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Robert Malley, US Special Envoy for Iran, walks in front of the Hotel Imperial near to Grand Hotel Vienna where closed-door nuclear talks take place in Vienna, Austria, June 20, 2021.

Back Into the Limelight

Western media confirms Tehran Times' scoop on Rob Malley

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Problems sometimes can be solved with missiles, other times with negotiation: Raisi

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi asserted in a televised interview on Tuesday night that "Operation True Promise" was a clear manifestation of "revolutionary rationality" and a beautiful manifestation of the cooperation of the battlefield and diplomacy.

The president was referring to Iran's missile and drone attacks on Israel's military sites on April 14 in response to the Zionist regime's April 1 attack on Iran's consulate in Damascus, Syria, in which seven Iranian military advisors were assassinated.

On the implementation of the government's promises, he also said, "Of course, the dimensions and consequences of Operation True Promise should be examined in specialized meetings, but this operation was the crystallization of the feeling of 'national pride' which became one of the turning points of consensus-building, and all people, currents, and thinkers of all tastes praised it," according to the president's official website. ► Page 2

FM says West implored Iran to lower severity of retaliatory attacks

TEHRAN - The foreign minister of Iran says that before Iran's audacious attacks on Israeli-occupied territory last month in revenge for the regime's lethal attack on the Iranian diplomatic post in Syria, the West had urged the Islamic Republic to use caution and lessen the severity of its reprisals.

On the sidelines of the Iranian administration's weekly cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian added that "the request of the Westerners was that if you want to respond, do not hit hard and reduce the intensity of the operation."

Addressing the reporters, the top Iranian diplomat continued that "ever since it was decided to conduct Operation True Promise, intensive contacts by the Westerners and the U.S.'s allies in Europe were established with Iran, and their first request was [for Iran] to exercise restraint and not to respond, to which we firmly stated that the response will definitely be given to the Israeli regime."

"We did not allow any decisions to be made under pressure from others, but we told the Western and American side that the root [cause] is in the Gaza crisis that should be resolved and they should focus on that issue," Amir Abdollahian said, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic made its own decisions about when and how to carry out the operation. ► Page 2

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3rd mass grave found at Gaza hospital

A third mass grave has been discovered in the ruins of Gaza's al-Shifa hospital, the largest medical complex in the Palestinian enclave.

At least 49 bodies have been recovered so far from the mass grave, the government media office in Gaza said on Wednesday, Middle East Eye reported.

"Government crews are still recovering more bodies until now," it said. "The exhumation operations have not finished, and we expect to find dozens of new bodies."

Footage shared online by local journalists showed bodies being uncovered and examined by civil defense teams amid the wreckage of the medical facility, which has been ravaged by Israeli attacks.

Israeli forces withdrew from al-Shifa in early April, after a two-week siege that left the entire complex destroyed and piles of bodies in its wake.

Israeli officials said at the time that their forces arrested 900 people and killed 200 "terrorists" without harming civilians or medical personnel. Medical organizations and eyewitnesses strongly rejected the claim.

Gaza's government media office said 400 people were killed by Israeli forces in al-Shifa, including "wounded, sick, and displaced people". It said hundreds of people were still missing.

Biden best suited for Israelis

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Joe Biden has proven to be the most suited American President in modern times to serve the vicious interests and agenda of the Israeli occupation.

While all U.S. presidents have historically provided unequivocal support for the Israelis despite the regime's violation of international law, Biden stands out.

President Barack Obama was a staunch Israeli supporter and provided Tel Aviv with a record level of military aid; at the time of his presidency, yet criticized the Israelis over illegal settlements by abstaining to veto a UN Security Council resolution on the illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The tension was mostly believed to be personal between Obama and Netanyahu who was also Israeli prime minister at the time rather than a split between the U.S. and Israel.

Nevertheless, the current incumbent American leader has overseen an unprecedented number of Israeli massacres and acts of genocide against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months.

The United Nations says the military assault on the civilian population in Gaza is unprecedented since the Second World War.

Partners in crimes

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Israel has perpetrated heinous crimes in the Gaza Strip since launching war on the besieged Palestinian territory more than seven months ago.

It has slaughtered nearly 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza since October 7, many of whom are women and children.

The regime has regularly launched deadly strikes on residential buildings under the pretext of targeting Hamas fighters in response to the surprise military operation that the resistance group carried out in southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

Medical sites have not been spared in Israeli assaults too.

The Israeli army has brutally killed patients and medical staff in its raids on hospitals.

Last month, hundreds of bodies were recovered from a mass grave inside the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis after Israeli forces withdrew from the city on April 7.

Bodies were also retrieved from mass graves at al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City.

Following the discovery of the mass graves, Palestinian officials revealed horrifying details about the tragedy.

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35th TIBF opens doors to public

TEHRAN - The 35th edition of Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) opened its doors to the public during a ceremony on Wednesday.

The ceremony was attended by Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, cultural officials, publishers and book lovers, Mehr reported.

Over 2,500 Iranian publishers as well as 60 foreign publishers take part in this edition of the book fair, which is underway in both physical and virtual formats, allowing each publisher to choose their preferred method of participation based on the fair's regulations.

For physical book sales, publications from 2020 onwards are accepted, while for virtual sales, books published from 2014 onwards are eligible for inclusion in the fair. ► Page 8



Iran Oil Show 2024 kicks off in Tehran

TEHRAN - The 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024) kicked off in a ceremony in the Iranian capital Tehran on Wednesday, Shana reported.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by senior Iranian and foreign officials including Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, Oil Minister Javad Oji, Head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr, Secretary General of Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Mohammed Hamel, as well as a number of parliament members and senior oil industry directors. ► Page 4

Ruoff parliamentary election to be held Friday

TEHRAN - Iran's Interior Minister underscored the significance of the upcoming parliamentary run-off elections slated for May 10, highlighting the readiness of 11,500 polling stations across 15 provinces.

Ahmad Vahidi, speaking on the sideline of a cabinet meeting, emphasized the pivotal role of this electoral phase.

90 candidates are competing for the remaining 45 parliamentary seats.

In the metropolis of Tehran, 32 candidates are racing for 16 seats.

Encouraging maximum voter turnout, Minister Vahidi urged citizens to participate actively in electing their preferred representatives. ► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

Western contradictions toward protests in US and riots in Iran

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

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper discussed the protests in America and wrote: Western media did not have an answer to the protests of students regarding the genocide of the Palestinian people by the Zionist regime, and they introduced them as anti-Semitic and supporters of terrorism. More than 10 days have passed since the beginning of protests by students of American and European universities against the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza.

The students only want to stop the support of the United States for the crimes of the Zionist regime and to end the genocide of the Palestinian people, but these peaceful protests cannot be tolerated by the Western governments and media. In addition, the pro-Zionist media is trying to introduce the protesters against Israel's crimes as anti-Jewish and their protest as anti-Semitism. Western media reacted to the students' protest and supported their suppression by the police, but these media during the riots of "women, life, freedom" introduced the people who sought to sabotage with maximum violence as brave, fighters and wise young people.

Siasat-e-Rooz: The power of the West Asia region centered on Iran

Siasat-e-Rooz in its editorial pointed out the visit of the President of the Kurdistan Region Barzani to Tehran.

The paper said: Although the relations between Iran and Kurdistan of Iraq have had many ups and downs, they are indebted to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In difficult situations, it was Iran that saved them and did not allow them to be in a critical situation. The most important of which is to confront ISIS, however, many times the anti-revolution forces settled in Kurdistan took action against Iran. Also, the Zionists settled in this region are also active against Iran, which cannot be tolerated by Islamic Iran.

Israel and the anti-revolution forces of Komala and the Democrats based in this region were not good allies for them, and there was no help from them when ISIS attacked.

The goal of the Zionist regime which Komala and the Democrats take orders from, is disintegrating Iraq, a disintegration that will cause problems for Islamic Iran. In any case, Barzani's trip to Iran at this point shows that they have realized what is happening in the West Asia region centered on Iran.

Iran engages domestic, foreign NGOs to pursue Zionist regime's crimes

TEHRAN- Mohammad Dehghan, Iran's Vice President for Legal Affairs, has announced the nation's concerted effort to address the crimes perpetrated by the Zionist regime.

Speaking on the sideline of the cabinet meeting, Dehghan revealed Iran's strategy of leveraging both domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to hold the occupying regime accountable.

He disclosed an ongoing collaboration with NGOs to document the actions and crimes of the Zionist regime, emphasizing the utilization of domestic NGO capacities.

Highlighting Iran's engagement with foreign NGOs, Dehghan underscored the importance of utilizing their resources to prevent crimes committed by the Zionist regime.

Moreover, he reiterated Iran's stance on the Zionist regime, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic does not recognize it as a legitimate government and thus follows alternative avenues to hold the Zionist regime accountable.

In early April, Dehghan stated that Tehran would take Israel to court for the regime's Monday attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus which has led to the death of at least 13 people including a top military general and his deputy.

"The National Security Council will make

Ham Mihan: America's effort is to isolate Iran in the region

In an analysis, Ham Mihan discussed America's efforts for a new regional security order in the Middle East. It wrote: The plan of America is to ensure the security of Israel and its allies and isolate Iran in the region. The security goal is to deal with Iran's threats, to weaken Iran's military power as much as possible, and to prevent the destruction of Abraham's and two-state peace plans. The leaders of the Zionist regime are also looking for Washington's support. Achieving this goal (weakening Iran's military power) requires confronting proxy groups as well as confronting the nuclear and missile program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Israeli leaders demand the presence of the United States in any military confrontation with Iran and consider the current situation in the Middle East as an opportunity to realize this strategic goal. We still believe that involving the U.S. in a military confrontation with the Islamic Republic of Iran is the most important goal of Israel in expanding the crisis in the region, a goal that Israel has pursued for a long time. But the most important obstacle to establishing this order is the military power of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its allies.

Hamshahri: The promising prospect of Tehran-IAEA negotiations

In an interview with Hasan Beheshtipour, a senior expert on international issues, Hamshahri addressed Grossi's trip to Tehran and said: Some analysts believe that the positions raised by Grossi and Eslami during a press conference in Isfahan show that Iran and the IAEA are taking important steps towards strengthening cooperation and solving some ambiguities, an issue that can ultimately create a promising prospect in the context of resuming negotiations of lifting sanctions. If Iran and the Agency can find a positive solution to solve the remaining problems and ambiguities, that is the time when we can hope for the future. We must consider that we are in a position of power to advance the negotiations in the current situation. Now, on the one hand, Iran has the upper hand in regional relations, and on the other hand, Iran has a favorable situation in terms of enriched uranium reserves. So, we are fully ready for negotiation. If the cooperation between Iran and the IAEA moves in the right direction and appropriate steps are taken to clear the ambiguity about the two alleged locations of the IAEA, it will be a start to revive the negotiations of lifting sanctions.



decisions in this regard. The government will release the details once everything has been set," Dehghan stated.

