahmatkesh is currently on display in an exhibition at Ev Gallery. Entitled "Now Bahar", the exhibition runs until April 16 at the gallery located at No.5, Arabi Alley, North Kheradmand St., Karim Khan Ave.

* An exhibition of paintings by Pegah Shamlou, Tara Shoeib and Milad Nikou is currently underway at Sharif Gallery.

Entitled "Trio No. 10", the exhibit will be running until April 19 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



* A collection of paintings by Anahita Qasemkhani is on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibition named "The Reminders" will be running until April 16 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

* Paintings by Fereydoun Ave are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit named "For Nowruz" will be running until April 26 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.



* A collection of paintings by a large number of artists including Nasser Bakhshi, Shahgol Safarzadeh, Sara Abbasian, Milad Mousavi, Saeed Mirzai and Saba Niazmand is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery. The exhibit titled "Hidden Curtains, Aparant Curtains" will be running until April 16 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

Sculpture

* Sculptures by a group of artists are on display in an exhibition at

The exhibition will be running until April 15 at the gallery, which can be found at 54 near Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Blvd.

Cartoon of Day



Targeting WCK

Cartoonist: Hassan Bleibel from Lebanon

Iran Public Library Foundation condemns Israeli invasions in Gaza

TEHRAN- The Secretary General of the Iran Public Library Foundation has written a letter to Viki Mc Donald, President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), expressing deep concerns and condemnation regarding the recent Israeli invasions and the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In his letter, Mehdi Ramezani highlighted the significant loss of life and destruction of cultural institutions in the region, the public relations office of the foundation announced on Friday.

The letter, which noted that over 40,000 people, including women, children, and journalists, have been killed and displaced as a result of the invasions, pointed out the extensive destruction of libraries and archive centers.

The importance of these institutions in preserving knowledge and cultural heritage, as well as their role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, was also emphasized in the



correspondence.

The Iran Public Library Foundation is calling on IFLA to take a strong stance against these violations, advocate for freedom of information, and protect the rights of all affected individuals.

The foundation is also urging IFLA to engage with the United Nations and support efforts to establish a ceasefire for the benefit of the Palestinian people, underlining the significance of peace, freedom, justice, and human rights during these challenging times.

Ramezani also expressed appreciation for IFLA's attention to this urgent matter and anticipates their response, expecting the organization to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to freedom, justice, and human rights in the face of these atrocities.

Iranian animation to be screened at 43rd International Istanbul Film Festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian animation "Anita, Lost in the News" written, directed, and produced by Behzad Nalbanti will take part in the 43rd International Istanbul Film Festival, set to be held from April 17 to 28.

A production of 2023, the 17-minute animation will be screened in the Documentary Time section of the festival, ISNA reported.

Created using puppets made from newspaper clippings, it is about a Kurdish-Iranian family of four who died in the sinking of a migrant boat in the English Channel in 2020.

On October 27, 2020, an inflatable boat left the coast of Dunkirk, France to take 19 undocumented immigrants to England, but

was capsized after a few minutes and seven migrants drowned; five belonged to a Kurdish-Iranian family who had gone on this difficult journey dreaming of a better life.

At the time of the tragedy, there were ten more people on board than the vessel could hold. One of the victims was nine-year-old Anita, from whose perspective we follow the story.

"Anita, Lost in the News" has already been present at several international film festivals in Japan, the U.S., the U.K., and India.

The International Istanbul Film Festival is the first and oldest international film festival in Turkey, organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts. It is held every year in April in

movie theaters in Istanbul.

The International Istanbul Film Festival was first presented as a film week in the summer of 1982. Beginning in 1984, the event became a separate activity and was shifted to April. Accredited by FIAPF (International Federation of Film Producers Associations) since 1989 as a "specialized competitive festival", the "film week" thus was renamed the International Istanbul Film Festival.

Acclaimed Iranian dark comedy "World War III" directed by Hooman Seyyedi won the Golden Tulip for best film at the 42nd Istanbul Film Festival last year.

Adaptation of Brecht's "Life of Galileo" to go on stage in Tehran

TEHRAN-An adaptation of German playwright Bertolt Brecht's "Life of Galileo" will go on stage at the main hall of Tehran's City Theater Complex on April 17.

Translated by Hamid Samandarian, Shahabeddin Hosseinpour is the director of the play.

Farhad Aesh, Nura Hashemi, Sadaf Espahbodi and Kaveh Afaq are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until June 19.

