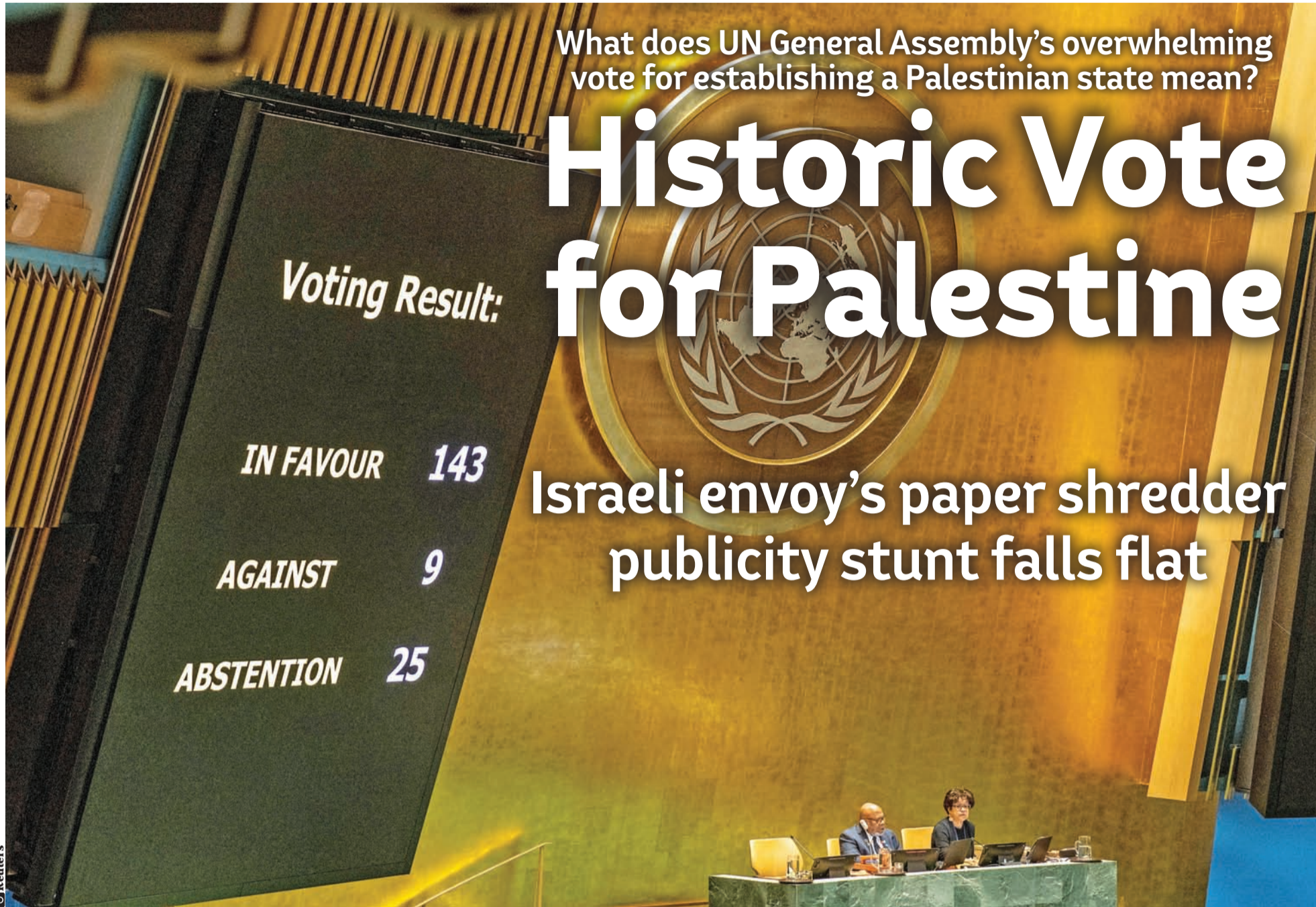


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What does UN General Assembly's overwhelming vote for establishing a Palestinian state mean?