Multiple Israeli fighter jets lobbed missiles at Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital, flattening the consular part of the compound. Iran vowed to make Israel regret the illegal and barbaric act.

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

The West has so far refused to condemn the Israeli attack and has instead opted to blame Iran for its support towards resistance forces and asked it to exercise "restraint."

Problems sometimes can be solved with missiles, other times with negotiation: Raisi

From page 1 ▶ On the implementation of the government's promises, he also said, "Of course, the dimensions and consequences of Operation True Promise should be examined in specialized meetings, but this operation was the crystallization of the feeling of 'national pride,' which became one of the turning points of consensus-building, and all people, currents, and thinkers of all tastes praised it," according to the president's official website.

The president also described Israel's acts of war in the Gaza Strip as instances of genocide, infanticide and crimes against humanity.

He also stated that despite seven months of continuous crimes by the Zionist regime in Gaza today all experts believe that the winners of this battle are the resilient people of Palestine and the losers are the Zionist regime and its supporters.

The president went on to call the continuation of the crimes in Gaza despite the acceptance of a ceasefire by Hamas a "shame and humiliation" for the Zionist regime and its supporters.

"Today, the cry for justice is heard not only in universities in the



Western world, but everywhere in the world, and it is these failures that have caused the Zionist regime to despair, and one of the manifestations of this despair was the attack on the consular building of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus, in violation of all international regulations and frameworks."

The president said Operation True Promise highlighted the need to focus on deterrence, noting, "We have always declared that it is this 'rational revolutionary discourse' that has worked..., not a begging diplomacy." Regarding his analysis on whether the retaliatory attack

against Israel will prevent the emergence of other problems, the president said, "My opinion is that this operation was a display of authority and showed that Iran is in a position of authority and will show its effects in economic, social and other fields."

He continued, "This operation showed that if the right decision is made at the right time and is implemented correctly, it can have very influential effects. The proof of this claim was this proud operation, whose appropriate decision-making, timely and correct implementation was able to create

a consensus among all factions and all our fighters praised us."

In response to a question whether the solutions to the country's problems are missiles, negotiations, or both, the president said, "We have emphasized many times that the Islamic Republic of Iran warmly shakes the hands of all countries that seek friendly relations with us, but some countries have always promoted Iranophobia in the past 45 years."

He also pointed out that problems can sometimes be solved with missiles and other times with negotiations.

Referring to his recent meeting with the president of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) in which he acknowledged the importance of the timely presence of General Qassem Soleimani and the Islamic Republic's support to Iraq and the Kurdistan region in the face of the lightning Daesh attack, Raisi said, "The people of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan will never forget Iran's support to them against the enemy and these effects are also noticeable in other countries of the region."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

FM says West implored Iran to lower severity of retaliatory attacks



From page 1 ▶ According to the senior diplomat, Iran has already informed the U.S. and the neighboring nations where Washington maintains facilities about the Islamic Republic of Iran's planned retaliation attacks against Israel.

"We informed the U.S. side and the nations

where the U.S. maintains bases two days prior to the operation that our targets are not the U.S. or its neighbors, but rather the Israeli regime," Amir Abdollahian pointed out.

"In the notice, we warned that if the U.S. takes action against Iran's interests, our response against the U.S. bases in the region will be immediate and decisive."

Based on the remarks made by the Iranian foreign minister, Iran warned the neighboring nations that house U.S. occupation bases, saying, "Our relations are based on brotherhood but if the U.S. makes the slightest mistake, we will target American bases."

The majority of the surrounding countries have informed us that they would not permit any nation to start an act of war against Iran

from their territory, Amir Abdollahian continued.

The Iranian foreign minister mentioned the current state of affairs in the Gaza Strip elsewhere in his speech, stating that if the West keeps its word, the time is right for a lasting ceasefire in the beleaguered Palestinian enclave.

"We had an unwritten agreement with the Western parties to focus on the ceasefire in Gaza, and the Westerners said they would move in this direction and, today, positive signs have appeared in this regard."

He also averred that in response to the proposal put out by Qatar and Egypt, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has responded "within the framework of its principles and as part of a realistic plan."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Diplomat says Iran has no regional proxies

TEHRAN- The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations disavowed claims leveled by the Israeli regime that Tehran has regional proxies by which it makes operations in the region, adding that such allegations are made to obscure and justify the Zionist regime's acts of aggression and destabilizing measures.

In a letter to President of the UN Security Council Pedro Comissario Afonso and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on May 7, Saeed Iravani categorically rejected the allegations that the representative of the Israeli regime has made against Iran.

The full text of the letter from Iravani is as follows:

I am writing to you in response to the letter dated 19 April 2024 from the representative of the Israeli regime to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2024/324), wherein the representative of the Israeli regime resorted once more to lies and misinformation to make unfounded accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Further to our letters dated 13 and 30 April 2024 (S/2024/305-S/2024/349), I would like to emphasize the following:

The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects unequivocally and strongly

all unfounded accusations in the aforementioned letter.

Contrary to unfounded claims, Iran has consistently upheld international law, adhered to the principles of the UN Charter, and complied with UN Security Council resolutions.

Moreover, Iran has played an active role in promoting international peace and security through its constructive involvement across multiple spheres.

In the letters dated 13 and 30 April 2024 (S/2024/305-S/2024/349), the Islamic Republic of Iran made a clear position that the action taken on 13 April 2024 was conducted directly and officially from Iran in response to the Israeli recurring military aggressions, particularly its armed attack on 1 April 2024 against Iranian diplomatic premises in Damascus, the Syrian Arab Republic.

Iran's action was necessary, legitimate, and fully in line with its inherent right to self-defense under the UN Charter.

The action only targeted military objectives and was carried out carefully and with prior notification to prevent civilian harm.

I wish to emphasize that no resistance groups were involved

in Iran's legitimate action and any assertions to the contrary are rejected.

In contrast to Israel's assertions, Iran does not have proxies in the region, and no individual, group, or nation operates under Iran's directive.

Additionally, resistance groups are not proxies; they are legitimate groups and their actions are lawful, and engaged only in fighting against Israeli occupation and aggression in Gaza and other occupied territories in Palestine, as well as against occupied forces in other nations in the region.

Therefore, Israel's attempt to label them as "proxies" is only to obscure and justify its own acts of aggression and destabilizing actions in the region.

It is indisputable that the Israeli regime, characterized by a long history and record of blatant violations of international law, the UN Charter, and UNSC resolutions, remains the primary and longstanding threat to international peace and security.

Any cynical attempt by this regime to obscure this reality through disinformation, smear campaigns, or unsubstantiated accusations against others is both

futile and groundless. The Israeli regime cannot deny its direct and full responsibility for the ongoing massacre and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza in defiance of UNSC resolutions.

An obvious example of the Israeli regime's persistent disregard for UNSC resolutions is exemplified in the Security Council's resolution 2728 (2024), which urgently demands an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Despite clear demands from the Security Council, the occupying regime persists in its ruthless warfare against the Palestinian people and its military attacks in Rafah in blatant contempt for the Security Council's demands.

The occupying regime must finally bear full responsibility for the consequences of its actions and the Security Council must address Israel's persistent destabilizing and irresponsible actions, as well as its atrocities against the Palestinian people and other nations in the region.

These actions pose a genuine threat to both regional and international peace and security, demanding immediate attention and decisive action from the Security Council.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Gaza's resistance and faith source of pride for Islamic world: envoy

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador to Iraq, Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadeq, has hailed the Palestinian people's resolute faith and resistance against the Israeli regime as a source of pride and honour for the Islamic world.

The official made the remarks during a meeting with members of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Denominations Assembly in Baghdad. Al-Sadeq said the Zionist regime has reached total failure in the besieged Gaza Strip, where it has been trying to "eradicate Hamas" for almost 8 months.

The ambassador also expressed satisfaction with the holding of a religious conference in Iraq and emphasized its importance in promoting unity among Muslims. "We need to create a united front against our mutual enemy," he stated.

Elsewhere in his comments, Al-Sadeq praised the current Iraqi government for its popularity among the people, attributing it to its efforts in addressing sectarian conflicts, political crises, and social issues. He also highlighted the strong relations between Iran and Iraq, which he said

are based on three principles: Respect for Iraq's territorial integrity and Iran's support for its unity, defence cooperation, as exemplified by Iran's assistance in defeating ISIS and last but not least, economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation.

The envoy emphasized the importance of developing these relations to secure the interests of both countries. He also expressed optimism about the future of Iraq, noting the government's efforts to address challenges and promote peace and prosperity.

Western media confirms Tehran Times' scoop on Rob Malley

By Sadeh Fereydounabadi

TEHRAN – The Washington Post's recent article sheds light on the suspension of Robert Malley, the U.S. special envoy for Iran, not only corroborating but also validating the groundbreaking revelations made by the Tehran Times over a year ago.

Both publications now confirm the reasons behind Malley's downfall, which revolve around allegations of mishandling classified documents and potential cybersecurity breaches.

Malley, appointed by President Biden in 2021, played a key role in back-channel talks with Iran. However, in April 2023, he was placed on leave and had his security clearance suspended without an official explanation.

The Tehran Times' exclusive report, published on July 10, 2023, initially raised eyebrows with its detailed insights into the opaque circumstances surrounding Malley's suspension. Despite initial skepticism from some quarters, the Tehran Times' investigation highlighted the true reasons behind Robert Malley's suspension, shedding light on a story that the mainstream Western media initially brushed aside.

The Tehran Times article offered insights into the opaque circumstances surrounding Malley's



departure and highlighted that Malley's close ties with unofficial Iranian advisors and his discussions beyond authorized limits likely contributed to his sidelining. The exclusive report also noted that contrary to some analyses, Malley's departure did not signify a shift in U.S. policy towards Iran but rather an internal matter, emphasizing Malley's inadvertent downfall due to his proximity to non-official Iranian associates.

The Washington Post's subsequent investigation, published on May 8, 2024, serves as a significant validation of the Tehran Times' earlier findings. Delving deeper into the allegations against Malley, The Washington Post details how Malley allegedly transferred classified documents to his personal email account and

downloaded them onto his personal cell phone. Moreover, there are indications that a hostile cyber actor may have exploited vulnerabilities in Malley's devices to gain access to the sensitive information.

The article highlights the frustration on Capitol Hill regarding the lack of public information about the case. Lawmakers in the United States are demanding clarity on the investigation's details, including the number of classified documents involved and their potential national security implications.

According to The Washington Post, Malley's critics in Congress view him as too friendly with Iran and its allies. Despite the allegations, Malley has not been formally charged with a crime, leaving him in a state of limbo.

This convergence of reports underscores the seriousness of the allegations against Malley and the implications for national security. It also highlights the challenges of maintaining cybersecurity in sensitive diplomatic matters, especially when dealing with influential actors such as Iran.

The fact that these revelations are now confirmed by an American source like The Washington Post raises questions about the transparency of the U.S. government in handling such cases and the need for accountability in matters of national security.