Brecht's "Life of Galileo" is a powerful play that delves into the life and struggles of the renowned scientist, Galileo Galilei. The play explores Galileo's groundbreaking scientific discoveries, particularly his defense of the heliocentric

theory that placed the sun, not the Earth, at the center of the universe.

As Galileo's ideas come into conflict with the entrenched beliefs of the Catholic Church, the play reveals the challenges he faces in navigating the intersections of science, religion, and politics.

Throughout the play, Galileo is portrayed as a complex character who is torn between his allegiance to scientific truth and his desire to avoid conflict with the powerful religious authorities of his time. As he faces pressure from the church to recant his views and conform to the traditional teachings of the church, Galileo's internal struggles are laid bare.

The play raises important questions about the role of science

in society, the consequences of challenging established beliefs, and the ethical dilemmas that arise when personal convictions clash with institutional power.

"Life of Galileo" is a compelling exploration of the tension between progress and orthodoxy, reason and faith, and individual conscience and societal norms. Brecht's play prompts audiences to reflect on the enduring relevance of these themes in contemporary society, highlighting the ongoing struggle for intellectual freedom and the pursuit of knowledge in the face of institutional resistance. Through Galileo's story, the play challenges viewers to consider the importance of standing up for truth and discovery, even in the face of

formidable opposition.

Bertolt Brecht was a German playwright, director, and poet known for his innovative approach to theater. He is considered one of the most influential dramatists of the 20th century, with his work often characterized by its use of epic theater techniques, including the distancing effect that aimed to provoke critical thinking and social change in audiences. Brecht's plays often tackled political and social issues, and he was a staunch critic of capitalist society, imperialism, and war. Some of his most famous works include "The Threepenny Opera," "Mother Courage and Her Children," and "The Caucasian Chalk Circle."

Jonathan Glazer donates signed "Zone of Interest" posters to Cinema for Gaza Auction

"The Zone of Interest" director Jonathan Glazer has donated signed posters to the Cinema for Gaza auction, which has collected gifts from major names in the U.K. entertainment industry to raise money for Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Before the fundraiser officially began on Tuesday, Glazer and "Zone of Interest" producer James Wilson donated seven "Zone of Interest" posters and a selection of posters from his 2014 film "Under the Skin." The posters will be signed by Glazer, Wilson and composer Mica Levi, who scored both films. The gift is one of the most in-demand items in the auction, with a current bid of £2,750 (\$3,450). The auction has currently raised over £42,000 (\$52,800), Variety reported on Thursday.

Among the gifts announced with the auction were Tilda Swinton reading a bedtime story over Zoom, Josh O'Connor teaching a porridge masterclass and tickets to attend a Ramy Youssef stand-up show and afterparty. More recent additions include a signed "Game of Thrones" DVD from Maisie Williams; a signed "All of Us Strangers" poster from director Andrew Haigh; a "Supernova" poster signed by Colin Firth, Stanley Tucci and Harry Macquene; a

signed "Romancing Mr. Bridgerton" novel with a personalized note from Nicola Coughlan; and an hour over Zoom with Louis Theroux.

Glazer's donation comes after the backlash to his speech at the Oscars on March 10, where his Holocaust drama "The Zone of Interest" won best international feature. In his speech, Glazer spoke about the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, saying that his film "shows where dehumanization leads at its worst. It shaped all of our past and present. Right now, we stand here as men who refute their Jewishness and the Holocaust being hijacked by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people".

The speech received a divided reaction, with over 1,000 Jewish creatives and execs denouncing it for helping to fuel "growing anti-Jewish hatred around the world," and others like director Ken Loach coming to his defense by calling his statement "brave" and "highly valuable." Glazer has yet to publicly address the backlash to the speech, but his donation to Cinema for Gaza suggests he stands by his words.

Since October 7, 2023, the Gaza Strip has been suffering massive civilian casualties

from Israeli bombardment. At least 33,000 Palestinians, about half of them women and children, have been killed in over 6 months, more than 70,000 people have been injured, and 10,000 are missing under rubble, totaling over 110,000 casualties since the war began, which is about 5% of Gaza's 2.3 million population.

As a result, this has become the bloodiest war ever fought during the Arab-Israeli conflict, eclipsing the combined death toll of the First Intifada, Second Intifada, Operation Cast Lead, and Operation Protective Edge. The high number of casualties is due to Israeli tactics and large-scale bombing, which in some cases has left entire towns completely destroyed and uninhabitable.

The continuing conflict has damaged or destroyed approximately 62 percent of all homes in Gaza, equivalent to 290,820 housing units, and more than a million people are without homes.

Public service infrastructure, such as water, health and education, account for 19 percent, while commercial and industrial buildings make up 9 percent.