

A Call for 'Hajj of Disavowal'

Ayatollah Khamenei calls on Muslims to denounce U.S., Israeli crimes while performing the religious pilgrimage

Head of Iraqi Kurdistan discusses bilateral matters with Ayatollah Khamenei

TEHRAN - In a significant diplomatic move, Nechirvan Barzani, the head of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, held a meeting with Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

This meeting underscored the importance of fostering robust relations between Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq maintains positive relations with Iran, with President Barzani acknowledging Iran's contribution to the economic prosperity of the Kurdistan Region during a forum in Sulaimani in April.

Barzani's visit also follows the historic visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Baghdad and Erbil last month, underscoring the evolving dynamics in the Region's diplomatic landscape.

Iran says ready to dominate nuclear energy sector

TEHRAN - Mohammad Eslami, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (AEOI), underscored Iran's preparedness to confront the dominance of powerful nations in the field of nuclear energy.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 1st International Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology in Isfahan province on Monday, Eslami reaffirmed Iran's commitment to peaceful nuclear pursuits while expressing a willingness to share the country's nuclear technologies with other nations.

Eslami's remarks come amidst persistent allegations by Western countries and their allies regarding the nature of Iran's nuclear program. Despite these claims, Iran has consistently maintained that its nuclear activities are solely intended for peaceful purposes and are in line with religious and moral principles that prohibit the weaponization of nuclear technology.

The international community, as represented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has repeatedly verified Iran's compliance with non-proliferation commitments.

Eslami highlighted Iran's favorable levels of cooperation with the IAEA, which have contributed to the verification of the non-diversion of Iran's nuclear program.

In addition to addressing concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear program, Eslami praised an international nuclear conference held concurrently with the exhibition. Despite facing pressure from what he described as "imperialist forces," the conference attracted numerous seasoned experts who presented high-quality scientific papers.

© Khamenei.ir

▶ Page 3



"Gaza": a cinematic journey through resilience and struggle

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN—"Gaza" is a documentary directed by Garry Keane and Andrew McConnell, produced in 2019 by Ireland, Canada, and Germany. This documentary takes audiences on an 86-minute exploration of the daily struggles and resilience of the people living in this small strip of land. Filmed between the Israeli war in 2014 and the border protests in 2018, "Gaza" is backed by Ireland and premiered at Sundance before kicking off its international release at the Dublin Film Festival.

Rocket in response to the stone

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Keane explained that he was sick of looking at the controlled narrative that was coming out of Gaza. "The...look at them attacking us (with stones) so we are justified in defending ourselves" (with heavy artillery) narrative, being delivered in rough, news sound bites and we wanted to provide something completely different."

Only 25 kilometers long, seven kilometers wide, and home to two million impoverished inhabitants, Gaza is shut off from the world by a harsh blockade. ▶ Page 8

Dark day for media in occupied territories

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The cabinet of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the offices of Al Jazeera news channel to shut down, with armed forces raiding its premises.

The move has been widely condemned, with many critics raising fresh concerns over what little freedom of the press remains inside apartheid Israel.

There is more than meets the eye about the measure taken by Tel Aviv, which claims the Qatari TV outlet is a mouthpiece for Hamas. The same accusation that Israeli officials leveled against South Africa when it took the occupying regime to the International Court of Justice over charges of genocide or against the largest UN agency in Gaza UNRWA.

Critics say the punishment against Al Jazeera was made because the Qatari TV channel has been the only go-to media outlet for the English-speaking demographic for news on the disturbing developments in the Gaza Strip.

Since October 7, the Israeli government has banned international reporters from entering Gaza. In the absence of foreign reporters inside the enclave, many in the Western world have relied on the Israeli army's reports. ▶ Page 5

Genocide looms in Rafah

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Fears are growing over a potential Israeli genocide and mass massacre in Rafah as the regime appears set to launch a long-promised ground offensive in Gaza's southernmost city.

Israel has ordered Palestinians to leave parts of eastern Rafah ahead of an expected ground incursion into the city.

The Israeli military has instructed about 100,000 Palestinians to head to an "expanded humanitarian area" in Khan Younis and al-Mawasi.

An Israeli military spokesman said on Monday that the operation planned in Rafah is of "limited scope".

Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani added that the evacuation of people from eastern Rafah would be carried out in "a gradual way". His comments came after nearly two dozen Palestinians including eight children were killed in an overnight Israeli strike in a Rafah area.

Israel claims Hamas had launched rockets from the area which led to the killing of four soldiers at a nearby crossing.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population is jammed into Rafah. Most of them are displaced Palestinians who have fled their homes elsewhere in the Gaza Strip to escape Israel's brutal onslaught. ▶ Page 5

Money base growth rate falls to 28%: CBI data

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced that the growth rates of monetary base and money supply declined significantly in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), IRNA reported.

Based on the CBI data, the money base growth declined by 16.9 percent from 45 percent at the beginning of the year to 28.1 percent at the end of the previous Iranian calendar year, while the money supply growth also fell to 17.5 percent at the year-end.

Liquidity growth also declined from 31.1 percent to 24.3 percent in the previous year.

Back in April, CBI announced that the point-to-point Producer Price Index (PPI), which is a measure of wholesale inflation, decreased 16.5 percent from 40.7 in March 2023 to 24.5 in late March 2024. ▶ Page 4



© president.ir

Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan vow cooperation in Tehran meeting

TEHRAN - The Iranian president, during his meeting with the head of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on Monday, affirmed that there are no impediments to collaboration with the autonomous region.

Ebrahim Raisi underscored Iran's longstanding solidarity with the Kurdish people during tumultuous periods.

In light of ongoing hostility from adversaries such as the Zionist regime, Raisi called upon Iraq and the Kurdistan Region to thwart any exploitation by Zionist or anti-revolutionary elements targeting Iran.

Additionally, he stressed the imperative of disarmament and the eradication of anti-revolutionary forces within Iraq, reiterating Iran's willingness to bolster economic ties with the Kurdistan Region. ▶ Page 3

World on queue to purchase Iranian drones: U.S. think thank

TEHRAN - Military analysts and experts in the West have invariably emphasized that Iranian drones have proven their effectiveness in real battlefields and, as a result, have been met with great interest from many countries.

The military analytical platform "Breaking Defense," in a recent report, evaluated one of the global consequences of the missile and drone Operation True Promise and stated that despite the extensive cooperation of several countries alongside Israel with Tehran's launched weapons, the global interest in Iranian drones is not diminishing, and analysts say there is a highly enthusiastic market worldwide for cheap and efficient purchasing relatively cheap and efficient Iranian drones. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

America's Patriot missiles were defeated by Iran's ballistic missiles

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

In an article, Kayhan pointed out the failure of American Patriot systems to intercept Iranian missiles and said: After the Iranian attack, the media of the Zionist regime said that the defense of American Patriots could not handle the ballistic missiles fired by Iran. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards fired a series of old drones and missiles with the aim of creating great panic and also involving Israel's air defense response. Then, it fired about 12 modern ballistic missiles, most of which hit their targets. The targeted military sites were considered the most protected places on earth against ballistic missile attacks. After this attack, unknown American and Israeli officials admitted that the claim of 99% interception was fake. Despite much propaganda about the effectiveness of Israeli and American air defense systems, if a large number of missiles were fired at a target, no defense system on the planet could fully combat a large and concentrated attack.

Hamshahri: Erbil has no way but to improve relations with Tehran

In an interview with Mohammad Parsa Najafi, an expert on West Asia issues, Hamshahri discussed the strategic mistake of the Kurdistan Region vis-à-vis Iran. It wrote: The anti-security movements of terrorist groups and the security services of the Zionist regime in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have caused ups and downs in Tehran-Erbil relations in recent months. The tensions are expected to diminish with Nechirvan Barzani's visit to Tehran and lead to a new round of bilateral relations. The recent developments made governments and places such as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq conclude that the Islamic Republic of Iran is the superior power in the region and taking a step in the path of creating tension with Tehran will result in much damage for them. Such behaviors should be corrected by the authorities of the Kurdistan region of Iraq. In the current situation, it may be considered probable that the regional authorities have understood that the Americans are no longer able to manage the developments in West Asia, a factor that has led the Region of Kurdistan to establish friendly relations with Iran instead of continuing hostile actions.

Iran: Israel did not dare to show the damages of Iran's retaliation

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper dealt with

the importance of the "True Promise" operation and wrote: The Al-Aqsa storm operation, which was carried out by Hamas, and the "True Promise" operation, which was Iran's direct military action against the regime, clearly showed that Israel is extremely vulnerable. In fact, nothing goes back before these two operations. But the most important prominence of the True Promise operation was the emergence of the will and decision of Iran's Leader, which surprised all the enemies. Israel, which thought it was an impenetrable military fortress, was attacked and penetrated by missiles and drones. It must be said that the will and decision of the nation of Iran, which was manifested in the Leader of the Revolution, has strategic importance. The operation of the True Promise overcame the self-made and illusory deterrence of the Zionist regime because Israel thought that its deterrence was guaranteed by reliance on the powers of America and NATO. The Zionist regime did not dare to show the world the pictures of its two military bases after Iran's direct action. If the Americans, British, French, and CENTCOM did not help the Zionist regime, 80% of Iran's missiles would have crushed the military bases of the Zionist regime.

Shargh: The failure of a dramatic hegemony

In a note, Shargh addressed the disruption of the "Middle East Air Defense Alliance" by Iran. It wrote: The Israeli regime and the Western media have tried to interpret Iran's legitimate response to Israel as a failure but what is clear is the change of regional equations and the destroyed deterrence of the Israeli regime, and the destruction of the entire political and military hegemony of the West and some regional traitors. Israel wanted to establish military-security cooperation with many countries with which it does not have political relations with the "Middle East Air Defense Alliance" initiative but now after Iran's missile and drone operations against Israel, it has been stated that all the equations of the actors who played a role in creating double layers of defense and helping Israel to intercept Iranian missiles and drones have been disrupted. With this successful operation, the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that it could break this seemingly great alliance, disturb their equations, and cause the fake hegemony of countries with nuclear power to break. This shows that Iran is the main player in the region in this new world order.

Senior commander stresses future-focused training for military cadets

TEHRAN- Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, has underscored the imperative of forward-thinking preparation for military cadets.

During an address at a conference honoring top professors and trainers within the Islamic Republic Army on Monday, he stressed that without a forward-looking approach, education and training would merely become "routine."

Highlighting the paramount importance of human resources within organizations, Admiral Sayyari emphasized the necessity for these resources to be both skilled and continually trained.

He asserted that in today's dynamic world, organizational growth hinges significantly upon the quality and competence of its human capital.

Failure to nurture and develop this resource, he warned, would result in stagnation and regression.

Furthermore, Admiral Sayyari reiterated the directive from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, emphasizing that training within the Iranian Army stands as a top priority.

He emphasized the noble role of instructors and professors within the army, stressing their crucial responsibility in shaping the future leaders and defenders of the nation.

Anticipating evolving threats on the horizon, Admiral Sayyari urged professors to adapt their training methodologies accordingly, ensuring that cadets are equipped to confront future challenges.

He underscored the ever-changing landscape of warfare, driven by advancements in technology and weaponry, emphasizing the necessity for constant vigilance and adaptation.

Admiral Sayyari further emphasized the importance of avoiding complacency in training efforts, warning against the pitfalls of "professional stagnation."

He urged continuous monitoring and improvement of educational infrastructure, stressing the need for trainers and professors to remain abreast of the latest developments in their fields.

In conclusion, Admiral Sayyari emphasized the imperative for instructors to remain responsive to the evolving needs of their students.