Historic Vote for Palestine

Israeli envoy's paper shredder publicity stunt falls flat

© Reuters

A screen shows the voting results during the United Nations General Assembly vote on a draft resolution that would recognize the Palestinians as qualified to become a full UN member, in New York City, U.S. May 10, 2024.

'Kurds are one of us': Leader

TEHRAN - In a meeting with Iraqi Kurdistan Region President Nechervan Barzani, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei emphasized the close bonds between Iran and the Kurdish communities outside the country.

"We consider the relations between us and the Kurdish community, both in Iran and Iraq, to be closer than those with any other nation," Ayatollah Khamenei stated. "They (Kurds) are one of us," he told Barzani.

Details of the Monday meeting was published in an article by the Khat-e-Hezbollah (course of Hezbollah) weekly on Friday.

President Barzani, in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahi-an later that day, praised his productive and problem-solving encounter with Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Considering the statements by the Leader today and also the issues raised in today's meeting with Mr. Raisi, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we will make maximum efforts and cooperation to fulfil our mutual interests in our bilateral ties, including in the economic and commercial fields," Barzani said. ▶ Page 3

In defense of genocide

By Aina Ademola Adeniran

LAGOS, NIGERIA-The Western world is in a fissionary state, a transformative change is emerging, protests have broken out in major cities in Europe and America including tertiary institutions demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an end to Israeli occupation.

These harmless protesters – many of them students – who are supposed to be protected by the constitution have faced nothing but repression and persecution by the security operatives. It has become glaring that not only is the Zionist state of Israel on trial for war crimes, the entire Western political system which have aided and abetted these crimes in defiance of public opinion is also on trial as regards who it truly represents: the masses of the people or business and political interests?

It has become abundantly clear that America – and many nations in the Western world – operate a one-party political system albeit disguised as a multiparty system with the spurious ideals of equality, justice and human rights. In the context of the United States, the American public have an illusion of choice because both the Democrats and the Republicans represent the interests of the same people: the billionaire ruling elites. The presidency is merely the 'face' of the government as those who call the shots and make binding decisions are unelected officials like international lobby groups like AIPAC (arguably one of the most powerful lobby groups in the world); ▶ Page 5

 **China says US mercilessly blocking Palestine's UN membership**

 **Russia criticizes United States for holding Security Council "hostage"**

 **French ambassador backs UN membership bid by Palestine**

 **Iran supports full United Nations membership for Palestine**

 **UAE urges UNSC to heed global call for Palestinian statehood**

 **'Apartheid S. Africa kicked out of UNGA. Try that with Israel'**

 **Irish deputy PM proud of role in UN vote on Palestine**

 **Pakistan says UN resolution shows widespread support for Palestine**

▶ Page 5

Health ministry plays key role in youth law enforcement

TEHRAN -Two years after the enactment of the law on supporting families and the youth, investigations have shown that the health ministry has played a central role in the implementation of the law, Hasan Farshidi, an official with the health ministry, has said.

"Since the implementation of the law, the number of births among mothers aged 20 to 24 has notably increased," the official said.

He made the remarks on Saturday on the occasion of the National Youthful Population Week which will start on Monday.

The rate of mothers giving birth to three children increased from 16 percent in the Iranian year 1398 (March 2019-March 2020) to 18.97 percent in 1402 (March 2023 - March 2024) and even the fourth childbirth increased from 5 percent to about 7 percent, Farshidi stated. ▶ Page 7



© Tehran Times/Mohamadreza Seyedagha

Foreign attendees hail magnificence of Tehran International Book Fair

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN-The 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) is underway in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla (prayer grounds), bringing together over 2,700 local and 60 foreign publishers from 25 countries attending the event.

Having been held for 35 years in a row, the cultural event serves as the most significant cultural event in Iran and has turned into a landmark, momentous book fair in West Asia. ▶ Page 8

Munir Shafiq: Resistance led Palestinians into total victory

TEHRAN - In a session held in Tehran on Saturday, Palestinian author Munir Shafiq took the lead in a discussion centered on "Palestine, Resistance, and Media," accompanied by a panel of analysts.

The session carried considerable weight, with Shafiq's longstanding dedication to the Palestinian cause drawing widespread attention and setting the stage for a thought-provoking exchange.