Moving forward, there will likely be increased scrutiny on how the Biden administration addresses these allegations and whether any charges will be brought against Malley. As The Washington Post reports, the U.S. administration faces pressure to either clear Malley's name or pursue legal action, as the unresolved status of the case hampers its ability to effectively manage diplomatic relations with Iran and other key actors in West Asia.

Appointed soon after U.S. President Joe Biden took office in 2021, Malley had the task of trying to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal after then-President Donald Trump's 2018 decision to abandon the pact and reimpose U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

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Straight Truth
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SPORTS

Mojarad not fit for 2024 VNL

TEHRAN – Iran middle blocker Ali Asghar Mojarad will be absent in the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

The Rapid Bucuresti player sustained an injury in Romani and will not be fit for the 2024 VNL.

The Iran coaching staff has decided to travel to Brazil without the player until he will be fit.

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

Al Hatmi to officiate Hong Kong, Iran in World Cup qualifier

TEHRAN – Qasim Al Hatmi from Oman has been chosen to officiate the match between Hong Kong and Iran.

Hong Kong will host Iran on June 6 at the Hong Kong Stadium in Group E of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification – AFC second round.

Iran sits top of the group with 10 points out of four matches, while Hong Kong is fourth with a single point.

Al Hatmi, 34, is a FIFA international referee since 2016.

Source: lemond.fr

Ruoff parliamentary election to be held Friday

90 candidates compete for the remaining 45 seats

From Page 1 ▶ Assuring the public of security measures, he reiterated that there are no existing security concerns regarding the electoral process. Furthermore, he emphasized that comprehensive training has been provided to officials tasked with overseeing the elections.

Earlier on May 4, Vahidi announced the Interior Ministry's full readiness to conduct parliamentary run-off elections "electronically."

Vahidi emphasized that in eight constituencies where multiple representatives are to be elected, the elections will be entirely electronic.

"In the first round of elections, all-electronic voting took place in four constituencies. However, this marks the first time such elections are being conducted on this scale, signifying a great advancement in the realm of voting," Minister Vahidi stated.

He further outlined that polling stations and voting systems have been meticulously designated for this purpose, ensuring a smooth electoral process.

Vahidi highlighted the efficiency of electronic voting, noting that vote counting is instantaneous, with results available on the spot.

"In the first round of parliamentary elections, where voting was entirely electronic in four

constituencies, results were compiled and determined by midnight," Vahidi explained.

In terms of public outreach and education on electronic voting procedures, Vahidi mentioned that training sessions will be conducted through IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting), with plans to intensify efforts in the forthcoming days.

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

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

Notably, Vahidi emphasized that eight constituencies will conduct the election entirely through electronic means.

The scheduled date for this phase of the parliamentary election is set for May 10.

Earlier on March 1, the country held parliamentary Assembly of Experts elections. The polls opened across Iran at 8 a.m. local time (0430) on Friday for parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

More than 61 million people were eligible to vote.

About 15,000 parliamentary candidates were vying for 290 seats for a four-year term.

Simultaneously, people voted for 88 members of the Assembly of Experts, a body in charge of overseeing the performance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Candidates for the assembly are elected for an eight-year term.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, cast his ballot at a polling station in Tehran in the first minutes of voting.

Ayatollah Khamenei called on the voters to turn in big numbers to please friends and disappoint enemies.

"We ask the Almighty God to make today a happy day for the Iranian nation and that the results of the efforts of our dear people and those involved in the various issues of the elections may reach the desired results and benefit the Iranian nation," the Leader said after voting.

"Our dear nation should know that today the eyes of many people in the world, both individuals and politicians and those who hold prestigious national and political positions, are on Iran and you."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Army air force ready to thwart threats: commander

TEHRAN – Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi, commander of the Iranian Air Force, has affirmed the heightened state of readiness of the Army Air Force, assuring its capability to thwart enemy threats at any hour.

Addressing participants during the twenty-third preliminary combat training course on Wednesday, Vahedi delved into

the significance of Operation True Promise, saying that it showcased the unwavering dedication of the Iranian military forces in all sectors.

Reaffirming the heightened state of readiness of the Army Air Force, Vahedi assured that no external forces is capable of threatening Iran.

In response to the April 1st

assault on the nation's consulate building in Syria, Vahedi stressed the imperative of a robust retaliation, expressing full confidence in the steadfast resolve of Air Force personnel.

Directing his remarks to elite duty personnel, Vahedi underscored their indispensable role in shaping Iran's future, urging them to actively contribute

to the nation's progress.

In light of concerted efforts to entice minds and elites away from the country, Vahedi highlighted their pivotal role in steering Iran's economic, industrial, and cultural trajectory, urging vigilant discernment in the face of hostile propaganda.

Iran calls for IAEA impartiality in resolving nuclear ambiguities

TEHRAN –The Deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has emphasized the county's expectation for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to maintain an impartial stance, urging the Agency to adopt a technical and professional approach.

Pezhman Shirmardi made the remarks on Tuesday, speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural International Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology.

This call comes as Iran seeks to address two unresolved issues within the nuclear realm, which remain ambiguous from the IAEA's perspective.

Shirmardi emphasized the significance of hosting such a conference in Isfahan. He underscored the event as a milestone in Iran's efforts to bolster global nuclear cooperation

and scientific exchanges.

Shirmardi highlighted a shift in Iran's approach to international conferences, noting increased domestic hosting under the current directives. He pointed to the positive reception of these events as indicative of Iran's effectiveness in engaging with the international scientific community.

Addressing media controversies surrounding Iran's nuclear program, Shirmardi emphasized its peaceful nature and reiterated Iran's commitment to sharing its nuclear expertise with other nations.

The official reaffirmed Iran's readiness to collaborate with independent nations seeking scientific advancements and expressed hopes for constructive dialogue during the conference.

Referring to the recent visit of Rafael

Grossi, Director-General of the IAEA, Shirmardi acknowledged remaining uncertainties from the Agency's perspective. He stressed the need for transparent discussions to address these issues effectively.

Shirmardi also advocated for equitable access to nuclear knowledge, emphasizing the importance of its dissemination for the benefit of all nations.

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

The Director-General of the IAEA arrived in Tehran on Monday. Grossi's presence underscored the international attention surrounding Iran's nuclear activities, culminating in the inaugural International Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology.

Thousands of spectators lined the French port to welcome the arrival of a majestic ship carrying the Olympic torch from Greece.

Paris Games organizers have promised "fantastic" celebrations as the arrival of a majestic ship carrying the Olympic torch from Greece is expected to draw a huge crowd Wednesday in the southern French city Marseille, where the Old Port has been placed under high security.

Paris 2024 Olympics Organizing Committee President Tony Estanguet expressed his emotion at the torch's arrival in France.

"The return of the Games to our country will be a fantastic celebration," he said. The torch was lit in Greece last month before it was officially handed to France. It left Athens aboard a three-mast ship named Belem, which was first used in 1896, and spent 12 days at sea.

More than a thousand boats will accompany the Belem's parade around the Bay of Marseille. The ship will then dock on a pontoon that looks like an athletics track in the Old Port. The welcoming ceremony will include a demonstration by the jets of the Patrouille de France, the acrobatic team of the French air force.

Iran futsal champions meet Ayatollah Khamenei

TEHRAN – The members of Iran's national futsal team, who won the Asian crown in late April, met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

They met Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran on Wednesday.

The athletes won the 13th title in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup in Thailand on April 28.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of Sports and Youth Kioumars Hashemi and President of Iran's Football Federation Mahdi Taj.

Iran's head coach, Vahid Shamsaei, has said that his men have the potential to go the distance at September's FIFA Futsal World Uzbekistan 2024 after winning the title in the recent Asian games in Thailand.

The Iranian players had won their sixth consecutive match with a 4-1 victory over Thailand to lift their 13th title.

Iran's women's futsal need long-term plan: Soleymani

TEHRAN – Head coach of Iran's women's futsal team said that they need a long-term plan to move further in the FIFA World Ranking.

Team Melli are eighth in the first FIFA Futsal World Ranking released on Monday.

FIFA has launched the official FIFA Futsal World Ranking with powerhouses Brazil the first number-one nation in both the men's and women's charts as the rapidly growing sport takes another major step forward.

Brazil sit top, followed by Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Colombia, Thailand and Russia.

"As you see, Thailand are sixth in the ranking and it's while we are champions of Asia. It shows that we need to compete in more international tournaments like what Thailand have done," Soleymani said.

"The football federation of Iran should pave the way for the women's futsal team to participate in the more international events. We have just competed in the CAFA tournaments but we need more matches. Women's futsal team need a long-term plan to move up in the ranking," she added.

"FIFA is going to hold Futsal Women's World Cup and it can help us to secure a better place in the ranking. The Iranian women play in the several categories but our futsal need to take part in the international events and the role of the federation is very important," Soleymani concluded.

Olympic torch arrives in Marseille

Thousands of spectators lined the French port to welcome the arrival of a majestic ship carrying the Olympic torch from Greece.

Iran, a gateway for Central Asian countries to int'l markets: Ambassador

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador to Tajikistan Alireza Haghighian has said that Iran is ready to serve as a gateway to international markets for Central Asian countries.

Speaking during a conference in Tajikistan on Tuesday, which was participated by ambassadors and different officials from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Haghighian said Central Asia is located in a special geopolitical position, terming the region as a crossroad of

civilizations and continents.

He noted that this region is of high significance regarding its political importance, stability, and security. The ambassador also highlighted the economic potential of the Central Asia region, as it boasts rich oil and gas and mining resources.

He also referred to Iran's position which is located between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, noting that Iran can serve as a gateway to international markets for Central Asian countries.

Over €700m of oil equipment exported in 2.5 years: official

TEHRAN - The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oil Industry Equipment Manufacturers Association Ehsan Saghafi, says Iran has exported €710 million worth of oil industry equipment over the last two and a half years.

Speaking in a press conference he said that the figure was just 10 percent of the association's capacity for manufacturing and expressed hope that manufacturers will be able to deploy 100 percent of their exporting potential over the next two years.

"Over the last 2.5 years, we have been able to establish closer relations with the government which has been helpful in view of solving the private sector problems but this level of interaction has not met our expectations," Saghafi said.

According to him, the association has started marketing abroad and has achieved some success even though it is faced with some challenges in terms of providing its foreign exchange needs.

We are at the beginning of the road leading to export equipment and we need governmental support, he concluded.

Iran's deputy oil minister said in late March that the country has succeeded in manufacturing 80 percent of the oil industry's needed parts and equipment domestically despite being under sanctions.

The Iranian Oil Ministry has focused on taking advantage of the expertise and technical know-how of knowledge-based companies, Jalil Salari said, emphasizing that more than 80 percent of the oil equipment is manufactured in the country.

Speaking in a meeting held in Abadan on reviewing the quality plans of oil byproducts, he said that the oil ministry took effective steps in the past two years for the domestic production of oil parts and equipment.