Back in late January, the admiral affirmed that the nation stands prepared to neutralize any potential threat and is resolute in swiftly leveraging its military capabilities to retaliate against any hostile acts of aggression.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's Army is currently at the peak of full readiness and stands strong against any threats," said Rear Admiral Sayyari at the time, adding that "today, the combat, defensive, and deterrent capabilities of the Army are at a very high level due to trained personnel, skills, as well as indigenous and modern equipment, in such a way that the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to confront and combat any enemy threat."

The commander also stressed that all Iranian armed forces feel a heavy responsibility to protect the territorial integrity and independence of their country with everything they have.

Tehran asserts U.S., UK main sponsors of Israeli genocide in Gaza Strip

TEHRAN- According to the spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry, the U.S. and the UK's "full and shameless" backing of Israel has played a significant role in the regime's atrocities and deeds of genocide against the Palestinian people throughout the last seven months.

In a post on X on Sunday, Nasser Kanaani said that "by providing full and shameless support, the U.S. and British regimes have played the biggest role in the war crimes and genocide committed by the Zionist regime during seven months!"

He continued by saying that the student protests in favor of Palestine are currently being suppressed by Washington and London.

The Iranian official forewarned the two regimes about their fruitless attempts to divert attention away from Israel's war crimes in the eyes of the world.

"Through disseminating false information and narratives and fake news, they cannot distract the world public opinion from their disgraceful support for the Zionist regime's war crimes and genocide against the Palestinian people," Kanaani added.

A number of heated and even violent incidents have resulted from rallies against the Israeli attack on Gaza taking place on U.S. campuses during the past several weeks.

The students want schools to stop investing in firms that support the Israeli regime and that Israel stop its genocide attack on Gaza.



After police at Columbia University, the focus of student protests, tried to disperse a pro-Palestine encampment and arrested hundreds of students, protests have spread to college campuses around the country.

The police, who also got repression-specific training from the Israeli authorities, are using brutal techniques to quell the student movement.

Since April 18, U.S. police have detained over 2,400 persons at pro-Palestinian demonstrations at 47 different college campuses throughout the U.S., according to the Associated Press.

Israel started the war on October 7, 2023, in response to a retaliatory operation by the resistance forces in the Palestinian region. Since then, at least 34,683 Palestinians—mostly women and children—have lost their lives and 78,018 have been injured.

On Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, held talks with his Turkish counterpart on the

sidelines of the OIC summit, hailing Ankara's move to put a moratorium on the trade with the Israeli regime in protest of its brutal war on Gaza.

During the meeting, Abdollahian praised the Ankara government's recent decision to halt economic and trade ties with the Zionist regime as a "significant measure."

The senior Iranian diplomat denounced the war crimes committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza and emphasized that the Islamic world— Iran and Turkey in particular— needs to play a bigger and more proactive role in assisting Palestine.

In another meeting between Amir Abdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud on Sunday, the two sides discussed bilateral and regional issues, including the situation in Gaza.

Iran will back any agreement that protects the rights of the Palestinian people, according to Amir Abdollahian. He said that Tehran "believes the Palestinians

themselves should decide the fate of Palestine," and supports any agreement that ensures the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people.

He clarified Iran's principled position in punishing the Zionist regime for its terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus.

Delivering a speech at the 15th edition of the Islamic Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Gambia on Saturday, Amir Abdollahian said that "beyond doubt, this time period will also pass by, despite all its hardships and adversities for the Palestinian nation."

"However, the manner and quality of the role that is played by us, Muslim states, in the face of this crisis will go down in history," the top diplomat added.

"Undoubtedly, severance of diplomatic and economic ties and [imposition of] practical arms and trade embargo [on Israel] serves as an important means of cessation of its genocide in Gaza and atrocities in the West Bank and the Noble al-Quds."

Amir Abdollahian stressed that what the resistance did in the course of time proved that its elimination "was nothing but an illusion."

"Because the Israeli regime is not a legitimate government. It is only an occupying apartheid power," he said, adding, "Passage of time is not going to lend legitimacy to an occupying power."

Iran says ready to dominate nuclear energy sector



From page 1 ► Eslami emphasized the significance of such conferences in showcasing Iran's scientific and technological achievements to the world, further bolstering Iran's position as a key player in the global nuclear arena.

The exhibition coincides with the visit of Rafael Grossi, the Chief of the United Nations nuclear watchdog, to Tehran. Grossi's presence underscores the international attention surrounding Iran's nuclear activities, culminating in the upcoming inaugural International Conference on Nuclear Science

and Technology in Isfahan.

Upon Grossi's arrival in Tehran, the IAEA chief was welcomed by the Spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Behrouz Kamalvandi.

Other than participating in the international nuclear conference, Grossi is set to hold talks with senior nuclear and political officials of Iran.

The 1st international conference of Iran's nuclear sciences and technologies will be held in Isfahan from May 6 to 8.

World on queue to purchase Iranian drones: U.S. think thank

From page 1 ► The report's author added that perhaps Israel and its allies were able to deal with the large number of 300 drones and missiles that Iran launched in its unprecedented attack on Israel, but according to analysts, this has not deterred potential customers of Tehran's unmanned aerial vehicles.

Fabian Heinz, a defense and military researcher at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, believes that most countries, interested in Iranian drones, want to use them against powerful enemies such as the United States and Israel.

For these countries, the advanced capabilities of enemies such as the United States in tracking these weapons are not so concerning. Iranian offensive drones have proven their effectiveness well.

Samuel Bendett, an artificial intelligence and unmanned systems expert at the CNA Institute in Washington, also stated that Israel's opposition will not have an impact on Iran's sales market, especially to countries seeking to adopt a politically and militarily independent approach from the West.

The report, with details of the number and types of drones and missiles used by Iran, claimed that Iran launched 170 Shahed 131 and 136 drones, along with over 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles towards targets in Israel.

According to the analysis, in recent years, the Shahed drone family has attracted widespread attention worldwide due to successful use in several operational scenarios, with the most prominent display being in Ukraine.

Jean-Marc Rickli, the head of global risk and resilience at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), also claimed to Breaking Defense that Ukraine provided a powerful showcase for the Shahed drones, even if these drones failed in the attack on Israel, they proved that they impose a significant cost on the adversary.

He also stated that the use of expensive missiles to destroy these inexpensive drones incurs a high cost, and more importantly, it eliminates the defender's capabilities. In the case of Israel, the interception of drones costed more than the drones themselves.

He also pointed out that the calculation has made Iranian drones attractive to many international buyers, adding that the potential market for Iran includes countries that are sanctioned by the West or have no fear of sanctions and are not willing to accept Western conditions when selling weapons.

According to this report, interest in purchasing Iranian drones has increased even more after extensive debates and denials about Russia's use of these aircraft against Ukraine.

Several months later, a senior Iranian official announced that 22 countries have expressed interest in buying Iranian-made drones. Yoav Gallant, Israel's Defense Minister, also claimed in February that 50 countries are negotiating with Tehran to purchase missiles and drones from the country.

Even an analyst from FDD said that "Iranian drones are now present in operational theaters on four continents: Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America."

The report also mentioned Iran's competitors in the drone market and added that analysts consider Iranian drones a cost-effective solution. Despite China leading in drone exports, experts say that Iran goes beyond Beijing and has few competitors in its niche market.

It was also emphasized that Iran has proven efficiency in high-altitude, combat, and suicide drones. While there are indeed some companies in this market, but Iran does stand out.

According to the abovementioned analysis, many experts were taken aback when they first encountered reports of Russia's dependence on Iranian drones.

Last year, Brigadier General Talaei-Nick, the Deputy Defense Minister, said that there are some European countries willing to purchase Iranian drones, pointing to the requests sent to Iran for its drones.

The general said that some

locally-made defense products are for sale, adding that in case Iran is sure that drones would not be used inappropriately, the country is ready to export some of its drones, considering the domestic needs and the capacity of the production.

On purchasing weapons, he said domestic products are prioritized, but in cases when foreign supplies are needed to meet the needs, especially in the field of air combat, the country will move according to its needs.

The general said the type of equipment that is needed should be evaluated in comparison with its domestic ones and similar ones in other countries.

Moreover, he said, it should be confirmed in terms of price and quality by authorities and that buying weapons from abroad is a long-term process.

General Talaei Nik also pointed to the training process which is needed for special types of weapons, where the foreign parties' cooperation is also needed.

The deputy defense minister added that financial provision and signing contracts must be done within a predetermined process, which take place within the framework of legal and international considerations.

The Defense Ministry official also said "exchanges with Russia" are still going on, noting that none of the "previously agreed exchanges" with Russia have been canceled.

A call for 'Hajj of disavowal'

Ayatollah Khamenei calls on Muslims to denounce U.S., Israeli crimes while performing the religious pilgrimage

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has urged Hajj pilgrims to disavow U.S. and Israeli actions, emphasizing the intersection of religious devotion and geopolitical tensions.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with the country's officials in charge of conducting and organizing Hajj pilgrimage.

The gathering took place in the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah on Monday, prior to the commencement of the 2024 Hajj pilgrimage journey for pilgrims.

As Muslims embark on the sacred journey of Hajj, Ayatollah Khamenei's directive underscores the moral imperative for believers to confront injustice and oppression, particularly in light of the ongoing crisis in Gaza. The indiscriminate bombardment of civilian areas and the displacement of countless families have drawn condemnation from across the globe, amplifying calls for solidarity and action.

Amidst mounting criticism of the United States' steadfast backing of Israel, the Leader's call challenges the ethical stance of Muslims worldwide, urging them to actively disavow complicity in the perpetuation of violence and oppression. With Washington's unwavering support enabling the Israeli actions, the Hajj pilgrimage emerges as a pivotal moment for believers to reaffirm their commitment to justice and human dignity.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Leader described Hajj as a multi-dimensional obligation in terms of material



and spiritual aspects. "In the inner dimension, the remembrance of God as 'the true source of life, shaping an individual's, society's and a nation's determination, willpower, and decisions,' is the prominent point of all stages and positions of Hajj," he stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the importance of the social aspect of Hajj, which includes unity and fostering connections among Muslims. He emphasized that the underlying philosophy of the divine invitation for all individuals to gather at a specific place and time during Hajj is to allow Muslims to become familiar with one another, work together, and make collective decisions. By doing so, he stated, the beneficial and tangible outcomes of Hajj can be shared by the Islamic world and all of humanity, while noting that the Islamic world currently lacks effective joint decision-making and collaboration.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized that disregarding national, religious, and ethnic differences is essential for unity. "The vast, uniform gathering of followers of all Islamic denominations from

all nationalities during Hajj is a clear manifestation of the socio-political aspect of the pilgrimage," he added.

While pointing out that Hajj should be filled with the blessed name of Prophet Abraham (pbuh) and his teachings, Ayatollah Khamenei asserted that renunciation of the enemies of God's religion is a valuable lesson drawn from his teachings.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution considered the current events in Gaza to be a major sign in history. "The savage attacks of the rabid Zionist dogs on one side, and the resistance and oppression of the Gazans on the other side, will remain in history and guide mankind. The amazing and unprecedented effect that it has had in non-Islamic societies and universities of the U.S. and other countries, are proof of its history-making and significant nature."

Ayatollah Khamenei elucidated the duty that the Islamic Ummah has regarding the atrocities taking place in Gaza, during the Abrahamic Hajj. He highlighted that, "Abraham (pbuh) was a

compassionate prophet with a very kind heart, but at the same time, this prophet of God also strongly expressed his renunciation and clearly declared his enmity against the oppressors and hostile enemies."

Referring to verses of the Quran, Ayatollah Khamenei described the Zionist regime as the absolute epitome of enmity towards Muslims, adding that the U.S. is an accomplice of this regime. "If it were not for the U.S.'s support, would the Zionist regime have the power and audacity to treat Muslims, men, women, and children so brutally like this?"

