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Leader in meeting with teachers:

U.S. Behavior with Students Proves Complicity with Zionist Crimes in Gaza

▶ Page 3

The end of Zionist hegemony: The loss of battle for public opinion in U.S.

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - The protests at various American universities in solidarity with Palestine demonstrate that the unanimous and bipartisan support that Israeli apartheid and militarism have received from successive U.S. governments and politicians is no longer unanimous among broad sectors of society, particularly among younger people.

According to a survey conducted by the Harvard University Institute of Politics, young people aged 18 to 29 in the United States consider Israel's military operations after October 7 unjustifiable. 44% of young Democrats and 30% of young independents emphasize the injustice and unacceptability of Israel's actions, while only 14% of Democrats and 19% of independents believe Israel's actions are justifiable.

Furthermore, while the majority of young Americans express solidarity with the Palestinian people, only 18% of young people find the Biden administration's performance regarding the Gaza conflict satisfactory. ▶ Page 5

Iranian academics, students express solidarity with American, European peers

TEHRAN - Thousands of Iranian professors and students penned a letter to express solidarity with their counterparts currently engaged in protests in American and European universities over the West's support for the Israeli regime in its genocidal war on the Palestinians.

The letter was signed by 2636 Iranian university professors and students.

The full text of the letter is as follows:

In the name of God

From a group of Iranian professors and students to the free students of America and Europe who stood up for the people of Gaza

Salam

As per Muslim custom, we start with Salam, which means wishing for health and peace. We were told that America and Europe are the cradle of freedom, freedom of thought, belief and expression. And you were told that our religion is a religion of violence and is against freedom. This was not how we or you have seen and understood ourselves. This was the image that the media and their rulers had created for us. ▶ Page 2

Carte blanche for 'terror attack'

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - American police have adopted an iron fist policy towards university students who have held peaceful protests on college campuses in solidarity with Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Police carrying riot shields burst into a building at the University of Columbia, Los Angeles, and broke up a pro-Palestinian demonstration.

Protesters had barricaded themselves in Hamilton Hall at UCLA in New York early on Tuesday. They occupied the building after the management said it had begun suspending students who had refused to meet a deadline to disperse on Monday.

Video footage circulating on social media shows individuals aligned with the pro-Zionist, pro-Israel groups attacking the pro-Palestinians who had pitched encampments on the college campus. The attacks came hours after police stormed Hamilton Hall.

Many of the assailants, not affiliated with the university, moved into the campus and clashed with pro-Palestinian protesters near a tent encampment they had pitched. ▶ Page 5

AEOL chief confirms presence of 130 inspectors for Iran oversight

TEHRAN - The Chief of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOL) has stated that more than 130 inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are currently authorized to conduct inspections within the country.

Mohammad Eslami, speaking at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, emphasized that Iran has not imposed any restrictions on the entry of IAEA inspectors and continues to engage with the Agency on safeguard issues.

He highlighted the upcoming visit of IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi to Iran as evidence of ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Iran and the IAEA.

Eslami underscored Iran's commitment to transparency and adherence to established inspection protocols.

On April 17, Eslami highlighted the presence of IAEA's approved inspectors, some stationed within Iran while others conduct mobile inspections.

He addressed assertions made by Rafael Grossi, the head of the IAEA, regarding the ambiguity of Iran's nuclear program.

Eslami differentiated between reports submitted to the Board of Governors or the UN Security Council, highlighting their dual focus on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and safeguards under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). ▶ Page 3

Iran, Africa set up joint agricultural cooperation committee

TEHRAN - Iran and Africa established a joint agricultural cooperation committee during the 2nd Iran-Africa International Summit in Tehran.

The committee was launched with the participation of the representatives of the Water and Soil Deputy Office of Iran's Ministry of Agriculture.

The representatives and managers of various sectors presented Iran's capacities and capabilities given the request of the trade ministers of Niger and Central Africa.

Then, the adviser to Iran's Minister of Agriculture, Fariborz Abbasi, and the project commissioner for the development of modern irrigation systems submitted a comprehensive report regarding the experiences of both public and private sectors in the fields of water and irrigation.

Also, Iran's capabilities in various fields of the sustainable soil management especially soil science studies (pedology) and the provision of the manageable maps, production and export of fertilizers and biological soil modifiers were introduced, according to Mehr news agency. ▶ Page 4

How the UK government covered up the rape of hundreds of English girls to protect the image of liberal diversity

By Mohammad Kazemi

She was a fifteen-year-old English girl whose life had been turned into a living hell by a group of criminals. Her home was being attacked, her family members were being physically assaulted and kidnapped, and on top of all she had been repeatedly raped at the hands of a grooming gang. In a sane world the police and justice system would have come to her help and punished those responsible for her and her family's suffering, but that is not what happened. The British police had a higher priority than saving girls like her from rape. ▶ Page 2



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Iran Expo 2024 wraps up

TEHRAN - The 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also known as Iran Expo 2024, came to an end on Wednesday after starting on April 27. The exhibition attracted participants from 100 countries.

According to Majid Takbiri, the head of the exhibition, the event's size had tripled compared to the previous year, with over 800 companies showcasing their products.

Iran's military power beyond Operation True Promise: commander

TEHRAN - A high-ranking commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has stated that Iran's retaliation against Israel utilized only a fraction of the country's military capabilities.

Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division, provided insights into the recent drone missile operation aimed at the Zionist regime, known as Operation True Promise.

Hajizadeh disclosed that despite the operation's complexity, only 20% of Iran's available military resources were deployed for punitive measures.

He emphasized that while the operation was impactful, it represented just a small portion of Iran's overall military strength. Even with this limited utilization, the operation yielded significant results. ▶ Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

The decline of American hegemony

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

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper dealt with the concern of American military and political officials regarding the strengthening of the alliance between Tehran, Beijing, and Moscow. It wrote: Basically, the beginning of this concern was created by the strengthening of the process of trilateral cooperation between Tehran, Moscow, and Beijing. By joining BRICS, these countries are trying to create new trade routes and move away from areas controlled by the West. The set of cooperation, by supporting the idea of a multipolar world, has put Iran, Russia, and China against a common enemy, the United States, and made it possible for them to achieve their goal of overcoming sanctions and winning wars. The decline of the United States hegemony under the shadow of these three important players in Asia is the beginning of a period in which the United States is no longer able to determine and assign duties to countries in the face of international issues. Now, America is facing a new level of relations that has long looked for a multipolar order and has put the confrontation of Washington's unilateralism on the agenda.

Arman-e-Melli: The new and positive view of the region towards Iran

In an article, Arman-e-Melli investigated the region's new view towards Iran. The paper said: Tehran's actions against Israel had widespread media coverage. But there is always an analysis among the supporters of Israel and the opponents of Tehran in the whole world who are trying to keep alive the danger of Iran's missiles and drones. According to them, after Tehran's recent action, westerners and even neighboring countries will move in the direction of putting more economic pressure on Iran. But the news data shows that the countries of the region have developed a new view towards Iran and after the anti-Israeli movements of Iran, they do not intend to limit their economic relations with Tehran, but they tend to become even closer to Iran. It means that they have increased their desire to increase the level of economic interactions with Iran. Therefore, it can be predicted that a better future awaits Tehran in the shadow of regional interactions.

Ettelaat: Calling the IRGC terrorist will increase tensions

In a note, Ettelaat pointed out the new British statements regarding calling the Islamic

Revolution Guards Corps a terrorist organization and wrote: David Cameron stated in his statements that the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps is fully included in the sanctions list of this country and that identifying it as a terrorist organization is not expedient and the British do not want to intensify tensions with Iran. However, groups affiliated with the Zionist regime try to revive this failed plan from time to time but according to the conditions of the region, it seems unlikely that they will achieve this goal. Cameron also stated that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has played a very important role in dealing with terrorist threats and extremist groups in the Middle East, and the terrorist accusations against the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps are baseless. The discussion of adding the name of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps to the list of British terrorist organizations became the subject of the Western media during the unrest of Azar 1401 (November 2022). This illegal plan made its way to political circles due to the movements of anti-revolution groups and the support of the lobby of the Zionist regime, but it failed. Analysts in England also believe that this action will intensify the tensions between London and Tehran amid the developments in West Asia and complicate any hopes regarding diplomatic efforts to revive the nuclear agreement. Therefore, it seems that England does not want to take such a tense action.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: The strategic victory for the resistance

In a commentary, Vatan-e-Emrooz discussed the anti-Zionist rallies and protests in the world and said: Analysts have understood the fact that this wave of public awareness in the West actually had led to the strengthening of the foundations and views of anti-Westernism among Islamic countries, especially the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the West. Iran is the main supporter of Palestine and the only country that has prevented the Palestinian issue from being forgotten in the world over the past 45 years. It was Iran that established the resistance against the oppression in Palestine and did not let the process of compromise or normalization be forgotten. The occurrence of major protests in Europe and student protests in American universities in defense of Palestine and against the oppression of the Zionist regime is definitely a strategic victory for the resistance.

Iranian academics, students express solidarity with American, European peers



From page 1 ▶ "Gaza", and the blood of its innocent women, men and children, disproved these false myths. Now we see that there is a red line for freedom of expression in the West: you have no right to defend people who are deprived of their basic rights, water, food, security and land, solely because they are Palestinians and they stand against Israel. Israel has crossed all the red lines that every person accepts as a human, but the United States government, along with many Western governments claiming to stand for human rights, does not stop providing financial, military or media support to this regime.

We are witnessing that the voice of your objection to this genocide is being severely silenced. The police enter campuses to suppress you and have the most violent response to your

humanitarian protests. We are very happy that the voice of the oppressed of Gaza have moved beyond the thick walls of censorship and mainstream media lies and reached your truth-seeking consciences.

We, in Iran, have been standing against Israel's crimes and alongside the Palestinian people for years, and now you and we are together and alongside the people of Gaza.

We stand by you and support you in building a bridge of justice and reason and above it, praising the truth and true freedom. We are with you and we will fight oppression, violence and discrimination until the coming of the savior, whom we call "Mahdi".

Cordially yours

A group of Iranian professors and students

Excessive violence against protesters will never work: Iran parliament

TEHRAN- The harsh suppression of pro-Palestine academic rallies in the U.S. and Europe has drawn harsh vitriol from Iranian Parliament members, who noted that using irrational violence against student protestors would not succeed.

Up to 150 members of the legislative body supported American and European college students who are aiding Palestinians in the Israeli military's months-long siege of the Gaza Strip, according to a statement released on Tuesday.

"Today, Gaza is the scene of confrontation between an oppressed, afflicted and resistant nation and a ruthless and usurping entity. In this battle, sympathizing with the oppressed and protesting against the oppressors is the least of human duties," the Iranian lawmakers noted.

