

Ending U.S. Presence in Iraq Can End Washington-Tel Aviv Malevolence

PMF base comes under aerial aggression



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A massive explosion has left a huge crater in an Iraqi military base which has been blamed on the U.S. and Israel.

Iran oil exports hit six-year high: report

TEHRAN – Iran is exporting more oil than at any time for the past six years, giving its economy a \$35bn-a-year boost, the Financial Times reported.

Tehran sold an average of 1.56 million barrels a day during the first three months of the year, almost all of it to China and its highest level since the third quarter of 2018, according to data company Vortexa.

Iran's success in exporting its crude underscores the difficulties facing the US and the EU as they seek to build up pressure on Tehran.

“The Iranians have mastered the art of sanctions circumvention,” said Fernando Ferreira, head of the geopolitical risk service at the Rapidan Energy Group in the U.S.

In Tehran, Tasnim News Agency said on Wednesday that the country's oil industry had found ways to get around sanctions.

Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji said last month that oil exports had generated more than \$35 billion in the preceding year. On another occasion, he said that while Iran's enemies wanted to stop its exports, “today, we can export oil anywhere we want, and with minimal discounts” ▶ Page 4

US again stands against the world on Palestine

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN – The U.S. on Thursday vetoed a Palestinian request to the United Nations Security Council for full UN membership, blocking the world body's recognition of a Palestinian state.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 12 in favor, the U.S. opposed and two abstentions, the UK and Switzerland.

The move by the U.S. increased the number of its vetos in favor of Israel to 43.

Palestinians currently have non-member observer status, granted by the UN General Assembly in 2012. An application to become a full member with voting rights would have to be approved by the Security Council and two-thirds of the General Assembly.

Addressing the council, UN Secretary General António Guterres strongly backed full membership by Palestine.

“Recent escalations make it even more important to support good-faith efforts to find lasting peace between Israel and a fully independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state,” Guterres told the council.

“Failure to make progress towards a two-state solution will only increase volatility and risk for hundreds of millions of people across the region, who will continue to live under the constant threat of violence,” the UN chief said.

The United States once again stood against the will of the international community as the only remedy to the decades-long Palestinian wound is establishing an independent Palestinian state. ▶ Page 5

All you need to know about IRGC retaliation against Israel

By Mehdi Bakhtiari

TEHRAN – Operation True Promise stood out from previous missile operations conducted by the IRGC against terrorist positions in Syria and against the United States in Ain al-Asad Air Base for several reasons.

In this operation, the IRGC Aerospace Force deployed weaponry launched from multiple locations across the country, surpassing even the scale of retaliatory actions following the terrorist attack on the martyrdom anniversary of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani taking place in the southeastern Iranian city of Kerman on January 3rd, 2024.

Prior operations, preceding True Promise, targeted regions stretching from northern Iraq to eastern Syria, covering distances of several hundred kilometers and employing missiles such as Fateh-110, Fateh-313, Zolfaghar, and Qiam.

During the operation on January 3rd, 2024, the new “Kheibar Shekan” missile made its operational debut, boasting a range of over 1300 kilometers. It was launched from Khuzestan Province and targeted terrorist group positions in northeastern Syria near Idlib, with a total of 24 missiles deployed.

From strategic patience to active deterrence

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – Iran's response to the Israeli aggression against its consulate, framed within international law and legitimate self-defense, has underscored the rationality of the Islamic Republic as a regional political actor.

The primary objective of the Iranian response, as mentioned in another article, was to restore the well-known balance of deterrence, while simultaneously avoiding triggering a full-scale war in the region.

Operation “True Promise” managed to achieve these two objectives. On one hand, Iran's use of drones, cruise missiles, and ground-to-ground missiles demonstrated that the action was much more than mere symbolism or a simple show, as suggested by some Western analysts. The Iranian response confirmed that the country possesses the military and technical capabilities necessary to strike Israel.

However, Tehran perceived this operation as a legitimate defense from the international perspective, stating that they would consider the matter closed if Israel did not respond. However, in case of a contrary response, according to the Iranian Armed Forces, “we will respond with even greater force than before,” which could imply the use of weapons such as the supersonic missiles that Iran has in its arsenal.

Amir Abdollahian ridicules Israeli weapons as ‘toys that our children play with’

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has noted that no attack has occurred in Isfahan to illicit Iran's reaction.

In an interview with NBC News on Friday night in New York, he said that “what happened last night (Thursday night) was not a strike, and they were more like toys that our children play with – not drones.”

Amir Abdollahian also stressed that Tehran was not planning to respond unless Israel launches a significant attack. “As long as there is no new adventurism by Israel against our interests, then we are not going to have any new reactions,” he said.

But the foreign minister warned that if Israel did attack Iran, the response would be swift and severe.

“If Israel takes a decisive action against my country and this is proven to us,” he said, “our response will be immediate and to the maximum and will cause them to regret it.”

The recent cycle of violence between Israel and Iran began on April 1 when Israel bombed an Iranian consular building in the Syrian capital of Damascus, targeting two generals and five officers in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

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Interview

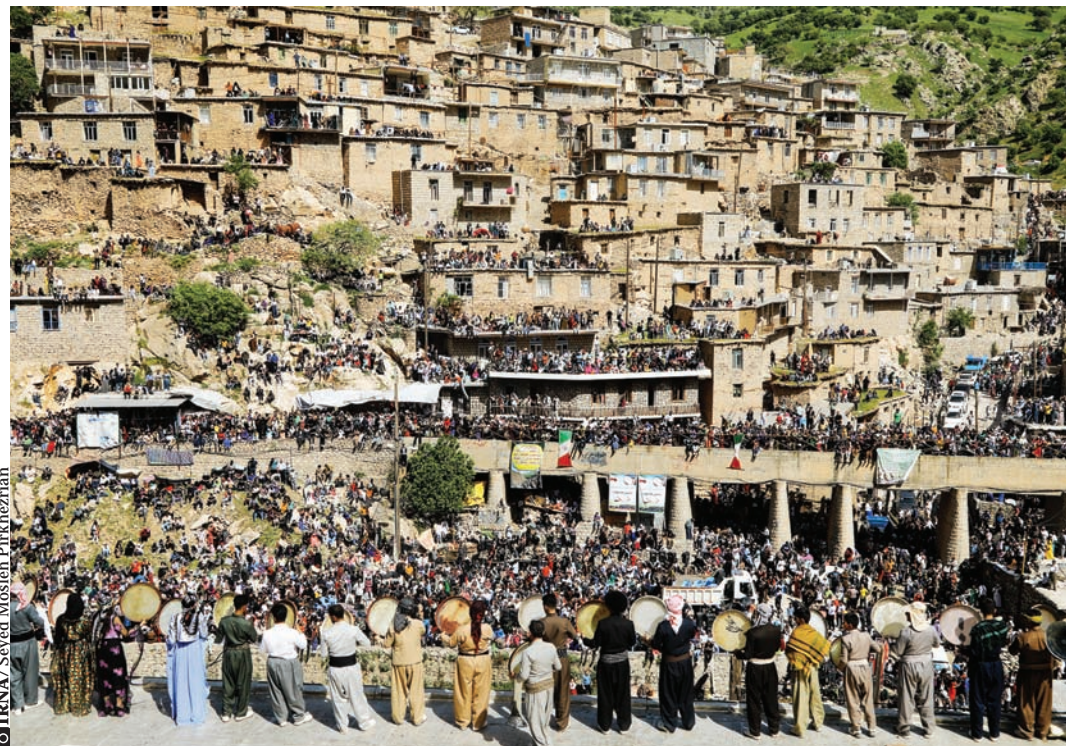


“Godzilla Minus One” and “Oppenheimer”: narrating the atomic bombing from two lenses



By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN – In 1945, at the end of World War II, the United States sent two ambassadors of peace to Japan: “Little Boy” and “Fat Man”. These not-so-harsh names belong to the two atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The atomic bombings killed about 220,000 people, mostly civilians. ▶ Page 8



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Hezar-Daf Festival reverberates musical legacy of Kordestan

TEHRAN – The echoes of the ancient melodies resonated, in Palangan, one of the Kordestan's oldest villages, enriching the spirits of thousands of fellow countrymen.

The historic village of Palangan, a nominee to be on the World Best Tourism Villages list, played host to approximately 30,000 tourists and travelers from across Iran, on Friday.

The Hezar-Daf Festival, which means one thousand drums in Persian, was organized with the presence of provincial officials and media groups. ▶ Page 6

Tehran puts forward proposals on enhancing SCO ties

TEHRAN – Iran has put forward eight proposals for the development of relations among the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

The 8th meeting of SCO education ministers was held on April 17 in Moscow, IRNA reported.

Attending the meeting virtually, Omid Rezaei-Far, an official with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, elaborated on the following eight proposals while delivering his speech.

Iran's first proposal focused on creating a joint fund to support studies and facilitate conducting research by member states.

Fostering scientific and technological cooperation among member states through the exchange of researchers and scientists was the second offered suggestion. ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

A failed attempt

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

In an analysis, Kayhan discussed the failed terrorist operation of the Zionist regime using several small drones against the 8th Air Base of the Army Air Force in Isfahan. It wrote: This failed operation has shown the depth of this regime's bragging against Iran. The Zionist regime tried to create terror and fear in Iran with intense psychological and media warfare against our country during the days after the proud operation of the "True Promise". The media of this regime and the officials of the Israeli army as well as the war cabinet of this fake regime tried to create a psychological atmosphere by threatening to attack Iran. Although this threat seemed ridiculous in the eyes of public opinion and did not have the slightest impact on the level of the Iranian nation, Iran's deterrent power caused the Western supporters of the Zionist regime to repeatedly warn the leaders of this regime against any operation against Iran. In such a situation, on the one hand, the Israeli war cabinet was under pressure from the radical Zionists to respond to the attack on our country, and on the other hand, this regime was facing the fear of Iran's deterrent power, as well as repeated threats from the officials and high-ranking commanders of our country.

Iran: Valid equation, new region

In a note, the Iran newspaper pointed out the new conditions created in the region by Iran and said: The failure of the attacks of the Zionist regime on Friday morning and the apparent strength of the defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that not only the new equation formed in the region after the strong offensive in the True Promise operation will not change, but that equation will be stabilized and more valid. The failed operation of the Zionists was another blow to their prestige. The failure of Friday morning's operation will further involve the Zionists in the prestige trap, and make the countries of the region more convinced in the new order that this regime cannot even provide security and deterrence for itself. Iran's strategic defense following the implementation of the "True Promise" operation was a surprising strategy to show Israel and its Western allies that threats, sanctions, or war have no effect and that it is Iran that determines the course of medium and long-term developments, where, with the support of its field ability, it shares its diplomatic ideas to solve the historical conflict of Palestine in international circles with other countries, and it has shown

Iran not looking for war, but ready to respond to aggressions: FM

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran is not seeking to escalate tensions and start a war, but it will severely and firmly respond to Israel if the regime decides to commit more illegal acts against Iranian personnel and assets, according to the Iranian Foreign Minister.

Hossein Amir Abdollahian made the remarks during a phone call with his South African counterpart. During the conversation, Amir Abdollahian explained that during its attack on the occupied territories last week, Tehran acted in self-defense and in line with international law. He noted how the country only targeted Israeli military and intelligence bases that were involved in the regime's strike on the Iranian embassy in Damascus on April 1.

The Israeli attack on diplomatic premises, which was in violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention, resulted in the deaths of 13 people, including a high-ranking military official and his deputy. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowed Iran would make the regime "regret" the unlawful act, a promise he seemed to fulfill on April 14 when the country launched a massive drone and missile attack against the occupied territories. Reports suggest Iran managed to seriously damage at least three military bases in the Occupied Golan Heights and the Negev region.

"After this operation, Iran also announced to the international community, including the United States, that it is not seeking to expand the war, but if the Israeli regime

itself ready to support the resistance front in the wake of the Al-Aqsa Storm.