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution added, "Those who kill Muslims and force them into displacement, as well as their supporters, are both oppressors, and according to the explicit Quranic verse, if anyone befriends them, they too are oppressors and cursed by God."

Considering the current situation of the Islamic world, he regarded the Abrahamic approach to Hajj, which means clear renunciation of enemies, more important than ever. "Based on this, Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims should be able to convey the Quranic reasoning in supporting the Palestinians to the entire Islamic world," he stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized, "Of course, the Islamic Republic has not and will not wait for others [to take action], but if the strong Muslim nations and governments unite and accompany [this endeavor], the deplorable condition that the Palestinians are in will no longer continue."

Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan vow cooperation in Tehran meeting

From Page 1 ► Barzani, on his part, emphasized the importance of deepening ties between Iran and the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

He recognized the significant role played by the Iranian commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in safeguarding and bolstering Kurdistan's security.

"We view the safeguarding of the integrity of these partnerships and engagements as foundational principles that are not up for negotiation," Barzani noted.

As the head of the Kurdistan Region, Barzani's presence in Iran holds particular significance.

Barzani has repeatedly emphasized the value of dialogue and cooperation between Kurdistan and Iran, particularly in resolving issues with the central government in Baghdad. His diplomatic engagements in Tehran serve as a testament to

his commitment to advancing mutual interests and strengthening ties between the two regions.

In acknowledging Iran's regional role, Barzani recognized the strategic importance of fostering constructive relationships with neighboring countries. By leveraging Iran's influence and expertise, Kurdistan seeks to address shared challenges and pursue opportunities for economic development and regional stability.

Overall, Barzani's visit to Tehran reflects a proactive approach to diplomacy and underscores Kurdistan's commitment to engaging with all relevant stakeholders to advance its interests and contribute to regional peace and prosperity.

President Barzani's last visit to Iran was in August 2021 to attend President Raisi's inauguration ceremony.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region maintains positive relations with Iran, with President Barzani acknowledging Iran's contribution to the economic prosperity of the Kurdistan Region during a forum in Sulaymaniyah in April.

Barzani's visit also follows the historic visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Baghdad and Erbil last month, underscoring the evolving dynamics in the Region's diplomatic landscape.

Barzani's agenda in Tehran also included discussions with Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and Ali Akbar Ahmadian, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. These meetings aimed to deepen bilateral ties and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation across various sectors.

Iranian ambassador inspects Mehran border crossing ahead of Arbaeen pilgrimage

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Mohammad Kazem Al Sadeq, along with the Iraqi Interior Minister, embarked on a visit to the Mehran Border Crossing on Monday.

The purpose of their visit was to inspect the latest preparations ahead of the Arbaeen pilgrimage, scheduled for August 25th.

Arba'een marks the anniversary of the 40th day following Ashura, the 10th day of the lunar month of Muharram, when Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and the third Shia Imam, was martyred at the hands of tyrant Yazid in the seventh century.

Millions of ardent lovers, in a demonstration of unfathomable love and devotion for their beloved, walk seamlessly and untiringly from one sacred city to another, day and night, braving inclement weather and ominous security threats.

Men and women, young and old, come from different corners of the world and converge in one place. They call it heaven.

It's not merely a walk. It is a mark of protest against all forms and manifestations of terrorism, fascism, imperialism, despotism, and oppression perpetuated by state and non-state actors.

It is a rallying cry in support of the oppressed, weak and powerless. It is a reaffirmation of pledge to uphold the principles exemplified by the 'master of challengers' in Karbala.

Arbaeen walk takes place from Najaf to Karbala – from the final resting place of the 'commander of the faithful' to that of the 'master of the martyrs'. It is a journey of love.

The border crossings of Mehran and Chazabeh in the western and southwestern parts of Iran witness an unprecedented high number of Iranian pilgrims every year.

Back on December 12, 2022, Al Sadeq met a number of Iraqi officials including the Iraqi interior minister and discussed a number of issues ranging from border security to energy supplies.

In his meeting with Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Amir al-Shemmari, Al Sadeq congratulated al-Shemmari for his appointment as the interior minister and thanked the Iraqi government for assisting with successfully holding the Arbaeen ceremony.

Ambassador Al Sadeq emphasized the need for strict implementation of the security agreement between the two countries, including more precise control of the common borders, the issue of arms smuggling and the extradition of criminals.

Al-Shemmari, while announcing the readiness of his ministry to cooperate with Iran, addressed the common concerns of the two sides in relation to border issues and called the issue of drug entry and arms smuggling among the first priorities of the Iraqi border guard forces.

He added that the infrastructure at the border points has been strengthened and there is complete

preparation to carry out border patrol missions.

The Iraqi interior minister also emphasized the need for continuous communication between the border officials of the two countries.

Al Sadeq also met with the Iraqi Planning Minister, Mohammad Ali Tamim. They consulted on strengthening bilateral relations in various fields, including water and electricity and commercial exchanges.

Iraqi media reported at the time that the two parties discussed prospects for joint cooperation between the two neighboring countries in many aspects, including ways to develop relations in economic, security, trade, investment, scientific and cultural fields.

The results of the visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani to Iran also featured at the meeting. Electricity, water, and the measures taken by both sides were also discussed at the meeting.

New era for IBSA Legal and Ethics Committee

The International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) has announced the names of three highly experienced individuals who will form the core of its Legal and Ethics Committee.

Former IBSA President Jannie Hammershoi will serve as Chair, with the support of IBSA's legal counsel, Dr. Stephan Osnabrugge, and Gael Riviere, a former French blind footballer and lawyer.

Special attention was paid by the new IBSA Board to the Legal and Ethics Committee after IBSA's Extraordinary General in Fatima, Portugal, in 2023 where a new Executive was elected. After this, Tim Reddish was appointed as Chair but subsequently had to stand down due to work commitments.

Hammershoi replaces Reddish after serving as IBSA's first female President between 2013 and 2021.

Along with Osnabrugge and Riviere, the Committee will be expanded over time in consultation with the IBSA Membership.

The IBSA Board envisages that two-three additional Committee members will be added in line with the requirements of the work it carries out.

In addition, experts without voting rights will be invited to assist the group with their deliberations in addressing issues in various areas of IBSA's activities.

IBSA President, Ilgar Rahimov, said: "On behalf of the IBSA Executive Board, I would like to thank Tim for his service but am also delighted to welcome Jannie, Stephan and Gael to the IBSA Legal and Ethics Committee.

"Forming an experienced and reliable group was a top priority at the start of my Presidency last year and all these individuals certainly have the right skills and experience to take this area forward over the coming months."

(Source: IBSA)

Paes announces his 18-man team for 2024 VNL

TEHRAN – Iran volleyball head coach Mauricio Motta Paes has called up 18 players to the National Team for the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

Iran are scheduled to play Serbia in the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) on May 22 in Brazil in their opening match and will also face Italy (May 24), Cuba (May 25) and Argentina (May 26).

Iran's prospects for qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics are dim due to poor performance in the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Nations League and the Olympic qualifiers.

Squad:

Setters: Javad Karimi (CS Municipal Arcada Gala?), Mohammadtaher Vadi (Foolad Sirjan), Ali Ramezani (Tabiat Eslamshahr)

Outside hitters: Milad Ebadipour (Hemarpol Cz?stochowa), Amirhossein Esfandiari (Tianjin Food Group), Morteza Sharifi (Spor Toto Spor Kulübü/Turkey), Meysam Salehi (Shahdab Yazd), Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh (Foolad Sirjan), Amirhossein Sadati (Gitipasand), Mobin Nasri (Paykan)

Middle blockers: Mehdi Jelveh (Fenerbahçe Parolapara), Matin Ahmadi (Pas Gorgan), Mohammad Valizadeh (Shahdab Yazd), Alireza Moslehabadi (Paykan)

Opposite spikers: Amin Esmaeilnezhad (PGE GIEK Skra Be?chatów), Mohammad Barbast (Dinamo Bucure?ti)

Liberos: Mohammadreza Hazratpour (Shahdab Yazd), Arman Salehi (Shahrdari Urmia)

The FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League is an annual international volleyball competition contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

The first tournament took place between May and July 2018, with the final taking place in Lille, France. Russia won the inaugural edition, defeating France in the final.

Iran discover rivals at 2024 Asian Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN – The draw completed for 18th Asian Men's Junior (U21) Handball Championship and Iran discovered their opponents in the competition.

The draw took place on Saturday at the Jordan Handball Federation headquarters, located at Princess Sumaya Hall, Amman, Jordan.

The 13 teams were divided into four groups. Host nation Jordan exercised their right to select their group, opting for Group C.

Defending champions Japan were drawn into the toughest group, Group D, alongside the Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Qatar. The teams in this group have won a total of 9 titles out of 17.

The 2022 host and silver medalists, Bahrain, were drawn into Group A with Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. Five-time champions Kuwait were drawn into Group B with Iran and China. Host Jordan chose Group C, where they will face Oman and India.

The 18th Asian Men's Junior (U21) Handball Championship is scheduled to take place from 16 to 27 July 2024 in Amman, Jordan. Additionally, the championship will serve as a qualifying event for the 25th IHF Men's Junior (U21) Handball World Championship in Poland, scheduled for June/July 2025. The top four teams from this competition will secure qualification spots for the World Championship.

Alamiyan into Saudi Smash 2024 Round of 16

TEHRAN – Noshad Alamiyan from Iran advanced to the Round of 16 of the World Table Tennis (WTT) Saudi Smash 2024 on Monday.

Alamiyan defeated Jingkun Liang of China 3-2 (12-14, 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 11-5) in the Round of 32.

He had defeated players from Egypt, Belgium and Austria in the event.

The competition is being held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from May 1 to 11.

Roma to seek discount on Azmoun from Leverkusen

TEHRAN - Roma football club want to make Sardar Azmoun's deal from Bayer Leverkusen permanent.

The capital club are said to be satisfied with the striker's usage and output.

The player seems to have impressed Daniele De Rossi and is considered a good enough back-up option for next season.

According to La Gazzetta dello Sport, Roma have a €13 million buy option which so far they have refused to activate.

In fact, the club are said to be seeking a discount from Bayer Leverkusen and are hoping to have this request granted from the German side within the coming weeks.

Fencer Pakdaman moves up in FIE ranking

TEHRAN – Iranian fencer Ali Pakdaman moved up to third place in the Fédération Internationale d'Escrime, commonly known by the acronym FIE, in sabre division.

Georgian fencer Sandro Bazadze sits first with 242.000 points, followed by Egyptian Ziad Elsisy (204.000) and Pakdaman (161.000).

Three-time world champion Aron Szilagyi of Hungary sits fourth in the ranking with 152.000 points. Pakdaman will represent Iran at the 2024 Olympic Games.

Money base growth rate falls to 28%: CBI data

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced that the growth rates of monetary base and money supply declined significantly in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), IRNA reported.

Based on the CBI data, the money base growth declined by 16.9 percent from 45 percent at the beginning of the year to 28.1 percent at the end of the previous Iranian calendar year, while the money supply growth also fell to 17.5 percent at the year-end.

Liquidity growth also declined from 31.1 percent to 24.3 percent in the previous year.

Back in April, CBI announced that the point-to-point Producer Price Index (PPI), which is a measure of wholesale inflation, decreased 16.5 percent from 40.7 in March 2023 to 24.5 in late March 2024.

As reported, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is an indication of inflation based on the prices paid by consumers, also decreased by 4.8 percent from 37.3 in March 2023 to 32.6 in March 2024.

In February, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) put the average inflation rate in the twelve months ended on January 20, which

marks the end of the 10th Iranian calendar month Dey, at 42.5 percent, noting that the figure fell by 1.1 percent from the previous year's same period.