The lawmakers also emphasized that the Israeli regime's record of aggression and usurpation spans seven decades and that the bravery and resistance shown by Palestinians in Gaza today is the result of a nation's pent-up anger and pain.

They further stated that academics worldwide, particularly in Western nations, have expressed solidarity with Palestine through a movement that is motivated by justice-seeking, altruism, and humanity, rather than by playing victim and manipulating the facts in the mainstream media.

"Irrational violence against this rights-seeking call will not cure the pain of oppressors," the statement stated, thanking American and European college students for their support of Palestinians in Gaza.

Imprisonment of freedom

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani criticized the arrest of pro-Palestine univer-



sity students in the U.S. in a post on his X social media account on Tuesday.

During his weekly presser on Monday, Kanaani denounced the U.S. police crackdown on students expressing solidarity with the people of Gaza Strip.

He cited the numerous pro-Palestine demonstrations and sit-ins at American universities, pointing out that these events demonstrate the intensity of anti-Zionist sentiments as well as the global public's vigilance regarding the Palestine issue.

The spokesman stated that people who care about justice will not put up with governments endorsing the homicidal war of the Zionist system, and that the U.S. government cannot use strong measures to put an end to protestors.

He expressed alarm over the students' actions and stressed that the Iranian foreign ministry will not tolerate the crackdown.

The spokesman went on to say that in order to meet legitimate public demands, the U.S. officials must allow students to voice their opinions. As a result, the Zionist regime's supporters and other world leaders are expected to give this

crucial issue significant attention.

Numerous campuses in the U.S. and Europe are hosting protests by students against the Israeli assault on Gaza, which has resulted in over 34,000 fatalities since October of last year and is supported by Washington.

The students are demanding that academic institutions distance themselves from any companies supporting the war being waged by the Israeli authorities on the beleaguered Palestinian area.

Hundreds of students have been arrested, suspended, placed on probation, and in some cases, expelled from institutions in the last ten days.

Since October 7, when the Israeli regime launched the assault on the besieged Palestinian enclave, the United States has given the regime unrestricted military, intelligence, and financial backing.

Israel receives \$3.8 billion in military aid from Washington each year, and U.S. President Joe Biden has been a steadfast supporter of the illegal entity even during the Gaza conflict.

On Wednesday, Biden signed an enormous budget measure into law that would provide the occupying

regime an extra \$17 billion.

Additionally, Washington has rejected multiple resolutions from the UN Security Council that demanded an end to the heinous military invasion.

Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations office in Geneva strongly denounced the current suppression of pro-Palestine protests on U.S. college campuses, emphasizing that using force against nonviolent demonstrators will not stop them.

In a post on X on Saturday, the mission said that "we strongly condemn the brutal and violent crackdown on widespread peaceful pro-Palestinian protests at universities in the United States. The U.S. Police brutality and excessive use of force during peaceful assemblies, and targeting students advocating for an end to genocidal war in Gaza is a matter of serious concern."

It went on to add, "Demonstrators are precisely calling for ending the U.S. complicity in ongoing genocide in Gaza in their name. Firing and beating peaceful protesters does not silence them, who are the frontline human rights defenders; it only reaffirms the urgency of the struggle for justice for Palestine."

"Police attacks against university students and professors, the scale of arrests and the conditions of detentions are deeply disturbing and we call for the release of all detained."

The United States is fully manifesting a double standard approach regarding the students who are sympathizing with the grieving Palestinians who have been subjected to death, bombardment, displacement, starvation, etc. for nearly seven months.

How the UK government covered up the rape of hundreds of English girls to protect the image of liberal diversity

She was a fifteen-year-old English girl whose life had been turned into a living hell by a group of criminals. Her home was being attacked, her family members were being physically assaulted and kidnapped, and on top of all she had been repeatedly raped at the hands of a grooming gang. In a sane world the police and justice system would have come to her help and punished those responsible for her and her family's suffering, but that is not what happened. The British police had a higher priority than saving girls

like her from rape. their main priority at the time was preserving the state's ideals of "diversity" and "inclusion", so when they learned that the men responsible for her situation were foreign immigrants, her case was quickly swept under the rug, and her suffering was allowed to continue. This was a fate she shared with hundreds of other young British girls, some as young as 11, in the city of Rotherham, a community of about a hundred thousand people.

For many years these defenseless girls were made victims of the city's vicious grooming gangs, and were subjected to rape, prostitution, and drug trafficking. But the way the British law enforcement dealt with these grooming gangs was just as appalling, for it is now known that for many years the police deliberately allowed the activities of these gangs to continue purely for ideological concerns.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel deterrence power 'diminished,' Lebanese MP says

TEHRAN- A Lebanese Parliament representative emphasized that the deterrence power of the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine has diminished, and Hezbollah will continue its operations against the regime until the end of the war in Gaza.

Hussein Hajj Hassan, the Lebanese Member of Parliament, said that as long as the war in Gaza continues, the Islamic resistance in Lebanon will continue its operations in support of the residents of the region and in response to the attacks of the Zionist regime on civilians.

He added that if Hezbollah's operations in the south were ineffective, we would not see all this commotion, mediation efforts, pressures, and threats.

The Lebanese lawmaker continued that "when we went to Syria to prevent Damascus from being toppled down, some in Lebanon were pleased with the overthrow of the Syrian regime but we expelled the great threat of Daesh and Al-Nusra from Lebanon, while some did not feel the danger posed by terrorists. Currently, we are witnessing a threat from the Zionist regime to Lebanon and we will confront such a horrendous threat."

Addressing those in Lebanon who take a position against the resistance, he averred that "you always have wrong choices and have never been with the resistance. From your perspective, Lebanon should remain weak and dependent on external forces. You want America to be our ally, while America is the fundamental supporter of the Zionist enemy."

Hajj Hassan emphasized that America, England, and Western and Arab countries all tried to prevent Yemeni attacks on Zionist regime ships but failed. This also happened in Iraq and

Syria. After the attack by the regime on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, most countries of the world opposed the attack, even though the attack on the consulate should have been protected under international treaties.

He also pointed out that the deterrence power of the Zionist enemy against Iran and also against the resistance in Lebanon and Gaza has diminished, and the axis of resistance is at war with it. The enemy has been unsuccessful in achieving its goals despite all its military capabilities and technology over the past seven months.

The Lebanese MP highlighted that more importantly, the loss of confidence of the Zionists in the Israeli army is significant, as evidenced by the dismissal of senior generals of this phony regime.

The Israeli airstrike, which took place in Damascus's Mezzeh district on April 01, resulted in the deaths of seven military advisors from the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Iranian officials vowed a decisive response to what they described as a violation of international obligations and conventions.

The assault drew sharp rebukes from governments and foreign ministries, citing violations of international law and diplomatic norms.

Issuing a statement, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the "barbaric" attack on the Iranian consulate openly violated international regulations, especially the 1961 Vienna Convention.

Kanaani also said it was essential that this Israeli act be condemned in the strongest terms by the international community, especially the United Nations, and necessary measures taken in regard to the aggression.

The ministry official went on to say that different "aspects of this horrible attack were under investigation and the aggressive Zionist regime was responsible for all consequences."

The spokesperson for the IRGC said on Monday that 10 nations failed to protect Israel as Iran punished Israel for its air raid on the Iranian consulate in Damascus.

Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif emphasized that despite the backing of 10 countries, Iran's retaliatory operation, dubbed "Operation True Promise", emerged victorious.

On April 13, Iran fired about 300 missiles and drones at Israel for its attack on the consulate which led to the death of seven Iranian military advisors in Syria.

Sharif also highlighted the enduring significance of the Palestine issue, describing the Quds Day rally as the second-largest demonstration in the country.

Sharif underscored the enduring support for Palestine, exemplified by Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, which he stated disrupted the Zionist regime's purported dominance in military and defense operations.

Despite the Zionist regime's advancements in military and security measures, the general noted its failure to achieve stated objectives in Gaza over seven months, despite relentless bombings.

Regarding Iran's military prowess, General Sharif asserted continuous efforts to strengthen the country since the Iran-Iraq War in the late 1980s, under the guidance of the revolutionary leadership.

In conclusion, the general reiterated Iran's victory over the defense systems of prominent countries supporting the Zionist regime during Operation True Promise.

Leader in meeting with teachers:

U.S. behavior with students proves complicity with Zionist crimes in Gaza

TEHRAN- Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has met with a number of teachers and education officials from across the country.



The Leader began his speech by congratulating all teachers on Teacher's Day. He emphasized the importance of educating students, youth, and teenagers about the logic and reasoning behind the policies and actions of the Islamic Republic.

pening in the universities in the US every day. As I read in the news today, several more universities have joined [the protests]. [Also] in Australia and various European countries, nations are concerned about the situation in Gaza."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized the importance of the growing public pressure on the occupying regime. He further stated, "The savage and merciless actions of the rabid Zionist dogs have validated the positions of the Islamic Republic and the Iranian nation.

Regarding the situation in Gaza, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted that, "No matter how hard the Zionists and their American and European supporters try to shift the world's public opinion away from Gaza, they are unable to do so. Just see what is hap-

Iran's stance right to the global community."

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the behavior of the United States and its affiliated entities towards the "peaceful and non-destructive protests" of students against the crimes of Israel as further evidence of the Islamic Republic of Iran's negative outlook toward US government.

On the same note, the Leader underscored that, "This matter has revealed to everyone that the US is complicit in the crimes committed by the Zionists in the massacre of the Gazans, which is an unforgivable sin. They might say something that seems they are showing sympathy at times, but it's all lie. This has proved

the Islamic Republic's stance, negative outlook and lack of trust in the US government."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added, "Palestine must return to its people and after the formation of the Palestinian system of governance, they should be the ones to decide whether to expel the Zionists or allow them to stay."

Ayatollah Khamenei also highlighted the efforts being made to normalize relations between the Zionist regime and the countries in the region. He expressed concern that some may believe the issue will be settled through these actions. However, he stated that even if relations are normalized between the Zionist regime and the surrounding Arab countries, the underlying problem will not be solved.

Elsewhere in his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that active teachers play a key role in shaping the identities of teenagers and the youth. He noted that every word, behavior, stance, and even gesture of a teacher can have a significant impact on the character development of the new generation.

AEOI chief confirms presence of 130 inspectors for Iran oversight

From Page 1 ► Regarding Iran's cooperation with the IAEA, Eslami emphasized the installation of surveillance cameras and continuous monitoring of nuclear activities, ensuring up-to-date information sharing.

Touching upon the JCPOA, Eslami affirmed Iran's compliance with the Strategic Action Plan for lifting sanctions, stressing that nuclear activities remain within its framework.