One of these measures is related to the launch of extraterritorial refining plans overseas and the export of technical and engineering services, he stated. So far, three- to four technical know-hows have fully been localized in refining companies in the field of producing catalysts, compressor manufacturing, and streamlining the quality of fuel oil, the chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said.

Iran's KSC exports 1.4m tons of products in a year

TEHRAN - Iran's Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) exported over 1.4 million tons of products to more than 10 different countries in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), an official with the company announced.

According to Reza Vakili, the deputy head of the company for sales and marketing, Khuzestan Steel Company has been exporting its products to over 28 countries across the world despite the sanctions.

The official noted that the company is targeting 1.5 million tons of exports in the current Iranian calendar year.

"The priority of Khuzestan Steel Company is to meet domestic needs, but our export plan for this year is 1.5 million tons," Vakili said in a press conference on the sidelines of the Iran Expo 2024.

While introducing the export opportunities of this company, he said: "Last year, Khuzestan Steel accounted for three percent of the country's total non-oil exports by exporting to

28 countries."

"We are also eyeing the North African market in our development plan and last year exports to this region increased significantly," he added.

KSC is an Iranian steel manufacturing company located in the major city of Ahvaz. It is currently the second-largest producer of raw steel in Iran, following Isfahan Mobarakeh Steel Company.

The company's factory, spanning 8.3 square kilometers, is situated near Ahvaz (10 kilometers on the Ahvaz-Imam Khomeini Port road), and its headquarters are also located in Ahvaz.

Iran exported more than 27 million tons of steel products worth \$7.0 billion in the previous Iranian calendar year, according to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

As reported, the exports of the mentioned products increased by 20 percent in terms of value and 68 percent in terms of weight compared to last year's corresponding period.

Iran Oil Show 2024 kicks off in Tehran

From page 1 ► Officials from NIOC, National Petrochemical Company (NPC), National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), Iranian Oil, Gas, and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union, Iranian Petroleum Industries Equipment Manufacturers Association and Iran Industrial Equipment Manufacturers Association, and representatives of knowledge-based firms, technological parks, and startups were also among the attendees of the opening ceremony.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Oji emphasized that Oil Show 2024 is an opportunity to showcase the achievements of the Iranian oil industry over the past two years.

Iran Oil Show is one of the largest oil

exhibitions in West Asia and the world, which is held every year more prosperously than in previous years despite the sanctions on the oil and gas industry, he said.

According to the minister in this exhibition, in addition to presenting the capabilities and achievements of the oil industry, the needs and challenges of each sector are presented, and the bases are provided for negotiation and cooperation among all the bodies active in this industry.

Iran Oil Show 2024 is open to visitors every day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (05:30 to 13:30 GMT) until May 11.

In addition to 1,500 Iranian firms, some 250 companies have taken part in this year's exhibition.

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).

TEDPIX falls 7,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 7,649 points on Wednesday to stand at 2,219,094.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges,

Iran's petrochemical output rises 15m tons in 2 years

TEHRAN - Iran's petrochemical output has increased by 15 million tons over the past two years, since the current government took office, according to an official familiar with the matter.

Speaking in a meeting of Iranian operators of the petrochemical industry with First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber in Tehran on Tuesday, Ahmad Mahdavi Abhari, the director general of the Association of Petrochemical Industry Corporation (APIC), put the country's current petrochemical output at 82 million tons.

He said Iran's petrochemical output stood at 67 million tons before President Raisi took office in August 2021.

The official also noted that the Iranian petrochemical industry has created as many as 143,000 direct jobs in the mentioned period.

He put the current growth of Iran's petrochemical industry at 40.6 percent up from 27.5 percent in the country's third five-year development plan.

Back in April, the head of Iran's



National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said the company is planning to complete 13 new petrochemical projects by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2025) to further increase the country's petrochemical output.

"One of the strategies of the petrochemical industry in the year 'production leap with people's participation' is to put 12 new petrochemical projects into operation by the end of [the current Iranian calendar] 1403 and use all available capacities," Morteza Shahmirzaei said.

He stated that the completion of 12 petrochemical projects by the end of this year will have a significant impact on the growth of production and economic development of the country.

The NPC head had previously put the country's petrochemical production capacity at over 92 million tons, and said: "Today we are almost self-sufficient in the main petrochemical sectors including products and equipment."

Iran's petrochemical industry accounts for 28 percent of the region's petrochemical capacity

and 27 percent of the world's petrochemical capacity, he announced.

The petrochemical industry plays a crucial role in Iran's non-oil economy, as petrochemical export is the second-largest source of revenue for the country after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already constitute nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

According to Shahmirzaei, the company plans to increase its annual petrochemical production capacity to 200 million tons over the next 10 years.

In this regard, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said that more than 100 petrochemical projects with a total investment of about \$70 billion have been defined and will be implemented across the country.

Oji noted that the country will also be completely self-sufficient in producing the catalysts used in the petrochemical industry by the end of the current government administration's incumbency (August 2025).

'Uzbekistan eager to expand all-out cooperation with Iran'

TEHRAN - President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has said his country is eager to boost all-out cooperation with Iran, especially in trade, energy, mining, and health sectors.

"Iran is today a powerful country with great economic, cultural, and intellectual capabilities," Mirziyoyev said on Tuesday while receiving the credentials of Mohammad-Ali Eskandari, Iran's ambassador to Uzbekistan at the Presidential Office.

"Uzbekistan is interested in expanding cooperation with Iran in the fields of mining, energy, chemical industries, agriculture, health,

and pharmaceuticals," he stressed.

The Uzbek president said that plans have been put in place to increase the volume of trade between the two countries to \$1.0 billion per year.

Eskandari, in turn, conveyed the warm greetings of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to his Uzbek counterpart and highlighted his government's policy of maximum interaction with the neighboring countries. Earlier this month, Eskandari met with the Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade of Uzbekistan Laziz Kudratov to discuss expanding economic, trade, and industrial ties.

Referring to the recent mutual visits of economic officials from both countries and the resulting agreements, Eskandari emphasized the need to facilitate the process of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Kudratov expressed satisfaction with the increased trade relations between the two countries in recent years and the goals set by the two countries' presidents to raise the volume of bilateral trade to one billion dollars.

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

Iran's monthly PMI remains above threshold

TEHRAN - Iran's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the fiscal month of Farvardin (March 20 - April 19, 2024) has remained above the threshold (above 50), the latest report by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) showed.

Affected by the two-week Persian New Year holidays, the new PMI was reported at as low as 39.6, while after seasonal adjustments and removing the effects of the holidays, the PMI reading for this month was estimated at 51.5 which indicates an improvement in the Iranian economy.

The findings of the ICCIMA survey indicate that the Iranian economy continued to thrive but with a lower slope compared to figures from the preceding months.

It seems that the shortage of raw materials will seriously affect Iran's economic conditions, especially the country's industrial sector within the next few months.

The ICCIMA Statistics and Economic Analysis Center, the sponsor and coordinator of the survey, announces the whole economy's PMI data in a report every month.

The headline PMI is a number from 0 to 100, such that over 50 shows an expansion of the economy when compared with the previous month. A PMI reading under 50 indicates contraction and a reading of 50 implies no change.

PMI is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends, aiming to provide information about business conditions to company directors,

analysts, and purchasing managers.

The "business activities" sub-index was reported at 60.41 in the month under review. Although the seasonal adjustment improves the figure to 49.0, the index has witnessed a significant decline.

Even after the seasonal adjustment, the "raw material inventory" sub-index was reported at 49.7 which is down from that of the preceding month.

The seasonally adjusted reading of the "raw materials price" sub-index (72.3) is indicative of a remarkable improvement compared to a month earlier. This sub-index has been above the threshold (above 50) over the past 12 months, marking a continuous growth in raw material prices.

The "Employment" sub-index

was put at 52.0 after seasonal adjustment. Although this sub-index has been improving over the past six months, the conditions differ for different levels of skill.

Statements by economic activists and other existing evidence indicate that high inflation and continuous pressures of living costs have caused unskilled laborers to be reluctant to work at the current wage levels, leading to serious problems for some economic sectors.

The "price of goods and services" sub-index has been reported at 56.3 after seasonal adjustment which shows an increase in the prices of goods and services compared to the preceding month. Increased prices of goods and services seem to be a result of a rise in prices of raw materials.

Iran 95% self-sufficient in producing agricultural machinery

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers says over 95 percent of the agricultural machinery needed in the country are manufactured by domestic producers, IRIB reported.

"Iran is a member of the World Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers, this association has only 15 famous members in the field of agricultural machinery, and Iran's membership means that we are a manufacturer that has something to say in the world," Hamidreza Nami said.

"However, we need to import new equipment in order to update the knowledge in this field, so

that technology transfer occurs," Nami added.

According to Abouzar Jamshidvand, the director general of the ministry's Office of Agricultural, Construction, and Mining Machinery, manufacturing of agricultural and mining machinery in Iran has increased by 100 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19).

Stating that in the last few years, a suitable production capacity has been created in the field of machinery, he said: "Currently, more than 80 percent of the machinery needed by the mining sector in the country can also be produced by domestic manufacturers."

CIPCC celebrates Nations Day for world's journalists

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING- China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) celebrated Nations Day for a number of foreign journalists from different countries on Tuesday (May 7).

In that ceremony, some of the journalists briefed the attendees on their countries through some photos and video clips, some others had cooked their national foods and presented them during the event.

Most of the journalist were in their national clothes, and some of them performed their national dances.

African journalist were the most active ones in

that ceremony. The unity between them and their happiness in this way was really admirable.

All those people in colorful and eye-catching clothes had made the place really astonishing.

To me, it was not only a celebration on the Nations Day, but also celebrating friendship and unity.

At the end of the ceremony, some Chinese foods were served, besides those national foods presented by some journalists.

Thanks to the CIPCC for holding such a nice ceremony.

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.

Partners in crime

The ends justify the means: Former top US general condones Israeli massacres in Gaza

From page 1 ▶ They said dozens of the bodies were found with bound hands while others still had medical tubes attached to them. It indicates that they may have been buried alive.

Ravina Shamdasani, a spokeswoman with the UN's human rights office, also said some of the bodies found at the Khan Younis hospital were "found with their hands tied and stripped of their clothes".

Israel had stormed the hospitals and carried out cold-blooded massacres there. The Israeli army claims that Hamas uses hospitals as its command centers. The regime, however, has failed to provide any evidence to back up its claims.

Despite such appalling atrocities, Israel has not been held accountable so far.

In addition, the US, which is Israel's main supporter, has brushed off calls to use its leverage to bring a halt to the regime's killing machine.

The US has supported Israel's narrative that it has the right to self-defense.

Although American officials have sharpened criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's deadly military campaign in Gaza following domestic backlash, they have not taken any practical actions to stop the war of genocide in Gaza.

The US could cut military aid to Israel and take firm measures at the UN Security Council if it wanted to halt Israel's brutal onslaught.