The center put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 35.8 percent in the 10th Iranian calendar month, which means families have paid an average of 35.8 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The Statistical Center of Iran has put the average inflation rate in the twelve-month period that ended on March 20, 2023, which marks the end of the Iranian calendar year 1401, at 45.8 percent.

The center had put the inflation rate in the twelve-month period that ended on March 20, 2022 (the end of the Iranian calendar year 1400) at 40.2 percent and that of the Iranian calendar year 1399 at 36.4 percent.

In mid-July 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in an economic outlook report said inflation in Iran which was reported to be 49 percent in 2022 is expected to fall to 30 percent in 2024.

Govt. spends \$5.5b to reduce gas flaring



TEHRAN - Head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Ali Salajegheh, announced that the government has spent \$5.5 billion to reduce gas flaring to improve air quality.

Speaking to Shana, DOE's head said that since the 13th administration took office in August 2021, burning associated gases from 55 flares have come to a halt amid spending 5.5 billion dollars for upgrading the quality of fuels and improving air quality.

The government is determined to improve the Petro-refineries and gas processing plants efficiency so that air pollution will subside, he said noting over the last year the amount of burnt fuel oil reached the lowest when compared with preceding years.

According to the head of the Department of Environment, the 13th administration has

taken serious steps to improve the quality of fuel at 10 oil refineries while those refineries have designed some major projects to reduce using fuel oil and desulfurize their oil products as well.

Last week, the managing director of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), Morteza Shahmirzaie, told Shana the process of gathering associated gases will accelerate this year so that the majority of petrochemical complexes' gas flares will be turned off at the end of the current Iranian calendar year on March 20, 2025.

Visiting Assaluyeh, the host of gas processing plants south of Iran, NPC's managing director added that NPC plans to pursue the gathering associated gases program more seriously this year.

"Gas flares play the role of safety valves so that when there is an emergency situation, they start burning to prevent the occurrence of an incident, and when there is a stable situation their burning is contained," NPC's managing director said.

He went on to say that in a year which has been named the Year of Production Leap Through People's Participation, petrochemical projects will bear fruit one after another.

Tehran hosts 6th Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN - The 6th meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee kicked off in Tehran on Sunday, IRNA reported.

The two-day event was co-chaired by Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Iraqi Minister of Commerce Atheer Daoud Al-Ghurairi.

On the first day of the meeting, specialized committees including commercial, industrial, agricultural, standardization and Quality Control, energy, finance, banking, investment and insurance, shipping, transport, and Customs, scientific, educational, tourism, health, as well as sports consulate held meetings to discuss areas for cooperation.

On Sunday, Ali Fekri, the head of the Organization for Investment Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran, said Iran and Iraq are going to sign 23 documents at their joint economic commission to broaden bilateral ties in the fields of energy, transport, trade, export of technical and engineering services, investment, finance, and banking.

Speaking on the first day of the event, Fekri said negotiations are underway for finalizing the documents.

The minutes of the negotiations will be inked at the open session of the joint economic commission between Iran's minister of economy and the Iraqi minister of trade.

TEDPIX falls 20,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 20,647 points (0.91 percent) to 2,239,099 on Monday, which is the third day of the Iranian calendar week.

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

In late April, Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshghi

said the organization is determined to support shareholders in the stock market.

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

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

Iran reviews economic ties with northern neighbors

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Economic Relations Coordination Committee has held its third meeting to assess the latest status of bilateral economic projects with neighboring countries such as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

According to IRNA, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari presided over the meeting on Sunday.

While explaining the importance of developing relations with Caucasian and Central Asian countries, Safari emphasized the need for cooperation between all relevant institutions and the private sector to take maximum advantage of the capacity for developing relations, especially in the field of export of technical and engineering services, transit, export of knowledge-based products, energy, industry, mining, and exchange of professors and students.

The latest status of plans and projects with these countries, obstacles and ways to solve them as well as facilitate the process of finalizing and implementing those projects were discussed in the meeting.



Deputies and managers of executive bodies, staff, and representatives of the private sector were present during the meeting held at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The value of Iran's trade with its neighbors increased by 1.35 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year to reach \$60.773 billion, according to Rezvaniyar.

The weight of non-oil trade with the neighboring countries stood at 95.924 million tons in the said period, which was 2.45 percent less than the figure for the preceding year.

During the past year, Iran exported \$28.288 billion worth of goods to its neighbors, while importing commodities valued at \$32.485

billion.

Iran's exports to neighboring countries decreased by 9.51 percent in the mentioned year; while the imports from neighboring countries increased by 13.17 percent.

Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan were the top importers of Iranian goods among the neighboring countries, and the UAE, Turkey, Russia, Oman, and Pakistan were also the main sources of imports in the previous.

The value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.178 billion in the last Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March

19).

The value of the Islamic Republic's trade with the partners in the previous year increased by 2.6 percent compared to the same period last year, Tasnim News Agency reported.

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

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

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

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$13.915 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$9.215 billion, the UAE with over \$6.611 billion, Turkey with \$4.16 billion, and India with \$2.17 billion.

Exporting technical, engineering services important for economic growth: official

TEHRAN - Iran has good capacities for exporting technical and engineering services overseas, which is important in realizing an eight percent growth of Iran's economy, an official said.

The head of the Board of Directors of Iran Power Industry Syndicate said that all the capacities, whether domestic or foreign, should be used optimally to materialize an eight-percent economic growth in the country.

Focusing on exporting technical and engineering services is one of the areas that can help boost the economy to a great extent,

Payam Baqeri emphasized.

The member of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) went on to say that exporting technical and engineering services can yield foreign currency for the country as well.

In addition, exporting technical and engineering services creates a good opportunity for the country to sell the manufactured products in the target markets, he stated.

Baqeri pointed to the recent inauguration of the Uma Oya Dam and Power Plant in Sri Lanka and added that the multi-purpose project, which

was designed and built by Iranian companies, is among the country's main projects in the field of exporting technical and engineering services.

Exporting technical and engineering services in the current year named "Production Jump with People's Participation" is a need that should be taken into serious consideration, he stressed. In late April, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Iran Water Industry Federation said the country exported \$1.8 billion worth of technical and engineering services over the past two years.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Russian rail transit cargo to India arrives in Iran

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN - A rail transit cargo from Russia headed for India entered Iran on Saturday through the Incheh-Boroun border crossing.

Carrying 31 containers, the Russian transit train will transfer its cargo to Bandar Abbas port in southern Iran through the Iranian section of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to be sent to India.

The North-South Corridor consists of three route sections, namely East, West, and Middle.

This is the second Russian rail transit cargo that is sent to India via the Iranian territory.

The first rail transit cargo from Russia to India entered Iran in July

2022 through the Sarakhs border crossing, to officially launch the eastern section of the North-South railway corridor.

The Russian train was allowed into the Iranian border in a ceremony attended by First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber along with transport, oil, industry, and agriculture ministers as well as the vice president for science and technology.

Speaking at this ceremony, Mokhber stressed the Iranian government's determination to expand trade with neighboring countries, especially in the transit sector, saying: "The transit capacity of the country has increased to 20 million tons, and by planning

and taking appropriate measures, transiting 300 million tons of commodities per year can be reached."

Carrying 39 containers, the Russian transit train left Chekhov station on July 6, traveling 3,800 kilometers through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to enter Iran. The cargo will be transported to Bandar Abbas port in southern Iran through a 1600 km rail route to finally be sent to India's Nhava Sheva Port via sea

The North-South Corridor consists of three route sections, namely East, West, and Middle.

Iran and Russia are also cooperating in the maritime sector to use the Caspian Sea to shorten the transit route from Russia to India.

Last year, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) announced that it has assigned 300 containers to transport goods between Russia and India.

The mentioned containers have been allocated to execute the first phase of a program for transiting Russian commodities to India via the North-South Corridor using the Caspian Sea.

"According to the plans made by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, in the first phase, 300 containers have been considered for transporting cargos to Russia, and if the demand increases, the number of these containers will increase continuously," an IRISL statement said.

China's waste sorting achievements showcased for foreign media

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING - A number of foreign journalists from different countries around the world got familiar with some achievements of China in waste sorting and recycling in an event held at Qijiyuan Diplomatic Residence Compound (DRC) in Beijing on Sunday (April 28).

A waste-sorting machine working by artificial intelligence (AI) techniques was showcased at that place, and journalists saw how it works.

Also, an exhibition of products produced from recycled materials was held at the same place.

Entertainment programs were also held for the children to encourage them to waste sorting and recycling activities.

And at the end of that visit, a ceremony was held for the participants in which Chinese opera and some other entertainment programs were performed.

Beijing Municipal Center for Foreign-related Environment Sanitation Services contributed to holding the mentioned programs.

The waste management processes typically involve numerous technical, climatic, environmental, demographic, socio-economic, and

legislative parameters. Such complex nonlinear processes are challenging to model, predict and optimize using conventional methods.

Recently, artificial intelligence (AI) techniques have gained momentum in offering alternative computational approaches to solve solid waste management (SWM) problems.

AI has been efficient at tackling ill-defined problems, learning from experience, and handling uncertainty and incomplete data. Although significant research was carried out in this domain, very few review studies have assessed the potential of AI in solving the diverse SWM problems.

To prevent the rapid increase in global e-waste generation from causing serious environmental pollution and adverse effects on human health, proper e-waste management is critical. In recent years, China has begun to pay more attention to e-waste management because the informal recycling and disposal by unauthorized collectors have brought serious environmental problems in some areas.

The application of intellectual technologies has given new opportunities for more effective e-waste management. Many companies in

China are developing smart e-waste collection and recycling systems by applying the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence (AI).

It should be mentioned that China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) arranged the visit to the waste sorting and recycling exhibition for the foreign journalists.

CIPCC, under the China Public Diplomacy Association (CPDA), has initiated a program to build a platform for the media from countries around the world, especially developing countries, to observe China and study development in this country.

The program aimed at media exchange was halted in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 epidemic.

In each edition of the program, journalists from all around the world gather together to get familiar with the modern China and exchange their experiences in the field of journalism.

In 2024 edition of the program, scheduled to be held from late February until late June, over 100 journalists from more than 90 countries are participating.

Genocide looms in Rafah

Israel orders 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate eastern Rafah amid an expected ground invasion

“Dangerous escalation”

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has warned about the repercussions of the evacuation order.

“This is a dangerous escalation that will have consequences. The US administration, alongside the occupation, bears responsibility for this terrorism,” Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters.

Prevent “genocide”

The Palestinian presidency has also said that Washington must be held responsible for the implications of Israel’s possible incursion into Rafah.

The spokesperson for President Mahmoud Abbas also said the US has provided financial and military support to the regime and encouraged it to continue “massacres” against Palestinians.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh demanded that the White House “act immediately, and prevent genocide and displacement in Gaza”.

The US and some of the other Western countries such as the UK stand accused of complicity in Israel’s crimes in Gaza over their military support for the regime.

MSF blasts Britain

The executive director of Doctors Without Borders has criticized the UK for failing to condemn Israel’s anticipated ground assault on Rafah.

In a post on X, Natalie Roberts wrote, “What is the UK government doing to avoid being complicit in the mass killings of Palestinians dying in their thousands from violence and disease?”

The international charity group, also known as MSF, has also sent a new letter to the British government denouncing arms supplies to Israel in the wake of its onslaught on Gaza which has claimed the lives of more than 34,700 Palestinians over the



past seven months.

“That these attacks on humanitarian workers are allowed to happen is a political choice – yet Israel faces no political cost. Instead, the UK is morally and politically complicit in enabling this brutality with impunity, by continuing to export arms that Israel uses to maim and kill civilians,” the letter said.

UNICEF warns of catastrophe

The United Nations children’s agency has also said Israel’s offensive on Rafah will be “horrific”.