Shafiq initiated the dialogue by contextualizing the discussion within the broader framework of Palestinian Resistance, underscoring its diverse dimensions beyond mere armed conflict to include cultural, intellectual, and media aspects. ▶ Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

Iran's successful operation made Israel regret its action

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

In a note, Kayhan discussed the report of the old American magazine Nation about Iran's missile attack on Israel and wrote: This magazine believes that Iran was the winner of the recent war with Israel. The details of recent conflicts in the region show that Israel is not victorious of an anti-Iranian coalition, but isolated and alone in the region. It should not be neglected that Iran's missile attack somehow revealed a new military alliance between Israel and the Arab countries. More importantly, some of the Persian Gulf countries that have American bases informed America that it could use its bases for operations against Iran. Tehran had warned these countries that if they allowed America to attack Iran from their territory, they would be targeted. According to Chas Freeman, an American diplomat, Iran has succeeded in neutralizing American forces in the Persian Gulf. As a result, the attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus caused a series of events that led to a new balance of power between the countries. This incident can be called a victory for Iran and Israel must deeply regret its attack.

Iran: Tehran's goodwill to advance peaceful nuclear activities

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper investigated Iran's position on the nuclear issue and said: Iran has said that we have no decision to produce a nuclear bomb, but if Iran's existence is threatened, we will have to change our nuclear doctrine. This positioning has addressed the Zionist regime, but Iran continues to pursue its nuclear activities peacefully. The recent visit of Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to Iran, apart from goodwill, was intended to maintain the path of positive interaction with the Agency and to prove the peaceful nature of the country's nuclear industry. Despite the disloyalty of the member states of the nuclear agreement in implementing their obligations within the framework of this agreement, Iran has tried to adhere to the nuclear safeguards' rules and regulations of the IAEA. Therefore, the strategy of changing the nuclear approach of the country happens in the situation that the leaders of the Zionist regime direct their crisis-provoking approach against Iran towards the threat of Iran's land.

However, it is expected that Iran's threatening position will be faced with a negative reaction from Western authorities, including the United States.

Iran slams Canada move against IRGC

TEHRAN- The Canadian House of Commons passed a motion adding the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to an official list of "terrorist organizations," which was sharply denounced by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani called the House of Commons' plan to designate Iran's official armed force as a terrorist organization as a hostile and foolish action in a statement released on Saturday.

As an act of aggression against Iran's sovereignty and national security, Kanaani vehemently denounced the action, noting that it breaches widely acknowledged standards and principles of international law, such as sovereign equality and non-interference in a state's domestic affairs. "The irresponsible move is in continuation of the wrong path that the Canadian parliamentarians have taken over the past decade under the influence of the Zionist regime and in unison with some rejected groups that have no status or value," the spokesman added.

According to the Foreign Ministry's website, he also counseled the Canadian lawmakers to research the IRGC's standing in Iran in order to get the relevant information.

"The IRGC is a sovereign institution that has emerged from the context of the great and powerful nation of Iran and has an official and legal identity derived from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution," Kanaani added.

He went on to add, "The IRGC, along with other elements of the armed forces, is responsible for guarding the national security and borders of the country and is also responsible to help protect the lasting security and stability in the region by confronting the ominous phenomenon of

Sobh-e-No: The strategic consequences of the True Promise operation

Sobh-e-No devoted its editorial to the strategic consequences of the True Promise operation. It wrote: Right action is the introduction of our right attitude, insight, and behavior, and the True Promise operation showed that it is possible to perform a very difficult, complex, and high-risk action without mistakes, an action that had profound cultural and social effects. The second point is the strategic consequence of validating the future threats of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In global equations, the credit of a country plays an important role in determining the position of that country. This credibility played a decisive role in deterrence in the war, so the True Promise operation significantly increased Iran's deterrence power. Iran's action not only restored the national pride of the people and prevented the repetition of the enemy's malevolence, but also demonstrated the credibility of the Islamic Republic of Iran in repelling threats. This operation changed the position of our country in the opinion of the strategists of the world and proved to them the strength of the will of the Iranian nation and the armed forces in the international arena. Therefore, the "True Promise" operation became the turning point of the developments in the region.