Eslami outlined Iran's readiness to uphold its obligations in accordance with the Strategic Action Plan if others fulfill theirs.

Addressing concerns about Iran's enrichment activities, Eslami reiterated that high enrichment does not equate to the pursuit of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, Eslami highlighted Grossi's acknowledgment of the positive interactions between



Iran and the IAEA. He expressed hope for future visits by Grossi to further strengthen cooperation and update existing arrangements between both parties.

Reflecting on past agreements between Grossi and the AEOI, Eslami reiterated Iran's commitment to NPT obligations and safeguards.

He emphasized that Iran rejects any nuclear activities hindering cooperation with the IAEA.

Iran urges Kuwait to address Arash gas field dispute amicably

TEHRAN - In a statement published on Wednesday, the spokesperson for Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed Kuwait's repeated claims regarding the Arash gas field, following the Kuwaiti Amir's trip to Egypt.

Kanaani, speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed regret over Kuwait's persistent unilateral claims regarding the Arash gas field. He highlighted Iran's stance on the matter, citing historical rights and past negotiation records.

Kanaani reiterated Iran's commitment to monitoring regional interactions with a principle of good faith. He urged third-party governments to prioritize trust-building measures and enhance relations and cooperation in addressing disputes like the Arash gas field matter.

agreement to jointly develop the Durra field, known as Arash in Iran. Iran promptly objected, deeming it "illegal" and asserting plans for independent development.

The gas field, discovered in 1967 on the eastern maritime border of Kuwait, remains a source of dispute as Iran claims the field extends into its waters. Estimates suggest over 70% of the resources of the disputed gas field lie in waters claimed by Iran. Despite years of diplomatic talks, Iran and Kuwait have not reached an agreement on their disputed maritime border area, which is rich in natural gas.

Nasser Kanaani emphasized Iran's historical rights to the area and invited Kuwait to engage in constructive dialogue for a mutually beneficial agreement.

Iran extended an invitation to Kuwait to engage in discussions aimed at reaching a sustainable agreement grounded in friendly cooperation and shared interests.

Additionally, the Ministry's spokesperson cautioned against the issuance of repetitive statements and unilateral claims, emphasizing that such actions carry no legal weight and hinder progress towards resolution.

"We recommend the authorities of this country to refrain from resorting to fruitless political and media methods regarding the issue of Arash gas field," he noted.

In the backdrop of regional tensions, the offshore gas field in the Persian Gulf has become a long-standing point of contention between Iran and Kuwait, both asserting ownership of this source. Last March, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia signed an

Raisi calls for election participation to fulfill social, Islamic responsibilities

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has underscored the significance of elections as a cornerstone of "religious democracy," urging the Iranian people to actively engage in the upcoming parliamentary run-off election scheduled for May 10.

tions conducive to a robust voter turnout, likening election participation to a civic and religious responsibility wherein individuals select representatives tasked with legislative duties and advancing procedural enhancements.

Additionally, he highlighted the alignment of electoral participation with this year's overarching national objective, as designated by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei: "surge in production through people's participation."

On April 26, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi declared the readiness to proceed with the second phase of parliamentary elections.

Vahidi disclosed that all necessary arrangements have been completed for the upcoming electoral process. He highlighted the extensive preparations undertaken across all 22 constituencies for the second round of the 12th parliamentary elections.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

In his address on Wednesday, President Raisi stressed the dual importance of participating in the electoral process: fulfilling both societal and Islamic obligations.

He emphasized the critical need to foster condi-

Iran's military power beyond Operation True Promise: commander

From Page 1 ► Furthermore, Hajizadeh elaborated on the involvement of the United States, Britain, and France, who supported the Zionist regime during the conflict. He highlighted their extensive military engagement, which included deploying combat ships and aircraft carriers.

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

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.

Despite mounting evidence of Israel's aggression and violation of international law, many nations have either remained conspicuously silent or issued tepid statements, failing to denounce the crimes perpetuated by Israel, whether in Gaza or against Iran.

Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip has resulted in the death of more than 34,000 Palestinians so far, with a majority being women and children.

Esteghlal held by Tractor

TEHRAN - Esteghlal football team were held to a goalless draw by Tractor in the Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) on Wednesday.

In the match held in Tabriz's Yadegar Stadium, the PGPL leaders played out a 0-0 draw with Tractor.

Also, Havadar defeated struggling Sanat Naft 2-1 in Tehran's Pas Stadium.

Sanat Naft are on the verge of relegation from the PGPL.

Shahrdari reach agreement with American Stone

TEHRAN - Shahrdari Gorgan basketball team have reportedly reached an agreement with American Center Diamond Louis Stone.

The 2.08 meters center has most recently played at Prishtina of Kosovo.

Stone, 27, played one season of college basketball for Maryland before being drafted 40th overall in the 2016 NBA draft by the New Orleans Pelicans.

He will join Shahrdari to help the Iranian team against Al Riyadi of Lebanon in the FIBA WASL-West Asia League.

Shahrdari lost to Al Riyadi 95-60 in its first match held in Lebanon last week.

Shahrdari will host the team on Wednesday in Tehran.

Yazd to host Asian Club Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN - Yazd has been chosen to host 24th edition of the Men's Asian Club Volleyball Championship.

The competition will be held in September in the Iranian city.

Iran Super League champion Foolad Sirjan and Shahdab Yazd will represent Iran in the competition.

The Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship, previously the AVC Cup Men's Club Tournament (between 1999 and 2002), is an annual continental club volleyball competition organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC), the sport's continental governing body. The competition was first contested in 1999 in China. It was not held in 2003 and 2020 due to 2002-2004 SARS outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic, respectively.

Iranian radio personality Masoud Oskouei dies

TEHRAN - Masoud Oskouei, a longtime Iranian radio personality, died at the age of 85 on Wednesday.

Oskouei was hospitalized for broken hip and leg in early April and passed away in a hospital in Tehran. He was also suffering from cancer.

Oskouei started his career in 1966 and worked as Radio and TV personality for about six decades.

He will be laid to rest in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery on Thursday.

Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathy to Oskouei's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Hashemimanes elected Iran's Kung Fu president

TEHRAN - Abbas Hashemimanes was elected as president of Iran Kung Fu Federation on Wednesday for a four-year term till 2028.

In the elections held at Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Hashemimanes secured 36 of 48 votes cast.

Mojtaba Shirzadi came second in the election with 12 votes.

He replaced Reza Heydari in the post.

Ghotbi likely to be appointed as Iran assistant

TEHRAN - Iranian-American football coach Afshin Ghotbi is reportedly poised to work as Iran national football team assistant.

Team Melli head coach Amir Ghalenoei had previously shown his interest in working with Ghotbi and the media reports suggest that the 60-year-old coach has reached an agreement with Iran football federation.

Ghotbi currently leads Vancouver FC in the Canadian Premier League.

Iran assistant Hamid Mottahar has been recently named as coach of Tractor football team and Ghotbi will replace him in the National Team.

Iran's men's goalball team to partake at 2024 Paralympics

TEHRAN - Iran's men's goalball team will participate at the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Team Melli have not competed in the Games since 2012 Paralympics.

The Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) had announced that participation in the 2024 Paralympics depends on getting good results in the preparatory tournaments and Mohammadreza Mazloumi, head of Iran's Blind and Partially Blind Sports Federation, said that the Committee has allowed the team to compete in the Games.

Paris 2024 will feature the men's and women's competitions.

The preliminary stage will start on Aug. 29, and the medal games will take place on Sept. 8.

Goalball will be staged at South Paris Arena along with Para table tennis and boccia. The venue is located within Paris Expo, an exhibition and convention centre that welcomes 7.5 million visitors a year.

Jafari among Goalball's Ones to Watch at Paris

TEHRAN - With the countdown to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games well and truly in the final stages, Paralympic.org has introduced goalball athletes to look out for this summer.

Hassan Jafari is among the Ones to Watch athletes in the Games.

Iran secured qualification for Paris 2024 thanks to Jafari's five goals in the 2023 Asia/Pacific Championship final which won them the title.

Paris 2024 will be his first Paralympic appearance since London 2012.

FIFA, AFC congratulate Iran on Asian futsal championship

TEHRAN - The heads of the World Football Federation and the Asian Football Confederation have congratulated Iran's national futsal team on their championship in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup competitions.

On Monday, Gianni Infantino and Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al Khalifah extended their respective felicitations to Team Melli Futsal on their victory a day earlier after the squad beat hosts Thailand to be crowned the games' champions edit.

Led by renowned former Iranian player Vahid Shamsaei, the Iranian team convincingly triumphed in all their matches en route to reaching the final.

The final showdown in Bangkok saw the Iranian side soar past the Thais 4-1.

Earlier on Sunday, Uzbekistan had secured the third place by winning a penalty shootout 3-1 after an exhilarating play-off against Tajikistan that had ended in a 5-5 draw.

The 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup, the 17th edition of the biennial international futsal championship, took place in Thailand from April 17 to 28.

TEDPIX falls nearly 4,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN – Following the downward trend in the current week, TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 3,902 points on Wednesday to stand at 2,264,924.

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).

Iran, Africa set up joint agricultural cooperation committee

From page 1 ▶ Iran also expressed its readiness to participate in the African countries and cooperate in the field of implementation of water and soil projects.

Iran's capital Tehran hosted economy ministers from more than 40 African countries

at the second Iran-Africa International Summit during April 26-29.

The opening ceremony of the event was attended by senior Iranian officials including President Ebrahim Raisi and Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Abbas Aliabadi.

Iran-Turkey trade exceeds \$1.3b in Q1 2024



TEHRAN – The trade exchanges between Iran and Turkey in the first three months of 2024 reached \$1.362 billion, registering a 16 percent decline compared to the same period last year.

According to the latest figures released by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), Iran's trade with the neighboring country stood at \$1.635 billion in January-March 2023.

According to TURKSTAT, Turkey's exports to Iran in the mentioned three months reached \$817 million, recording a 16 percent increase compared to last year's corresponding period.

Turkey exported over \$701 million worth of products to the Islamic Republic in the first three months of 2023.

Turkey's imports from Iran however registered a 41 percent decline and fell from \$934 million in January-March 2023 to \$547 million in the first quarter of 2024.

The trade exchange between Iran and Turkey stood at \$5.490 billion in 2023 with a decrease of 14 percent.

Based on the data previously released by

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

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

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

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

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

Iran's trade balance with Turkey was \$280 million positive in favor of Iran in the past year.

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

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

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

Tehran, Doha urge expanding economic, investment ties

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Abbas Aliabadi, and Assistant Undersecretary for Commerce Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar Saleh bin Majed Al-Khulaifi have stressed broadening economic and investment ties between the two countries.