James Elder, the UNICEF spokesperson, told Al Jazeera that the assault will amount to “catastrophe upon catastrophe”.

Save the Children further warned that an incursion into Rafah would not only risk the lives of more than 600,000 children but would also severely affect the humanitarian aid response for Gaza.

“We hoped this day would never come,” Inger Ashing, CEO of the charity, added.

Israel declared war on Gaza after Hamas carried out a surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7.

Since the start of the war, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until “total victory” over Hamas.

Over the past months, he has been

insisting that the Israeli army cannot emerge victorious against Hamas unless it conducts a ground military operation in Rafah.

Israel says four Hamas battalions amounting to thousands of fighters are operating in Rafah.

Israel wants to invade the city under such an excuse.

The Israeli military has bombed and stormed hospitals in Gaza and carried out massacres there over the past months. The regime claims Hamas uses hospitals as a command center without providing any evidence to back up its claims. It has resorted to such allegations to justify the massacres of civilians.

Another genocide could unfold in Rafah at the hands of Israeli troops under similar excuses.

Israel seeks to launch another bloodbath to paper over its military failures in Gaza and its incapability to eliminate Hamas.

Israel was under the illusion that intensifying attacks on Gaza would pit Palestinian people against Hamas.

But, according to assessments by the Israeli military’s intelligence, support for Hamas has grown not only among Gazans but also in the West Bank.

Israel’s imminent incursion into Rafah also comes as the latest

ceasefire talks were held in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

Hamas agrees to a ceasefire

However, in the closing hour of our newspaper Al Jazeera reported that Hamas has agreed to a ceasefire deal.

“The mujahid brother Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Hamas movement’s political bureau, had a phone call with the Qatari Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani, and with the Egyptian Minister of Intelligence, Abbas Kamel, and informed them of the Hamas movement’s approval of their proposal regarding the ceasefire agreement,” the resistance group said in a statement, according to Al Jazeera.

Netanyahu is under immense pressure to reach a deal with Hamas to secure the release of captives in Gaza.

Hamas took hostage nearly 250 Israelis and foreign nationals during its October 7 attack. Over 100 of them were released following a swap deal in November last year. Dozens of captives still remain in Gaza.

Israeli people and opposition have warned that an imminent incursion into Rafah would endanger the lives of the captives.

They have demanded that Netanyahu sign an agreement with Hamas to pave the way for freeing the captives.

Nonetheless, Netanyahu believes that a permanent state of war could offer him a lifeline because he is under fire for failing to prevent Hamas’ military operation which dealt severe blows to the regime.

Undoubtedly, Israel will not be able to continue the Gaza war without the support of the US and some other Western countries.

Hence, Washington and its allies would be responsible for the massacres that Israel may commit in Rafah.

WORLD HEADLINES

Russia announces nuclear weapon drills

Russia has said it will hold drills that will include practice for the use of tactical nuclear weapons, days after top European leaders voiced stronger military support for Ukraine.

The Kremlin said on Monday the military exercises ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin were in response to statements by Western and NATO-member countries about sending troops into Ukraine, which Russia invaded more than two years ago.

They will include practice for the preparation and deployment of nonstrategic nuclear weapons intended to “increase the readiness ... to fulfill combat tasks” after “provocative statements and threats of certain Western officials”, the Ministry of Defence said, according to Al Jazeera.

Russia’s strategic nuclear forces regularly hold exercises but the statement marked the first public announcement of drills involving tactical nuclear weapons, which are usually smaller in yield – the amount of power released during an explosion – than the strategic nuclear weapons designed to destroy entire cities.

The move marks an escalation of tensions that have risen since French President Emmanuel Macron said last week that his country would consider sending ground troops to Ukraine if Kyiv requests backup. A day later, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron said Ukraine could use British weapons against targets inside Russia if it wanted.

‘No military victory in the war, Israel needs to understand this’

Gershon Baskin, Middle East director at the International Communities Organization, says the Israeli evacuation order might either mean the launch of the long-threatened Israeli incursion into Rafah or be a response to Sunday’s rocket and mortar attack into Israel that killed

and wounded several Israeli soldiers.

Speaking to Al Jazeera from West Jerusalem, Baskin said Israel “needs to understand” that there is no military victory “in a war like this”.

“Hamas is an idea and ideology that cannot be destroyed by the military. There have to be political solutions to deal with the reality of Hamas and the reality of Gaza, and this is not being done,” he added, noting that the failure to reach a ceasefire deal has resulted in a “dead-lock situation” with dangerous consequences.

“There are no guarantees here. We are in the midst of a very, very evil war, but this needs to come to an end,” Baskin said.

“Israel is not willing to surrender, Hamas is not willing to surrender. There is a ceasefire offer on the table, I suggest we all accept it and try to figure out how to end this war as soon as possible.”

Guardian analysis: US weapon used in Israeli attack on health workers

Israel used a US weapon in a March airstrike which killed seven healthcare workers in southern Lebanon, according to a Guardian analysis of shrapnel found at the site of the attack, which was described by Human Rights Watch as a violation of international law.

Seven volunteer paramedics, aged between 18 and 25, were killed in the 27 March attack on an ambulance center belonging to the Lebanese Succor Association in the town of al-Habariyeh in south Lebanon on 27 March, the Guardian reported.

The Guardian examined the remnants of a 500lb Israeli MPR bomb and a US-manufactured Joint Direction Attack Munition (JDAM) recovered by first responders from the scene of the attack. Pictures of the shrapnel sent by the Guardian were further verified by Human Rights Watch and an independent arms expert.

Human Rights Watch said that its own investigation concluded that the strike on the healthcare center was unlawful and should have implications for US military assistance to Israel.

Dark day for media in occupied territories

Israeli cabinet bans Al Jazeera

From page 1 ▶ This has allowed Tel Aviv to avoid further scrutiny from global public opinion despite all eyes and public debate being largely focused on Gaza over the past seven months.

Pro-Israeli supporters who claim that foreign reporters are being prevented by the Israeli military from entering Gaza for their own safety are wrong. That is a decision that reporters take and have taken in all war zones around the world and in history.

The strict media censorship in the occupied lands has turned into a debate as many argue if the Israeli regime claims it is following international law in Gaza, the occupied West Bank or occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) then why would it be so scared of foreign media reporting on Israeli military action.

Instead, the regime is banning the only English-speaking channel from operating from Gaza where the Israeli military is accused of war crimes as well as killing a record number of journalists who were already on the ground before October including journalists reporting for Al Jazeera.

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also criticized the move, saying, “A free and independent media is essential to ensuring transparency and accountability. Now, even more so given tight restrictions on reporting from Gaza.”

There is a similar pattern of media censorship in the West.

Following Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine, Britain led Europe to ban the Russian media outlet RT.

This led the British public to switch to Western media for their news coverage on another conflict, the Ukraine war, which critics have accused Western media of being extremely one-sided on.

EXCLUSIVE: Protests for justice in Palestine are also protests against political authoritarianism: professor

“Crackdown on students at Columbia and elsewhere is outrageous”

TEHRAN – Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, a Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies at SOAS University of London, says student protests in the U.S. against the Israeli war in Gaza “are also a protest against political authoritarianism”.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Professor Adib-Moghaddam also says police crackdown on students at Columbia University and other academic institutions is “outrageous”.

Anti-war encampments in the U.S. are spreading to campuses in other countries, including France, Britain, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Ireland, Lebanon and Jordan.

Students are challenging their schools’ stances on the war in Gaza and ties to Israel, which is carrying out a scorched-earth war against the Palestinians in Gaza.

“Students are expressing their right of free speech as democratic citizens,” Adib-Moghaddam says.

Following is the text of the interview:

Aren’t the crackdown and arrest of students at American universities by police a violation of the right to protest and freedom of opinion?

First and foremost, the violent suppression erodes the principles of democracy itself, not only in the United States, but also elsewhere as autocratic governments try to point to this assault on freedom in order to rationalize their own brutality towards people.

Do you agree with this view that the United States is manifesting a double standard approach in this regard?

The government of the United States is not an exception in applying double-standards. Of course, there is no comparison between innocent civilians being killed, maimed and tortured which recurrently happens in autocratically ruled countries and what is happening on the campuses of the United States. But the events at Columbia and elsewhere are particularly outrageous exactly because they happen in a country that claims to be the “leader of the free world”. It is right that peo-

ple all over the world hold their governments to account. In the end, they are exclusively there to serve us and we better make sure that they do so adequately or they should be booted out.

Aren’t these moves “un-American” or a violation of the values that the United States claims it stands for?

The civil society always created dissent. I would compare the current spasm of resistance to the 68 generation, the anti-War movement at the time which was steeped in a global counter-culture against all forms of authoritarianism itself galvanized by the revolutions in the Global South in particular in Cuba. In the end, it was this resistance that ended the Vietnam war and even then Palestine was central to the discourse. This “un-American” behavior, then, is what the United States could be: A valuable addition to the global struggle for freedom and emancipation from oppressive governmental policies.

The brutality of Israel in Gaza has shocked the world. It has so far killed about 30 people in Gaza in response to every person killed in the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. However, the protestors are accused of “anti-Semitism” while a considerable number of the protestors are Jews. Why do you think politicians, including President Biden, are using such slanders against students and other opponents of the war?

Undoubtedly, anti-Semitism is vile and it does exist beyond the platitudes that we are hearing. Anti-Semitism is the flip side of other forms of racism, including “Islamophobia”, so battling it must be a part of any global resistance against injustice. In fact, the students in the United States and elsewhere are acutely aware of that responsibility. These students are expressing their right of free speech as democratic citizens. It is not in the interest of all of us who are truly appalled by all forms of discrimination that the US government is using labels that simply do not apply. No one is blind. The mass killings in Gaza by the Netanyahu government will go down in history as one of the

“Netanyahu has wished a clash of civilizations between a “white West” and the rest.”

everywhere in the world. In fact, this is what Netanyahu has wished for in the first place, in the United States and Europe, a clash of civilizations between a “white West” and the rest. The effect of all of this could be a serious threat to democracy – and with a potential re-election of Trump, a push towards even more global instability.

Students are expressing their right of free speech as democratic citizens

Old wall unearthed during street renovation in Hamedan



TEHRAN – Remnants of a brick wall have recently been discovered some 1.5 meters beneath the surface when workers dug side-lines of a street in the ancient city of Hamedan, west-central Iran.

According to a local tourism official, the ruins were found in a pedestrianization project on Baba Taher Street, captivating the attention of cultural heritage enthusiasts and archaeologists alike.

Initial estimates suggest that the wall belongs to an ancient structure, buried approximately 1.5 meters beneath the street's surface, Hamidreza Heidari, the deputy tourism chief of Hamedan province, announced on Sunday.

"While excavating at a depth of 1.5 meters at the beginning of Baba Taher Street, a wall, which is apparently part of an ancient building, was unearthed.

However, the exact antiquity of which is yet to be determined."

Heidari emphasized the necessity of thorough examination by experts to ascertain whether the wall indeed bears historical importance.

He added, "Our colleagues in archaeology are meticulously working on this artifact to precisely determine its historical relevance."

As the excavation continues and experts delve deeper into the mysteries of this newfound relic, anticipation builds regarding what other historical secrets may be concealed beneath the streets of Hamedan, offering a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Iran's ancient past.

Hamedan, historically known as Ecbatana, stood as a pivotal city in ancient times, boasting prominence as one of the ancient world's paramount centers.

Though few relics from antiquity endure, extensive portions of the city center remain dedicated to archaeological excavations, offering glimpses into its storied past.

Notably, Hamedan is renowned as the resting place of the Tomb of Avicenna, honoring the legacy of the Islamic world's revered scientist.

Additionally, visitors marvel at the Ali Sadr Cave and the ancient inscriptions of Ganjnameh, attributed to the rulers Darius and Xerxes of Persia.