Siasat-e-Rooz: The inevitability of the West

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the crisis of the West in the West Asia region. It wrote: The conditions of West Asia have changed and there is no way to go back. The hegemony of the West has collapsed and can no longer be rebuilt. Israel suffered 100% damage and Israel can not be like before October 7 and April 14. The West and the Arabs were placed in the weakest historical position among their nations. During this period, the balances were messed up, the equations were changed and unprecedented strategic shifts were formed in the region and the world, and a new definition of power emerged. For sure, none of these phenomena are reversible. If in the past, the West did not have an accurate assessment in accepting this definite reality and sought to change West Asia with various projects for decades, today they have neither the ability to fight nor the ability to influence events that are constantly undergoing strategic and environmental changes. Therefore, we have been able to disrupt all the equations of one of the biggest empires in the most complicated historical conditions of human life, and make them face the most difficult conditions in various dimensions.

Javan: The bubble of prestige has burst!

Javan addressed the ridiculous attack of Israel on Iran and wrote: The ridiculous attack of the Israelis and the anger of their commanders showed that a small drone should have made a bubble and the media should have distended it, but this did not happen. America for a hundred years and Israel for seven decades have never faced a real military force. This attack was more of a bubble that burst sooner than a credible threat. The clear message that the enemy must have understood is that the strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has now changed from defensive to "offensive-defensive" and as the senior defense commanders and responsible officials have emphasized, it is time to fight. The Islamic Republic of Iran, abandoning "strategic patience", will give decisive and multiple responses to any military action of the enemy from now on. Therefore, the response of the country's air defense emphasized the defense readiness that Iran's land is unsafe for any attacker.



takes any action against the Islamic Republic of Iran again, it will respond strongly and decisively," Amir Abdollahian noted.

During the phone call, the top Iranian diplomat also condemned Western states for refusing to hold Israel accountable for the various crimes it has committed in the region in the past 7 months. Elsewhere in his comments, the foreign minister praised South Africa for the genocide case it put forth in the International Court of Justice against the regime.

For her part, Naledi Pandor, emphasized the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Since the beginning of Israel's latest round of onslaughts against Gaza over 34,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have tragically lost their lives. The enclave is also on the verge of famine due to Israel's full siege.

Pandor also talked about a future meeting between Iranian and South African leaders, stating that President Ebrahim Raisi is expected for a visit to the African country in 2024.

Amir Abdollahian ridicules Israeli weapons as 'toys that our children play with'

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Amir Abdollahian also stressed that Tehran was not planning to respond unless Israel launches a significant attack.

"As long as there is no new adventurism by Israel against our interests, then we are not going to have any new reactions," he said.

But the foreign minister warned that if Israel did attack Iran, the response would be swift and severe.

"If Israel takes a decisive action against my country and this is proven to us," he said, "our response will be immediate and to the maximum and will cause them to regret it."

The recent cycle of violence between Israel and Iran began on April 1 when Israel bombed an Iranian consular building in the Syrian capital of Damascus, targeting two generals and five officers in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran responded 12 days later, launching an unprecedented, direct military attack on Israel involving more than 300 missiles and drones.

Amir Abdollahian said the attack was intended to be "a warning." "We could have hit Haifa and Tel Aviv," he said. "We could have also targeted all the economic ports of Israel."

"But our red lines were civilians," he added. "We only had a military purpose."



In his interview, Amir Abdollahian said Iran had no prior knowledge of Hamas' attack.

He also said Hamas was not a terrorist organization but a liberation movement opposed to Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

He called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unhinged, saying that the Israeli regime is to blame for the stalled hostage negotiations.

The foreign minister also stressed that the Israeli regime has made excessive demands to compensate for its failure to meet its objectives in the war in Gaza.

"It has not been able to destroy Hamas or to arrest the leaders inside Gaza, has not been able to disarm Hamas, has not been able to destroy the weapons and equipment," Amir Abdollahian said.

"Therefore, it had to resort to killing women and children," he added, "and now at the negotiating table, they are trying to get what they could not get on the ground."

Still, the foreign minister said he hopes that a deal will be reached soon for the release of the hostages as part of a broad settlement. Hamas is "ready to go ahead with the release of the

prisoners within the format of a humanitarian political package encompassing everything."

"I think now is a good time," he said. "There is a good chance for this."

When asked if the results of the U.S. presidential election in 2024 will affect Iranian policy, Amir Abdollahian stated that there is no distinction between Republican and Democratic views.

He said that Iran would make its own judgments based on U.S. actions; if the U.S. acts in a way that upholds Iranian sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference, then the decisions made by the American people will be honored.

Regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), he stated that, in contrast to the Trump administration, there was no discernible advancement made in renewing the agreement under the Biden administration.

Regarding the events in Gaza, the Iranian foreign minister pointed out that although Hamas has put forth reasonable suggestions, the Israeli regime's goals have obstructed efforts by Qatari and Egyptian mediators to reach a consensus and implement a ceasefire in the besieged strip.

"No Damages as MAVs inter-

Iran says U.S. violated human rights via sanctions on Venezuelan oil

TEHRAN- The spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry denounced the U.S. administration's re-imposition of sanctions against Venezuela connected to oil as a breach of international law and human rights.

On Saturday, Nasser Kanaani declared that the use of unilateral, unlawful sanctions as a weapon that inflicts irreversible harm on a nation's people and economy is condemned as a breach of international law, human rights, and international norms and laws.

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden announced its decision on Wednesday not to extend a license that was due to expire on April 18, which provided relief from oil sanctions on Caracas, over what it claimed to be the Venezuelan government's failure to adhere to democratic principles ahead of elections in July.

In response to a deal reached by the administration of President Nicolas Maduro and the opposition in Barbados, the U.S. decided to temporarily ease certain sanctions in October of last year.

A transparent election overseen by foreign

observers would be held in 2024, according to the U.S.-backed pact.

But the opposition leader Maria Corina Machado's 15-year ban was maintained by the Supreme Court of Venezuela, which also affirmed that her potential replacement, two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, was ineligible.

The world's largest verified oil resource is found in Venezuela. However, years of harsh sanctions from the West have caused a sharp drop in productivity.

Following Maduro's reelection in 2018, which the U.S. and other Western nations refused to acknowledge, the U.S. levied severe sanctions on Venezuela as retaliation against his administration.

The U.S. sanctions have prevented PDVSA, the state-run oil corporation, from selling to specific markets since 2019.

Back in February, Kanaani asserted that the U.S. threat to re-impose sanctions on Venezuela's oil industry is illegal under international law and the UN Charter.

Iran's Armed Forces on high alert, top IRGC general asserts

TEHRAN - The second-in-command of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has emphasized the readiness of Iran's armed forces to swiftly respond to any hostile actions, citing extensive advancements in defensive and military capabilities over the years.

Brigadier General Ali Fadavi highlighted the tangible impact of Iran's recent drone and missile attack on Israel, dubbed Operation "True Promise," noting the palpable unease it instilled among American and Zionist circles.

Fadavi delved into the multifaceted success of the operation, underscoring its strategic and

tactical prowess in underscoring the dominance of Iran against adversarial forces, surpassing anticipated outcomes.

Commenting on the aftermath of Operation True Promise, the Iranian General pointed to a shifting regional dynamic favoring righteous causes while casting a shadow over American and Zionist interests.

He credited the resilience of the Resistance fighters across Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq for displaying courage and continuing the fight toward a just cause.

Fadavi emphasized the historic significance of Iran's triumph in

Operation True Promise, asserting that the era of impunity for the United States, Israel, and their associates in the region is over, given the unprecedented nature of the strike after decades of Zionist occupation.

Reiterating Iran's preparedness to counter potential threats, Fadavi reaffirmed the heightened state of readiness of Iran's armed forces, poised to safeguard national borders and territories, with a steadfast resolve to emerge victorious against all adversaries, particularly along the nation's frontiers, with divine assistance.

Shortly before midnight Sunday, Iran launched a swarm of

cepted in Iran"

At a meeting of the ambassadors of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states in New York on Friday, Iran's foreign minister mocked the Israeli regime's frantic attempt to distort its latest setback by stating that there have been no injuries or damages as a result of the Iranian air defense shooting down micro aerial vehicles above the provincial capital city of Isfahan.

He gave an overview of Iran's positions on the Zionist regime's crimes and the Palestinian dilemma, as well as Iran's rightful resistance against Israeli aggression.

Amir Abdollahian also emphasized that Iran acted in accordance with international law and the legitimate defense concept when it launched its recent retaliation operation against Israeli military sites.

He pointed out that although Iran was able to cover a larger area with this operation, it exclusively targeted the Zionist regime's military installations, which were the starting point for the attack on Iran's embassy in Damascus on April 1.

Amir Abdollahian said that Iran might accomplish its objectives with the least amount of reaction.

He said, "Iran was able to demonstrate its unwavering resolve, strike the targets of the attack on the Iranian embassy, and deliver a message to the Zionist regime."

He forewarned that Tehran would respond immediately, forcefully, and decisively if the Israeli regime made another mistake and moved against Iran's interests. The U.S. and other parties have received such a warning.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

He also denounced the U.S.'s instrumental use of sanctions as a weapon to meddle in the internal affairs of other nations.

"Resorting to such measures is tantamount to direct intervention in the internal affairs of countries and a violation of the United Nations Charter," he added.

The Iranian spokesperson issued a warning, stating that such actions would only serve to fortify independent nations' resolve and collaboration in opposing interventionist measures.

Days after the top court in that South American nation upheld the disqualification of an opposition presidential candidate, the U.S. vowed on to re-impose sanctions on Venezuela's oil industry.

U.S. corporations who do business with Venezuela's state-owned mining company Minerven had until February 13 to finish a "winddown of transactions" with the company, according to a statement released by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

drones and missiles at the occupied Palestinian territories in response to the Zionist regime's cowardly strike on Iran's consulate in Damascus on April 1st.

The Israeli airstrikes on Iran's embassy in Damascus had killed two generals of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, as well as five of their accompanying officers.

Following the operation, Iran warned Israel against taking any retaliatory actions and urged the United States to try not to involve itself in the conflict.

From strategic patience to active deterrence

From Page 1 ► The “True Promise” operation can be analyzed from a strategic standpoint and defined as a “sub-threshold” response strategy, a type of response that lies on the line between deterrence and escalation. The meticulously choreographed attack, down to the smallest detail, aimed to send a series of messages to three key actors:

Firstly, Iran sought to establish a precedent that would alter the situation in the region, indicating to Israel that missiles and drones could reach the Zionist Entity despite the myth of its defensive capability. In this sense, it is important to highlight that the attack calls into question the power of Israel. When analyzing power, it should not only be considered in the traditional sense but also as the capacity for autonomous action. Under this definition, one could argue that the Zionist Entity does not possess autonomous and independent political articulation, as it depends on assistance from various actors such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Jordan, among others, to ensure its security.

The next message Iran aimed to convey with the attack was directed at both the United States and the Zionist Entity. This message was related to the self-perception of the Islamic Republic as an inherently anti-imperialist and anti-colonial political entity. Iran's history is marked by national pride and resistance against numerous attempts to change the regime, at least since 1953. The attack on Israel, following threats and warnings from Washington, was a declaration that Iran would not submit to the Western political vision out of fear of a possible response. This act made it clear that if Israel and the United States believed they could threaten



Iran, the attack demonstrated that this was not possible.

The final recipients of the Iranian message were the countries in the region that had opted for what is known as “normalization processes” with Israel. From the Iranian perspective, these countries had jeopardized one of the basic principles of regional politics, as understood by the Islamic Republic, especially under President Raisi's government. For Iran, regional issues should be addressed through intra-regional diplomacy, framed within the discourse of good neighborliness and without any foreign interference.

It is important to remember that by not recognizing Israel as a legitimate state and considering it an extension of Western-origin settler colonialism, normalization with Israel represents a risk for the entire region, as demonstrated by the attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1st.

The “True Promise” operation also served to question the predominant narrative in the West, where the Islamic Republic is represented in terms of irrationality and unpredictable behavior. Since the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Western media have promoted the narrative that Iran is led by a group of religious fanatics who lack regard for human life, partly attributing this

to the tradition of martyrdom in Islam and particularly in Shi'ism.