Hamshahri: Canada's new claim about Iran's intelligence services

In a commentary, Hamshahri dealt with the claim of the Canadian Security Intelligence Organization about Iran's foreign operations and said: This organization claimed that Iran's foreign operations have become more aggressive, bolder, and wider, and the countries of Russia, China, India, and Iran increased their activities. According to this organization, the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to become a great power in the Middle East and expand its influence to Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and beyond. Iran's foreign operations in Western countries have become increasingly aggressive and widespread in recent years, and have led to the advancement of deadly plots by Iranian military and security agents in the United States, Britain, and several European countries. The Canadian government's propaganda against Iran is while this country's embassy has acted as a spying and sabotage station for the CIA and MI6 agencies during its decades of activity in Iran. Also, in recent years, the Canadian government has served the anti-Iranian policies of the United States and the United Kingdom for negative political propaganda, sheltering terrorists and economic corruptors, and setting traps for some celebrities.

terrorism." "The move by the Canadian parliament out of its ignorance and imprudence has no effect on the might and authority of the proud force that has arisen from the context of the Iranian nation," the spokesperson added.

"At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to appropriate response and countermeasures against such moves that violate international law and are against the Iranian nation and government," Kanaani concluded. "Unwise, hostile, and contrary to the accepted standards and principles of the international law, including the equality of sovereignties and non-interference in the internal affairs of states," was how Kanaani sharply denounced the action. He described the move as "an example of an attack on Iran's sovereignty and national security."

"This irresponsible step is in line with the mistaken path that Canadian lawmakers have been following over the past decade under the influence of the Zionist regime and certain groups that are outcasts and lack any status and value," Kanaani added. His remarks came after the Canadian House of Commons on Wednesday adopted a non-binding resolution calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government to blacklist the IRGC and expel an estimated 700 Iranians.

Despite the unanimous vote, the report including the motion, is not legally binding and therefore does not impose an obligation on the government. Canada's terrorist list began after the 9/11 attacks. If a group is placed on the list, it allows the authorities to charge anyone who financially or materially backs the group.

The North American country has not added any new entities to its list since 2021 when it made four additions.

Iran supports full UN membership for Palestine

TEHRAN- Iran's UN envoy has reaffirmed Tehran's unwavering support for Palestine's full UN membership, calling it a critical first step in redressing the historical injustices suffered by the Palestinian people.

The UN General Assembly supported Palestine's application for full membership on Friday, stating that it is eligible to join, urging the UN Security Council to "reconsider the matter favorably."

After the U.S. vetoed the Palestinian request in the UN Security Council last month, the vote by the 193-member UNGA was a global survey of support for the initiative, which would essentially acknowledge Palestinian statehood.

In a statement before the UNGA, Iranian Ambassador Saeed Iravani explained why Iran believes Palestine must be a UN member state.

The full text of his statement is as follows:

The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its support to Palestine's full membership in the United Nations.



The admission of Palestine as a full member of the UN is a first step and a pivotal moment in addressing the historical injustices endured by the Palestinian people.

The resolution just adopted, rightly underscores that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter.

The Islamic Republic of Iran acknowledges and supports the General Assembly's decision today. The decision represents a modest yet crucial step in fulfilling the international community's

obligations toward the people of Palestine and restoring some of Palestine's inherent rights.

Palestine has demonstrated its commitment to peace and its ability to fulfill the obligations under the UN Charter. Consequently, it deserves full membership in the United Nations.

Conversely, the Israeli regime's actions disqualify and render this regime ineligible as a peace-loving entity capable of upholding the UN Charter's obligations. The Israeli regime consistently violates international law, the UN Charter, and UN resolutions. It refused to

comply with the legally binding orders of the International Court of Justice and persists in egregious violations including massacres, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide.

The appalling reports of mass graves discovered in Nasser and Al-Shifa medical facilities paint a harrowing picture of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by this regime. Approximately 400 bodies, including women and children, were found buried, serving as stark examples of the regime's brutality and disregard for human life. These actions run counter to the fundamental values of the United Nations and all basic norms and principles of international law and threaten international peace and security.