Aliabadi met and held talks with Al-Khulaifi at the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran, also known as Iran Expo 2024, in Tehran.

Describing the presence of Qatar in Iran Expo 2024 as an opportunity to learn more about Iran's export capabilities, Aliabadi highlighted Iran's significant progress in technical and engineering services, which could potentially aid Qatar with repairing turbines and complex machinery.

Additionally, Aliabadi expressed Iran's willingness to cooperate with Qatar in various industrial, agricultural, and industrial fields.

Meanwhile, Al-Khulaifi pointed to Iran and Qatar's joint Economic Committee meeting, noting that the relevant articles in the Iran-Qatar Committee will be reviewed and the result will then be announced to the Iranian side by Qatar's ambassador to Iran.

Iran and Qatar signed a comprehensive cooperation document at the end of the ninth Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on December 11, 2023.

The document was signed by Iran's Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Abdullah Al Thani as the heads of the Joint Economic Committee.

In the mentioned document, cooperation in the fields of energy (water and wastewater, electricity, oil, gas, and environment), exchanging experiences and technical knowledge, holding events, including exhibitions, and specialized training courses in the fields of water and water technologies, and renewable energies were emphasized.

Exchanging private sector delegations active in the fields of consulting, contracting, and industries, production of equipment related to the electricity industry, and the readiness of the environmental organizations of the two countries to expand relations have also been covered in the document.

Iran, UAE ink comprehensive economic co-op MOU

TEHRAN – Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for expanding economic cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' 3rd Joint Economic Committee meeting.

The MOU was signed by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash and UAE's Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, who co-chaired the joint meeting.

During the mentioned committee meeting, the two sides stressed the need for further expansion of economic cooperation between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

Speaking at the end of the meeting, Bazrpash said: "We have held the joint commission between the two countries after 10 years, which is an opportunity to develop the commercial and economic relations between the two countries."

"The UAE, as Iran's second biggest



Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash (L) and UAE's Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri exchange signed MOU documents.

trade partner, has great strategic importance for us," the minister said.

Referring to the location of Iran and the UAE in the International North-South Transit Corridor (IN-STC), Bazarpash said: "Access to the markets of the north and south can create an opportunity for the two countries to cooperate."

In the end, the minister emphasized solving the banking and monetary problems between the two countries to facilitate bilateral trade relations.

Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri for his part underlined the importance of the meeting, saying: "Holding today's meeting shows the develop-

ment and expansion of economic relations between the two countries. After China, the UAE has the largest amount of trade relations with Iran. The trade value of the two countries has reached 27 billion dollars and many Iranian companies are established in the UAE."

"Creating new opportunities for transportation and banking cooperation is one of the achievements of this commission," the official said.

Referring to the performance of the UAE government in the field of investment, the official said: "The approval of the law on the formation of foreign companies and the government's support for companies that operate in the field of new energies has created a good opportunity for business with the UAE."

The 3rd Iran-UAE Joint Economic Commission was held in Abu Dhabi from April 30 until May 1,

What should Iran, China do to promote social-cultural ties?

Interview: By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING – Although Iran and China have a strong and prominent political and economic relation, the people of the two countries do not know much about each other; so, what should the Iranian and Chinese governments do to elevate such bilateral knowledge?

To receive some perspectives and answers to this question, the Tehran Times conducted an interview with Shen Shiwei, China Global Television Network (CGTN) reporter, and research fellow on international relations and the BRI cooperation, which comes as follows.

Although Iran-China trade and political relation is outstanding, people of the two nations do not know about each other as much as it should be. What's your opinion in this regard, and what should be done to improve relations between the two countries in this field?

Actually, China and Iran are old friends and good partners, and the two countries have known each other since ancient times. For centuries, the land and maritime Silk Roads have closely connected the two ancient civilizations, and they have lived in harmony. The Silk Road strengthened exchanges between the two sides in the fields of trade, art and culture.

In modern times, language, culture and education play an important role in mutual understanding between the people of the two countries, especially the younger generation. China is one of the earlier countries to launch Persian language teaching and education. At present, more than a dozen universities in China have established Persian language and culture education centers and Iranian research centers. An increasing number of Iranian students are studying Chinese at local Confucius Institutes or studying for degrees in China. According to the Iranian Embassy in China, there are currently more than 3,000 Iranian students studying in China.

As China becomes the world's second largest economy, more and more Chinese companies are undertaking local landmark projects in Iran, and the image of China and Chinese people in Iran is gradually changing. There is an old Chinese saying that says seeing is believing. Through more on-site visits, especially exchanges between the younger generations, the people of the two countries will have a more vivid understanding of each other.

What measures should be taken in terms of expanding tourism ties between Iran and China, for example visa-free visits, etc?

Implementing a visa-free policy and increasing direct flights are undoubtedly good ideas to

promote visits between China and Iran. Taking the Persian Gulf countries and Caucasus countries as examples, a visa free policy, either unilateral or bilateral, together with increasing economic cooperation and direct flights with China have boosted more travel, both for business and tourism purposes. China and Iran have already established a visa-free policy for diplomatic and public affairs passports, and Iran has unilaterally granted visa exemption to Chinese tourists, a move that has already attracted Chinese visitors.

In terms of direct flights, in addition to Mahan Air's direct flights to China's major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Urumqi, Air China and China Southern Airlines will soon add direct flights to Tehran.

Social media, especially short videos, has a great influence on the younger generation's understanding of each other. I'm very glad to see that the Iranian Tourism Bureau (original has Iranian travel authority) and airlines have begun to invite Chinese influencers to have a real travel experience in Iran and share travel tips with social media users. I hope the Iranian Tourism Bureau and others can further expand their promotional plan and that Chinese tourism authorities and agencies will also try this kind of initiative.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran, Uzbekistan discuss ways to broaden economic ties

TEHRAN – The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Uzbekistan met with the Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade of Uzbekistan to discuss expanding economic, trade, and industrial ties.

Mohammad-Ali Eskandari met and held talks with Laziz Kudratov on Tuesday.

Referring to the recent mutual visits of economic officials from both countries and the resulting agreements, Eskandari emphasized

the need to facilitate the process of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Kudratov expressed satisfaction with the increased trade relations between the two countries in recent years and the

goals set by the two countries' presidents to raise the volume of bilateral trade to one billion dollars.

Additionally, he called for advocating plans that would accelerate the implementation process.

Tehran says economic talks with Saudi Arabia constructive

TEHRAN – Iran's Economy Minister Ehsan Khandouzi said he has held favorable talks with his Saudi Arabian counterpart during his visit to the Arab country.

In a post on his social media, Khandouzi said he had constructive talks with the Minister of Economy and Planning of Saudi Arabia Faisal F. Alibrahim.

"Faisal F. Alibrahim agreed with Iran's all five proposals," the Iranian minister underlined.

He said that the Saudi minister also emphasized the need for developing a roadmap for economic cooperation in the public-private sector.

An Iranian delegation headed by Khandouzi vis-

ited Riyadh to participate in an annual Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) meeting.

Speaking at his weekly press conference on Monday morning, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kan'ani said that consultations and dialogues are underway between Tehran and Riyadh at the political and economic levels.

"We have had economic issues on the agenda since the beginning of the resumption of negotiations between the two sides, and both sides are unanimous on this matter, and the talks are ongoing," the senior Iranian diplomat said.

Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a China-brokered deal in March 2023 to resume their diplomatic re-



lations after they cut them in 2016.

The two sides reopened their respective embassies a few months later.

3 MOUs in agricultural sector inked at Iran Expo 2024

TEHRAN – On the first day of the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran dubbed "Iran Expo 2024", three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were signed between Iran's Fars province and Mongolia and Russia.

Coordinating Manager of Fars Province Agricultural Organization Masoumeh Moayyedi announced this in her visit to the

pavilion of Fars province at Iran Expo 2024 and noted that two MOUs were inked with Mongolia in the field of extraterritorial cultivation of the agricultural products and also cooperation in the field of farming and red meat industry.

The other MOU was signed with Russia in the field of packaging and exporting fresh fruits and vegetables, she stated.

She pointed to the participation of more than 2,000 foreign traders and merchants from about 100 countries in this international event and noted that the Agricultural Organization of Fars province will unveil two mechanized systems in the field of the development of the production and value chain of the pharmaceutical plants.

An MOU was also signed with

China on the first day of the exhibition for the development of oil and gas industry.

The 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran was launched at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on April 27 and will run through May 1, 2024.

Carte blanche for 'terror attack'

Pro-Israeli vigilante mob beats pro-Palestine protesters at UCLA as US police refuse to intervene

From page 1 ▶ Police did not intervene to prevent the vigilantes from beating students who demand their universities stop doing business with Israel or companies that support the regime's brutal onslaught on Gaza.

A couple of hours after the scuffles, police entered Columbia's campus and cleared the encampment.

New York police arrested nearly 300 people at Columbia University on Tuesday.

Pro-Palestinian protesters at UCLA accused pro-Israelis of carrying out a terror attack.

"The life-threatening assault we face tonight is nothing less than a horrifying, despicable act of terror," the UC Divest at UCLA group said in a statement reported by the college paper, Daily Bruin.

They criticized college leaders for not protecting them.

"Law enforcement simply stood at the edge of the lawn and refused to budge as we screamed for their help," it said.

The police crackdown against pro-Palestinians at the university happened on the 56th anniversary of a similar move to quash an occupation of Hamilton Hall by students protesting racism and the Vietnam War.

Police also resorted to violence at other American universities to disperse peaceful pro-Palestinian protesters.

Police in riot gear closed in on an encampment at Northern



Arizona University in Flagstaff late Tuesday. Police officers arrested about 20 people for what they called trespassing. University officials had earlier threatened that students would face criminal charges if they did not disperse.

Columbia University has been the epicenter of a heated standoff between pro-Palestinian demonstrators and police for two weeks.

The protests at Columbia University began on April 18. More than 100 students were arrested after the university called in the police to empty an encampment of demonstrators. Since then, the pro-Palestinian college campus protests have snowballed across the country.

US and Israeli officials have accused the university protests of antisemitic.

However, critics say these allegations are meant to silence

opposition.

Organizers of the rallies, some of whom are Jewish, say it is a peaceful movement aimed at defending Palestinian rights and opposing Israel's war on Gaza.

According to an NBC News tally, US police have arrested more than 1,200 pro-Palestinian protesters in the wake of college campus demonstrations over the past two weeks.

Growing pro-Palestinian protests have raised deep concerns in the administration of President Joe Biden.

Polls indicate that the majority of young Americans are unhappy with Biden's handling of the Gaza war as pro-Palestinian demonstrators accuse him of condoning the Israeli genocide. The expansion of college campus protests has added insult to injury.

Young voters can play a key role in the re-election of Biden in the November presidential vote.