Accusations of “irrationality” against the Iranian government are closely linked to claims that it seeks to forcibly export its revolution throughout the Muslim world, and that its regional preference is chaos. Within this same discourse lies the narrative of “crazy mullahs” conspiring while working to acquire nuclear weapons that are supposedly intended to dominate the entire region.

All this discourse attempting to associate the Islamic Republic with violence and irrationality was challenged by the way the Iranian response unfolded. In a moment of maximum regional tension, generated by Israel's entirely provocative behavior, Iran has demonstrated restraint and a strategic regional vision that deserve to be highlighted.

Despite all the propaganda in this regard, the Islamic Republic has been a rational actor since its foundation. For example, the Iranian government did not unleash a holy war against Iraq in the 1980s; rather, it fought to defend the Iranian people against a brutal Iraqi invasion, which received direct support from many of Iran's neighbors as well as Western powers, including the United States.

During the course of that war, when

Iran was targeted by years of chemical weapons attacks, Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, and his associates chose not to use Iran's alleged stockpiles of chemical agents as weapons, a measure that would have allowed for a similar response. Furthermore, for years, the most prominent political and religious leaders of the Islamic Republic have rejected both the acquisition and the use of nuclear weapons, citing reasons both strategic and religious, as they consider such weapons incompatible with Islamic principles.

The same can be said about the Iranian reaction at present. The response of the Islamic Republic has not been irrational or brutal; rather, it has always remained within the bounds of international law regarding self-defense.

Lastly, it is important to note that due to Israel's destabilizing attitude, the Islamic Republic has abandoned its traditional doctrine of “strategic patience” to adopt “active deterrence.” This means that from this moment forward, any action against its military personnel or facilities will receive a direct response.

In this regard, it is important to remember the words of the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Revolution Guards, Hossein Salami, who declared in an interview days after the “True Promise” operation: “We have decided to establish a new dynamic with Israel.”

The new phase of “active deterrence” does not imply a change in the rationality of the Islamic Republic in its regional political-military vision. What this new phase indicates is that Iran continues to interpret the region in terms of stability but without passively accepting constant Israeli attacks on its sovereignty.

All you need to know about IRGC retaliation against Israel

From Page 1 ► In that operation, three main regions were targeted: the northern Iraqi region, east side of Euphrates in Syria, Idlib in northeastern Syria, along with several other locations. Missile launch sites spanned at least three areas, including Khuzestan, Kermanshah, and West Azarbaijan. Consequently, this operation marked the largest missile attack by Iran since 2017, in response to various terrorist activities by the enemy.

But in Operation True Promise, missile launches were executed from multiple points across the country, strategically timed to target enemy positions. This made it, in terms of the number of missiles deployed, even more extensive than all previous missile operations conducted by Iran, including the 1999 attack on the MKO headquarters.

Operation's objectives

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri stated that this operation had two primary targets: a spy base at the occupied Golan Heights and the Nevatim Air Base, which was used as the launching site for the fighter jets involved in the April 1st incident. These two locations were designated as targets in Iran's retaliatory operation due to their direct involvement in the attack on the Iranian embassy.

Decades ago, the Zionist regime occupied the Golan Heights, which belong to Syria. These heights hold strategic importance due to their commanding position over vast eastern regions, making them crucial for surveillance and espionage operations by this regime. The Nevatim Air Base officially houses stealth fighter squadrons and fifth-generation F-35 aircraft controlled by the Zionist regime. In recent years, alongside F-15 and F-16 fighter jets, these aircraft have played a role in the aggressive actions of this regime after being integrated into the Israeli Air Force.

Weaponry in-use

In this operation against the enemy, three types of weapons were utilized: drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, all of which are considered the primary offensive weaponry of the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Among them, cruise missiles and suicide drones represent the latest additions to the force's arsenal compared to ballistic missiles, which have been held by the IRGC since 1984. These two newer branches have been domestically developed by experts and scientists of the IRGC Aerospace Force in under two decades.

The initial wave of attack featured the deployment of several suicide drones. Based on

available imagery, these drones were predominantly of the Shahed 136 type equipped with a propeller engine, which has gained global recognition in recent years.

These drones were assigned the mission of covering distances exceeding 1000 kilometers flying from Iranian territory. However, concerns arose regarding the choice of these drones for the operation due to the enemy's air defenses and the limited speed and range of these drones.

The IRGC likely had multiple objectives in mind when employing these weapons. Firstly, by sending a swarm of drones towards the enemy, they effectively challenged the aerial surveillance capabilities of the coalition forces supporting the Zionist regime, compelling them to clear the skies over a wide area. This action was somewhat provocative and also demonstrated the IRGC's actual proficiency in detecting and tracking these drones.

Secondly, given the duration of the drone operation, the enemy's aerial resources were largely occupied in dealing with the drones, limiting their capacity to launch a counter-operation against the country's missile bases. By alleviating the strain on tracking activities, there was a possibility of some drones evading detection and reaching occupied territories.

It's evident that another concealed goal behind deploying numerous drone flights was to target objectives should they successfully breach the enemy's frontline air defense layers and those of its allies.

Another round of attacks involved the use of cruise missiles. Based on the footage of missile launches, it's probable that the IRGC Aerospace Force deployed first-generation cruise missiles, likely of the Paveh type with fixed wings, in this operation.

These missiles were launched from mobile truck launchers. Equipped with a turbojet engine located in the upper part of their body, they boast a range of over 1000 to 1650 kilometers across various models.

Thanks to the jet engine, these missiles can achieve flight speeds estimated at over 700 to 900 kilometers per hour, enabling them to reach occupied territories from Iranian soil in under an hour and a half.

Similar to drones, cruise missiles possess the capability to navigate along intricate routes towards their designated targets. Their high flight speed minimizes the window of vulnerability to enemy air defense systems, enhancing the possibility of evading interception. Additionally, flying at low altitudes

provides an inherent advantage in evading the majority of ground-based air defense systems for these missile types.

Ballistic missiles: the main axis of operation

The main component of the IRGC's attack in Operation True Promise was ballistic missiles. Launched in the early hours of April 14, these missiles swiftly entered the airspace of the occupied territories. According to published information, the IRGC did not employ Sejil, Khorramshahr, Haj Qassem, Khyber Shekan 2, or Hypersonic Fateh missiles in this operation.

Among the missiles of the IRGC that were utilized against Israel, the ones remaining for striking Israel include Dezful, with a range exceeding 1000 kilometers, Qiam-2 with a range of 1000 kilometers, Rezvan with a range of 1400 kilometers, Khyber Shekan 1 with a range of 1450 kilometers, Emad with a range of 1650 kilometers, and Ghadr with a range of 1950 kilometers. The first two, considering the distance from launch areas to target areas, are intended for use against the mentioned target in the occupied Golan Heights. Dezful and Khyber Shekan are solid-fuel missiles with inclined missile-launch system, while the rest are liquid-fuel and use a vertical launching system, all equipped with mobile launchers.

Because of the distance between Iran and the occupied territories, enemy systems cannot intercept Iranian projectiles during the initial acceleration phase. Moreover, considering the diverse launch distances of the missiles, it's improbable that any of them will fall within the range of the enemy's known missile defense systems, except for the American Aegis system. This system can only engage missiles flying beyond the atmosphere, given sufficient radar data and only with one of its missiles.

In the early stages of the operation, numerous videos depicting missile flights, engagements with enemy air defenses, and explosion in multiple areas were released. Some videos showcased different perspectives of the same targeted area. These videos highlight several notable points, briefly outlined here.

Some of the images showing missile impacts on target areas seem to be connected to the launch of projectiles containing submunitions, which are essentially cluster munitions.

In additional videos, we can see heavy cluster munitions hitting in rapid succession within a specific area, likely linked to the Nevatim Air Base area.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Iran into 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup quarterfinals

TEHRAN - Iran became the first team from Group D to secure a spot in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Thailand 2024 quarterfinals following a thrilling 5-3 win over Bahrain on Saturday.

Iran will face Kuwait on Monday, while Bahrain take on Afghanistan.

Mirza was on target for Bahrain but Alireza Ra-fiepour equalized the match.

Bahrain struck again with two minutes left on the clock when Mohamed Alsandi sent a delightful through ball for Saleh Sanjar to strike home from close range.

Saleh Sanjar had a chance to further extend Bahrain's advantage but was denied from the spot by Iran keeper Bagher Mohammadi just before the break.

Iran came out fighting in the second half and leveled the score in the 22nd minute when Saei Ahmad Abbasi found an unmarked Karimi, who finished with aplomb from inside the box.

Iran then took the lead for the first time seven minutes later through Abbasi's effort from a tight angle but their joy was short-lived as Bahrain refused to give up.

The West Asian side equalized a minute later with Ali Alaraibi initiating the move from his defensive end before finishing a well-orchestrated team move himself from close range.

Iran underlined their superiority when they regained the lead in the 33rd minute with Behrouz Azimi striking a powerful shot from the edge of the box.

Abbasi scored Iran's fifth goal when he pounced on Alsandi's poor pass before sending the ball from above the half-way line into an unattended goalmouth to seal the victory.

Zahedi nets brace against Jubio Iwata

TEHRAN - Avispa Fukuoka battled back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 with Jubio Iwata on Saturday.

Fukuoka's Iranian striker Shahab Zahedi scored a brace in the match held at the Best Denki Stadium.

Ryo Germain scored for the visiting team in the 30th and 47th minutes and Zahedi also made a brace in the 60th and 78th minutes.

Zahedi has scored five goals in six matches for Fukuoka.

Fukuoka sits 13th with 11 points from nine matches, seven points behind leader Cerezo Osaka in the J1 League table.

Freestylers Emami, Azarpira secure berth for Olympics

TEHRAN - Iranian freestyle wrestlers Yones Emami and Amir Ali Azarpira won tow places for the 2024 Olympic Games in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on Friday.

Iran now has its fourth Paris 2024 quota in Freestyle as Emami puts on a takedown show to beat Nurkozha Kaipanov from Kazakhstan at 74kg in three minutes and 49 seconds.

Emami had failed to win a quota at the World Championships after losing to Zaurbek Sidakov(AIN) and later to Hetik Cabalov (SRB) in the repechage. But a dominant performance sees him tick one more spot for Iran.

Iran filled its fifth Freestyle quota for the Paris Olympics as Zagreb Open champion Azarpira defeated Gankhuyag Ganbaatar from Mongolia 3-0 at 97kg. Azarpira got a point for Ganbaatar's passivity and then scored a takedown in the second period to win. 57kg is the only weight in which Iran has not qualified for the Paris Olympics.

Iran to participate at 2024 CAFA U18 Women's Championship

TEHRAN - The 2024 CAFA U18 Women's Championship's schedule was announced and Iran will

face Uzbekistan on Sunday at the opener.

The Persian girls are also scheduled to play Turkmenistan (Monday), Tajikistan (Friday) and Kyrgyzstan (Sunday).

The tournament plays an important role and aims to support the general popularization of the Women's game in the region and provide platform to prepare the teams of Central Asian member associations for the Continental competition AFC U20 Women's Championship as well as showcasing their skills and talents through all CAFA media channels.

CAFA contributes their regional football development initiatives which is further supporting the vision of FIFA making the game truly global and vision of AFC to making football the number one sport in the continent.

The tournament will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from April 19 to 28.

A total of five teams will compete in an exciting single round-robin format.

Esteghlal edge Shams Azar to go top: PGPL

TEHRAN - Esteghlal football team defeated Shams Azar 3-2 here on Friday to move top of the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL), one points ahead of their archrivals Persepolis.

Mehrdad Mohammadi opened the scoring for the Blues in the 20th minute and made it 2-0 from the penalty spot five minutes into the second half. Amirhossein Moradmamand scored Esteghlal's third goal at the Azadi Stadium with a header.

With seven minutes remaining, Shams Azar forward Faraz Emamali pulled a goal back and substitute Mojtaba Fakhrian made it 2-0 two minutes later.

Shams Azar put Esteghlal under pressure to level the score but the match finished 3-2.

Earlier in the day, struggling Nassaji edged past Tractor 1-0 in Ghaemshahr and Foolad lost to Mes 1-0 in Ahvaz.