Israel is an apartheid regime that does not scruple to commit barbaric crimes against Palestinians.

The US has turned a blind eye to these atrocities because it has per-



petrated similar acts.

Apart from the atomic bombings of Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 which killed tens of thousands of people, the US has claimed the lives of a large number of civilians during its military invasion of countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US has always tried to justify the tragic deaths of civilians. American officials have claimed that the country's armed forces target "militants" who use civilians as human shields.

Former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley has made up similar excuses to justify Israel's brutal onslaught on Gaza.

"I feel horrible for the innocent people in Gaza that are dying, but

we shouldn't forget that, we, the United States killed a lot of innocent people in Mosul, Raqqa, that, we, the United States killed 12,000 innocent French civilians as here we are in the 80th anniversary of Normandy," the former top American commander made the comments at AI Expo for National Competitiveness at the Walter E.

Washington Convention Center hosted by the Special Competitive Studies Project (SCSP) on May 7 and 8.

He was referring to the US attacks in Iraq and Syria at a time when the Daesh terror group oc-

cupied parts of the Arab nations and Allied bombings of French villages and cities during the Second World War.

The US has claimed that it de-

ployed forces to Iraq and Syria to eliminate Daesh.

However, the US is accused of abetting the terror group. During his 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump accused the administration of then president Barack Obama of founding Daesh.

"We destroyed 69 Japanese cities not including Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We slaughtered people in massive numbers, innocent people who had nothing to do with their government. Men, women and children. War is a terrible thing but if it is gonna have meaning; if it is gonna have any sense of morality there has to be a political purpose and it must be achieved rapidly with the least cost," Milley added.

His comments, in fact, are reminiscent of the idiom, "the ends justify the means".

Israel is using the same pretexts to justify its war of genocide in Gaza.

Israel has tried to demonize Hamas by likening it to the Daesh terror group.

But, Hamas has become more popular than ever among Palestinians because it has put up resistance against the occupying regime in the face of its brutal war on Gaza.

Israel like the United States can kill more civilians but it won't be able to crush the Palestinian resistance through military operations.

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the Gaza war until "total victory" over Hamas. But, he should know that the war will end sooner or later and his regime will suffer a crushing defeat at the hands of the Palestinian resistance.

WORLD HEADLINES

HRW: Israel unlawfully kills Palestinians

A prominent international rights group has taken the lid off Israel's cruelty toward Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"Israeli security forces have unlawfully used lethal force in fatal shootings of Palestinians in the West Bank," Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a new report based on the documentation of several cases.

According to HRW, research into eight deaths in four incidents between July 2022 and October 2023 concluded that "Israeli forces wrongfully fatally shot or deliberately executed Palestinians who posed no apparent security threat".

"Israeli security forces are not just unlawfully killing Palestinians in Gaza, but have been killing Palestinians without a legal basis in the West Bank, including deliberately executing Palestinians who posed no apparent threat," said Richard Weir, senior crisis and conflict researcher at HRW.

"These killings are taking place at a level without recent precedent in an environment in which Israeli forces have no need to fear that their government will hold them accountable," he added.

Israeli forces in 2023 killed 492 Palestinians, including 120 children, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (al-Quds), according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). That figure is more than twice as many as in any other year since the UN began systematically documenting fatalities, said HRW.

have the proper building permits, which are very rarely granted to Palestinian Bedouins in the Negev desert, known as the Naqab in Arabic.

Several Abu Asa family members decided to burn down their own homes prior to the operation rather than watch the Israelis destroy them. One Palestinian, Ahmed Abu Asa, was arrested after he tried to obstruct the bulldozers.

Israeli officers: Netanyahu abandoned goal of freeing captives

Israel has abandoned its goals of freeing the captives in Gaza, instead seeking to establish a long-term presence with its Rafah ground offensive and pursue top Palestinian leaders, Middle East Eye cited Israeli military officers as saying.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, three officers, one of whom is serving in Gaza, questioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy in the ongoing war on Gaza, which failed to return captives taken by Hamas in October last year.

One officer told MEE the Netanyahu cabinet's aims were unclear and the objective of rescuing captives and destroying Hamas had "collapsed".

"Netanyahu's operations in Gaza are fundamentally aimed at... hunting down Yahya Sinwar," said the officer in Gaza, adding that the war had become "personal" for the Israeli premier.

Police clear pro-Palestine encampment at GWU

US police have made several arrests at George Washington University (GWU) after officers moved to clear a pro-Palestinian encampment from the campus.

A spokesperson for Washington DC Metro Police told the BBC that "a number of arrests" were made for assaults on a police officer and unlawful entry.

University students have been inside an encampment since 25 April.

Since mid-April pro-Palestinian demonstrations have broken out at nearly 140 US colleges.

According to a BBC tally, there have been pro-Palestine protests at 45 states and Washington DC since the demonstrations started at Columbia University in New York on 17 April.

They are demanding that their schools, many with massive endowments, financially divest from Israel.

Many also want their universities to end academic relationships with Israeli institutions.

Russia plays down Ukraine's claim

The Kremlin said it had no comment on Ukrainian assertions that Kyiv caught Russian agents plotting the assassination of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, but said that it was hardly likely to be accurate information.

Ukraine's state security service said on Tuesday it caught two agents for Russia who planned to kill Zelenskiy and other top officials as "a gift" for President Putin as he was sworn in for a new term, the Guardian reported

3rd mass grave found at Gaza hospital

From page 1 ▶ "Some of these bodies were found in pieces, some of these bodies were found without heads," Motassem Salah, director of the health ministry's emergency operations center, told reporters on Wednesday.

Salah said that the ministry's emergency team did not have the necessary personnel or equipment to document evidence of alleged Israeli crimes committed at the hospital.

"It sadly took us weeks to find these bodies," he said. "The stench of death still exuded from al-Shifa."

Seven mass graves have been uncovered across the Gaza Strip during the course of the war: three in al-Shifa, three in southern Gaza's Nasser hospital and one in Kamal Adwan hospital in the north.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Biden best suited for Israelis

Incumbent American leader oversaw mass suffering of Palestinians

From page 1 ▶ Biden publicly set a "red line" for Tel Aviv over any armed ground incursion in the southernmost city of Rafah, which is crammed with internally displaced Palestinians while describing the Israeli bombings as "indiscriminate".

These have all proven to be empty words with no action to back them up as the Israeli military has crossed that red line by carrying out a ground assault on Rafah, where around half the population – some 600,000 – are children.

The "indiscriminate" bombings across Gaza that have killed and injured a record number of civilians in such a short space of time have all been allowed to go ahead by the Biden administration without any punitive measures.

Biden, who is a self-proclaimed "proud Zionist" had the influence and power to end the killing of children and allow water and food to reach a starving Palestinian population but chose to sit back and watch on.

The United Nations has been warning about the famine in Gaza for months, and yet less humanitarian aid is entering the Strip today than ever before.

The simplest measures Biden could have taken was to restrict military aid months ago to ease the level of Palestinian suffering, but he has failed to make that move despite UN agencies repeatedly warning about the plight of malnourished women and children inside the enclave.

The public remarks of the U.S. president are certainly at odds with his actions or lack of ac-

tion.

It's difficult to judge whether a different US president would have taken a different approach as all American leaders have fully backed Israel at times of war and peace.

But experts say there was usually some level of pressure on the Israeli regime behind the scenes in previous wars that Tel Aviv had instigated.

None of that pressure is believed to have been put on the Israelis under Biden, though the ongoing war on Gaza is the deadliest.

More importantly, this genocide in Gaza is happening under Biden's watch.

The public criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government by Biden and some Democrats, Chuck Schumer in particular, who said he feared the Israeli occupation risks becoming a "pariah" does not represent a shift in U.S. policy toward Israel.

What it does represent is a shift in the U.S. concern about the image of Washington's staunchest ally in West Asia.

There are differences among supporters of the Israeli occupation regime on the best method to ensure that the Zionist project would survive.

Analysts have pointed to the example of readers who believe left-leaning Israeli news outlets such as Haaretz are sympathetic toward the Palestinians, while these outlets have the same Zionist agenda but view the policies of reaching the mission in a different manner to other Israelis.

ICRC calls for protection of civilians in Rafah amid Israel's offensive

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned in February that a significant Israeli military operation in Rafah would pose a disastrous risk to the civilian population given the more than 1 million displaced Palestinians now living in the southern Gaza Strip.

As instructions to evacuate certain areas in Rafah were issued on Monday by Israel, the ICRC reiterates that all must be done to spare civilian lives, and to ensure they have access to the basic necessities for life, including food, water, and medical care. It is necessary to ensure that steps taken in recent weeks to increase the flow of aid into Gaza remain in place. The ICRC reiterates the need to protect the medical mission –

inclusive of facilities, ambulances, doctors and nurses – and calls on all parties to the conflict to fully protect and respect this essential and life-saving service.

At the same time as evacuations and operations are being conducted, news reports indicate negotiations continue on a potential political agreement which could include a release of captives, detainees, and a ceasefire. While the ICRC continues to demand the outright and unconditional release of the hostages, it also recognizes this is unlikely without an agreement. The ICRC hopes an agreement will be reached that reunites families and provides respite and aid to all people affected by the conflict. The



It is safe to say the image of the Israeli regime has been dealt a heavy blow at an international level.

There is no doubt about that. From the mass weekly protesters in the streets of the West that have turned into a U.S.-led student movement at university campuses to Latin American countries cutting diplomatic ties with Israel.

That is the concern of President Biden and his fellow Democrats in power. How global public perception of the Israelis is affecting the status of the regime and America's number one ally amid the genocide in Gaza?

There is a lot of work to be done, if it can be achieved at all, for Tel Aviv to recover its international reputation.

The more women and children that are massacred by the Israeli army, the more difficult it will be for America to speak about human rights and international law.

The dying Western argument of the Israelis having the right to self-defense has been thrown out of the window.

As Brazil's President Lula once said, this is a war between a "highly prepared army, and women and children".

ICRC stands ready to play its role as a neutral intermediary in fulfilling humanitarian aspects of an agreement.

If military operations continue, it is critical that the parties to the conflict account for the reality of large numbers of people moving across damaged roads and through areas possibly contaminated by unexploded weapons. Evacuations must be carried out in a way that ensures civilians arrive safely and have satisfactory conditions of hygiene, health, safety and nutrition; family members should not be separated. People must be able to return to their homes as soon as hostilities have stopped.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Tehran, Jakarta to scale up tourism



TEHRAN – Stemming from cultural and religious ties between Iran and Indonesia, the two nations have taken steps forward in the tourism field front and center in collaboration agenda.

In a notable effort to bolster cultural connections between the two nations, Iran's deputy tourism minister has met with the Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran to discuss further cooperation.

Ali-Asghar Shalabafian highlighted the importance of deepening tourism collaborations between two countries with particular focus on bilateral private sector activities.