We regret that the United States has obstructed the draft press statement of the Security Council proposed by Algeria which calls for an impartial, transparent, and international investigation to determine the facts behind the horrific crime of mass graves in Gaza.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iraqi Kurdistan seeking to prevent past issues from straining relations with Iran: KRG rep.

TEHRAN- The representative of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Iran has said that given the positive achievements of Nechirvan Barzani's visit to Tehran, the autonomous region will definitely witness the development of political, security, and economic cooperation between Iran and the Kurdistan Region in the future.

Regarding the importance and achievements of Barzani's recent visit to Tehran and his meetings with high-ranking officials, Nazim Dabagh, the Kurdistan Regional Government representative to Tehran, stated in an interview with IRNA on Saturday that the strategic and important visit of Barzani, the head of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to Tehran, along with his accompanying delegation, was not aimed at strengthening relations with Tehran, but rather to repair relations and resolve the problems that had arisen.

The two sides in the visit and meetings emphasized continuing the past relations and expanding those relations.

He stated that Barzani's important visit to Iran had many positive achievements, saying, "One of the most important achievements of this visit was the meeting that Barzani had with Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, for the first time, which was a friendly and intimate meeting."

Intl. community must recognize civilian nature of Iran nuclear program, Bolivian envoy says

TEHRAN- Bolivia's Ambassador to Iran Romina Guadalupe Perez Ramos has noted that the world should be aware of peacefulness of Iran's nuclear program.

Speaking with IRNA on the sidelines of the first International Conference on Nuclear Sciences and Technology (ICNST) held in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on May 6, she said that despite the accusations leveled against Iran, the progress in Iran's nuclear activities is completely peaceful.

"The achievements that Iran has made in various fields, including in the production of radiopharmaceuticals and the diagnosis and treatment of deadly diseases such as cancer, demonstrate such reality," the envoy said.

Ramos also stressed that the nature of Iran's nuclear program is peaceful and the international community should recognize such a fact.

Regarding the importance of holding the meeting due to the pressure exerted by Western countries against Iran, she said that despite Iran's many years of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy

The representative of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq emphasized that in this meeting, the leadership of the Iranian Revolution emphasized that at one point in time, the majority of Kurdish leaders in Iraq lived in Iran.

Dabagh went on to add that during the meeting with Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the Leader mentioned some past memories and also remembered the late Idris Barzani, the father of Nechirvan Barzani.

The Leader also emphasized that "we should cooperate as one nation with each other to address some of the issues between us and to take steps towards strengthening the relations between Iran and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq."

He stated that the recent visit of the president of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Iran had positive and good achievements in the political, economic, and security fields.

Additionally, he said that the volume of trade between Iran and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has not increased significantly during this period, but it has not decreased either.

The representative of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq stated that if suitable conditions and atmosphere are provided for increasing the volume of trade between the two sides, there are good capacities in the KRG that can create good grounds for cooperation with Iran and

increase the volume of bilateral trade.

Dabagh also pointed out that in order to increase the level of commercial interactions between the two sides, the authorities of Iran and the KRG are determined to do so and emphasized the benefits that both sides will have from this matter while expressing hope that the conditions for achieving such a goal will be provided.

He continued by saying that in a recent press conference that Barzani had, he emphasized that the authorities in Erbil are committed to implementing the terms of the security agreement between Iran and Iraq, and of course, part of these agreements has been implemented.

The representative of the KRG averred that Barzani emphasized the issue that no group in the territory of the KRG has the right to take any action against the national interests and security of Iran and neighboring countries, and likewise, Iran should not take any action against the interests and security of the region.

Dabagh concluded by saying that "we will definitely see the development of political, security, and economic cooperation between Iran and the KRG in the future, and Barzani also emphasized that we are trying to prevent any problems that existed in the past between Iran and the region from arising again."

Agency and demonstrating its peaceful approach by fulfilling its commitments within the framework of the nuclear agreement, it was the United States that unilaterally withdrew from the agreement and imposed extensive sanctions unfairly against Iran to pressure and corner the nation.

The Bolivian Ambassador pointed out the reverse result of such a sanctions policy against Iran and added that Iran's progress has not stopped in spite of numerous accusations leveled the country's nuclear program and activities.