Hence, the Biden administration is trying to appease rising domestic opposition to his policy toward Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

The trip of Secretary of State Antony Blinken to West Asia to help broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is in line with Washington's efforts to contain pro-Palestinian protests in the country.

According to NBC News, senior White House officials are increasingly concerned about the expansion of college campus protests and view a potential ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas as perhaps the only development that could quell some of the political blowback over Biden's handling of the conflict.

The US news outlet also says Biden is worried about the spread of pro-Palestinian protests to his and other top administration officials' events in the following months.

But it is clear clampdowns will fail to help Washington bring a halt to pro-Palestinian protests.

The Biden administration is suffering from the consequences of supporting Israel's war on Gaza.

Unless the Biden administration exerts pressure on Israel to end its genocidal war on Gaza, Washington will have to pay a heavier price for its failed policy toward the conflict.

U.S. threatens ICC over Israeli arrest warrants

Russia accuses Washington of hypocrisy

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- In another sign America allowing Israel to violate international law, Washington stands accused of threatening a UN court from issuing arrest warrants against the Israeli leaders.

Senior Republican officials say President Joe Biden's administration backs their stance toward the International Criminal Court (ICC) if the body goes ahead with its plan to issue arrest warrants against Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Speaking to reporters, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson says there is support among Democrats in the White House for the ICC to withdraw its position amid reports the UN Court is set to issue arrest warrants for Netanyahu as well as other high-ranking officials including War Minister Yoav Gallant and military chief of staff Herzi Halevi for war crimes.

In a direct threat to the ICC, Johnson underlined that "they'd better not do that ... I think that it would make us as a nation respond in kind to the ICC".

"I think a group of senators and House members who would move expeditiously and we might just turn the table on the ICC. They better be careful," the Republican leader warned.

According to Johnson, who spoke to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday, the Biden administration totally agrees.

Blinken "confirmed that the position of the White House is our position ... they are calling for the ICC to stand down," Johnson told reporters.

According to Axios, Congress has informed the ICC that any arrest warrants against Israeli leaders will be met with U.S. retaliation with legislation to that effect already in the works.

In a statement, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Michael McCaul, echoed those warnings from his party leadership.

The Israeli occupation regime does not recognize the authority of the ICC, but issuing warrants would mean that the 124 countries that have signed up to the body, including some of Tel Aviv's closest Western allies, would be obliged to arrest Israeli officials if they enter their territory.

Many have called out the U.S. hypocrisy in its response to war crimes investigations against the Israelis, whose war on Gaza has so far led to the murder of around 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children. Using starvation as a weapon of war in

Gaza is another Israeli war crime that reports indicate the ICC is pursuing the arrest warrants for.

Last year, Biden welcomed an ICC decision to issue an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying it was justified over what the U.S. president said was Russia's "invasion of Ukraine".

Russia says the warrant against Putin is a meaningless campaign by the West to damage Russia's reputation and denies war crimes during its military actions against the U.S. and NATO-backed Ukrainian army.

"This is evidence of the stratification of consciousness," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a post on social media in which she hinted that Israel is a satellite of the United States.

"On the one hand, the ICC judges are under US sanctions; on the other hand, Washington fully supported, if not stimulated, the issuance of ICC warrants against the Russian leadership; on the third, the American political system does not recognize the legitimacy of this structure in relation to itself and its satellites," Zakharova pointed out.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

The end of Zionist hegemony: The loss of battle for public opinion in U.S.

From page 1 ▶ The loss of support for the pro-Zionist discourse is having consequences for students. University authorities are conducting an asymmetrical legal campaign against students demanding an end to their universities' complicity with the Palestinian genocide. Since October, universities have suspended student groups, restricted academic freedom of expression, and called the police to suppress peaceful protesters at numerous universities across the country.

At the same time, pro-Zionism has used the term "antisemitic" to try to discredit the protests. In this regard, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a recent public appearance, described the protests at American universities as "horrible" and claimed that "antisemitic crowds have taken control of the major universities." Meanwhile, Mark Dubowitz, director of the pro-Zionist lobby Foundation for Defense of Democracies, linked the protesters to Hamas and insinuated that they were acting as "Iranian proxies."

The strategy of accusing those who oppose Zionism of antisemitism is not new. As

early as 1880, leaders of the Zionist movement in Palestine labeled Palestinians who fought against the colonization of their land as antisemites. They argued that Palestinian opposition to Zionism was not based on the colonization of Palestine by the movement or the expropriation of land from Palestinian peasants, but rather on "antisemitism." In 1920, Zionist settlers in Palestine accused Palestinians resisting colonization of carrying out an antisemitic "pogrom" against their Jewish colonizers.

As Joseph Massad, a professor of Arab history, points out, at that time the Zionists insisted that their ideology was the true and only expression of Judaism, and that the two could not be separated. Subsequently, the Zionists adopted this appropriation as a historical fact rather than recognizing it as an innovation.

The Zionists insist that the transformation of Palestine into "Zion" is something that all Jews share and have shared throughout the centuries. When the United Nations General Assembly declared in 1975 that "Zionism is racism" and compared it to other white European

settler colonialism in Rhodesia, Namibia, and South Africa, the Zionists and their allies argued the opposite was true: the UN resolution and all forms of anti-Zionism are antisemitic.

In recent years, with the growing success of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, Israeli and pro-Israeli voices have expressed significant concern about the alleged "antisemitic" motives behind all movements opposing Israeli settler colonialism, state racism, and military occupation.

On the other hand, it's also important to mention the images of police actions at various universities, reflecting what is known as the militarization of everyday life. In the American context, police militarization refers to the process by which law enforcement agencies have increased their arsenal of weapons and equipment, adopting tactics and practices that employ military-style responses even for routine policing activities.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Brits demand arms ban on Israel

More protests have been held outside factories across the UK by campaigners against military arms being sent to Israel.



Organizers said more than 1,000 workers and trade unionists demonstrated outside BAE Systems sites, as well as the London offices of the Business and Trade department, the Independent reported.

They said the aim was to show solidarity with Palestinian workers.

Members of Workers for a Free Palestine group also protested outside factories in Glasgow, South Wales and Lancashire.

Tania, a trade unionist and organizer for the group who took part in the London protest, said: "Our movement forced the issue of an arms embargo onto the table and polling shows the majority of the British public want to see arms sales to Israel banned, yet the Government and also the Labour Party continue to ignore the will of the people."

"The Government has sought to play down the scale of its arms supplies to Israel, but the reality is UK arms and military support play a vital role in the Israeli war machine, and evidence that three British aid workers were killed by a drone partly produced in the UK shows the extent of British complicity in Israel's genocide."

Turkey to join genocide case against Israel

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Turkey would join in South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"Upon completion of the legal text of our work, we will submit the declaration of official intervention before the ICJ with the objective of implementing this political decision," Fidan said in a joint press conference with Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Ankara.

"Turkey will continue to support the Palestinian people in all circumstances," he added.

The ICJ ordered Israel in January to refrain from any acts that could fall under the Genocide Convention and to ensure its troops commit no genocidal acts against Palestinians after South Africa accused Israel of genocide in Gaza.

In January, President Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey was providing documents for the ongoing case at the ICJ, also known as the World Court.

Hamas insists on Israel's withdrawal from Gaza

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has asked Egyptian and Qatari mediators to provide clarity on the terms of the latest ceasefire proposal being discussed as part of negotiations with Israel, an Egyptian official told the Associated Press.

The official, who has close ties to the talks and spoke on condition of anonymity in order to freely discuss the deal, said Hamas wants clear terms for the unconditional return of displaced people to the north of Gaza and to ensure that the second stage of the deal will include discussing the gradual and complete withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the entire Gaza Strip.

The official said the current deal didn't fully explain who would be allowed to return north and how it would be decided.

The emerging phased deal includes the release of 33 captives held by Hamas in exchange for a halt to the fighting and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

Netanyahu: Israel won't accept deal that ends war in Gaza

Israel's prime minister has told US Secretary of States Antony Blinken he will not accept a deal that includes ending the war on Gaza, Israeli media reported.

According to senior American and Israeli officials, Benjamin Netanyahu said if Hamas insists on ending the war, the deal will not be accepted and Israel will be forced to launch a military offensive in Rafah, Israeli news agency Walla reported.

Blinken met Israeli leaders in his push for a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, saying "the time is now" for an agreement that would free captives and bring a pause in the war.

High school starts encampment protest

High school students in the US have now started encampments protests of their own in solidarity with college students across the country who are protesting the genocide in Gaza.

Students at Iowa City's City High are planning to host a school strike on Friday, according to a post on X.

"Spend the day with us, an open hour, or just a few minutes during the school day to stand in solidarity with students across the country," read a flyer from City High students.

Students added that Friday's action is not a protest against City High school but in solidarity with "those at Columbia University, who are standing up in protest against US involvement of egregious human rights violations occurring everyday in Gaza".

Lone children at risk of deportation to Rwanda

Lone child asylum seekers are at risk of being sent to Rwanda because the UK Home Office has wrongly classified some as adults, the Guardian reported.

The Refugee Council, which works with these children, has warned of the risk after more than a dozen of the children it works with were wrongly issued with notices of intent for Rwanda.

The Home Office has said it will not send lone children to the east African country. However, if officials wrongly classify a child as an adult, they can be sent. According to Refugee Council data, six age-disputed people it has been working with have been detained in adult immigration detention centers.

If a child is disputing their age and the Home Office deems they are an adult they can be sent to Rwanda before the outcome of a social worker age assessment is known.

UN: Gaza filled with more debris and rubble than Ukraine

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) says that the mammoth task of clearing Gaza's debris is made all the more costly and dangerous by the sheer amount of asbestos and unexploded ordnance.

Nearly seven months into the war, UNMAS estimates the amount of debris in the Gaza Strip at 37 million tons in mid-April, or 300 kilograms per square meter, Al Jazeera reported.

"Gaza has more rubble than Ukraine, and to put that in perspective, the Ukrainian front line is 600 miles (nearly 1,000 kilometers) long, and Gaza is 25 miles (40 km) long," said Mungo Birch, head of the UNMAS program in the Palestinian territories.

But the volume of rubble is not the only problem, UNMAS said. "This rubble is likely heavily contaminated with UXO (unexploded ordnance), but its clearance will be further complicated by other hazards in the rubble," Birch told journalists in Geneva.

Lorestan to host 4th intl. troglodytic architecture conference

TEHRAN – Lorestan province is set to host the 4th International Troglodytic Architecture Conference, scheduled to take place in the ancient city of Khorramabad from November 12 to 14.

Themed “Resilience against Relics, Climate Change, and Disasters,” this conference is aimed to serve as a pivotal forum for experts, scholars, and enthusiasts worldwide.