Pointing to the Iranian part of the efforts, featuring a visa-waiver program for Indonesians, Shalabafian emphasized that paving the way for collaboration in the tourism field is a priority for the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Efforts to establish direct flights, reduce the cost of tour packages, arranging tourism cooperation plans and hosting events showcasing Iran's tourism potential were also discussed.

Additionally, marketing and advertising strategies were followed in conversations, including the use of influencers on social media and understanding the preferences of both parties to promote attractive destinations.

Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro, for his part, responded positively, emphasizing the cultural bonds between Tehran and Jakarta.

The ambassador further explained that Iran is considered as an attractive destination for Indonesian tourists.

Prioritizing the issues related to the tourism link between the two countries, the Indonesian envoy mentioned easing tourists' arrivals and content creation about tourist attractions.

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

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

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

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

Unknown Assyrian symbols solved as 'Tag' of Sargon II

Ancient symbols on a 2,700-year-old temple which have baffled experts for over a century have been explained by Trinity Assyriologist Dr Martin Worthington. The sequence of 'mystery symbols' were on view on temples at various locations in ancient city of Dūr-Šarrukīn, present day Khorsabad, Iraq, which was ruled by Sargon II, king of Assyria (721-704 BC).

The sequence of five symbols – a lion, eagle, bull, fig-tree and plough – were first made known to the modern world through drawings published by French excavators in the late nineteenth century. Since then, there has been a spate of ideas about what the symbols might mean.

Deciphering the Assyrian Symbols

Dr Martin Worthington of Trinity's School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies has proposed a new solution in a paper published this month [April 26th] in the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. He argues the Assyrian words for the five symbols (lion, eagle, bull, fig-tree and plough) contain, in the right sequence, the sounds that spell out the Assyrian form of the name 'Sargon' (šarḡīnu).

Sometimes, the same archaeological site

uses only three of the symbols (lion, tree, plough), which Dr Worthington argues again write the name 'Sargon', following similar principles.

What is more, according to Dr Worthington, each of the five symbols can also be understood as a constellation. Thus, the lion represents Leo, and the eagle Aquila (our own constellations are largely inherited from Mesopotamia, via the Greeks, so many of them are the same). The fig-tree stands in for the hard-to-illustrate constellation 'the Jaw' (which we don't have today), on the basis that 'isu 'tree' sounds similar to 'isu 'jaw'.

Ancient messaging of Mesopotamia

Ancient Mesopotamia, or modern Iraq and neighboring regions, was home to Babylonians, Assyrians, Sumerians, and others, and is today being researched from cuneiform writings, which survive in abundance. Indeed, writing was probably invented there around 3400 BC. So, though Sargon's scholars would not have been aware of this, in devising new written symbols they were echoing Mesopotamian history from over a thousand years before.

(Source: Ancient Origins)

Iran in frames



The triumph relief of Shapur I (r. 241-272), the most famous Sasanian rock relief from Naqsh-e Rostam, is very close to the tomb of Darius I the Great. It shows Shapur I (on horseback) with Philip the Arab and Emperor Valerian being defeated.

Archaeologist tells of 29 troglodyte sites discovered in northern Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian archaeologist Meysam Fallah has announced the discovery of 29 troglodyte sites during two archaeological seasons he has led across the Haraz Valley in northern Iran.

Over the course of two systematic archaeological surveys conducted in Amol county (of Mazandaran province), 29 geographical locations bearing troglodyte structures were identified and examined, ILNA quoted Fallah as saying on Tuesday.

"Our findings represent a unique and diverse collection of troglodyte architecture in the central Alborz Mountains, located on the eastern slopes of Mount Damavand and on both sides of the Haraz valley in Amol county."

"To achieve our goals, an area of approximately 70 kilometers along the Haraz Valley from the Chelav area to the village of Ask was surveyed."

He underlined that summarizing and drawing conclusions about the function and construction time of these troglodyte structures was achieved through field research.

Making speculations about the original usage of the discovered sites, Fallah said: "It is highly likely that we are dealing with ritual-religious complexes (for prayer rooms, worship places, hermitag-



es, pilgrimage sites, educational chambers for religious teachings), burial sites (stone tombs, mausoleums, grave domes, and shrines), and temporary settlements or shelters (for surveillance or guiding purposes)."

He added: Identifying carved patterns on the inner walls of one of these complexes depicting human, natural, weaponry, animal, and geometric motifs, and a carved pictorial inscription on a flat frame on the entrance of another of these complexes indicating vague imagery of archery, and possibly vessels belonging to the Sassanian period.

"Discovery of stone graves similar to those introduced in Fars and Ahvaz, and a troglodyte altar on a unique and natural stone, and troglodytes with local names such as Pal (caravanserai) and Nakhsh

Le (grave amphora), highlight the importance and diversity of these relics as well as the variations in their function and creation period."

He added some of these complexes, with different placements, functions, structures, plans, and forms, in similar locations to each other, belong to different historical periods (Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanian, post-Sassanian Islamic, and some others until contemporary times) and are possibly related to Mithraism and Zoroastrianism (even with the continuation of these beliefs in the Islamic era).

That troglodyte structures were found in Chelav, Lahash, Panjab, Kaharvard, Gazaneh, Gaznak, Anneh, Mun, Rineh, Tineh, Firreh, Malar, Nyak, Zardband Bayjan, Vana, Daraie, and Aineh Munon, among some other places, he said.

The main objective of these surveys, according to the archaeologist, was to identify, document, and study these troglodyte structures based on field research and then study their form, 3-D organization, usage, and time of their creation.

Iran is renowned for its rich troglodyte architecture. The province of Lorestan is gearing up to host the 4th International Troglodytic Architecture Conference, scheduled to be held in the ancient city of Khorramabad from November 12 to 14. Themed "Resilience against Relics, Climate Change, and Disasters," this conference aims to provide a crucial platform for experts, scholars, and enthusiasts from around the globe.

Troglodytic architecture refers to structures that are built into natural rock formations or caves, utilizing the existing geological features as part of the structure. These types of buildings are often found in regions where suitable building materials are scarce or where natural caves provide shelter. Troglodytic architecture can range from simple dwellings to elaborate structures, and examples can be found in various parts of the world, including regions of Iran, Tunisia, Spain, and China, among others.

Semnan hosting festival of Silk Road traditions

TEHRAN – The ancient city of Semnan is playing host to a cultural heritage festival dedicated to Silk Road traditions.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Semnan's tourism chief announced the launch of the Taska festival as part of Semnan's programs to mark being a member of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities.

"The festival is in line with the selection of Semnan as Iran's representative in the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities."

"Taska is a type of traditional container used in Semnan, and by organizing this festival and selecting this name, we aim to highlight the local culture of Semnan, local foods, and tourism and cultural heritage potentials."

The official said various programs have been devised in this regard, one of which is the Taska tourism festival.

She considered Semnan's bread-baking traditions and culinary skills as one of the focal

points of the festival, adding the event includes an exhibition of artworks by local artists as well.

The event includes programs such as traditional music performances, art performances, handicraft exhibitions, local foods, and award ceremonies for the winners.

The three-day festival will come to an end on May 11, she said.

"We seek to benefit from Semnan's membership in the "International Union of Tourism Cities along the Silk Road," attended by over 20 countries worldwide, as this presence is a very rare occurrence and can have a significant impact on the economic, tourism, cultural, and overall development of Semnan province."

The ancient Silk Road has existed for thousands of years, passing through empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies throughout history. At certain times in its long history, traders could travel freely along these routes, whereas at others, travel was difficult or dangerous.

There are over 40 countries today alongside the historic Land and Maritime Silk Road, all still bearing witness to the impact of these routes on their culture, traditions, and customs. Travelers along the Silk Road were fascinated not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange that was taking place in cities along the route, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts, and literature, as well as crafts and technologies, were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions, and cultures developed and influenced each other.

According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages, and of course material goods into societies across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

Ardakan hosting festival of native pigeons

TEHRAN – A bird festival intended to promote tourism within Yazd's Ardakan county has opened to run from May 7 to 10.

Ardakan's Cultural Heritage Chief, on Wednesday, announced that the second edition of Persian high-flying tumbler festival is underway simultaneously with an exhibition of handicrafts and souvenirs.

"This year, more than 120 pigeon species from across Iran have been brought to the festival," Mostafa Sepehri elaborated. "Which is warmly welcomed by the visitors."

Regarding the festival's total stalls, the officials pinpointed that more than 60 booths are active, of which, 15 are dedicated to artisans showing their handicrafts.

Sepehri further explained that the event is designed to boost tourism and extend support to lo-

cal craftspeople.

"These days, Ardakan is playing host to tourists, hailing from Oman, UAE, and Bahrain," the tourism chief noted.

"Which makes a great opportunity to showcase the capacities within the country."

Encouraging enthusiasts to visit the exhibition during its four-day run, he outlined that the event also serves as a platform for local artisans to promote their traditional skills and crafts to a wider audience.

According to him, the Persian high-flying tumbler is a type of authentic Iranian pigeon that is very expensive and difficult to maintain but generates a very high income. This district is considered one of the hubs for them in the country, the official added.

"The event has been set to run from May 7 to 10, welcoming

the enthusiasts from 4 to 10 PM" Sepehri wound up. "Taking place at Aqa-Mohammad Afkhami Hall."

Birds, particularly pigeons, have long been revered in Iranian culture for their beauty, grace, and symbolism of peace and freedom. For centuries, they intertwined with various facets of Iranian society, from art and literature to architecture and agriculture.

One of the most iconic manifestations of this reverence is the pigeon towers, the ruins of which are scattered across the ancient country.

Usually built of mud-brick, pigeon towers are often decorated by ornate cupolas and muqarnas friezes. Each tower consists of an outer drum, buttressed internally to prevent collapse and to support the inner drum that rises perhaps a third as high as the main structure.



Pigeons can get to their nets through some passages that are so narrow that it is impossible for other birds such as eagles or falcons to enter. At the bottom, there are some smooth parts of stucco works. These parts can prevent snakes from ascending. In some cases, they put a bowl of milk in the center with lime around it. As snakes like milk, they try to get it but will be stuck in the lime.

Nowadays, due to the wide use of chemical fertilizers, such pigeon towers just convey memories of the past as significant but strange buildings.

Turkmen horses to compete in sport, beauty festival

TEHRAN - Aiming to boost the rural economy and develop the horse breeding industry, Kalaleh is set to play host to the 18th edition of a national festival dedicated to Turkmen horses on May 15.

On Tuesday, Kalaleh's governor highlighted the festival's significant potential for enhancing the local horse breeding culture, bringing joy and vitality to the community, and fostering the growth of the tourism industry.

"The purebred Turkmen horse is a unique asset for the district," Farhad Shakib added. "And hosting this festival provides an opportunity to

revive and showcase the customs, traditions, and culture of the people in the region."

Shakib also mentioned the planning sessions held to ensure a magnificent execution of the one-day event.

He emphasized the importance of recognizing the characteristics of the purebred Turkmen horse to enthusiasts and the broader community, as well as focusing on wealth generation and strengthening the tourism industry.