Esteghlal lead the table with 53 points, one point above Persepolis.

Sepahan are third with 42 points.

Chris Coleman shortlisted to lead Tractor

TEHRAN - Media reports suggest that Tractor football club has reached an agreement with former Wales coach Chris Coleman.

Tractor is going to hire the 54-year-old coach on an 18-month deal.

Coleman started his coaching career in Fulham in 2003 and has also worked as head coach in Coventry City and Sunderland.

The Welshman has led his country from 2012 to 2017.

Tractor has recently parted company with Spanish coach Paco Jemez.

The Tabriz-based team has almost missed the chance of winning the Iran football league.

With six weeks remaining, Tractor sits fourth in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) table with 40 points.

Persepolis ready to extend Osmar Vieira's deal

TEHRAN - Iranian football club Persepolis are ready to extend Osmar Loss Vieira's deal.

The 49-year-old coach was named as head coach of Persepolis in January until the end of the season.

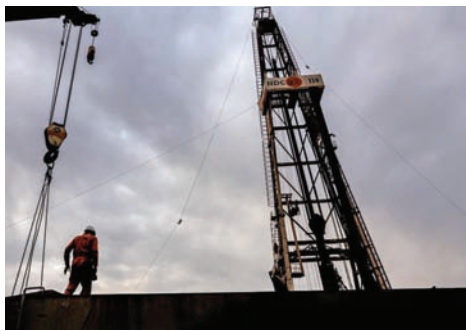
Under his leadership, Persepolis have won seven matches and lost one. The Reds were also held by Esteghlal in Tehran derby.

Now, Persepolis are one point behind leaders Esteghlal and the club are interested in extending his contract.

Osmar Loss was named Persepolis assistant coach in July 2022 and helped the Team win Iran's league and Hazfi Cup.

After the club parted company with Yahya Golmohammadi in January, the 49-year-old coach took charge of the team as head coach.

Iran oil exports hit six-year high: report



From page 1 ► Earlier this month, The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said that Iran produced 3.25 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in March 2024, 20,000 bpd more than the previous month.

According to the EIA report, Iran's oil production in February stood at 3.23 million bpd.

Iran has produced an average of 3.2 million barrels of oil per day in the first quarter of this year, based on the report.

Iran's oil production in the first quarter of this year has increased by 50,000 bpd

compared to the fourth quarter of the previous year and by 630,000 barrels per day compared to the first quarter of 2023.

Iran produced 2.6 million bpd of oil in the first quarter of the previous year and 3.18 million bpd in the fourth quarter of the mentioned year.

With an increase of 630,000 barrels in oil production over the past year, Iran had the highest production rise among OPEC members, according to EIA.

Gabon, Nigeria, and Venezuela have been the only OPEC members to increase production over the past year. The production of Gabon increased by 10,000 bpd, Nigeria by 40,000 bpd, and Venezuela by 90,000 bpd.

OPEC oil production in the first quarter of last year was 27.380 million bpd, which has decreased by 720,000 barrels to 26.660 million in the first quarter of 2024.

Based on the EIA report, Iran maintained its position as the organization's third oil producer in March.

TEDPIX surges over 77,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 77,643 points to 2,285,857 on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

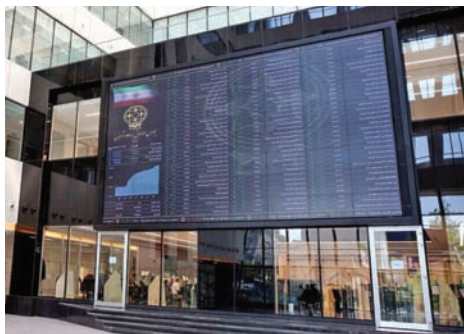
TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

Last week, Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshghi said the organization is determined to support shareholders in the stock market.

Speaking in a meeting attended by economic operators from financial institutions, analysts, and capital market media, Eshqi said "Political, social, and economic debates have created some high expectations from the stock market."

As IRNA reported, the official referred to the complexity of the prevailing conditions in the market, announcing the serious determination of this organization to support the rights of shareholders.

"The mistrust among the shareholders



under the influence of various factors caused the creation of difficult conditions in the market, and now we need empathy given such a problem and to overcome these conditions," he said.

Eshqi further said when the condition of the capital market is not very suitable, naturally, private sector companies are not very willing to offer their shares in the stock market and they believe that there is not much value for the companies in this market.

Previous experiences, however, indicate that the current conditions governing the market cannot be continued in the long term, the official added.

Annual transit via Iran's roads rises 54%

TEHRAN- Transit of commodities through the roads of Iran increased by 54 percent during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to the data released by the Transport Ministry.

Based on the mentioned data, last year 14.3 million tons of goods were transited via roads in Iran, while the figure stood at 9.3 million a year earlier, IRNA reported.

As reported, of the total transited goods, 9.1 million tons were non-oil commodities and the rest were oil products.

The continuous trend of recent transit records via the country and the increasing interest of governments, traders, and those active in transport sectors from neighboring, regional, and extra-regional countries in the transit and logistics situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicate the fruitfulness of the transformational approach of the 13th government to the strategic issue of transit, with emphasis on the development of all-round economic relations with neighbors.

As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative made by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

As previously announced by the Transport Ministry, 10.8 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20, 2023).

This year, the issue of transit and playing a

role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the deputy transport minister noted.

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran, and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

Foreign investment in Iran reaches \$11.6b in 2 years

TEHRAN - The Iranian government has managed to attract \$11.6 billion of foreign investment in various sectors since the administration took office in 2021, Shana reported.

As reported, in the mentioned figure the share of the oil and gas projects has been \$4.8 billion which means the oil industry accounted for 41 percent of the country's total foreign investment in the mentioned two years.

After the oil sector, the industrial sector has had the highest rate of investment attracting, and during the said period over \$4.1 billion of foreign investment was attracted in the mentioned sector.

The industrial sector accounted for 35.3 percent of the total foreign investment.

Back in March, the head of the Organization of Investment, Economic and Technical Assistant of Iran (OIETAI) announced that foreign investment in the country reached more than \$4.0 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Ali Fekri, also Iran's deputy minister of economy, stated that nearly \$4.0 billion of foreign



investment was attracted in each year of the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi, who assumed office in August 2021.

He went on to say that Iran's economic relations with most countries are on a growth trajectory despite the sanctions imposed against the country.

In December 2023, the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced that 73 foreign investment projects valued at about \$382.4 million were approved in the first six months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2023).

According to the Industry Ministry data, of the total number of investment projects

in the mentioned six-month period, 93.8 percent was the share of the industry sector, 2.2 percent was the share of the mining sector, while trade-related projects accounted for four percent of the total figure.

Approved foreign investment includes all applications, including investment to create new projects, purchase of shares of existing companies, as well as foreign investment in the form of contractual arrangements.

Out of the 73 cases of foreign investment in the mentioned sectors, 24 cases had 100 percent foreign investment, 34 cases were joint ventures and 15 cases were in the form

of civil partnership, mutual sale, or build-operate-transfer (BOT).

The highest volume of foreign investment approved in the industry, mining, and trade sectors in the period under review was in the categories of wood and wood products, extraction of minerals, manufacture of chemical products, and basic metals.

Afghanistan, China, Turkey, India, and the United Arab Emirate were the top five countries with the highest volume of investment, while Fars, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Hormozgan, and Tehran were the top five provinces in terms of the volume of approved foreign investment.

Earlier in April 2023, the Iranian government approved a new resolution to facilitate foreign investment in the country.

According to the Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance Organization of Iran, the main purpose of this resolution was to encourage investors from other countries, especially from neighboring countries, to invest in Iran.

Home-made train to join Iranian subway fleet in two weeks

TEHRAN - Iran's Vice President for Science, Technology and Knowledge-based Economy Rouhollah Dehghani Firouzabadi says the construction of a domestically-made train has made 85 percent development and the train is expected to join the subway fleet within the next couple of weeks.

Firouzabadi said that the train is being constructed by a Consortium of five knowledge-based companies operating along with the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, Tehran Municipality, and the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research.

He added that the home-made train successfully underwent all the Iranian and European quality standard tests last week, the portal of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Saturday.

The vice president noted that with the

mass production of this train, over 90 percent of the country's needs for trains would be met.

In late February, the Iranian railway fleet also received 685 new domestically-made or renovated wagons and locomotives worth 33.58 trillion rials (about \$67.7 million).

The mentioned wagons and locomotives included 645 freight wagons, 10 new locomotives, five renovated locomotives, two new passenger wagons, and 23 renovated passenger wagons, all manufactured and renovated by domestic companies.

The development of the railway sector has been one of the macro policies of the Iranian government as it has been emphasized by the general policies of the country's national development plans.

In this regard, the national railway fleet has constantly received new domestically-



made locomotives and wagons in the past and current Iranian calendar years.

Last year, a total of 1,660 wagons and locomotives were added to the country's railway fleet in four stages.

Advantages such as consuming less fuel and creating less pollution as well as high safety attach priority to the railway when compared to some other transportation systems, and make its development economically viable.

Iran's poverty headcount ratio drops 37% in 2 years: WB

TEHRAN - World Bank statistics indicate that Iran's poverty headcount ratio has decreased by 37 percent over during 2020-2022, IRNA reported.

Based on the WB data, the ratio of the population with absolute poverty to the total population in Iran was 0.8 percent in 2020, however, the figure reached 0.7 percent in 2021, and then to 0.5 percent in 2022.

This international organization defines poverty based on a daily income of 2.15 dollars per person (based on the purchasing power parity index at constant prices in 2017) and this figure is the minimum amount that a person needs to

meet their basic needs.

The poverty headcount rate of 0.5 percent in Iran is the lowest rate recorded for this index in the last five years. In 2017, the ratio of the headcount poverty in Iran to the total population was 0.3 percent, and this figure went through a more or less upward trend until 2020 and reached 0.8 percent this year.

In another report earlier this month, In its new report on food security, the World Bank announced that Iran was able to reduce inflation of food products by 48 percent in a year.

Based on the mentioned report, food inflation in Iran was about 79.5 percent in March 2023, which decreased

by 48 percentage points to 31.2 percent in February 2024, and Iran has been 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.

Wheat production expected to reach 13.5m tons this year: report

TEHRAN - Iran's wheat production is expected to reach 13.5 million tons in the current crop year (September 2023-2024), an official with the Agriculture Ministry said.

According to Sohrab Sohrabi, the manager of the Agriculture Ministry's Wheat Project, the government purchased 10.4 million tons of wheat from farmers in the previous year, while the figure is expected to reach 10.5 million tons in the current year.

Putting the country's annual need for wheat at 12 million tons, the official said considering the current trend of production, Iran will become self-sufficient in wheat production over the next few years.

Considered a staple in Iran, wheat is purchased every crop year by the

government to build up its reserves and supply the market over time.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in a recent report said Iran produced more than 21 million tons of grain in the 2023 Crop Year to hold the fourth largest grain reserves in Asia.

In the report dubbed "Outlook of Food Products and Situation", FAO put the total volume of grain produced in Iran in 2023 at 21.1 million tons, showing a more than two percent hike compared to a year earlier.

According to this report, Iran produced over 13 million tons of wheat in 2022 and 13.5 million tons in 2023.

FAO put Iran's total cereal stocks at 12.1 million tons in the previous year, noting

that the stocks increased by 100,000 tons compared to the previous year.

Back in May 2023, FAO released a report in which Iran was ranked 43rd in the world in terms of food imports despite being the 17th most populous country in the world.

The UN entity's statistics show that industrialized countries were the largest importers of food products in the world.

According to the organization, Iran currently stands among the world's top producers of agricultural products.

China is ranked first in the world in terms of grain reserves with 399 million tons of grains, followed by India with 64 million tons of grain reserves and Turkey with 12.7 million tons respectively.

Ending US presence in Iraq can end Washington-Tel Aviv malevolence

PMF base comes under aerial aggression

TEHRAN - A deadly explosion struck a military base in Iraq used by the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) which played a key role in defeating the Daesh terror group.