Situated on a lofty plateau, Hamedan's origins trace back to the urbanization efforts of the Medes, Assyrians, Persians, and Parthians. While it may no longer rival its legendary status of yore, the city remains steeped in cultural richness, a testament to its enduring heritage.

One of the province's striking features is its seamless blend of cultural heritage and natural splendor.

Visitors are treated to picturesque landscapes, traditional eateries, verdant public gardens, bustling outdoor markets, and above all, the warm hospitality of its inhabitants. Hamedan continues to captivate visitors with its timeless allure, offering a glimpse into the tapestry of Iran's ancient history.

Tourism in China surges during May Day holiday but travelers turn frugal

China has reported a surge in tourism during the just concluded Labor Day holiday, but travelers cut back on their spending, in a sign that consumption in world's second largest economy remains sluggish.

Tourists made a total of 295 million trips within mainland China during the five-day-long holiday, which ended on Sunday, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism said on Monday.

That was 28% more than the number of trips taken during the Labor Day holiday period in 2019, which lasted only four days. Months later, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic would strike China and the world, largely shutting down travel.

This year's Labor Day tourism revenue was 166.89 billion yuan (\$23.6 billion), only 13.5% higher than the 2019 level.

That means tourists were spending less money per trip compared to five years ago, as

their average spending dropped 6% to 565.73 yuan (\$80).

There was a similar pattern at China's box office.

During the holiday period, 37.77 million people went to the cinema, exceeding 2019's 35.09 million.

But ticket sales were about the same as 2019 levels, reaching 1.527 billion yuan (\$215.7 million).

Chinese consumers have curtailed spending as the economy weakens and job prospects worsen.

A record downturn in real estate, which accounts for 70% of household wealth, is weighing on consumer sentiment.

"[Chinese] consumer sentiment appears shaky judging by the sluggish retail sales spending momentum and the sharp reversal in the April services PMI," analysts from TD Securities said in a recent research note.

(Source: CNN)

Iran in frames



The ancient village of Abyaneh attracts numerous native and foreign tourists year-round, especially during traditional feasts and ceremonies.

Archaeological-rich Zel Cave to undergo excavation

TEHRAN – Zel Cave, an archaeological-rich place in central Iran, will undergo a 2nd authorized season of excavation in the near future.

Over the past century, this cave has been looted several times by unauthorized excavators, and many of its Pahlavi-scripted leather inscriptions have been plundered, with a substantial number held in American and German universities and private collections.

Situated near the village of Hastijan in Delijan county of Markazi province, the cave underwent an extensive excavation last year, yielding relics ranging from a Sasanian-era reed flute to one-centimeter bags, sleeves, and pieces of personal ornamentation.

Payng a visit to the cave on Sunday, Mahmoud Moradi, the provincial tourism chief, underlined discoveries made in the first archaeological season as "significant".

"Among the finds were raw bricks, pottery shards, textile fragments, and leather inscriptions dating back to the Sassanid era," the official said.

Azar (November-December) last year, in the presence of the acting head of the archaeological team, experts, and archaeological supervisors.

Further detailing the discoveries, Moradi highlighted, "The leather inscriptions, inscribed in Pahlavi script, belong to the Sassanid period and were uncovered during the first season of archaeological exploration at Zel Cave.

The excavation will continue until the end of summer, the official said.

Zel Cave, also known as Takht-e Qaleh, is nestled within the rugged terrain south of Takht-e Qaleh



Iranian tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami (L) visits a public exhibition of relics discovered from Zel Cave in central Iran.

Mountain, approximately 14 kilometers southeast of Delijan and 2.5 kilometers northeast of Hastijan village.

Regrettably, the integrity of the cave's architectural features has been compromised by unauthorized excavations. Throughout the past century, Zel Cave has fallen victim to numerous instances of looting by unauthorized individuals, resulting in the plundering of many of its leather inscriptions scripted in Pahlavi. A considerable portion of these inscriptions now resides in collections housed within American and German universities, as well as private collections. Remarkably, despite a hiatus of seven decades, archaeological exploration of the cave resumed in October and November of the current year, shedding light on its tumultuous history.

Archaeological findings from this recent excavation effort include leather fabrics bearing inscriptions, wooden implements, fragments of pottery, and remnants of animal bones, all dating back to the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods. This resurgence of exploration

promises to unveil further insights into the cave's past, despite the setbacks inflicted by illicit excavations in decades past.

A part of a sleeve without an owner!

Sections of a garment's sleeves, its owner's whereabouts, and their fate remaining unknown, are preserved amid the cave's stones and dry space. These sleeve ends are now showcased in museum display cases along with a part of a shoe lacking its sole.

Other leather inscriptions from the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods have been found but remain unread. Now, some of these fabrics, leather inscriptions, and ropes made from goat hair are exhibited in the halls of the National Museum of Iran.

The magic of a reed flute

One of the findings pertains to a reed flute, remarkably similar in shape and composition to modern-day flutes. This flute indicates that Iran had written materials from the Sasanian era using this instrument. Archaeologists believe

that this discovery has pushed back the history of reed-writing instruments by 1,400 years.

Inscribed pottery, a seal in the form of a rose, a ring seal, clay seals, part of a wicker basket, wooden tools, and combs, and a necklace alongside the fabrics from that period constitute another section of the Hastijan's cave exhibition.

A letter from brother to sister

One of the most significant findings from this cave is related to a document written by a brother to his sister. This document, which is being kept at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California, demonstrates the importance placed on honoring women's status during the Sasanian period and afterward. The content of this letter has attracted considerable attention from archaeologists, researchers, linguists, experts, and even visitors.

This private letter dates back to the late Sasanian era or the beginning of the Islamic period and was probably written somewhere between Qom and Kashan. It indicates widespread literacy and writing among the Iranian populace before the advent of Islam.

In the document, it is written: May the pearls of my dear sister, whom God may make happier, bring every happiness to my sister. I, through the hand of fate, have sent a bottle of pure oil. Write to me about your health and well-being, and be reassured about my 'well-being' and my children.

However, the last line of this leather inscription, 'Send the oil soon,' remains a matter of dispute among archaeologists. Some claim this sentence exists in the leather inscription, while others refute its presence.

Border guards to be trained in handicraft skills

TEHRAN – In an innovative move to intertwine cultural preservation with military training, border guards in Sistan-Baluchestan will soon be trained in handicraft skills

Some handicraft workshops have been arranged for border guards in Sistan-Baluchestan based on an initiative to preserve the cultural heritage of the nation, a local official said on Monday.

"This educational program is part of a broader effort to promote handicraft traditions," Vahideh Derakhshani said.

This initiative, spearheaded by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in partnership with the Central Skills Training Headquarters of the Armed Forces, seeks to enrich the guards' skills while honoring and sustaining traditional crafts, she brought to light.

Amol festival seeks to revive local games and sports

TEHRAN – Amol is set to host a festival of local games and sports intended to help revive indigenous cultural practices of the northern Iranian city.

Mehdi Bahmani, Amol's cultural heritage chief, announced the one-day festival will be held on May 15.

"The festival is a collaborative effort involving related organizations such as Shomal University, the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO..." Bahmani further elaborated.

The official pointed out that the festival aims to revive and showcase traditional games such as Haft Sang, Dajbal (Vasati), Aghuzka (walnut game), Tug of war, stick pulling and Chelik Mareka.

Bahmani emphasized the cultural significance of local games as not only a reflection of the region's cultural identity but also as an effective means of attracting tourists.

"Public holidays, particularly Nowruz and summer, provide an excellent opportunity to engage

During a coordination meeting held on Monday, Rakhshani emphasized that expanding handicraft education across different fields remains a key priority for the Deputy of Handicrafts.

"We are ready to collaborate and participate with all executive, military and private sectors," she stated.

The official also outlined that the initiative stems from high-level discussions resulting in a memorandum of understanding with the Central Skills Training Headquarters of the Armed Forces.

"It is decided that an initial group, consisting of 100 soldiers from the Sistan-Baluchestan border guards," she stated. "Would benefit from this skill training during their service."

Regarding the timeline, the official revealed that the training sessions are set to begin in August and will last for three months.

Rakhshani further explained that the training would cover various specialties based on needs assessment, featuring gemology and stone carving, leatherwork and marquetry.

"At the end of the training period, participants who excel," she wined up. "Will be awarded certificates of completion, which they can use to start their own businesses or enhance their existing skills."

The related officials expressed hope that this program will not only equip the soldiers with valuable skills but also help in the preservation and enhancement of the rich cultural heritage of Sistan-Baluchestan through the promotion of its traditional crafts.



As claimed by the provincial officials, the one-day festival promises to offer a vibrant display of Amol's cultural and sports heritage, appealing to a diverse audience, including cultural enthusiasts, tourists, and local communities.

Zanjan hosting festival of ethnic heritage

TEHRAN – Zanjan is playing host to an ethnic festival that features nationwide customs of Iranians along with handicrafts and souvenirs.

"The event provides visitors with an opportunity to re-discover ethnicities from across the country," the provincial tourism chief said on Monday.

Running from May 5 to 10, the event is a notable outcome of the synergy between the public and the authorities, Saeed Safavi said.

"Moreover, it is a venue for purchasing handicrafts and souvenirs as well."

He further elaborated on the primary goal of the festival, stating that such events create

a great atmosphere for cultural exchange and could lead to the continuation of the art within the artisans.

"Communal happiness is what we're trying to achieve," Safavi added.

According to the official, the festival will include traditional music performances, exhibitions, and the introduction of cultures and customs hailing from across the country.

He further detailed that the festival would span six days and focus on promoting a vast array of Iranian traditions.

"The festival feature 95 segments," the director-general explained. "Dedicated to 15 provin-

es across Iran."

Regarding the participants, he outlined that Zanjan, Tehran, East and West Azerbaijan, Hamedan, Qazvin and Gilan are some of the active provinces throughout the course of the six-day festival.

Kordestan, Fars, Kermanshah, Alborz, Yazd, Khorasan Razavi, Lorestan along with Khuzestan are the other provinces having stalls in the exhibition, according to the official.

"The Iranian Ethnicities Festival has been set to run from May 5 to 10, welcoming the enthusiasts from 4 to 10 PM" Safavi wined up. "Taking place at Zanjan International Exhibitions Center."

Around 19,000 thalassemia patients identified

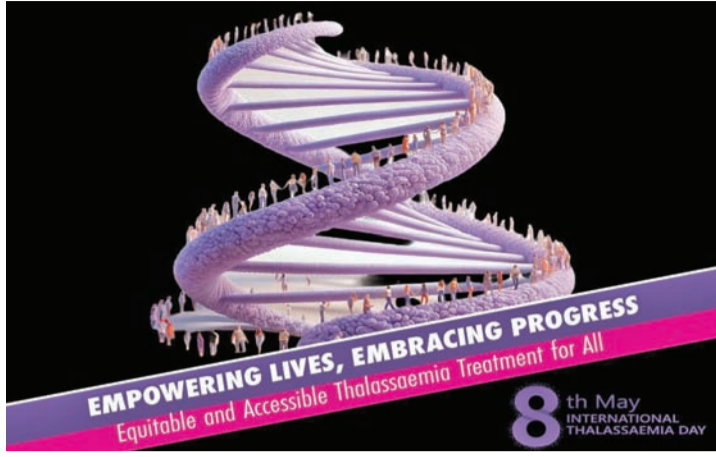
TEHRAN –Currently, there are about 19,000 patients with thalassemia in the country, with 15,500 diagnosed with thalassemia major, 2,800 with thalassemia intermedia, and 1,000 suffering from sickle cell disease and other hemoglobinopathy disorders.