She noted that the breakthroughs that Iran has made in various fields, including in the production of radiopharmaceuticals and the diagnosis and treatment of deadly diseases such as cancer, demonstrate the reality.

Ramos mentioned the unveiling of the latest diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals as evidence of Iran's peaceful nuclear industry's accelerated progress and added that these radiopharmaceuticals are very important in cancer treatment and are highly priced worldwide, but Tehran has succeeded in obtaining them with

its indigenous technology despite the sanctions.

"This is while the goal of sanctions is to create more dependency on target countries, but Iran has shown that it can withstand even the harshest sanctions with its independence and reliance on domestic capabilities," Ramos continued.

She also highlighted the close cooperation between Iran and Bolivia in the field of science and technology, as underlining that Iran is implementing extensive investment projects in South American countries, focusing on the development and expansion of health institutions, scientific and educational relations, as well as peaceful nuclear cooperation.

Especially, Bolivia can benefit from Iran's successful nuclear achievements in the field of radiopharmaceuticals and the treatment of severe diseases, paving the way for further cooperation, she said.

The ambassador also stated that Bolivia respects Iran's peaceful nuclear program and believes that Tehran's achievement of new peaceful advances in the nuclear field is its right.

"This approach has enabled it to resist against the unilateral and aggressive policies of the United States and play an important and pioneering role for other countries facing similar pressures from the United States."

The first International Conference on Nuclear Sciences and Technologies in Isfahan opened on Tuesday, May 7th, with the presence and speech of Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization.

Panels of experts started their meetings in Isfahan ahead of the 30th edition of the National Nuclear Conference and the First International Conference on Nuclear Sciences and Technology (ICNST) on May 6 for three days.

Around 100 people, half of them from other countries, gave lectures in person and online on the latest scientific achievements.

A day after the opening ceremony of the nuclear conferences, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi attended the event, met with Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami, and answered reporters' questions by participating in a briefing.

Munir Shafiq: Resistance led Palestinians into total victory

From Page 1 ▶ Shafiq provided insights into the ongoing situation in Gaza, stressing the fluidity and complexity of the region's dynamics. In his analysis, Shafiq delved into the Al Qsa Storm Operation, lauding its strategic importance and effective execution.

He specifically commended the adept leadership displayed by the Resistant groups, highlighting their role in maintaining the conflict with a high degree of precision and efficacy.

Shafiq further highlighted the geopolitical context surrounding the conflict, noting the concerted efforts by Western allies of Israel to escalate tensions. Despite their intentions, Shafiq noted a significant setback for these actors, as their attempts to spark a full-scale war with Palestine were ultimately thwarted.

This observation underscores the resilience and determination of Palestinian Resistance efforts, as well as the challenges faced by external actors seeking to influence the region's dynamics.

Munir Shafiq provided a comprehensive analysis of the recent conflict, highlighting the evident dominance of the Resistance from the outset. He pointed out the Israeli military's failure to locate Resistance strongholds, resulting in the targeting of civilians. Shafiq credited the Resistance for introducing innovative tactics that outmatched the Israeli regime across all fronts, ultimately leading to Israel's defeat despite the significant civilian casualties.

Emphasizing the triumph of the Resistance, Shafiq noted their acceptance of ceasefire conditions, which further showcased their strategic prowess.

He raised a poignant question regarding Israel's refusal to accept peace, suggesting it stems from a reluctance to acknowledge their defeat in the conflict. Shafiq drew parallels with past instances where the United States accepted defeat in conflicts like Vietnam and Afghanistan but seem unwilling to do so in Gaza, signaling a shift in global power dynamics.

He asserted the pivotal role of



media in shaping global perceptions and amplifying Palestinian voices on the international stage.

Throughout the session, Shafiq delved into the complexities of media representation, highlighting the challenges Palestinians face in shaping their narrative amidst dominant narratives that often marginalize their experiences.

Shafiq also highlighted the growing momentum of university protests across U.S. campuses, warning that Israel's actions risk turning into a global symbol of shame.