Ata Hassanpour, the chief of tourism in Lorestan province, said on Wednesday that the event will convene a diverse array of domestic and foreign guests and researchers.

“The conference will delve into crucial topics including theoretical concepts and foundations, cultural and intangible heritage, natural settings in vernacular architecture, experiences, and preservation of vernacular architecture,” Hassanpour stated.

He emphasized that the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Lorestan, is organizing this international event.

Researchers, university professors, and enthusiasts passionate about troglodytic architecture are invited to submit abstracts of their papers to the conference’s secretariat by May 19, the official added.



Troglodytic architecture, characterized by structures built into natural caves or carved into cliffs, occupies a significant place in Iran’s rich cultural and architectural heritage. From the ancient troglodytic villages of Kandovan to the majestic rock-cut sanctuaries of Meymand, Iran’s troglodytic sites offer a captivating glimpse into centuries of human ingenuity and adaptation.

Against the backdrop of these remarkable achievements, the 4th International Troglodytic Architecture Conference aims to explore the contemporary challenges and opportunities facing troglodytic structures.

With a keen focus on resilience against relics, climate change, and disasters, the conference endeavors to develop strategies for the preservation and safeguarding of these architectural treasures for future generations.

‘Great enigma’: Amateur archaeologists unearth mysterious Roman object

Amateur archaeologists in England have unearthed one of the largest Roman dodecahedrons ever found, but mystery surrounds what it was actually used for.

The 12-sided object is one of just 33 known to exist in Roman Britain, and one of approximately 130 in the world. It is considered “one of archaeology’s great enigmas,” according to the Norton Disney History and Archaeology Group, an amateur group based in the English region of Lincolnshire where it was found in June.

Measuring about 8 centimeters (3 inches) across, the dodecahedron is hollow and covered with 12 holes of varying sizes.

The 1,700-year-old object will be displayed at the Lincoln Museum from May 4 until early September.

“It’s a real pleasure to have the Norton Disney dodecahedron joining us... just a stone’s throw from where it was found,” Andrea Martin, exhibitions and interpretations manager at the museum, said in a Lincolnshire County Council press release. “To have the opening of the display coincide with the Lincoln Festival of History is a real coup.”

The release describes the dodecahedron as “one of the largest examples” discovered.

However, experts still aren’t sure exactly what the Romans used the dodecahedron for.

“It is completely unique,” said Richard Parker, secretary of the Norton Disney History and Archaeology Group, adding that no similar objects have ever been found. He said that, unlike other dodecahedra, this one is undamaged.

“Ours is absolutely in a fabulous condition. It’s complete, undamaged, and it clearly was consid-



ered of great value by whoever made it and by those that used it,” Parker said. “So there must have been a very important reason for its to be deposited in the ground in the way that it was.”

Parker told CNN there are no descriptions of the dodecahedron in Roman literature, and they have not been depicted pictorially in mosaics. There are also several features that make it difficult to discern what its intended purpose was. All of the dodecahedra are of different sizes, meaning they were not used for measurement, he said. Because it is undamaged with no signs of wear, it is unlikely to have been a tool, Parker added.

Parker’s group does have one working theory, however.

“Most likely they were some form of religious or ritual object,” he said. “The Romans were a very superstitious lot, and generally required signs to allow them to make decisions in their daily lives.”

(Source: CNN)

Iran in frames



Locals wearing traditional Kurdish attire play Dafs, a kind of frame drum musical instrument, during a vast live performance in the village of Palangan, western Iran.

Iran emerges as potential destination for Russian tourists

From Page 1 ▶ TEHRAN - In a bid to position itself as a top tourist spot for Russians, Iran has been implementing several measures to ease travel and enhance accessibility.

Last year, the two countries implemented a visa-free exchange program, allowing travelers as part of tour groups to arrive without the hassle of obtaining a visa.

This move has notably sparked more interest among Iranian tourists compared to their Russian counterparts.

Statistics reveal a significant contrast in the utilization of this opportunity. By the end of 2023, around 29.5 thousand travelers from Iran had journeyed to Russia, while the reverse route saw only about 10.7 thousand people heading to Iran.

To further stimulate tourism from Russia, relevant authorities from the two countries are actively working on enabling payments with “Mir” cards within the Islamic Republic. This initiative aims to streamline financial transactions for Russian travelers, enhancing their overall experience in Iran.

While these efforts are expected to bolster tourism, representatives from Russian tour operators remain cautious about the country’s



potential to become a mainstream destination for Russians in the near future. Darya Domostroyeva from “Intourist” highlights that despite growing demand, Russian tourists still lack substantial knowledge about Iran and its recreational opportunities.

Moreover, concerns regarding financial transactions are being addressed. With the full operation of the Russian payment system in Iran, worries about potential disruptions due to external pressure on local banks dissipate. Iran’s long-standing endurance under Western sanctions offers reassurance in this regard.

On the aviation front, Russia is expanding its air links with Iran. In April, Rosaviatsia issued addition-

al permits for direct flights to the Islamic Republic, including destinations such as Tehran, Rasht on the Caspian Sea coast, and Kish Island in the Persian Gulf – Iran’s premier beach resort.

Despite recent fluctuations in travel inquiries, Russian tour operators report an overall increase in interest in Iran. “Russian Express” notes a 20% surge in demand compared to last year, while ITM group reports a more substantial 30% rise.

As Iran endeavors to establish itself as a tourist hotspot, these developments mark significant strides in fostering closer ties between the two nations and opening up new avenues for cultural exchange and

tourism.

More than six million foreign tourists arrived by air, road, and sea in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year, which came to an end on March 19.

Last year, Iran set the stage for the unilateral abolition of visa requirements for citizens of 32 countries, which took effect on February 4.

The visa-waiver program was approved for India, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Belarus, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, and Seychelles.

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

Iranian artisans showcase skills at Expo 2024

TEHRAN - Tens of Iranian craftspeople showed off their skills as a marketing opportunity at the 6th International Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran Expo 2024), which was held in Tehran from April 27 to May 1.

Enameling, marquetry, turquoise inlaying, woodcarving, hand-woven carpets, traditional jewelry, and ornaments were among the wide array of artistic disciplines and traditional crafts offered at the event.

Maryam Jalali, the deputy minister for handicrafts, while visiting the Gilan province’s booth, emphasized the expo’s potential for accessing global markets, stating that the value chain of this year’s edition is closely related to handicrafts.

Gilan, with rich assets such as UNESCO recognitions for Chador-Shab weaving, and Hyrcanian forests, can contribute significantly to the identity formation of value chains, she said.

Jalali stated: More than 27,000 artisans are currently engaged in 42 handicraft fields in Gilan, and seven cities and villages in the province have been introduced as national and international brands for handicrafts.

Some crafters exhibited superior quality at the event held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, while Hall 25 was dedicated to handicrafts. Furthermore, several booths arranged live workshops where artisans engaged in crafting or producing handicrafts.

In addition, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the deputy minister for tourism, paid a visit to the Expo, saying the organization of this expo is important, despite tourism having the smallest share in it. He considered the expo crucial for conveying a secure and realistic image of Iran to foreign traders and merchants.

Some 2,000 traders and businessmen from 85

different countries participated in the event that covered major groups of commodities, including the food industry, agriculture and fisheries, hand-woven carpets, handicrafts and tourism, medicine, medical equipment, and chemical products, the construction industry, technical and engineering services, and also the petrochemical group.

Promoting trade and economic relations with other countries, fostering domestic production, propelling the private sector’s business environment onto the international stage, and fostering new trade and economic dialogues with various countries have been highlighted as the primary objectives of hosting the exhibition.

At present, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as “world cities of handicrafts”.

Home to Sassanid fortress, Khorramabad valley inhabited for 5400 years, research suggests

TEHRAN – In a recent significant development in the field of archaeology in Khorramabad valley, where the Sassanid fort of Falak ol-Aflak is located, some evidence has been found, dating human settlement back to 5400 years ago, preceding the Bronze Age.

During a press conference held on Tuesday, Lorestan’s director-general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts disclosed the new findings coming from the Khorramabad valley.

“Archaeologists explored a 25-meter-long and 2-meter-wide section of the fortress’s hill,” Ata Hassanpour brought to light. “Uncovering evidence of human habitation.”

Regarding the significant results, Hasan-pour pinpointed that the

findings revealed the clues of human habitation dating back to multiple historical eras.

The official also emphasized the strategic implications of these findings for the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle and the Khorramabad Valley’s candidacy for UNESCO World Heritage status.

“The nomination dossier for the 2024 UNESCO World Heritage List has already been submitted,” Hasan-pour further explained. “These scientific excavations provide crucial archaeological data that strengthens the historical foundation of our World Heritage application.”

These recent findings underscore the archaeological richness of the Falak-ol-Aflak site and its pivotal role in unraveling the complex tap-

stry of Iran’s ancient civilizations, the director-general wined up.

Earlier this year, on January 31, Ali Darabi, the deputy minister of cultural heritage, announced that Iran had submitted a dossier on “Khorramabad’s Valley and Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress” to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for possible registration as a World Heritage.

Ata Hasan-pour, on April 15, brought to light that the UNESCO inspectors are expected to arrive in province throughout the approaching summer, when is our deadline to complete the necessary measures on the site.

The unmissable eight-towered fortress dominates Khorramabad as one of the most visited travel des-



tinations in the region for both domestic and foreign sightseers.

The fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651). It seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night, offering picturesque views of its encircling crenelated battlements.

The Sassanid era (224 CE–651) is of very high importance in Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.

Khomein’s rosewater festival gains national recognition

TEHRAN – An annual festival dedicated to roses and rosewater has been officially registered in the national list for intangible cultural heritage, marking a significant milestone for Khomein’s Shahabieh village.

Emphasizing the deep historical roots and authenticity within the county, Khomein’s cultural heritage chief pointed out that the roses and rosewater, produced predominantly in the Shahabieh area, are not only key local products but also integral to the cultural identity of the region.

Ali Mashhadi noted that with a rich heritage and the efforts of the provincial organizations, the festival has been successfully added to the national tourism events calendar.

“Henceforth, the festival would take place annually from May 8 to 10,” Mashhadi noted. “Now officially recognized as rose and rosewater days.”

This period marks a vibrant celebration in the

Shahabieh village, where visitors from across the country gather to experience the unique fragrances and beauty of roses, alongside the traditional art of rosewater distillation, according to the official.

Mashhadi explained that the inclusion of this event in the tourism calendar aims to streamline and professionalize tourism in the region while organizing new tourist destinations and routes.

“This initiative is expected to significantly boost the local economy by increasing tourist influx,” the chief further explained. “Who are drawn not only to the festival but also to the rich cultural tapestry of the area.”