Thalassaemia is a genetic blood disorder that hinders the body's ability to produce hemoglobin, resulting in varying degrees of anemia, fatigue, and related complications. The severity of the condition varies depending on the type of thalassemia, making expert care crucial for effective treatment and management.

Celebrated on May 8th, the World Thalassaemia Day raises awareness of the disease. With an estimated 100 million people worldwide carrying genes responsible for thalassemia, and more than 300,000 babies born annually with severe forms of the disease, the Day is a powerful call to raise awareness about this condition and its impact while celebrating the solidarity of the resilient thalassemia community worldwide.

Each year, World Thalassaemia Day is celebrated according to a theme. The theme for the year 2024 is 'Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All'.

It underlines the timely need for a unified approach in ad-



ressing the patients' right to access all available, approved, and safe treatment options—regardless of cost—and achieve the best possible quality of life.

The theme also conveys the message of empowering individuals affected by thalassaemia through advancements in treatment options, while emphasizing the need for continued and collective awareness and advocacy efforts to bring about meaningful improvements to the lives of everyone affected by this genetic condition.

In Iran, a total of 240 health centers across public hospitals provide patients with blood transfusion services.

The services include blood transfusions, iron chelation therapy, and other essential services.

Moreover, 30 academic centers provide specific tests such

as ferritin tests, T2 MRI, rehabilitation services, and dental care.

The disease is mostly prevalent in the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khozestan, and Hormozgan.

Domestically manufactured medicines to prevent iron overload, either in the form of pills or shots under the skin, are available in sufficient quantities.

Also, as per regulations, foreign medications are accessible to patients who need them, with 97 percent of the costs covered by insurance.

The health ministry aims to improve services in the current Iranian year that started on March 20 by providing financial protection to cover the total expenses of rare diseases.

The health ministry also plans to develop comprehensive packages for the diagnosis and treat-

ment of rare and hard-to-treat diseases, increasing services in each support package, and establishing relevant scientific advisory committees.

Genetic counseling for thalassemia before marriage, and prenatal diagnosis services are available in the country with the government paying for the costs.

442 rare diseases identified in Iran

A total of 442 rare diseases have been identified in the country according to a recent report by the Rare Disease Foundation.

The incidence of rare diseases is very low to the extent that maybe one or two people with a certain rare disease are present in the country. Some rare diseases such as 'butterfly skin or EB', 'Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)', 'Metabolic diseases', 'Autism', and 'Dystrophies' are among the most common cases in the country. A sum of 50 trillion rials (about \$100 million) was allocated in the past Iranian calendar year that ended on March 20, 2023, IRNA reported, adding that the figure rose to 70 trillion rials this year.

Considering the number of patients identified, the needed medicines, and medical tools, a sum of 150 to 180 thousand trillion (about \$300 million) is expected to be allocated for the current Iranian calendar year, beginning on March 21.

Oral health campaign kicks off

TEHRAN – The ministry of health kicked off on Monday an oral health campaign with the main objective of raising awareness about the fundamental role of oral and dental health in overall health.

Under the theme of 'mouth is the gateway to health', the campaign will wrap up on Wednesday.

There is a two-way relationship between periodontal diseases and diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory infections, premature birth, and low birth weight babies.

Smoking is one of the leading causes of oral cancer, and poor oral hygiene is directly linked to mental health issues and heart diseases. Gum diseases are associated with diabetes. So good oral health is essential for overall well-being.

'Oral and dental health, child health' is the theme of the second day of the campaign. Oral health education programs will be conducted in schools to raise students' awareness. Also, the oral and dental health of students will be checked, and if a student needs treatment, they will be referred to health centers.

On the third day of the campaign, the focus will be on 'the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in oral and dental health'.

The role of different institutions and individuals in promoting oral and dental health will be clarified.

Overall, the goal of the oral health campaign is to improve awareness of dental health and underscore the significance of oral care.

Basic dental services are accessible to everyone in health centers, with free dental care services offered in villages and cities with a population of less than 20,000 people.

FDI World Dental Federation theme for the 2024 campaign will be 'A happy mouth is a happy body', encouraging people to understand the benefits of a happy, healthy mouth by shedding light on the intricate link between oral health and general health.

Health is a universal right

Health is a universal right and responsibility that is not limited to any specific age group, culture, or nationality, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi has said.

All members of society from their childhood to old age have the right to access high-quality health services without financial worries.

Access to clean drinking water, soil, air, and food is a fundamental right and responsibility, the Health Ministry's website quoted Einollahi as saying.



He made the remarks on the occasion of World Health Day 2024, calling upon decision-makers to create conducive environments for individuals to actively participate in creating and maintaining health, from home to the community and the environment.

He went on to say that the family health program and referral system in Iran is one of the most advanced health programs in the world. It aims to enhance everyone's access to health services, promote well-being, and achieve significant welfare objectives.

Launched last year, the program seeks to foster a healthy, vibrant society through national and collective efforts at all levels of society.

The upcoming National Health Week will set health priorities for the next year in alignment with the national plans and priorities.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries

Some 105 medical equipment produced by 23 Iranian companies are exported to 55 countries across the world, Reza Masaeli, an advisor to the health minister said on Sunday.

"Currently, a total of 280,000 medical equipment is produced in the country," Fars quoted Masaeli as saying.

"In recent years, the production of medical equipment in Iran has increased by 9 percent," he added.

One of the main strategies of the Health Ministry is to boost exports, he said, adding that Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries including Russia, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Croatia.

تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی به ۵۵ کشور صادر می شود

مشاور وزیر بهداشت گفت: در حال حاضر ۱۰۵ محصول تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی که توسط ۲۳ شرکت ایرانی تولید می شود، به ۵۵ کشور جهان صادر می شود.

به گزارش خبرگزاری فارس، رضا مسائلی، اظهار داشت: در کشور بیش از ۲۸۰ هزار قلم تجهیزات پزشکی در کشور وجود دارد و در سال های اخیر، تولیدات تجهیزات پزشکی در جمهوری اسلامی ایران، ۹ درصد افزایش داشته است.

وی توجه به صادرات را یکی از مهمترین راهبردهای اساسی وزارت بهداشت در راستای حمایت از تولیدات داخلی دانست و افزود: در حال حاضر محصولات تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی به ۵۵ کشور جهان از جمله کشورهای روسیه، آلمان، ایتالیا، بلژیک، هلند و کرواسی صادر می شود.

Tehran to host 9th intl. conference on seismology, earthquake engineering

TEHRAN –The 9th International Conference on Seismology and Earthquake Engineering will be held in Tehran from May 7 to 9.

The conference will be held under the theme of 'earthquake and megacities, with a focus on Tehran'.

Seismology and Early Warning Systems, Geotechnical Earthquake Engineering, Structural Earthquake Engineering, and Earthquake Risk Management are the main topics of the conference, IRNA reported.

The event is held every four years, attracting many researchers and experts who attend to share their latest findings.

Six prominent foreign lectures are attending the conference, a total of 415 articles will be presented in the form of lectures and posters, and 43 articles from other countries will focus on seismology, the earthquakes, faults, and magnitudes of earthquakes, as well as prevention in terms of securing buildings and their designs, and post-earthquake, that is crisis management.

The articles are from Germany, Norway, the U.S., Spain, Australia, the UAE, England, Italy, Brazil, Turkey, Japan, China, Sweden, France, Canada, New Zealand, India, the Czech Republic, and other countries.

The main goal of the conference is to solve the problems that exist in the country regarding major earthquakes in metropolitan cities such as Tehran, Tabriz, Mashhad, Shiraz, and Isfahan.

It will study earthquakes and their issues in Iran and seek measures to address problems related to earthquakes, i.e. to create safer cities and buildings that can withstand and resist earthquakes.

Meanwhile, 16 specialized workshops will be conducted in fields such as construction on faults, Tehran earthquakes, and the design and construction of resilient hospitals.

At the end of the conference, based on the data obtained in these workshops, a resolution will be formulated to promote resilience and crisis management and develop safe construction practices for officials and policymakers.

Earthquakes in Iran

Iran, being located between two Arabian and Euro-Asian tectonic plates, has experienced several destructive earthquakes, leaving heavy casualties and serious deterioration in different periods of its history.

Over 130 severe earthquakes happened in the 20th century in the country, leaving socio-economic losses and long-lasting effects that indicate the seismicity and vulnerability of this country.

Unfortunately, during some of these disastrous natural events, even the invaluable evidence of ancient Persian culture has been flattened to the ground. All the aforementioned facts confirm the crucial necessity of being concerned about seeking a remedy in order to prevent and diminish these effects.

Almost 6,950 quakes in a year

Some 6,949 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the past calendar year, which ended on March 20, according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

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

Statistically, 2, 268 earthquakes were less than

2 on the Richter scale, 3,685 were between 2 and 3, 796 were between 3 and 4, 181 were between 4 and 5, 22 were between 5 and 6, and 5 were between 6 and 7.

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

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

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

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

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

Intl. Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering (IIEES)

Regarding the high seismicity, vulnerability, and high seismic risk of this region, the International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering (IIEES) was established in November 1989 following the suggestion of the 24th UNESCO General Conference and approval of the Iranian government "Council of Higher Education Development" based on the investment of Iranian experts in the earthquake engineering.

In order to realize the goals of the institute and develop the knowledge in this arena, training intelligent students could be of great help. In this regard, IIEES was approved as a "Research Center" at the 408th meeting of the "Council of Higher Education Development" in 1999 and then its new doctrine was affirmed in August 2001.

Today IIEES is engaged in the implementation of national and international projects and will take effective steps in protecting the lives and properties of human beings against the activities of nature thanks to all its responsible and qualified researchers.

The main goals of IIEES are investigation, technology, and education in all aspects pertinent to seismology, earthquake engineering, earthquake hazard, and suggesting practical approaches and supporting their implementation to reduce the risks of earthquakes and develop the security culture against earthquakes in this country and in the region.

The International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering (IIEES) hopes to bring together more scientists and researchers in the field of earthquake science and engineering by holding conferences every four years and turn this international conference into a memorable scientific and cultural event.



Paddy fields in Mazandaran province

A farmer is working in a paddy field in the northern province of Mazandaran, planting rice after the field was plowed.

Planting season begins in mid-spring when the weather gets warm in the region.



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
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

MAY 7, 2024

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: 19:16 Dawn: 3:29 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:05 (tomorrow)

Taha Behbahani's bird sculptures on show at Art Center



TEHRAN-An exhibition of artworks by the veteran artist Taha Behbahani is underway at Art Center Gallery in northern Tehran.

Entitled "Thirty Birds for Simorgh," the exhibit showcases a collection of bird sculptures created by Behbahani in about 40 years of artistic career, IRNA reported on Monday.

Behbahani, 77, is a famous Iranian sculptor, painter, set designer, TV and theatre director, and a university professor.

He was born into an art-loving family and learned the basics of painting from his father. He later became a distinguished student of master Ali Akbar Najmabadi (one of Kamal-ol-Molk's students) at the age of 13.

He went through his high school education and Kamal-ol-Molk Art school simultaneously and then entered the Faculty of Dramatic Art and graduated in set design for theater, television and cinema.

Later in Paris and Salzburg, he started to study and research in the field of Marionette Theater and its connections to the painting and sculpture of the east.

Upon his return to Iran, he started teaching at the faculty of Dramatic Arts and for some years was the director of Marionette Theater Department of the faculty. During this period, He directed over 450 educational television programs and two plays for the Festival of Arts in Shiraz. He also designed the sets for famous plays such as "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and "The Glass Menagerie".

However, he has devoted himself to painting and sculpture since the 60s. He was one of the

artists who created a new atmosphere in the painting in 1960's. By presenting his works; he propounded the Metaphysical Surrealistic School in painting.