According to the Iraqi army, one person was killed and eight others injured in the blast at the Kalsu military base late on Friday which is located some 50km south of Baghdad in the province of Babil (Babylon).

Iraqi officials said a member of the army was among those injured in the base which also serves as a headquarters for the country's military.

Footage from the scene has shown a huge explosion and a large crater and damage to infrastructure and vehicles.

The cause of the blast is still unknown.

On Saturday, Iraqi authorities said they were investigating the explosion.

The Iraqi army said it had not detected any drones or fighter plane in the airspace of Babylon before or during the blast.

However, on Saturday afternoon, the PMF described the blast as an "attack".

Earlier, the PMF had put the blame on the United States.

"American aggression bombed the Kalsu military base," it said in a statement.

The U.S. rejected reports that it was behind air strikes in Iraq.

"We are aware of reports claiming that the United States con-



ducted airstrikes in Iraq today. Those reports are not true. The United States has not conducted air strikes in Iraq today," the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) said on X.

The U.S. has carried out frequent attacks against the positions of resistance groups in Iraq in the past. They demand a withdrawal of American military forces from the Arab nation. It remains unclear whether the U.S. was behind the incident at the Kalsu military base.

But if reports about Washington's involvement were true, it would be a stab in the back of Iraqis especially immediately after an official visit by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to the United States.

The blast at the military site came amid high tensions in West Asia in the wake of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and the regime's deadly strike on Iran's consulate in the Syrian capital on April 1st. Iran

retaliated the attack two weeks later by launching more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel.

Meanwhile, fingers have also been pointed at Israel for the blast at the PMF base. However, an Israeli official told CNN that the regime was not involved.

If reports about Israel's involvement in the incident came to be true, the U.S. would be responsible. This is because the U.S. has control over the Iraqi airspace.

Undoubtedly, Israel could not have carried out any attack inside Iraq without U.S. foreknowledge.

Any attack inside Iraq either by the U.S. or Israel amounts to violating the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Popular Mobilization Forces was formed in 2014 in Iraq as part of a coalition of dozens of armed factions to combat the growing threat of the Daesh terror group.

The PMU has been recognized as

a formal security force by Iraqi authorities Since 2018.

The PMU is also an influential political group.

The Shia Coalition Framework, which represents PMF-linked groups, won more than 30 per cent of Iraq's seats in the last provincial elections.

Anti-Israeli operations

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, launched a drone strike against a strategic target in the southernmost part of Israel on Saturday.

The group said it had hit an Israeli site in the port of Eilat.

It noted that the operation was carried out in response to the "aggression" on the PMF base and in support of Palestinians in Gaza where Israel has been committing massacres since October 7.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has conducted many attacks on Israeli targets since the regime declared war on Gaza.

Over the past years, calls have grown in Iraq for the expulsion of U.S. forces from the country.

Presently, anti-U.S. sentiment remains high in Iraq due to Washington's support for Israel's war of genocide on Gaza.

For now, ending the U.S. military presence in Iraq and halting Israel's war on Gaza can reduce tensions in West Asia, prevent a broader conflict in the region, and put an end to malicious acts by the U.S. and Israel.

WORLD HEADLINES

Berlin protesters: Stop arming Israel



German people have staged a protest in Berlin to express solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Holding Palestinian flags and placards, the protesters condemned Israel's genocide in Gaza.

The demonstrators demanded that Germany stop arms sales to Israel.

Israeli strike kills 9 family members in Rafah

Gaza's civil defense agency said Saturday an overnight Israeli strike killed nine members of a Palestinian family including six children in the southern city of Rafah.

Five children aged one to seven and a 16-year-old girl were among the dead, along with two women and a man, according to the city's Al Najar hospital, AFP reported.

"Nine martyrs including six children were pulled out from the rubble after Israeli air forces struck a house of the Radwan family in Tal al-Sultan in Rafah," Gaza Civil Defense agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said in a statement.

Abbas: US violates international law

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the U.S. for vetoing a widely supported resolution at the Security Council that would have paved the way for the state of Palestine to gain full membership at the United Nations.

He slammed the move as a display of the US's defiance of Palestine's "rights, history and land", as well as the "sanctities of the Palestinian people".

"While the world agrees on the application of international law and stands by the Palestinian right, America continues to support the occupation, refusing to compel Israel to stop its genocidal war," Abbas told the official Wafa news agency.

"It provides Israel with weapons and funds that kill our children and destroy our homes, and it stands against us in international forums, in positions that do not serve security and stability in the region," he added.

"The United States has violated all international laws and abandoned all promises regarding the two-state solution and achieving peace in the region."

Israel kills more Palestinians in West Bank

At least two Palestinians have died and a further seven suffered gunshot wounds in an Israeli military operation in the Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm on the West Bank, the Palestinian health authority reported on Saturday.

The Israeli military confirmed that the operation had begun on Friday and was continuing into Saturday, according to DPA.

Four more men had been killed, Palestinian media reports said, including the local commander of Islamic Jihad.

A number of Palestinians are reported to have been detained and considerable damage caused to roads, healthcare facilities and homes.

Almost 450 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank since October 7.

Turkey: Israeli occupation main cause of instability

Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has said that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is one of the primary causes of instability in West Asia, TRT reported.

Addressing a joint news conference on Saturday with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry in Istanbul, Fidan said the Palestine issue may trigger global issues.

He added, "Cooperation between Egypt and Turkey is extremely beneficial for our peoples and region."

Egyptian Foreign Minister Shoukry stressed the need to open Israeli crossings with the besieged Gaza.

"We demand that the six Israeli crossings with Gaza be opened to humanitarian aid," said Shoukry.

The Egyptian official stressed that the "failure to do so violates international law."

Shoukry said that "since the beginning of the Israeli war in Gaza, Israeli hurdles persisted."

Hezbollah would respond to Israeli escalation

Hezbollah is determined not to ramp up its attacks over Lebanon's southern border, but will respond in kind to any Israeli escalation, Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem told NBC News.

Qassem slammed Israel and the United States for perpetuating tit-for-tat attacks that have killed hundreds in southern Lebanon and displaced tens of thousands of civilians on both sides of the border.

"We didn't expect the war would last this long because we didn't think that Netanyahu was that foolish, same for Biden and the other countries," Qassem said.

Qassem said Hezbollah's fight is "serving its purpose" by "luring the Israeli forces to get busy in the north."

"Therefore, we will continue to do so, and we will not wage a full-scale war unless the Israelis decide to get into war against us," he said. "Then we are ready for the full confrontation."

Feeling fighting in Myanmar

About 1,300 people have fled from eastern Myanmar into Thailand, officials said Saturday, as fresh fighting erupted at a border town that has recently been captured by ethnic guerillas.

Fighters from the Karen ethnic minority last week captured the last of the Myanmar army's outposts in and around Myawaddy, which is connected to Thailand by two bridges across the Moei River, AP reported.

The latest clashes were triggered in the morning when the Karen guerrillas launched an attack against Myanmar troops who were hiding near the 2nd Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, a major crossing point for trade with Thailand, said police chief Pittayakorn Phetcharat in Thailand's Mae Sot district. He estimated about 1,300 people fled into Thailand.

Thai officials reported people had started crossing since Friday following clashes in several areas of Myawaddy.

US again stands against the world on Palestine

From page 1 ► The U.S. invented an excuse for its unjustified move despite its claims, especially since the start of the Israel-Gaza war, that forming a Palestinian state is the only way to secure the region.

"The United States continues to strongly support a two-state solution. This vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood, but instead is an acknowledgment that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties," deputy US ambassador to the UN, Robert Wood, told the council, the Guardian reported.

Explaining Britain's abstention, its envoy to the UN, Barbara Woodward, also said: "We believe that such recognition of Palestinian statehood should not come at the start of a new process, but it doesn't have to be at the very end of the process."

Woodward added, "We must start with fixing the immediate crisis in Gaza."

These excuses and fabrications by the U.S. and Britain are unwarranted and neither convince nor deceive anybody.

Contrary to what the U.S. and Britain claimed, the recognition of a Palestinian State would have put pressure on Israel to give in to the demand

by the international community to treat Palestine as a sovereign state.

The veto in favor of Israel comes as the regime has been committing indescribable crimes against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since October 2023.

Now, Israel feels more emboldened to go on with its apartheid policy against Palestinians.

Being unquestionably supported by the West, Israel doesn't want an independent Palestinian state at all. They want the entire Palestinian land no matter whether Yair Lapid, Naftali Bennett, Benjamin Gantz, Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak - who are considered less criminal - are in power or butchers like Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon.

Some ultra-right parties like Ben Gvir's Jewish National Front or Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionist Party, who now hold ministerial positions in Netanyahu's cabinet, openly speak about driving out Palestinians from their native land.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz and the regime's ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, openly revealed Israel's ulterior motive. Katz praised the US by saying "terrorism will not be rewarded" and praised Washington for aborting the Pal-

US universities silence pro-Palestine activism Crackdown "will inevitably collapse"

By Wesam Bahrani

Over the past months, universities in the United States have heavily cracked down on peaceful activism on campus and beyond in opposition to the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

American faculty, students, organizations and lecturers that have been peacefully raising awareness on the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza have been terminated, expelled or suspended. And it all raises the question of why.

In a country that claims to champion freedom of speech and association, it has become quite clear that this right comes with conditions attached, that would only sit comfortably and/or serve U.S. foreign policy interests.

This is particularly pertinent to foreign policy issues with a high level of sensitivity such as the Gaza genocide, in which the U.S. administration and other policymakers stand accused of complicity.

And so, perhaps not so surprisingly, university groups dedicated to raising awareness on the plight of Gaza throughout the United States, or protesting for human rights, liberation, and self-determination for the Palestinian people, have been prevented from doing so.

Despite the peaceful nature of the pro-Palestinian activism on campus, free speech and as-

sociation have been met with punishment.

University leaders and state officials have been vague when attempting to justify how these pro-Palestinian students and student groups have broken any campus rules, or how the decision to suspend them or take other punitive measures against them was reached.

The prominent American pro-Palestinian campus group, Students for Justice in Palestine, a network movement founded some 30 years ago, has been suspended from several universities, including Columbia, Brandeis, George Washington and Rutgers. Rutgers is reported to have recently revoked the suspension.

Students for Justice in Palestine joined hands with numerous other organizations in coordinating nationwide student protests including a walkout on college campuses in October and February in protest against Israeli military action in Gaza as well as U.S. support for Tel Aviv.

Organizers with Students for Justice in Palestine say student interest in the 150 chapters that were active at the start of the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza in October had expanded to 80 campuses throughout the country three months later.

While limited in their resources amid a lack of funds or any government backing, this growing voice of dissent, albeit peaceful, appears to have

estonian membership. Erdan went on to say that full membership for the Palestinians would be a "prize to terrorists" and would make "any future negotiation almost impossible".

Designating Palestinians as terrorists is disgusting and appalling. Such designation is just a cover to continue with the project of purging Palestinians from their native land. The Israelis don't want negotiations with the Palestinians and don't recognize Palestinians as negotiating partners.

They just want to purge Palestinians from their homeland and the U.S. is helping them to advance their project.

Casting another veto vote in favor of Israel brought more anger against American decision-makers in the world, even in the United States.

The United States is helping Israelis in denying the Palestinians of having their sovereign state.

However, failure to heal the old Palestinian wound will continue to haunt the United States and the region. It would also produce more violent Palestinians and Jews in the future.

shaken state authorities.

The increasing level of grassroots pro-Palestinian activism has managed to fill the vacuum missing in mainstream media, which hasn't provided a sufficient platform for a pro-Palestinian voice considering the level of death and destruction in Gaza.

It's in stark contrast to pro-Israeli students who enjoy vast sums from donor networks in addition to various campus Hillels as well as the mainstream media to magnify their pro-establishment position, despite being in the minority.

But punishing the pro-Palestinian voices is also a double-edged sword for hawkish pro-Israeli officials who are trying to silence the student movement's position on Gaza when at the same time turning their punishment into local, and at times, national headlines.

These headlines raise awareness across the country and can reach out to other students to join their cause.