According to the event organizers, the festival, which will be held in the Sofian village with-

in Kalaleh, is expected to be grander than last year's edition.

The previous festival saw participation from horses across multiple provinces including Golestan, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Fars, Qazvin, Tehran, Alborz, North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, Mazandaran, Gilan, Semnan, and Isfahan, competing in 10 different classes, the governor further explained.

Each spring, horse lovers gather to enjoy the display of beauty and agility of these noble animals, making it a much-anticipated event in the region's cultural calendar.

IRCS is a top organization nationally, internationally

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is recognized as one of the five prominent societies worldwide thanks to its wide range of activities and great achievements both nationally and internationally, Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, has said.

He made the remarks on Tuesday, on the occasion of the World Red Cross Day which is celebrated on May 8.

The day celebrates the spirit of humanitarianism and recognizes the individuals who make a difference in their communities.

In Iran the event is celebrated from May 8 to 13 through holding different programs.

The week-long event kicks off with an exhibition showcasing achievements of the IRCS and a blood donation campaign, according to the IRCS website.

The event also is a good opportunity to honor the rescuers who have sacrificed their lives while providing comfort to people in need in different humanitarian missions, Kolivand said.

He highlighted the capabilities, dedication, and selflessness of the IRCS women, who work hard in different sectors.

The official went on to elaborate measures to boost the IRCS effectiveness.

A total of 300 ambulances and 600 rescue vehicles have been purchased. It is planned to add 1,500 more rescue vehicles to the IRCS fleet, Kolivand stated.

Equipping mountain rescue bases, providing insurance for rescuers,



and increasing their incomes were among the other measures to enhance the services.

"The Iranian Red Crescent Society has also been active and successful in international missions like helping earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey which made the organization receive the Turkish government's award for its sacrifice and help," he further noted.

The official attributed the organization's achievements to the unwavering dedication of volunteers, whose number has already reached 3 million.

Initiatives to develop and empower Crescent houses in remote, deprived areas and enhance prevention and education programs are other parts of the society's effort to expand its services.

In this regard, some programs and maneuvers are put on the agenda to be conducted during the week, Kolivand noted.

The IRCS offers public education and relief services courses in universities, schools, seminaries, and barracks to improve the whole society's

resilient in the face of disasters.

Health, treatment, and rehabilitation are another part of the IRCS activities, the IRCS hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics meet the medical and therapeutic needs of thousands of citizens every day.

The IRCS medical centers abroad are reputable worldwide. Soon, the Red Crescent Medical Center will be opened in Tajikistan

As a humanitarian organization, the IRCS is trying to alleviate the suffering of the people involved in accidents, emergencies, and conflicts.

The most important issue these days is to help the victims of the war in Gaza.

So far, with the help of the people, 10,000 tons of health and medical items have been collected and delivered to the people in need in Gaza.

Referring to cooperation with knowledge-based companies, Kolivand said, "Today, collaborations with knowledge-based firms have resulted in advancements in manufacturing orthoses, prostheses, artificial organs, and new medications, with plans to extend cooperation to

rescue and relief efforts as well.

Iran is IFRC's strongest member in region

In July 2023, Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), referred to Iran as the strongest member in the region.

"Among the 192 national Red Crescent and Red Cross societies around the world, the Red Crescent of the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been one of the most important and strongest societies and a reliable member of the Federation."

The quick and effective presence of the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the rescue operations and then providing relief to earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria last winter shows the good preparedness of the IRCS in response to natural disasters, the IFRC official highlighted.

World Red Cross Day

Every year on May 8, people around the world come together to celebrate World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

It is a day to pay tribute to the millions of volunteers and staff working alongside people in need of protection, assistance, healthcare, social aid, and solidarity.

This special day is all about appreciating the important ideas behind the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Sanctions are to blame for shortages in certain rare-disease drugs

TEHRAN –There are no restrictions on the supply of medicine for rare-disease patients, but some foreign companies prevent the sale of medicine to Iran because of sanctions causing temporary shortages of the needed drugs, an official with the Food and Drug Administration has said.

FDA makes every effort to make sure patients have access to needed drugs including importing medicines for those who are allergic to domestic drugs, IRNA quoted Heidar Mohammadi as saying on Tuesday.

He made the remarks on the occasion of the World Thalassaemia Day on May 8.

Most of the drugs for rare-disease patients are domestically manufactured. Sometimes shortages refer to foreign medicines unavailability. Naturally, the FDA supports locally manufactured drugs whose efficiency have been proven, Mohammadi added.

If domestic drugs are found to be inefficient, foreign sample options, in case of being proven effective, will be imported, he said.

Regarding the medicine supply for thalassaemia patients, he said, "With the help of the Thalassaemia Association and oncology specialists, domestic drugs are mainly used to meet the needs of patients."

However, Mohammadi added that due to the different needs of patients and the effectiveness of drugs on them, a part of the needed medicine is imported.

With the help of the Central Bank, the amount of imported drugs for thalassaemia patients increased significantly last year (ended on March 19), compared to a year earlier. This year, we aim to continue providing the necessary medicine for these patients with the Central Bank's assistance.

Health insurance and rare disease funds cover part of the costs to help patients get medications without financial concerns.

Currently, there are about 19,000 patients with thalassaemia in the country, with 15,500 diagnosed with thalassaemia major, 2,800 with thalassaemia 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 thalassaemia, making expert care crucial for effective treatment and management.

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 Iranian calendar year that ended on March 20, 2023, IRNA reported, adding that the figure rose to 70 trillion rials the next 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.

ENGLISH IN USE

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COVID-19 lockdown moves most cities out of "red" zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk "red" zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions.

The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

امعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

علیرضا رئیس، سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: از ۸۹ شهری که از پنجشنبه آبان محدودیت های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده اند. او با اشاره به محدودیت های کرونایی در ۴۳ شهری که (از ۵ آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است، گفت: از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده اند. با توجه به ورودی بیمارستان ها و اینکه میزان بستری هم کاهش یافته است امیدواریم روند فوتی ها هم تا حدود دو تا سه هفته دیگر آثار خود را نشان دهد و روند کاهشی پیدا کند. وی اعلام کرد: اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقیمانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهشی شروع خواهد شد.

Iran to host Intl. Friendly Skills Competition

TEHRAN –The First International Friendly Skills Competition (IFSC) will kick off in the northern province of Golestan on May 11.

Participants from different countries including South Korea, Brazil, Turkmenistan, Malaysia, Ghana, Russia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Japan will compete in the weeklong event, IRIB quoted Mehrdad Azimi, the head of Technical and Vocational Training Organization, as saying.

Mobile application development; Web technologies; IT network System Administration; IT software Solutions for Business; Mechanical Engineering CAD; and Graphic Design Technology will be the subjects of contest.

The event mainly aims to improve the skills of the youths and the workforce through exchanging experiences, learning about national skill standards, encouraging young people to be trained in accordance with their jobs, and facilitating the exchange of information and expertise among professional youths all over the world.

Competitors must be under 22 at the time of competition. Each competitor is accompanied by an expert who will automatically be part of the Jury. A test project will be conducted in English.

Science and Technology development

In February 2023, President Ebrahim Raisi said science and technology are the cornerstones of national development.

The chain of knowledge, research, innovation, and technology ensures sustainable development in the country, he added.

The president made the remarks at the ending ceremony of the 36th Khwarizmi International Festival, the 24th Khwarizmi Youth Award, and the 1st Khwarizmi Innovation and Technology Award, which was held in Tehran, IRNA reported.

"Our religious leaders benefited from the knowledge and advised the society to learn science and wisdom.

They gave a privileged position to wise men, scientists, and researchers and always encouraged someone who was a person of wisdom and thoughtfulness."

"Our interaction with all nations and gov-

Zimbabwe willing to use Iran's expertise in health, environment

TEHRAN –Zimbabwe has expressed interest in utilizing Iran's capabilities and experiences to boost technology in the fields of health and environment, and also agriculture and aerospace.

Attending a meeting on Wednesday in Tehran, Amon Murwira, Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, and Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, the Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy, discussed ways to boost cooperation between the two countries in various sectors, ISNA reported.

Referring to Zimbabwe's rich natural resources, Murwira said knowledge and technology are needed to be able to use these resources; Iran's scientific and technological capabilities can help the country to enhance its services, increase welfare, and make progress. So it welcomes scientific, innovation, social, and industrial cooperation with Iran.

The official went on to say that Iran has taken great strides in gaining independence and making notable progress, Zimbabwe is willing to learn from Iran's experiences to bring dignity and honor to Zimbabweans by using technology and innovation.

Also, he stressed the country's readiness to strengthen strategic ties with Iran, particularly in the field of science and technology, via establishments of joint committees and working groups.

Dehqani-Firouzabadi, for his part, said that the two countries have reached an agreement to collaborate on projects with joint ownership of infrastructure, investments, knowledge, and technologies. Both sides hope to develop a platform for manufacturing high-quality joint products in the near future.

Iran plans to strengthen African ties

On April 30, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein

ements in the world should be for the transfer of knowledge and technology, and our interaction with all neighboring countries, in the region and globally, should be based on this criterion," Raisi highlighted.

Innovation, technology ecosystem

The country's progressing process of development has accelerated with the emphasis on the formation of the technology and innovation ecosystem and the approval of laws for supporting knowledge-based companies and boosting Iran-made products.

Today, we are witnessing the positive effects of adopting the approach in the economy, culture, and daily life of people.

The Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy has reported that the sales of knowledge-based companies in the fiscal year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022) hit 4,000 trillion rials (about \$10 billion) compared to the fiscal year 1399, an increase of 86 percent year on year.

Improving the scientific level of society, achieving high global rankings in the number of scientific articles, references, and patenting, reducing the illiteracy rate, and increasing the number of university courses and students are only a part of the achievements after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The total number of knowledge-based companies in the country reached 8,368 companies in the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20), showing a 90 percent growth year on year.

"Biotechnology, agriculture, and food industries", "high-tech pharmaceuticals and products for diagnosis and treatment", "advanced materials and products based on chemical technologies", "advanced machinery and equipment", "devices, and medical equipment", "electricity and electronics", "telecommunication", "information technology and computer software", are the fields of activity of the country's knowledge-based companies.

In line with the law enforced on May 24, 2022, knowledge-based production is a priority of the government so the plan for promoting knowledge-based products has progressed well so far.



Amir Abdollahian stated that Iran is determined to strengthen and expand its relations with African nations based on mutual interest and respect.

The top diplomat made the remarks during a meeting with the Central African Minister for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. During the meeting, Amir Abdollahian highlighted the importance of expanding relations with the African continent as a key priority of Iran's foreign policy.

The official expressed Iran's readiness to enhance bilateral cooperation with Central Africa, especially in areas such as agriculture, science, technology, and education.

Ngate Robard, for his part, commended Iran for its hosting of the second Iran-Africa Summit and Expo Tehran 2024, emphasizing the significance of these events.