Behbahani creates allegorical works that are sometimes similar to surrealism. He often uses the lonely, silent bird with eyes on the road as a symbol of man in a mystical expression in his paintings and figures.

He has participated in 40 different exhibitions as a solo artist or as a member of a group of artists in Iran and abroad. Among them are his exhibitions in Paris in 1993 and 1994, and his exhibition in Venezuela in 1999. Since 2001, he has participated in many group exhibitions in the U.S.

His paintings are kept in the personal collections of more than 45 American, French, Japanese, Emirati, Dutch, etc. collectors.

He has been a member of the executive board of Iran's National Creative Arts Committee, affiliated with UNESCO and a jury member in a number of international exhibitions.

The word "Simorgh" in the title of the exhibition refers to the benevolent bird in Persian mythology and literature. It bears some similarities with mythological birds from different origins, such as the phoenix and the huma. The figure can be found in all periods of Iranian art and literature and is also evident in the iconography of Georgia, medieval Armenia, the Eastern Roman Empire, and other regions that were within the realm of Persian cultural influence.

Literally meaning 30 birds in Persian, Simorgh is a gigantic wise bird representing the union between the Earth and the sky, serving as mediator and messenger between the two.

The legendary creature has been used in Ferdowsi's epic Shahnameh (Book of Kings) and by Attar of Nishapur in his symbolic story of "The Conference of the Birds," among other literary works.

Behbahani's solo show will run through May 14 at Art Center Gallery located at No. 145, North Salimi St., Andarzgooy Blvd.

"Gaza": a cinematic journey through resilience and struggle

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN-"Gaza" is a documentary directed by Garry Keane and Andrew McConnell, produced in 2019 by Ireland, Canada, and Germany. This documentary takes audiences on an 86-minute exploration of the daily struggles and resilience of the people living in this small strip of land. Filmed between the Israeli war in 2014 and the border protests in 2018, "Gaza" is backed by Ireland and premiered at Sundance before kicking off its international release at the Dublin Film Festival.

Rocket in response to the stone

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Keane explained that he was sick of looking at the controlled narrative that was coming out of Gaza. "The...look at them attacking us (with stones) so we are justified in defending ourselves" (with heavy artillery) narrative, being delivered in rough, news sound bites and we wanted to provide something completely different."

Only 25 kilometers long, seven kilometers wide, and home to two million impoverished inhabitants, Gaza is shut off from the world by a harsh blockade.

The film is about two teenagers from two sides of the social divide in Gaza: Karma and Ahmed. We first see Ahmed at the age of 14, who dreams of fishing and follows in the footsteps of many of the men in his family. His whole life revolves around the sea.

Ahmed and his fellow citizens explain that the three-mile limit on fishing territory is imposed, monitored and enforced by Israeli border control; And that fly-fishing offenders are immediately charged and imprisoned.

Ahmed's 36 brothers and sisters, for whom Deir Al Balah refugee camp is home, represent a young workforce for Gaza, according to their father's beliefs.

The painful realities of Gaza are not limited to large refugee families. Originally from Jerusalem and of Istanbul heritage, lawyer, Manal Khalafawi, and her 19-year-old cellist daughter, Karma, share their stories about being trapped in a place where their educated, cultured minds and hearts have no chances to thrive, grow or take flight.

Karma, an astute young girl who finds limited solace in her cello and the sea, comments that people in the West "only see what they want to see."

Final scenes bring us up to May 2018 and some of the bloodiest clashes in Gaza's history, leaving 60 protesters dead and 2,500 injured.

Not just a battle zone!

"We set out to turn the cameras around and face them back to Gaza and its people, humanize them by letting them share their life stories, spend time with them, get to know them, let them explain to the world that all they want to do - and this



goes for the vast majority of Gazans - is to lead normal lives, raise and educate their children and not live in a constant state of fear," Keane said.

"We met beautiful, decent, hardworking family people when we were making the film in Gaza. They are being murdered en masse."

The director explained that in the film they reveal the beauty, color, vibrancy and human warmth on display in Gaza. "It really is an extraordinary and unique place and sadly, because of the blockade, Gaza is never properly seen by the outside world, who are fed only a one-dimensional view."

"We believed back in 2018 that our film would be the first time that audiences worldwide would literally see Gaza and would understand that it is more than just a battle zone, and come to realize that, yes, Gaza is devastated by recurring conflict but is certainly not defined by it," Keane highlighted.

An insight into Gaza

He pointed out that the film had been in planning for several years, ultimately requiring over six years to complete. "We know lots and lots of people in Gaza and have always been in touch with them, and always will."

"Since November our company has raised over €140,000 for Gaza, for the charity Amjaad that we support there and other charities too and also to help our dear friends escape the horrific genocide that's happening there - in full view of the world," the director added.

Keane told the Tehran Times that his purpose in making this documentary was to give the world access and insight into Gaza, so they could gain a proper understanding of the people and the place. He mentioned that the Israeli government likes to propagate the idea that everyone in Gaza is a terrorist and therefore, everyone in Gaza is a threat to the Israeli regime.

"That literally makes every citizen of Gaza a legitimate target in their eyes and look at how that is playing out over the last six months

- nearly 35,000 people killed and nearly 15,000 of them children! and thousands and thousands more injured. This is genocide plain and simple," he added.

Anti-colonial Irish DNA

Keane also mentioned the influence of his Irish origin in his concern about the occupation of Palestine and said: "I come from Ireland and in our DNA, we have the memory of over 700 years of British occupation, so we naturally emphasize with any occupied territories but the Irish have always had a particular connection with the plight of Palestinians."

He is thankful that they do not have much exposure to Zionists in Ireland and they're not just 'curious' about Gaza here, they are very knowledgeable and very aware of everything that has been going on there for the longest time.

"Gaza" portrays the painful situation of the people of this strip as well as the inexcusable crimes of the Israeli regime in an honest way and avoids direct political engagement. However, the film's very existence is enough for some critics to dismiss it offhand as "propaganda" or "manipulative and disingenuous".

Keane believes that the incorrect and supportive policies of the United States towards the Israeli regime are the cause of the critical situation in Gaza. "America is helping to destroy Gaza. A nearly \$100 billion aid bill to Israel was signed recently. That legislation provides Israel's military with about \$15 billion as it continues to bombard Gaza and kill innocent people."

He also stated that the international community seems to have turned their backs on these tortured souls. "Everyone seems to have become desensitized to the cruelty that's been inflicted on them. It's so very wrong what is being allowed to happen. I'm ashamed of the world's so-called lawmakers. There is no such thing as International Law."

A new project about Gaza

The director was moved by the people of Gaza who continue to struggle against unbelievable hardship, persevere when hope is scarce, show kindness without seeking favors, offer welcome in the face of abandonment, and find moments of joy amidst devastation, inspiring them during the making of "Gaza".

"Now our film has become a historical document of what Gaza was and how maybe, it'll never be again," the director added.

Keane told the Tehran Times that he and his team are planning to make a new film about the conditions in Gaza after October 7 and have just returned from Cairo; where they interviewed families who had escaped Gaza. Ordinary people who have no homes anymore, whose lives have been shattered and torn apart, many who have lost family members.

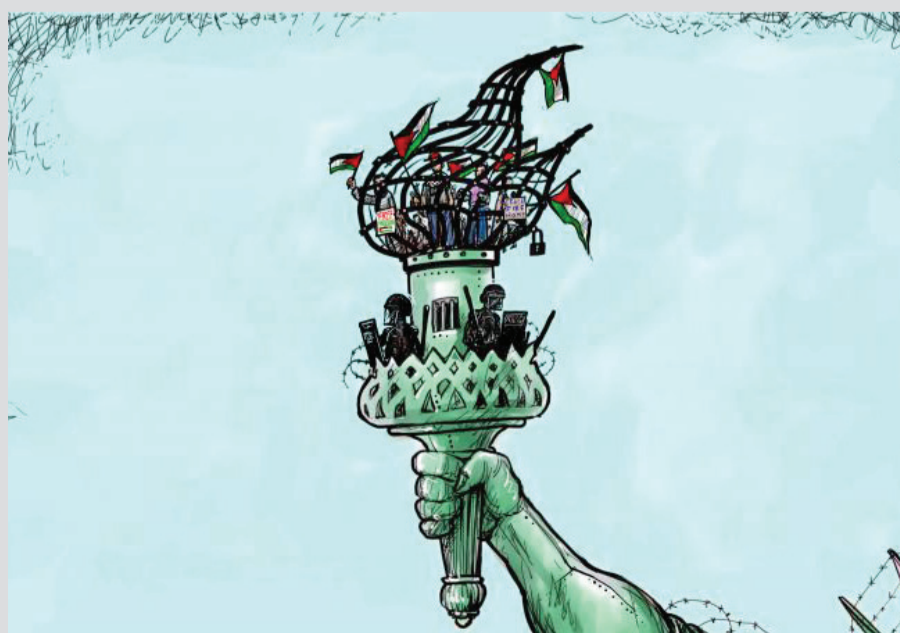
"Gorgeous human beings who have been forced to leave their homeland. It's Nakba all over again but on a completely different scale. We are going to follow these families over the next year and tell their stories."

He noted that they are going to show people the horrific effects of displacement, something that has plagued Palestinians long before 1948.

Keane also mentioned Doctor Mahmoud Abu Nujaila, who was killed in a hospital strike at the Al-Awda hospital in northern Gaza. Keane recounted the sentence that Abu Nujaila wrote on a hospital whiteboard just before his death: "Whoever stays until the end will tell our story. We did what we could. Remember us."

"Gaza" documentary won many awards including the Dublin Film Critics Award & Honorable Mention for Best Documentary (Ireland), the Pull Focus Award of Belfast Film Festival (UK), and the Audience Choice Award of Amman International Film Festival (Jordan).

Cartoon of Day



Students Protest

Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

Iran, Armenia to bolster interfaith cooperation

TEHRAN- The head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) and the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicos of All Armenians, met to discuss expanding interfaith collaboration between the two countries.

The meeting was held during Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipour's visit to the Etchmiadzin Cathedral in Armenia on Saturday, IRNA reported.

Imanipour emphasized the need for religions to interact and collaborate with each other, stating, "We have moved beyond merely acquainting ourselves with religions and are now focusing on interaction and cooperation."

He explained plans to sign a cultural cooperation agreement in order to strengthen relations between Iran and Armenia.

ICRO has been engaging in religious dialogues with various faiths for the past 35 years, with interfaith dialogue being a key focus for the organization, he noted.

Imanipour continued by highlighting Iran's progression from introductory dialogues about religions to actively discussing ways to interact and cooperate.



Expressing regret over the genocide in Gaza, he remarked, "The conflict there revealed the inadequacy of international institutions, underscoring the need for new mechanisms to establish global peace."

He underscored the significant role of religions in safeguarding world peace, affirming Iran's commitment to promoting lasting peace in the region through dialogue.

He stressed the potential for achieving enduring peace in the region through collaborative and constructive discussions.

Noting the strong ties between Iran and Armenia, he observed, "During my short visit to Armenia, I saw firsthand the enthusiasm for

learning Persian among young people at schools and universities."

He highlighted the positive impact of Persian language learners in Armenia and Armenian learners in Iran on fostering future friendly relations.

Imanipour concluded by asserting that when fear is propagated by the West, it often leads to positive developments, particularly in relation to the influential role of religions.

Karekin II, the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, expressed gratitude for Iran's support to Armenia and stressed the benefits of cooperation between the two nations in various fields.

He acknowledged the joint efforts of Iranian ambassadors and cultural representatives in implementing programs promoting interfaith dialogue in Armenia.

Discussing educational initiatives, he stated, "Our programs aim to facilitate interactions between church authorities and Islam."

Commenting on Iran's assistance to Armenians residing in Iran, he affirmed the enduring bond between the two nations.