More than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested at Columbia University in New York on Thursday after its president authorized police to clear an encampment set up by students demonstrating against the Israeli war on Gaza. The protests were held for a third consecutive day.

(See full text at: tehrantimes.com)

National Museum of Iran comparable with Louvre, tourism minister says

TEHRAN – On Saturday, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ezatollah Zarghami, addressed the issue of the modest ticket prices for museums across the country, comparing them to international standards.

In an interview with the Mehr news agency, Zarghami discussed the relatively low ticket prices for museums in the country, adding “In the case of the National Museum of Iran, [for instance], we do not intend to compare it with the Louvre Museum's entrance fee of 22 euros, but this is where our museums stand.”

“When someone visits the National Museum, they see that it has no less than the Louvre [Museum].”

Regarding a sudden increase in ticket prices for the country's museums from the first day of the year (March 20), Zarghami said: “A ticket price of 30,000 tomans (some half a dollar) for entry into a museum is not a figure seen anywhere in the world!”

This fee is allocated for the renovation, maintenance, and revival of museums. The rate should have increased significantly in previous years, but that didn't happen, the minister explained.

“The amount was not excessive. Nevertheless, special discounts have been considered for agencies that have booked tours in advance.”

Hit-and-run tourism is tearing the heart out of Florence – there is a better way

Florence is an exquisite city. Because of its history and its cultural heritage as the cradle of the Italian Renaissance, it is unique, precious and very fragile. The historic centre – a Unesco World Heritage site – occupies a very small space. The city's 366,000 inhabitants are joined each year by about 11 million tourists. Maintaining the characteristic dignity of the place and meeting the needs of those who live here permanently while managing this volume of tourism, is a great challenge and responsibility. For most of the year, Florence struggles to do either sustainably.

Tourism must be managed, otherwise it stops being a resource and becomes only a problem. And over the years Florence has gradually lost parts of its identity as it has lost its citizens – fewer than 40,000 now live in the historic centre, which is overrun with Airbnb apartments and eateries. Most Florence residents feel profoundly frustrated by the impossibility of leading a normal life in their city. Their precious jewel must be protected and not sold off and compromised any further.

Since 2015, I have had the great honour of directing the famous Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, best known for Michelangelo's

He added that many groups also receive discounts for museum entry. Their number is not insignificant, and this increase comes at a time when cinema tickets now cost between 60,000 to 80,000 tomans.

“Saadabad Palace [Complex] spent seven billion tomans solely on water expenses last year. Even organizing the stream passing through the complex has become our responsibility, and we must clean it up. It has 300 staff, and 26 palaces need to be managed. These are substantial figures, and the increase in ticket prices compensates for a small portion of these expenses.”

Zarghami noted that such a rate is still much lower compared to museums in other countries. Of course, we do not intend to compare it with the Louvre Museum's entrance fee of 22 euros, but this is where our museums stand.

“When someone visits Iran's National Museum, they see that we have no less than the Louvre Museum.”

The National Museum of Iran is somewhat chock-full of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country's juicy history. Massive and tiny statues, ceramics, pottery, stone figures, bas-relief carvings, metal objects, textile remains, rare books, and coins are amongst the objects that build up the innumerable collections inside.

David.

But the problems I have witnessed both in the gallery and in the city at large have also given me an opportunity to explore possible solutions to over-tourism.

We started with the museum's relationship with the city's inhabitants, many of whom had become distanced from it, perceiving it as a space just for tourists. To give the museum back to the city, we began involving residents in its daily life, launching events for everyone, young and old, accessible for free. Admission to the museum is also free every first Sunday of the month.

Thanks to these strategic choices, last year we exceeded 2 million annual visitors for the first time by extending opening hours in the summer – late opening twice a week – and having one main exhibition in the winter rather than bunching them in the high season.

In a way, the Accademia can be viewed as a kind of microcosm of Florence. And I have seen what a sustainable approach can achieve. Slower tours, smaller groups, better signage and orientation, de-seasonalisation, distribution of visitors, longer openings, these things have been transformative.

(Source: The Guardian)

Iran in frames



A view of the Fire Temple of Yazd, which is a significant Zoroastrian fire temple in the historical city of Yazd, central Iran. The site offers a captivating glimpse into ancient religious traditions.

Lichens threaten Iran heritage sites; Bisotun leads most severe erosion

TEHRAN – For more than two decades, experts and cultural heritage specialists have been reporting on the crisis of lichen penetration in some of Iran's cultural heritage sites and monuments.

The growth of various types of lichens, which remain largely unidentified, is believed to pose a significant risk to many inscriptions, buildings, and historical rock formations.

Mohammad Sohrabi (lichenologist and former head of the Research Institute for the Preservation and Restoration of Historical Monuments), who has spent years identifying, monitoring, and studying the growth of lichens on historical monuments and ancient inscriptions in Iran, now describes the condition of Iran's historical structures as highly damaging and unstable in terms of biological degradation, ISNA reported.

“Currently, we witness the most dangerous and severe biological degradation caused by the growth of lichens in Bisotun, followed by other World Heritage sites of Persepolis, the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region, Tchogha Zanbil, Susa, [Gonbad-e] Soltaniyeh, Gonbad-e Qabus, Takht-e Soleiman, and some caravanserais, among others.”

The expert said that so far, some 500 species of lichens -- with different erosion rates -- have been identified growing on Iran's historical buildings.

Sohrabi, who also presides over the Iranian Lichen Museum, says: “Lichens are symbiotic organisms that grow on rocks, stones, tree trunks, and branches and can live up to 4,000 years.”



He said Iran is home to 2,500 to 3,000 species of lichens, of which 1,000 have been identified so far, with some half of the identified ones being associated with historical artifacts and buildings.

“In the ongoing lichenology research at the Iranian Lichen Museum and by doctoral students under my supervision, we are witnessing new reports of lichens across the country, and some species are even being discovered for the first time in the world of lichenology, with my students preparing articles on these new species.”

Unfortunately, due to legal limitations and the lack of necessary financial support, no progress has been made in assessing and determining the rate of destruction of each lichen species and its damage to the cultural heritage.

He said, a majestic structure like Persepolis, currently faces very serious lichen damage due to the lack of sufficient budget.

“A categorized list of destructive and non-destructive lichen species of Persepolis has been prepared, but due to the lack of necessary financial support, further

studies on this structure are still ambiguous.”

Sohrabi believes not all lichens in historical sites and World Heritage sites are destructive. “For example, this phenomenon is clearly visible on the surfaces of natural stones around the lake of Takht-e Suleiman, and even on the surfaces of stones in the village of Kandovan.”

“This type of lichen growth indicates untouched natural substrates and, like an insulator, protects the historical site of Kandovan from natural elements. Therefore, there is no need to remove lichens from these sites. However, some others have penetrated the surfaces of ancient stones and rocks, causing their destruction in any case.”

He said what is important is first to identify all lichens in historical sites, differentiate critical and non-critical points, grade these points concerning the active presence of lichens, and then mitigate and remove them from historical artifacts.

“In my opinion, sampling for DNA analysis and using molecular identification methods elevate Iran's World Heritage standards,

Hezar-Daf Festival reverberates musical legacy of Kordestan

From Page 1 ► The inaugural Hezar-Daf Festival in Pelangan took place two years ago and this year, the cultural ceremony, serving as a spiritual and cultural heritage, is held on the last Friday of the very first month of the Persian calendar, with the participation of various drumming and artistic groups in the tourist village.

Being celebrated each year with particular grandeur and attended by tourists from both within and outside the province, the Hezar-Daf is one of the most beautiful customs of this historic village.

During the ceremony, Esmail Zarei-Kousha, the Kordestan's governor, expressed his appreciation for the enthusiastic participation of people from across the country in the festival.

“This enthusiastic participation and the dissemination of news, images, and videos thereof,” the official added, “contribute to the global recognition of Palangan.”

He emphasized tourism as one of the main and essential capacities of Kordestan's development.

“We spare no effort to strengthen this sector,” Zarei-Kousha added.

Moreover, the governor of Kamyaran county

also stated during the ceremony that while the global registration of Pelangan is important, its preservation for future years is even more crucial.

“We must take action with precise and principled planning to create and strengthen the necessary measures in this regard,” the official stated.

Palangan vies for UN recognition

Last year, Iran submitted eight villages for the title of the best tourism village to the UN Tourism Organization, among which only Kandovan village found its way to the final list, and Palangan ranked second, scoring 86 out of 100.

As revealed by related officials, in the current year, the files of the eight selected villages will be finalized on April 24, and Pelangan this year stands a good chance of being listed as the best tourism village, despite some shortcomings and challenges that need to be addressed.

On April 13, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the deputy tourism minister, delineated that village assessments are based on nine relevant indices aligned with sustainable development goals (SDGs), covering cultural and natural resources, economic stability, social cohesion,

environmental sustainability, tourism potential, value chain integration, governance and prioritization of tourism, infrastructure and connectivity along with health and security.

Underscoring the importance of a justification form in village applications, the official pointed to the requirement of villages to elucidate their motivations and initiatives to become global destinations.

“In 2024, Iran can submit eight applications,” Shalbafian noted, “with villages such as Abyaneh (Isfahan province), Kandolus (Mazandaran province), Palangan (Kurdistan province), Bisheh (Lorestan province), Meymand (Kerman province), Fahraj (Yazd province), Esfahak (South Khorasan province), and Ghaleh Bala (Semnan province) being highlighted.”

“Currently, field assessments of these villages are underway,” Shalbafian added, “with strategic tourism development committees being formed in provinces.”

In his concluding remarks, the deputy minister pinpointed that the village's motivation files are being prepared in collaboration with provincial departments, scheduled for submission to the UN Tourism organization, by the deadline of April 24.

Symphony of flavor: Mahnesan hosts 3rd fish cooking festival

TEHRAN – Mahnesan county's third Fish Cooking Festival has delighted visitors with flavors of tradition and history, taking place adjacent to the historical Behestan Castle.

In a celebration of Mahnesan's vibrant fishing and culinary heritage, the two-day festival which started on Thursday, drew locals, tourists, and dignitaries alike to indulge in the flavors and traditions of the region.

Addressing the festival, Zanjan's director-general of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, underscored Mahnesan's pivotal role as a pillar for rainbow trout production within the province.

“With its numerous fish farms and substantial annual output,” Saeid Safavi noted, “Mahnesan has cemented its status as a cornerstone of the local economy and a hub of culinary innovation.”

Pointing to the festival's mission, the director-general outlined that the event was planned to serve as a platform to promote the consumption of fish and raise awareness about the nutritional benefits they offer.

Safavi also pinpointed that the event witnessed enthusiastic participation from tourists eager to taste the unique gastronomic experiences offered by Mahnesan's renowned chefs.

Spanning two days, the festival showcased the artistry of fish cooking against the enchanting backdrop of Behestan Castle, a historical landmark steeped in centuries of cultural significance, according to the official.

Safavi also emphasized that cooking rainbow trout is registered in the national tourism events calendar and on a provincial scale.

Furthermore, Mohammadreza



Mohammadi, the governor of Mahnesan, lauded the festival as a testament to the region's commitment to sustainable aquaculture and culinary excellence.

“With over 750 fish farms placed within the landscape and an annual fish production exceeding 12,000 tons,” Mohammadi added, “Mahnesan has emerged as a powerhouse in the realm of fish

and it is possible to identify destructive and non-destructive species with minimal time.”

“It should be noted that sampling and specimen preparation for lichen substrate studies are still a necessity. We will never allow any harm to come to historical surfaces,” the expert explained.

So far, nearly 40,000 images have been taken of lichen presence from various points of Iran's historical buildings and sites, but these images are not sufficient; identifying these lichen species requires DNA sampling.

“Removing lichen damage from historical buildings requires the compilation of a lichen atlas and conducting DNA analysis, which is a time-consuming and costly endeavor.”

Expert emphasizes that in all of Iran's stone artifacts, there is a biological degradation crisis caused by lichens.

Sohrabi emphasizes that in all of Iran's stone artifacts, there is a biological degradation crisis caused by lichens; this is a national need, which is why the Iranian Lichen Museum was founded in 2017 to fulfill this national mission in the country.