The Central African Minister also praised Iran's advancements in various scientific, technological, and industrial sectors, while acknowledging the warm hospitality extended during his visit.

Iran has been seeking to strengthen ties with African nations since President Raisi's administration took office. Raisi visited Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe last year, and signed various documents to up bilateral cooperation in different fields.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Overlook and forgive the weaknesses of the generous people because if they fall down, Allah will help them.

Imam Ali (AS)

International Short Film Festival Oberhausen honors Iranian documentary

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film "With Confidentiality" directed by Shervin Vahdat and Payam Azizi received an award from the 70th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen in Germany, which ran from May 1 to 6.

The 2023 flick won the Special Mention of the international jury of the International Competition section of the festival, ISNA reported.

"Ingeniously simple and touching, this film weaves a story of solidarity, ambition and ambivalence. Risking

their lives, the women of an Iranian village turn to the authorities to accuse their husbands. The film is not just about, it is feminist empowerment," the jury statement read.

The 17-minute flick is a short documentary about a group of women in a village in Iran,

who secretly come together despite the danger to their lives to write a complaint letter to the local authorities against their own men. Their clandestine unity and covert movement against widespread addiction among the men lead to a significant police crackdown.

The world's oldest short film competition, the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen is a forum for experiments, unusual content and formats, and the place for cinematic discoveries, regardless of genre and production country.

Every year, filmmakers from over 40 countries present themselves at the festival. Only international festival premieres are admitted to the competition. A premiere shown in the competition is often a springboard for selection at other festivals - not least for the Oscar.

"Punch Drunk" wins NETPAC Award from 25th Jeonju International Film Festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian feature film "Punch Drunk" directed by Adel Tabrizi won an award at the 25th Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF) in South Korea.

The festival, which is underway in Jeonju from May 1 to 10, announced the winners of various categories on Tuesday, and the Iranian 2023 production received the NETPAC Award, Mehr reported.

Written by Tabrizi and Arsalan Amiri, the 100-minute movie is about a literature and karate teacher who falls in love with the divorced mother of one of his students.

Set in Tehran in 1996, the story of the film follows Mahtab who lives along with her 10-year-old child, Erfan. She is divorced from her husband, Morteza, who is in jail. Mahtab has enrolled her child in a karate class. Erfan's only interest is cinema and could not care less

about sports. Hassan Khoshnud, the tough and serious karate instructor with his dictatorial methods causes Erfan to run away one day from the karate academy in the middle of exercises.

The tragicomedy won the best screenplay award at the 16th Cheboksary International Film Festival in Russia last June.

The cast includes Behrang Alavi, Hamed Behdad, Baran Kosari, Nader Soleimani, and Siavash Cheraghpoor among others.

Jeonju International Film Festival is an Asian film festival. It was launched in 2000 as a non-competitive film festival with partial competition. It introduces independent and experimental films to focus on the alternative course of contemporary film art. JIFF also features an experimental section called Expanded Cinema (formerly called Stranger than Cinema).

35th TIBF opens doors to public

From Page 1 > Yemen is the special guest of this edition of the book fair. Initially, India was designated as the special guest of the book fair, but due to restrictions on Indian citizens traveling to Iran, the organizers made the decision to replace India with Yemen

Being Iran's major trade fair for books, the TIBF has been turned into a landmark, momentous book fair in West Asia after 34 editions in a row.

Millions of visitors inspect the fair every year, including thousands of university students, scholars, and their families.

The cultural event currently serves as the most significant cultural event in Iran. On average 2,500 domestic and 600 foreign publishers participate in the landmark event. The foreign publishers substantially offer



their materials in English or Arabic however titles in French, German, Chinese, Korean, and

Japanese are also available.

The 35th Tehran International Book Fair, with the slogan "Let's

Read and Create," will continue until May 18 in the Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

Children of Mosque Popular Theater Festival commences in Yazd

TEHRAN- The 15th edition of the Children of Mosque Popular Theater Festival kicked off with a grand ceremony in the historic town of Bafq in central Yazd province on Tuesday.

The event's opening ceremony took place at the Martyrs' Cemetery of Bafq county, attended by cultural officials, local authorities, and various participating theater groups, as announced by the Art Bureau's public relations office.

The governor of Bafq county welcomed guests at the start of the ceremony, expressing optimism for outstanding performances at the festival and highlighting the significance of hosting such an artistic celebration in Bafq, known as the birthplace of renowned Iranian artists.

Kouroush Zarei, director of the Art Bureau's Center for Dramatic Arts, credited the collaborative efforts of provincial officials for making the festival's inception in Bafq possible, underscoring

the presence of esteemed artists like Nasrollah Qaderi, Hossein Fadaei Hossein, and Mohammad Reza Azad, who will lead educational workshops and engaging discussions for the next generation of talent in attendance.

Zarei also mentioned the esteemed jury panel that will evaluate the performances of participating groups as the festival progresses.

In closing, he expressed hope that this edition of the festival would bring about inspiring artistic and cultural experiences for the town of Bafq and its residents, fostering a sense of cultural pride and excitement within the community.

During a press conference in Tehran on Sunday, Zarei mentioned that the festival had been suspended for three years to establish the necessary infrastructure and perspectives.

He also highlighted that throughout this hiatus, numerous mosque-based theater groups

nationwide were actively staging plays and preparing for the upcoming edition of the festival.

Zarei added that this year's performing plays are the output of 800 theater groups, and efforts are being made to reach out to villages as well.

He emphasized that this theater festival should expand to all corners of Iran in order to discover and guide talents even in the remote areas of the country.

Highlighting the motto of the fifteenth festival as "My Mosque, My Artistic Home," Zarei stressed the intention to merge religious context with artistic themes and attract teenagers to mosques as cultural centers suitable for children to spend their time.

The 15th edition of the Children of Mosque Popular Theater Festival, with the participation of 14 groups of artists in the field of theater in mosques across the country, will run until May 10.

Arte to show Iranian series "Actor" to European viewers



TEHRAN-The Iranian series "Actor" will be released on the Arte TV channel and platform from May 9 for the European viewers.

The French-German cultural television network Arte has acquired the broadcasting rights for the series, written and directed by Nima Javidi, and dubbed it into French and German, ISNA reported.

The series is to premiere during prime viewing hours on Thursday to attract maximum viewers with its diverse and high-quality content.

According to Arte, this move aligns with its reputation for showcasing diverse, high-quality programming to the channel's European audience. Being the first Iranian series broadcast internationally, it is a black comedy of delightful originality.

Starring Navid Mohammadzadeh, Ahmad Mehranfar, Hasti Mahdaviyar and Hanieh Tavassoli, the series delves into the lives of theater actors navigating intricate adventures after accepting a unique offer.

The other cast members include Hooman Barghnavard, Gelareh Abbasi, Arash Falahatpisheh, Roya Javidnia, Mehrooheh Sharifinia, and Farideh Sepahmansour.

Each episode of "Actor" presents a distinct story and atmosphere, as the protagonists, portrayed by Mohammadzadeh and Mehranfar,

immerse themselves in various roles, from an addict aiding a concerned father to bandits orchestrating a surprising proposal.

The series' appeal lies in its versatile makeup and character designs, compelling viewers to follow the unfolding narrative.

"Actor" features an extraordinary performance from Mohammadzadeh, who pulls off a tragicomic tour de force that impresses with its scope. Each episode is characterized by its own breathtaking performance, and each performance has its own share of misadventures based on a fabulous unpredictability. Gripping from the very opening scene, the series will serve as a wake-up call for Iranian cinema.

For writing the script, Javidi was inspired by the renowned English playwright and poet William Shakespeare, and learned from him how to write characters that are multi-dimensional and complicated.

"Shakespeare said that all the world's a stage," Javidi said. "And that all the men and women are merely players, assuming different roles depending on their situations and what they want to achieve. I thought it was fascinating to put performers in realistic roles and have them overcome obstacles, solve problems, and save themselves and others from difficulties using their acting abilities."

Following its international success, including winning the grand prize at France's Series Mania Festival and the best screenplay award at the Seoul International Drama Awards, "Actor" is to make its European debut on Arte TV.

Mohammadzadeh's accolades, such as the Best Actor Award in the Horizons competition category at the 74th International Film Festival of Venice, further underscore the series' acclaim.

Cartoon of Day



Netanyahu and Targeting Rafah
Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

U.S. rapper criticizes Biden in new song supporting pro-Palestinian student protests

In a surprise new song, U.S. rapper Macklemore praises college students across the US who are protesting Israel's war in Gaza, vowing that he will not vote for President Joe Biden come November.

The song, released Monday, is titled "Hind's Hall" in reference to the new temporary name pro-Palestinian protesters at Columbia University gave to a building they occupied on campus, CNN reported.

With its release, the Grammy-winning rapper becomes one of the first major music artists to explicitly condemn the US government's continued aid to Israel and praise students who are protesting their universities' financial investments in companies tied to Israel on campuses across the US.

"The problem isn't the protests, it's what they're protesting," Macklemore raps. "It goes against what our country is funding."

Macklemore echoes the sentiments of pro-Palestinian protesters who say they'll refuse to vote for Biden in the presidential election this year due to his continued support of Israel. There has been concern among Democrats that losing support among young voters frustrated with Biden's handling of the war may cost him the

election and see former President Donald Trump return to office.

The song also criticizes the police dispatched by universities to break up protests on college campuses. Several of the schools who called on police to intervene said its encampments were unlawful and that administrators had attempted to negotiate with student protesters before police got involved. When protesters refused to move at the University of California Los Angeles, police appeared to use rubber bullets against them. At the University of Arizona, law enforcement used pepper balls and rubber bullets on protesters.

Across the U.S., pro-Palestinian protesters have been occupying lawns and buildings on campuses, and many are requesting that their universities divest from Israel. Several protesters' encampments have been raided by police, resulting in more than 2,300 arrests at schools across the country. Many of those arrested at university protests were students, some of whom have been banned from their campuses and face expulsion.

Hind's Hall, the name pro-Palestinian protesters gave to Columbia's Hamilton Hall, was named for the Palestinian child Hind Rajab, who was found

dead in Gaza after she became trapped in a car with six of her relatives.

Macklemore's lyrics reference the more than 13,800 children who've been killed in Gaza since the beginning of the war. The song asks listeners, as well as politicians, university officials and fellow artists who've not spoken out against the violence in Gaza, to consider the human cost of the war: "What if you were in Gaza? What if those were your kids? If the West was pretending that you didn't exist?"

In "Hind's Hall," Macklemore accuses the music industry of being "complicit in (its) platform of silence," he sings. He's likely the only major artist to write a song about the conflict. Several notable musicians have signed onto the Artists 4Ceasefire letter addressed to Biden, though, including Dua Lipa, Jon Batiste and Selena Gomez. Scottish singer Annie Lennox also verbally called for a ceasefire while performing at the Grammys in February.

Macklemore has said through his social media channels that when the song is released on streaming, all the proceeds will go to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.