Throughout the three-day event, the village of Shahabieh transforms into a bustling hub of activity, Mahhadi added.

The official in his concluding remarks, stated that the arranged programs, include a diverse

array of stalls showcasing exquisite local handicrafts and a dedicated exhibition for rose and rosewater products.

Golab or rosewater is obtained from a particular kind of Rose, known as Mohammadi roses in Iran. Harvesting flowers seems to be the most important part of the process. They should be picked from dawn through morning very carefully. The petals are put into massive copper pots and boiled, and then the extracted water is kept in special bottles. The longer the distillation is, the better will be the quality of the rosewater.

Golab is used nationwide in diverse traditional dishes to flavor them or consumed as a religious perfume as well.

The distillation of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories probably due to shorter time intervals between the harvest and distillation practices.

Tehran, Dodoma discuss ways to launch ICT co-op

TEHRAN – Iran and Tanzania have explored opportunities for collaboration in the field of information and communication technology.

During a meeting held in Tehran on Wednesday, the Iranian Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Issa Zarepour, and the Minister of Trade and Industrial Development of Tanzania, Omar Said Shaaban, agreed on developing cooperation in areas related to information and communication technology, IRNA reported.

Highlighting the importance of relations between Iran and African countries, Said Shaaban stated that Tanzania is willing to expand cooperation with Iran.

“Western social media platforms have now become a threat to family values. This issue stresses the necessity of launching local social platforms that are in line with the cultural norms of our countries,” he said.

Lauding the expertise of Iranian companies in the field of information and communication technology, Said Shaaban expressed optimism that Tanzania would benefit from the capabilities of Iranian companies to develop ties between the two countries.

Zarepour, for his part, referred to Iran's strategy to enhance relations with African countries, especially Tanzania, announcing Iran's readiness to take steps in this regard.

“The communication development, including infrastructure development, information technology development, and space industry



can each serve as a starting point to commence bilateral cooperation in the field of communication and information technology,” IRNA quoted Zarepour as saying.

He also announced the country's readiness to enhance fixed communications in Tanzania based on the fiber optic network and the development of electronic government.

In the end, he called for the establishment of a joint working group comprising deputy ministers of the two countries to address the issues related to bilateral cooperation and finalize the agreement reached during the meeting.

Status of ICT in Iran

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is the highest authority in the field of ICT in the country. All activities related to the information and communication technology industry are directly related to the ministry.

According to Zarepour, the government pays special attention to plans and policies in this sector in order to maximize the use of ICT to facilitate people's lives.

The successful designing, building, and launching of a satellite show the growth of the national technology and scientific power of a country.

Space technology has been considered a tool to expand prosperity, peace, scientific-cultural development, and economic progress in human societies.

Different nations of the world exploit this technology in some way based on their capacity, capabilities, and efforts.

Currently, 13 universities and a research institute affiliated to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology are offering aerospace majors, thus Iran has a high capability in training specialists and experts in the aerospace sector and is a lead-

ing country in the region.

Zarepour said in April 2023 that more than 91 percent of villages with a population of over 20 households across the country have now access to the internet via the national information network.

The villages with above 20 households having access to the internet have increased from 80 percent to 91 percent since the incumbent administration took office in August 2021, said the minister.

Access to telecommunication services in rural areas of the country had improved over the period as the overall number of villages with access to communication services rose to 52,182, around 93 percent of all villages, while 47,837 villages had access to home landline services.

Moreover, the number of Iranian mobile users reached nearly 135.890 million, according to the CRA which put the mobile phone penetration rate in the country at 161.67 percent.

The figures showed, however, that fixed broadband adoption in Iran had stalled at 14 percent with nearly 11.921 million customers having access to the Internet via those services.

This statistic shows that fixed broadband internet has grown by less than 2 percent compared to last year and mobile internet has experienced a growth of 10 percent. However, it can be said that the speed of mobile internet expansion is 5 times the speed of fixed internet.

Sanctions have led to a boost in medical production: official

TEHRAN –Sanctions have resulted in the growth of the country's pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry, Heidar Mohammadi, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, has said.

Iran is known as one of the leading producers and exporters of medicine and medical equipment in the region, he highlighted.

Mohammadi made the remarks in a meeting with Razan Salota, the Syrian deputy health minister for pharmaceutical affairs, in Tehran on Wednesday.

He added that the high quality of the products is one of the key components for competition in export markets and we have tried to improve the quality of these products to boost exports to the regional market.

Acknowledging Iran's pivotal role in supplying pharmaceuticals and medical equipment to the Syrian market, the Syrian official, for his part, asked Iran to help Syria access certain vaccines, Mehr news agency reported.

Salota said following the agreements made in the last two years, the collaborations between the two countries have been successful so far.

Mohammadi, referring to the positive relations between Iran and Syria, noted, “We will definitely continue providing medical equipment and medicines and plan to transfer knowledge to Syria to help the country improve its healthcare system in the near future.”

Over 60 countries import Iranian medical equipment

Medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually, the head of Iran's Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said on January 13.

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, IRNA quoted Abdolreza Yaqoubzadeh as saying.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, he added.

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

Exporting equipment to neighboring countries

On December 30, 2023, Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Econ-

omy, Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, said the country is planning to export laboratory equipment to neighboring countries.

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

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

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

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

Export of medicine and medical equipment rise

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central Africa seeks Iranian expertise in new technologies, human resource development

TEHRAN –Central Africa has expressed interest in benefiting from Iran's knowledge and experience in technology and training efficient human resources to address environmental issues.

Hyppolite Jean-Paul Ngate Robard, Central African Minister for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, held a meeting with Ali Salajeqeh, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE) in Tehran on Tuesday.

The African official commended Iran's capabilities and remarkable growth in various sectors and went on to highlight some of the environmental challenges that Central Africa is currently facing.

“The economic problems have led people and local communities to exploit the forests of Central Africa.

Moreover, climate change has altered the seasonal rainfall patterns. There used to be two six-months of wet and dry seasons. Now, there are sometimes four months of rain or four months of drought in a year. The shift in precipitation pattern has badly affected agriculture.”

He also stressed that inappropriate waste management has posed serious problems and challenges to cities and villages of the country.

Salajeqeh, for his part, announced Iran's readiness to expand environmental ties with Central Africa.

“Iran is ready to offer scholarships to Central African students in various technical engineering, medical, and particularly environmental

fields,” the official said.

He went on to stress Iran's ability to meet the needs of Central Africa in science and technology, particularly in new energies, water, sewage, and waste management, environmental protection, and academic fields.

Iran to transfer technology to Africa

In the 2nd Iran & Africa International Economic Conference, convened at Tehran's International Conference Center on April 26, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi underlined Iran's intention to engage with Africa on the basis of mutual interest, contrasting it with the exploitative approach of many Western countries.

He highlighted Africa's potential in various fields, including emerging technologies, and called for the development of cooperation roadmaps with defined timelines.

In July 2023, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who accompanied President Ebrahim Raisi on his trip to Africa, spoke about Iran's perspective on the continent and the potential for collaboration with African nations.

“Iran's view on Africa is quite different from that of neo-colonialism or its older version,” Amir-Abdollahian told Press TV in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe.

“We aim to empower Africa through technology transfer,” he said.

The foreign minister continued his remarks by elaborating on two key points of convergence between Iran and African countries.

Tajik delegation highly impressed by Iranian knowledge-based products

TEHRAN – A delegation of businessmen and producers from Tajikistan paid a visit to Iran's House of Innovation and Technology (iHiT), expressing that they were highly impressed by Iranian knowledge-based products.

The delegation attended the Iran Expo 2024 exhibition, which kicked off in Tehran on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The products are of high quality and are compatible with Tajikistan's agricultural conditions.

More than 70 percent of the working population of Tajikistan works in the agricultural sector, but the worn-out tools and lack of modern planting and harvesting equipment have greatly hindered agricultural production in the country.

Tajikistan is a very promising market for Iranian agricultural tools and machinery.

The delegation looks to expand cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan to get more familiar with Iran's achievements and introduce Iran-made products and industrial capabilities.

Boosting links in knowledge-based sector

On January 9, the Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy, Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, said a range of good opportunities are available for fostering science and technology-based cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan, particularly founding joint consortia for knowledge-based products and services.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Rustam

Emomali, the chairman of the Tajikistan National Assembly and mayor of Dushanbe.

The scientific and research centers of the two countries provide the grounds for the development of collaboration, IRNA quoted Dehqani-Firouzabadi as saying.

“We are ready to expand the cooperation in the form of a comprehensive program, relying on young, educated, and expert human resources,” he added.

Emamoli, leading a delegation, arrived in Iran on Monday and visited Iran's House of Technology and Innovation (iHiT) today.

iHiT in Dushanbe

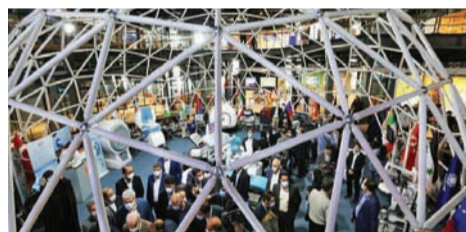
Firouzabadi and Emamoli signed a memorandum of understanding to found a joint innovation and technology house in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

Based on the memorandum of understanding, the two countries will define joint projects for expanding technological and research cooperation.

A joint committee has been formed to follow up on planning, coordinating, observing, and evaluating the progress of the joint activities; in case needed, the two sides will hold online meetings to offer suggestions based on the results of evaluations.

Enhanced scientific co-op

In January 2023, the Iranian deputy science minister and the president of Tajikistan's Academy of Sciences held a meeting to discuss ways to boost relations in the field of science and research.



Zohidi Nizomiddin Shamsiddinzoda, the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, also attended the meeting, IRNA reported.

The two sides emphasized the need to develop scientific and technological cooperation by forming a joint committee in the near future.

Vahid Haddadi-Asl, the Iranian official, referred to common religion and language and geographical proximity as factors that can be effective in deepening the cooperation between the two countries, saying that the past relations between the two countries have been in line with cooperation and friendship.

The Exchange of academic staff members, cooperation of academic staff members in scientific projects, and participation in scientific seminars of the two countries should be strengthened, he highlighted.

The Tajik official, for his part, pointed out that Tajikistan is interested in cooperating with Iran, saying: “By exchanging the scientific achievements of the two countries, we can further help the development of the two countries.”

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average'

The effects of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, while southern provinces of the country are more likely to bear the consequences, secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

“The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand county in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C,” ISNA quoted Mohammad Darvish as saying on Tuesday.

Climate change impact is increasing in southern part of the country, among which Yazd province's condition has raised concern, he said, adding, the industries operating in the province must reduce their dependency on water, otherwise water scarcity might worsen in the region.

تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

محمد درویش، دبیر سیاست محیط زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی، وزارت نیرو و سازمان آب، اظهار کرد: ایستگاه هومند آسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمای حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.

وی اضافه کرد: هر چقدر به شهرهای جنوبی‌تر کشورمان نزدیک می‌شویم، تغییرات اقلیمی هم بیشتر می‌شود به طوری که از این میان یزد وضعیت نگران‌کننده‌ای دارد. باید میزان وابستگی صنایع در یزد نسبت به آب کاهش پیدا کند چرا که در غیر این صورت می‌تواند شتاب خشک‌سالی‌ها را افزایش دهد.



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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
 Email: info@tehrantimes.com
 Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
 Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware of making friends with a fool for he tries to attract you by his behavior and make you like himself.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:11 Dawn: 3:36 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:10 (tomorrow)

“Sculpture” video art wins award at LA Sun Film Fest



TEHRAN-The Iranian video art “Sculpture” has won an award from the LA Sun Film Fest in Los Angeles, California, the U.S.

Written, directed, and composed by Ramin Hosseinpour, “Sculpture” won the Best Composer Award at the 26th edition of the film fest in April, ILNA reported on Wednesday.

The video art is about the life story of Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Shams Tabrizi.

Rumi undertook one or two journeys to Syria, during one of which he met the derish Shams.

However, he was deeply influenced by Shams during their second visit to Konya in 1244.

For months, the two men constantly interacted, and as a result, Rumi neglected his disciples and family, who could not tolerate the close relationship.

One night in 1247, Shams disappeared for-

ever. This experience turned Rumi into a poet. The Divan of Shams (The Collected Poetry of Shams) is a true translation of his experiences into poetry.

Hosseinpour’s video art has previously won awards at various international festivals. It recently won the award for Best Animated Music Video in the latest edition of the HALO International Film Festival in Saint-Petersburg, Russia.

It has also received prizes from King Film Awards 2023 in London, 2022 Vancouver Independent Film Festival Award, 2022 Rome Music Video Award, and LA Music Video Awards 2022 among others.

Los Angeles is the capital of the entertainment industry and known as a place of endless sunshine and movie magic. LA Sun Film Fest celebrates features and shorts of all genres from U.S. and International filmmakers.

A bi-monthly online film festival, its objective is to provide indie filmmakers with an international platform and support them with the best opportunities and the recognition they deserve.

The festival is committed to the promotion and recognition of indie films, arthouse projects, emerging artists and screenwriters from all over the world.

Iranian vocalist brothers harmonize folk with electronic music

TEHRAN- The Saeidi Brothers, a traditional Iranian duo consisting of Ali and Mohammad Saeidi, have recently released a new musical piece that combines Iranian folk music with western electronic elements.

The song, titled “Boland Bala” (Lofty Figure) features lyrics by Baba Taher Oryan and is based on a folk song from Shiraz. It has

been reimagined with electronic music and kamancheh accompaniment.

Known for their unique interpretation of Isfahani folk music, the twin brothers often incorporate traditional Iranian instruments into their performances. They have collaborated with renowned musicians like maestro Farhad Fakhreddini, solidifying their place in Iran’s vibrant music scene.

Cartoon of Day



Pro-Palestinian Protests Across U.S. Universities
 Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair shines spotlight on “Kalila and Demna” as literary icon

TEHRAN- The 33rd edition of Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), which is currently underway, has honored “Kalila and Demna” by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ as the “Book of the World” for its significant impact on cultural and literary history.

One of the special sections at the fair showcases “Kalila and Demna” as a highly influential literary piece globally, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Among the innovative programs introduced by this literary event is the “Book of the World” program, which focuses on exceptional works that have contributed to shaping human civilization and impacting cultures in distinctive manners.

In parallel with the book fair, an engaging art exhibition titled “The Art of Myths from Kalila and Demna to La Fontaine” is being hosted by the Louvre Abu Dhabi, serving as a complement to this literary exploration. The Abu Dhabi International Book Fair has also announced the selection of Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz as the “Iconic Figure” for this event.

Mahfouz, the first Arab writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1988, has significantly enriched Arab literary heritage through his works, which have been translated into multiple languages.

Ali Bin Tamim, chair of the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, who is also secretary-general of the Sheikh Zayed Book Award as well as the organizer of this book fair, stated, “Naguib Mahfouz placed Arab literature and unique aspects of Egyptian culture on a global stage, introducing Arab culture to other societies and civ-



ilizations, expanding its reach.”

He also commented on the selection of the book “Kalila and Demna” for the newly launched “World Books” program at the Abu Dhabi Book Fair, saying, “Kalila and Demna” is one of the most prominent works in Arab literature. It is recognized by Arab critics as a premier Arabic book and acts as an outstanding representation of cultural fusion between civilizations based on its origin, which combines languages such as Sanskrit from India, Pahlavi from Iran, and Arabic. The elements of this book have received acclaim for their influence on other cultures, especially the renowned French poet Jean de La Fontaine, who drew inspiration from it in creating one of his best fables, and the great Arabic-language poet Ahmad Shawqi, who wrote an important collection for children based on it.”

“Kalila and Demna” also known as “Kelileh o Demneh” and “Ka-

lila and Dimna” is a renowned collection of fables that feature animal characters as their heroes. The book, comprising fifteen chapters, is notable for its storytelling and moral lessons. Among its notable characters are the lion, who serves as the king, the ox Shetrebah as his servant, and the two jackals, Kalila and Demna, who not only narrate the stories but also play central roles. Believed to have originated from the Sanskrit Panchatantra, this influential work has been translated into numerous languages, with surviving illustrations found in manuscripts dating back to the 13th century.

Originally based on the c. 200 BC Sanskrit text Panchatantra, the book was later translated into Middle Persian in the sixth century by Borzuya. In the eighth century, Persian scholar Ibn al-Muqaffa’ translated it into Arabic. Furthermore, in the 18th century, King Vakhtang VI of Kartli translated the work from Persian

to Georgian, with the translation later refined by Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani. His translation, along with an earlier incomplete version by King David I of Kakheti, has served as a valuable reference for determining the original text.

“Kalila and Demna,” is featuring anthropomorphized animals with moral lessons suitable for a ruler. The tales are presented in a layered narrative style, with interwoven and nested stories providing deeper insights. The two jackals, Kalila and Demna, are integral to the storytelling, serving as both narrators and participants in the tales set within the court of the lion king, Bankala. Through allegorical narratives in human social and political contexts, the fables offer reflections on various aspects of human life.

The 33rd edition of Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, which started on April 9, will continue until May 5 at the Abu Dhabi Exhibition Center.

Iranian pianist Saman Ehteshami to perform at Tehran concert hall

TEHRAN-Iranian pianist and composer Maroufi and Jalil Shahnaz, and later supported young talents like Mohammad Esfahani and Alireza Ghorbani.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a German composer and musician widely regarded as one of the greatest composers in Western musical history. Born into a family of musicians, Bach’s musical talents were evident from a young age. He began his career as a church organist and violinist, eventually holding prestigious positions in churches and courts throughout Germany. Bach’s compositions are renowned for their complexity, technical skill, and profound emotional depth, making him a significant figure of the Baroque period.

Bach’s musical legacy is vast and diverse, encompassing numerous works in various genres such as organ music, sacred choral works, concertos, and keyboard compositions. His compositions are characterized by intricate counterpoint, harmonic richness, and a deep sense of spirituality. Bach’s mastery of form and structure, as well as his innovative use of musical techniques, have had a lasting influence on subsequent generations of composers and musicians. His works, such as the

Brandenburg Concertos, the St. Matthew Passion, and the Well-Tempered Clavier, are considered masterpieces of the classical music repertoire.

Despite achieving modest recognition during his lifetime, Bach’s music fell into obscurity after his death. It was not until the 19th century that his works were rediscovered and acknowledged for their profound artistic merit. Today, Bach’s music is performed and celebrated worldwide, and he is revered as a musical genius whose compositions continue to inspire and captivate audiences across generations. Bach’s enduring legacy as a composer of unparalleled skill and creativity has secured his place as one of the most significant figures in the history of classical music.

Known for his exceptional talent, Khorram became a leading composer for National Radio at just 21 years old. Alongside his music career, he earned a master’s degree in electrical engineering, seeing music and engineering as complementary disciplines rooted in mathematics.

Khorram’s work on the radio show Golha included composing songs for renowned singers like Master Mohammadreza Shajarian, as well as numerous instrumental pieces. He collaborated with notable artists such as Javad



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Art students, faculty rally at U.S. university pro-Palestine protests

As pro-Palestine protests have erupted on U.S. college campuses over the last week, protesters—including art students and faculty—have been joining the rallying calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and divestment from Israeli companies.

Protests have spread to dozens of universities across the U.S. after an encampment on the campus of Columbia University in New York City led to the arrest and suspension of more than 100 protesters on April 18, the Artnet reported.

On Friday, April 26, protesters overtook the major intersection of Chicago’s Michigan Avenue and Adams Street, near the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, before being pushed to the neighboring Millennium Park by police.

Rhoda Rosen, a curator and art history professor at SAIC who is Jewish and South African and who serves on the Advisory Council of the European Shoah Legacy Institute, spoke to the demonstrators.

“We support your vision of the School of The Art Institute of Chicago, and we believe that it’s achievable, a vision that imagines what it would be like to be a part of a community that divests from those funds that support the destruction of Palestinian culture,” Rosen said. “Know that calls for divestment from U.S. companies profiting from South African apartheid had a huge impact in South Africa.”

Art faculties at multiple universities have also issued statements of solidarity with university students. Members of

Columbia’s Visual Arts and Music faculty issued a letter to students underscoring their constitutional right to assembly and free speech. “We ask the university to revoke all suspensions, expunge the disciplinary records of sanctioned students, and immediately allow all students back into their dormitories,” the letter said.

At Princeton, faculty issued an open letter in solidarity, vowing to “withhold our academic labor from Columbia and Barnard, not to participate in conferences and other campus events, and not to collaborate with university institutions” until Columbia reinstated suspended students and removed police from campus to demonstrate the “unrestricted scholarly inquiry and academic freedom.” Signatories includ-

ed art historians Hal Foster and Irene V. Small and artist James Welling, among others.

Since the protests broke out, students at multiple universities have been subject to police aggression and arrests in addition to academic censure.

Artists and arts workers have also spearheaded pro-Palestine demonstrations that have swept major institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museum since the beginning of Israel’s offensive in Gaza, which has killed nearly 34,500 Palestinians and wounded about 37,000.

The current surge in college campus protests has been called the most significant U.S. student movement since the Vietnam War campus protests of the late 1960s.