“We have no shortage of equipment or conducting relevant experiments in the country in studying biological degradation caused by lichens.”

farming, contributing significantly to the province's economic vitality.”

He also emphasized the potential of such festivals to boost the region's recognition and the sale of rainbow trout from Mahnesan county.

Beyond its economic impact, the festival is able to catalyze promoting tourism and showcasing Mahnesan's rich cultural heritage to a broader audience, according to the governor.

The inaugural fish cooking festival in Mahnesan took place on March 3, 2023, while the second edition occurred on May 18, last year in Dandi, attracting government officials, locals, and tourists alike, who had the opportunity to sample an array of dishes featuring rainbow trout, expertly prepared using traditional techniques passed down through generations.

WFP releases March report on Iran

TEHRAN –The World Food Program (WFP) has released a report, expounding on activities in Iran over the month of March.

In March, WFP food assistance reached 33,529 beneficiaries, which included Afghan and Iraqi refugees as well as Iranian teachers.

Of those assisted, 28 percent were women, 29 percent were men, 21 percent were girls, and 22 percent were boys.

Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket which includes fortified wheat flour (12 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person per month), while students and their teachers receive a date bar, and/or fortified biscuits. WFP stopped providing milk-in-school snacks in January 2024 due to funding gaps.

In addition to this in-kind food assistance, WFP provides cash assistance to 7,349 Afghan and Iraqi refugee households each month.

In March, households headed by refugee men received Iranian Rials (IRR) 2 million (US\$ 5.01, according to the UN Operational Rate) per person.

Households headed by refugee women received a slightly higher monthly cash allocation, amounting to IRR 2.5 million (US\$ 6.2) per person due to limited access to working opportunities, leading to higher food insecurity.

To maintain beneficiaries' purchasing power amid deteriorating economic conditions, since June 2023, WFP has increased its cash assistance to vulnerable refugee women and men facing



serious risks over their food security and well-being.

In March, a total of 9,157 students and their teachers received snacks.

Also, WFP provided 2,746 refugee girls with a cash incentive of IRR 500,000 (US\$ 1.2) transferred to their bank accounts.

This is a part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.

By March 2024, WFP Iran helped ease the financial burden associated with the gluten-free dietary needs of 48 refugee celiac patients from WFP's beneficiaries by providing them with an extra cash amount of 7.7 million rials (US\$ 19.3) per person as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.

In March, a total of 21 WFP-supported livelihood activities including welding, tailoring, baking, farming, bag making, and suit making, remained functional and sustained their operations supporting 356 refugees (59

percent women and 41 percent men).

Following WFP's Disability Inclusion Workplan 2023, WFP implemented a pilot initiative in two settlements, Shahid Naseri of Markazi and Mohajerin of Semnan provinces, providing refugees with disabilities a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US\$ 2.5) on top of their regular entitlement. In March, the program successfully reached 102 beneficiaries targeted for assistance.

On April 3, the WFP released its 2023 report on Iran based on the interim Country Strategic Plan (2023-2025).

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been hosting millions of Afghan refugees over the past four decades.

According to the report, there are roughly 4.5 million Afghans currently living in Iran.

Around 33,000 of the most vulnerable documented refugees live in 20 settlements in 13 provinces of Iran.

WFP's response in Iran focuses on addressing the food security

needs of the most vulnerable refugees living in settlements.

WFP provides food, education, and livelihood assistance through a hybrid modality of in-kind food, unconditional cash, and capacity strengthening to refugees.

In 2023, WFP Iran was able to secure more than 75 percent of its funding and address the daily food requirements of around 33,000 vulnerable refugees.

In addition to the unconditional assistance provided to around 33,000 refugees inside settlements, WFP also provided conditional support for students attending primary schools and junior high schools.

Through WFP's school meals program, around 8,620 refugee school children (49 percent girls) at primary schools and junior high schools and their 610 Iranian teachers (30 percent women) received nutritious school snacks throughout the scholastic year.

The snacks included fortified milk and either a date bar or whole grain biscuit for every day of school attendance to support their education and nutrition.

Under the same program, around 2,900 girls at primary schools and junior high schools also received cash incentives to support their education in line with girl's empowerment.

Following the successful establishment of bakeries in some settlements in the past years, WFP supported equipping a bakery in 2023 in one settlement to improve the efficiency of the baking process and the quality of the bread for around 1,400 inhabitants of the settlement.

Almost 350 earthquakes occur in a month

TEHRAN –A total of 349 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the last month of the past Iranian year that ended on March 19, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

The epicenter of 25 earthquakes was in neighboring countries, namely Azerbaijan (5), Afghanistan (13), Turkey (2), and Turkmenistan (5).

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of more than 5 on the Richter scale, which occurred on March 5 with a magnitude of 5.6 in Fonoj, southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Statistically, 126 earthquakes with a magnitude smaller than 2, 179 earthquakes with magnitudes between 2 and 3, 36 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4, and 6 earthquakes with magnitudes between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country.

Northeastern Khorasan Razavi province registered the highest number of earthquakes (54), followed by central Isfahan province (42), and southern Kerman province (32).

Over the first eleven months of the past Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2023-February 19, 2024), 6,610 earthquakes were recorded in the country.

Most of the earthquakes happened respectively in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi, southeastern Kerman, northwestern West Azarbaijan, and eastern South Khorasan provinces, ISNA reported.

Statistically, 2,142 earthquakes were less than 2 on the Richter scale, 3,506 were between 2 and 3, 760 were between 3 and 4, 175 were between 4 and 5, 22 were between 5 and 6, and 5 were between 6 and 7.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran but more than 6% of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Iran has entered a decade of earthquakes since the [Iranian calendar] year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), as the Iranian plateau is shrinking by 30 millimeters per year, Mehdi Zare, professor of engineering seismology at the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIIES), has said.

The Strait of Hormuz region in the south of Iran has the highest seismic activity in the region and its formation is related to the continuation of the convergent movement between the Arabian plate and the central continental plate of Iran.

Tehran is also one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslides, fire following an earthquake, etc.

On the other hand, Tehran has a nighttime population of over 8,300,000 with a mixture of old non-resistant structures as well as modern high-rise buildings that affect the vulnerability of this city.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iranian zoos to be monitored online

The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

“Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible,” IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

باغ وحش های کشور آنلاین پایش می شوند

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: پایش آنلاین باغ وحش های کشور جزو برنامه های سازمان است و در حال تهیه زیر ساخت برای اجرای آن هستیم. علی تیموری روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا افزود: باغ وحش هایی که جدید احداث می شوند باید حتما سیستم پایش آنلاین داشته باشند، مجموعه های قدیمی نیز باید هر چه سریعتر این سیستم را راه اندازی کنند.

وی اظهار داشت: باید تمام ادارات کل استان ها آدرس سیستم آنلاین باغ وحش ها را دریافت کنند تا ورود و خروج گونه ها از باغ وحش، ورود گونه های جدید، تلفات و دلایل آن را ثبت و به صورت آنلاین در جریان قرار گیرند.

تیموری گفت: زیر ساخت های این کار تا حدودی آغاز شده و دو مجموعه کار زیر ساخت را شروع کرده اند و بقیه باغ وحش ها هم به مرور انجام خواهند داد.

SOCIETY

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National cancer screening campaign on the agenda

TEHRAN –A national campaign for early diagnosis and prevention of cancers will be launched free of charge in the near future, Health Minister Bahrām Einollahi has announced.

Early detection helps treat many cases of cancers and reduce the number of patients who are diagnosed at a late stage, IRIB quoted Einollahi as saying.

The health ministry is also planning to open free advanced medical centers for cancer patients, he added.

The campaign will kick off as soon as screening children for obesity and short stature mandatory ends.

Those suspected of cancer will be referred to medical centers to be screened and treated.

Cancers are the leading cause of premature mortality in the country, according to the health ministry.

Cancers account for more than 55 thousand deaths annually. Some 34 thousand deaths out of 122 thousand premature deaths (under 70 years of age) and 11 thousand deaths out of 85 thousand very premature deaths (under 50 years of age) are caused by various cancers.

The latest national cancer census shows that the number of new cancer cases in Iran is expected to increase to 160,000 by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), indicating an increase of 43 percent.

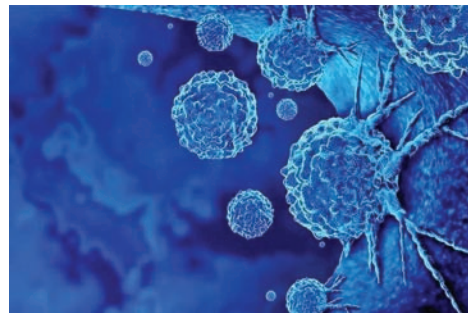
The first 10 most common cancers in Iran are breast, prostate, colon, stomach, lung, bladder, thyroid, uterus, brain, and spine cancers.

The most common cancers of Iranian women include breast, colon, thyroid, stomach, uterine, leukemia, ovary, brain and spine, lungs and esophagus.

Around 250,000 Iranians are now living with cancer. Half of cancers can be almost treated and the rest can be avoided.

Recent achievements

On January 20, the Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS) announced the develop-



ment of a system based on artificial intelligence (AI) that can detect breast cancer with 94 percent accuracy, IRNA reported.

In Iran, breast cancer is the second-leading cause of death in women as around 30 percent of patients die each year, nearly as much as the world average.

Earlier detection of cancer increases the chance of successful treatment and survival.

Also, an Iranian knowledge-based company announced readiness to meet the needs of regional countries as well as North Africa for the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.

HPV is known to cause cervical cancer in women.

The product has been manufactured at a much lower price, 75 percent cheaper, compared to foreign samples.

Producing the HPV vaccine needs one of the most complicated technologies in the world, and Iran has been able to produce the vaccine domestically.

Once the vaccine proved its safety and effectiveness in increasing the antibody titer, it obtained the Food and Drug Organization's approval to enter the market in 2020.

In September 2023, an Iranian knowledge-based company succeeded in producing 'ibrutinib' which is used to treat various blood cancers, making the country the third producer of the medication in the world.

Now Iran, India, and China are the only three countries in the world that have the high-tech knowledge to produce ibrutinib and necessary raw material, IRNA reported.

Tehran puts forward proposals on enhancing SCO ties

From page 1 ► Sharing infrastructure and laboratory equipment among members; and awarding scholarships, financial aid, and educational grants aligned with the interests of the SCO were among the other suggestions made by Iran.

Rezai-Far also suggested the sharing of research experiences and technological development under political and economic restrictions.

He went on to announce Iran's willingness to establish a professional training center within the framework of the SCO with the aim of promoting digital education.

Other proposed plans included supporting Persian language chairs in universities of the SCO member states and providing annual advanced training courses for Persian language professors in these universities.

The formation of a working group on advanced education to be led by the deputy ministers of science and higher education of the SCO member states was also suggested. Iran announced readiness to host the working group meetings.

“We strongly believe that knowledge generation will greatly improve people's social welfare. Hence, scientists should not be limited to certain geographical borders, they should serve all humanity,” Rezaei-Far said.

Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology believes that removing borders for scholars and scientists will significantly decrease the level of tension in the region, he further noted.

Highlighting that countries are obliged to expand the free flow of knowledge regardless of territories and political borders, Rezaei-Far said let's make the idea of universal access to science and technology for all races, nationalities, religions, economies, and languages come true.



8th SCO meeting

The meeting was attended by heads of specialized agencies of the SCO member states including Iran, India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus, IRNA reported.

Special attention was paid to the functioning of the key educational project on the organization's platform – the University of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (network university).

At the meeting, the heads of delegations presented national priorities in ensuring quality and accessible education and discussed the development of cooperation in this area.

Iran participated in the meeting as a full member for the first time after 20 years of being an observer country.

Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, represented Iran in person, while Omid Rezaei-Far participated virtually, delivering a speech via a video conference.

During the meeting, Jalali stressed that “Iran, as a full member, is looking for constructive interaction and comprehensive cooperation with SCO departments.”

Saying that education is the cornerstone of national development, he highlighted the importance of boosting educational ties.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do not feel ashamed if the amount of charity is small because to refuse the needy is an act of greater shame.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:03 Evening: 19:02 Dawn: 3:51 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:22 (tomorrow)

Ronda Armitage’s children’s puppet show on stage at Kanoon

TEHRAN-A children's puppet show titled “No, No, No Cookies” is on stage at the Boustan Hall of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (known as Kanoon) in Tehran.

Written by Elmira Parsa and directed by Pouya Sheshpari, it is based on the children’s book “A Very Strange Creature” by Ronda Armitage, IRNA reported.

The story is about Monkey who finds a strange creature in the jungle. Puzzled, he calls the other animals to help. It doesn’t have a tail for swinging, a trunk for washing, a long neck for reaching the high trees or even webbed feet for swimming. Whatever could it be?

Armitage, 81, is a children’s writer born in Kaikoura, New Zealand. She worked as a teacher and is a trained counsellor, but is best known for her many children’s books, including the “Lighthouse Keeper” series.

She moved to England in 1974 with her husband and two children. Her husband David

Armitage has illustrated many of her books.

She has written more than 30 fiction and non-fiction books for children in over 40 years. Armitage’s first book (and the first in the “Lighthouse Keeper” series), “The Lighthouse Keeper’s Lunch” won the 1978 Esther Glen Award from the Library and Information Association of New Zealand. The title was also named in the booklist for Fifty Favorite Books From The Last Fifty Years by The Federation of Children’s Book Groups. In 2013, she won the Coventry Inspiration Book Award for “A Very Strange Creature”.

The play will remain on stage until May 20.

Book on eight realist novelists published in Persian

TEHRAN-The book “The Realists: Portraits of Eight Novelists” written by C. P. Snow has been released in the book market across the country.

Translated by Akram Rezaei, the book has been published in 383 pages by Now Publication, Mehr reported.

In the book, originally published in 1978, Snow assesses the influences of personality and experiences on their choice of subjects and literary style of Stendhal, Honoré de Balzac, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Benito Pérez Galdós, Henry James and Marcel Proust. Snow makes a robust defense of the realistic novel in the book.

The realistic novel was quite different than what has been seen with earlier literature. The

Cartoon of Day



U.S. Veto

Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

“Godzilla Minus One” and “Oppenheimer”: narrating the atomic bombing from two lenses

From Page 1 ▶ In 1954, less than 10 years after this crime, Japanese filmmaker Ishiro Honda and special effects designer Eiji Tsuburaya dreamed up a giant dinosaur-like creature that came from the depths of the ocean, mutated by nuclear radiation, a “kaiju” named Godzilla.

It was at that time that “Godzilla” entered the field of cinema and literature as a metaphor and symbol of these two terrible bombs.

How Japanese survivors felt

Some 70 years later, Toho’s 33rd Godzilla film, “Godzilla Minus One”, written and directed by Takashi Yamazaki, entered the 2024 Oscars alongside a biopic about the father of the atomic bomb; “Oppenheimer” written and directed by Christopher Nolan.

In an interview with Tehran Times, William Tsutsui, Japanese author of “Godzilla on My Mind: Fifty Years of the King of Monsters,” shared his thoughts on the significance of Godzilla in relation to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He emphasized that such films present a unique opportunity for audiences worldwide to revisit and contemplate the devastating impact of nuclear weapons, as well as our ongoing concerns about a potential nuclear apocalypse.

Set in the immediate post-war period of 1945, “Godzilla Minus One” goes beyond the war’s monstrous nuclear fallout and considers its devastating human emotional toll.

Yamazaki once said in an interview with The Verge that he wanted “audiences to gain an understanding of how Japanese survivors felt after WWII.”

The film follows kamikaze pilot, Koichi who fails to follow through on a suicide mission yet, while returning from the battlefield, manages to miraculously survive the monster. But after returning home, he finds that his parents and neighbors are dead. While Godzilla is still wreaking havoc among civilians, Koichi struggles with his guilt and tries to save himself from this feeling by confronting the monster.

Black and white, like the ancestors

“Godzilla Minus One” is a film that, according to critics, was able to return the franchise to its original Japanese roots.

“‘Godzilla Minus One’ is a fascinating film that reframes the origin story from ‘Gojira’ (1954) in fresh and creative ways,” said Tsutsui about this similarity.

He explained that in the movie, the monster is (once again) created from U.S. nuclear testing at Bikini Atoll and attacks Tokyo in ways that clearly echo Godzilla’s rampages in the first Toho film, including the famous destruction of the Ginza.

The author believed that the fact that “Godzilla Minus One” was released not just in color but also in a black-and-white version seems like a further acknowledgement of the original 1954 movie.

“Perhaps most importantly,

‘Godzilla Minus One’ hinges on human drama and the Japanese struggle to find redemption and closure for defeat in World War II, just as the pioneering film ‘Gojira’ did almost 70 years earlier,” Tsutsui added.

Yamazaki’s film took home the prize for best visual effects, the first Academy Award in the franchise’s 70-year history.

“Oppenheimer” bears all the blame

Tsutsui believed that both “Godzilla Minus One” and “Oppenheimer” can be important in helping us understand what happened in 1945 and what legacies we still are experiencing today from the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

However, in his opinion, the two films did not move equally in the direction of expressing a warning about nuclear war.

“Whereas ‘Godzilla Minus One’ is a powerful reminder of the American role in the birth of nuclear warfare and nuclear fear, ‘Oppenheimer’ seems to focus responsibility for the horror of nuclear weapons squarely on one man, thus absolving the American people of culpability in the atomic attacks on Japan.”

Nolan’s drama, which picked up 13 Oscar nominations, received serious criticism. He does not depict the consequences of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in any way and does not show the Japanese victims. In fact, in one scene, when Oppenheimer, played by Cillian Murphy, is giving a speech, he visualizes the members of his predominantly white audience as victims of the bomb.

That was intentional, Nolan once said, as he wanted to document Oppenheimer’s “experience subjectively.” The director said he chose not to illustrate the aftermath of the bombings or the victims because “to depart from Oppenheimer’s experience would betray the terms of the storytelling.”

Critics have pointed out that while Nolan intended to depict Oppenheimer’s perspective in his film, the omission of the actual destruction caused by atomic bombs, particularly the impact on Japanese civilians, aligns the narrative with historical propaganda and potentially glorifies

the existence of nuclear weapons.

This is the factor that distanced “Oppenheimer” from real historical sources and caused critics to not consider a white director to be the right person to narrate the suffering of Japanese civilians.

A metaphor for painful memories

Tsutsui mentioned how Godzilla was created and told the Tehran Times that after World War II, the American military occupiers of Japan (who administered the defeated nation from 1945 to 1952) systematically censored public discussion of the atomic bombings in the Japanese media.

“The goal was to prevent public backlash against American use of such devastating weapons, which might undermine American authority in Japan.”

He explained that as a result, discussion of Hiroshima and Nagasaki became a taboo subject in Japan following the war. Although a few films took on issues related to the bombs (and their survivors), “Gojira” (1954) was the first to address the traumas of 1945 in such a direct and moving manner.

The author has previously stated that Godzilla’s heavily furrowed skin or scales were imagined to resemble the keloid scars of survivors of the two atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. David Kalat also mentions the same issue in an essay for “Turner Classic Movies.”

“As such, the Godzilla franchise became an important, cathartic means for Japanese audiences to confront their painful memories and ongoing anxieties,” Tsutsui said.

He highlighted that over time, more open discussion of the atomic bombs and their legacies has become more accepted and widespread in Japan, but Godzilla remains an important symbol of how the Japanese people dealt collectively with the horrors of World War II.

White Americans are white-washing

The author noted that at the core of the Godzilla films made by Toho in Japan (30 live-action pictures from 1954 to 2023) has been a simple and powerful origin story: the creature

was a surviving dinosaur that was rendered monstrous by American hydrogen bomb testing in the South Pacific.

“Although the force of the series’ anti-nuclear and pacifist message has been diluted over the decades, the films from Japan stay true to this basic premise that Godzilla is a creation of the nuclear age with important lessons for the contemporary world.”

Tsutsui pointed out the fact that the American Godzilla films (now five made by TriStar and Legendary Pictures between 1998 and 2024) have largely been big-budget Hollywood special-effects movies, lacking in a consistent and meaningful political message.

“Strikingly, the American films have sought to deflect responsibility for the creation of the monster away from the United States: the 1998 Godzilla, for instance, blames French nuclear testing in Polynesia, while the recent MonsterVerse films from Legendary suggest that giant monsters like Godzilla were naturally occurring within a vast ‘hollow Earth,’ he added.

Tsutsui mentioned that the American desire to whitewash the pointed political messages of “Gojira” was particularly evident when the film was first brought to the United States.

Atomic bomb for salvation or slaughter?

“American distributors edited out about 20 minutes of the original Japanese movie, removing all references to U.S. nuclear testing and World War II, as well as all its political messages. As a result, the American version of the film, ‘Godzilla, King of the Monsters’ (released in 1956) was rendered into a simple action picture, with an optimistic Hollywood happy ending,” the author said.

He stated that in the Legendary movies, the filmmakers have gone even further to protect the sensibilities of American audiences. “In these films, Godzilla (and other giant monsters) are naturally occurring creatures and the U.S. military tries to control them and protect humanity by using nuclear weapons against them.”

Tsutsui continued, in this light, American nuclear power is rendered benevolent and positive, rather than aggressive and inhumane.

Review of Mehrjui’s works at Moscow International Film Festival

TEHRAN-The 46th Moscow International Film Festival, which is underway in the Russian capital, has dedicated a section to review the works of the late Iranian filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui.

Titled “Dariush Mehrjui: The Poetry of Ordinary Life,” the section includes six films by the auteur, namely “Hamoun,” “Cow,” “Pear Tree,” “Leila,” “Pari,” and “Ghosts.”

Mehrjui has always been a bridge between the cultures, literatures and philosophies of the world, as well as film schools. He directed almost three dozen features, worked as a documentary filmmaker, translated into Farsi philosophical works of Western authors, including neo-Marxists, and modern Iranian writers into English.

According to the festival website, “if you have not watched Mehrjui’s films, you know nothing about the most outstanding phenomenon of Iranian cinema, which remains unsurpassed, according to many Iranian and foreign critics, you know next to nothing about what Iranian cinema was like before the era of realism, you are also unlikely to

know anything about the socialist aspirations of Iranian intellectuals which initiated the anti-imperialist and anti-monarchist movement that led to the Islamic Revolution, and you do not know what happened to them and their worldview afterwards.”

Almost all of Mehrjui’s films are inspired by either Western or Iranian classics, and sometimes they are a mixture of allusions to books from half the world. But even in the adaptations of books by Western authors, one will always discern the author’s Iranian art language and outlook.

Mehrjui’s films are both existential and romantic. There the viewers will find surrealism and impressionistic play with color and light, almost all the best Iranian actors, including the theatrical ones. He is a master of atmosphere and cinematic poetry; the music of his films captivates and puts the viewers into a trance from the first couple of beats. It is always cinema with a message, cinema as a synthesis of almost all arts, cinema for viewers of any culture in the world.

His record includes awards from half of the world festivals: Berlin, Tokyo, Venice, Tehran, Chicago again, San Sebastian, and Nantes among others.

Mehrjui was stabbed to death in October 2023 alongside his wife Vahideh Mohammadifar at their home in Karaj, Alborz Province.

This year’s edition of Moscow International Film Festival started on April 19 and will run until April 26. Other than Mehrjui’s works, four Iranian films and a series will be shown at the event.

“Cold Sigh,” directed by Nahid Azizi Sedigh is Iran’s representative in the Main Competition section. “Gazelle” by Houshang Golmakani is present in the Artcore section. In the Documentary Film Competition section, “Facing the Rook” directed by Sam Kalantari is from Iran. “Taxidermist,” directed by Susan Salamat and Behzad Alavi will compete in the Short Film Competition section. And the crime drama “The Lion Skin” directed by Jamshid Mahmoudi will represent Iran in the serial program of the festival titled “First Series”.