He concluded by asserting the role of resistance in Gaza as a harbinger of a new world order, despite ongoing internal strife within Palestine. Shafiq stressed the importance of prioritizing victory in the conflict before addressing post-peace plans.

The analysts present in the session also actively engaged in the discourse, probing into power dynamics within media discourse and exploring strategies for effective storytelling and advocacy.

Hossein Jaber Ansari, a West Asia studies expert and the event's moderator, reported on Munir Shafiq's insightful discussion, highlighting his deep commitment to Palestine as his central focus. Shafiq delved into the aftermath of the Al Qsa Storm Operation, addressing the plight of victims and the strategic challenges faced by Israel in the conflict.

Moreover, Jaber Ansari emphasized the pivotal role of media in shaping narratives surrounding the Palestinian struggle. He

underscored the importance of understanding the power dynamics at play in media representation and questioned the true face of Israel amidst the ongoing war of narratives.

Abbas Khomeini, a culture and media expert, provided analytical support for the Islamic revolution, emphasizing the significance of narrative warfare in the ongoing conflict. He highlighted the intense

media battle surrounding the Gaza issue, noting the Zionist portrayal of themselves as victims and the propagation of falsehoods regarding events like the October 7 incident.

Amidst this asymmetric media war, Khomeini observed that media played a role even more critical than weapons, shaping perceptions and influencing public opinion. He noted Hamas's media preparedness in response to this challenge, while also acknowledging Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's labeling of media as "terroristic."

Traditionally, Arab media outlets aligned with the Palestinian narrative, but Khomeini noted a divergence in stances during the recent conflict, with some countries advocating for normalization with Israel portraying Hamas as an adversary. Internal strife within resistance groups further complicated the media landscape.

Overall, Khomeini stressed the pivotal role of media in shaping the narrative of the recent conflict, underscoring its significance in the ongoing struggle for Palestinian rights.

Mohammad-Ali Mohtadi, another West Asia studies expert, reported on the significant outcomes of the resistance in Gaza, highlighting both the military and security defeats suffered by Israel. They noted that despite Israel's attempts to compensate for their losses since October 7, their deterrence has been severely undermined.

Moreover, Mohtadi highlighted the role of media portrayal in exposing Israeli crimes and changing the narrative surrounding the conflict.

He emphasized that despite denials from the U.S. and other allies, the truth about the Zionist regime's actions has become widely known, dismantling their false advertising over the years.

Mohtadi pointed out that Israel's victim narrative was its biggest achievement until October 7, but this façade has now been shattered.

He also drew attention to the growing advocacy for a free Palestine among university professors and students in the West, signaling a significant shift in public awareness and demand for change after years of obscured truths.

Gholamreza Montazemi, a diplomat and media expert, reported on the discussion, focusing on Munir's assessment of the solution for Iran and the Axis of Resistance.

Additionally, Montazemi highlighted the influence of Western media in shaping the narrative surrounding the conflict, underscoring the importance of understanding Western perspectives. He pointed out that Israel's influence extends beyond the region, with significant support and presence in Western countries.

Moreover, Montazemi noted Munir's observation that the legitimacy of the West was challenged during the conflict, exposing the realities of Western civilization. Palestinian death toll nears 35,000 as Israel continues its ongoing offensive on the Gaza Strip since last October, the Health Ministry in the besieged enclave said on Saturday.

'Kurds are one of us': Leader



From Page 1 ▶ He acknowledged Iran's unwavering support for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and praised the role of the late anti-terror icon, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in regional security.

"Since we believe Iran's security is tied to the security of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, the Kurdish region will never be a point of threat

against the Islamic Republic of Iran," Barzani emphasized.

He also highlighted the progress made in implementing the security agreement between Iran and Iraq, and expressed the Kurdistan Region's commitment to its full implementation.

Iran had previously practiced April attack on occupied territories: IRGC

TEHRAN – Iran had practiced its April attack on Israeli positions in the occupied territories multiple times during military maneuvers, said the spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Guard corps on Saturday.

"In various maneuvers, we had practiced attacking the bases of the Zionist regime and were fully prepared to respond to the Zionist regime when needed. They made us put what we had practiced into use by making a strategic mistake in attacking the Iranian consulate in Damascus. We carried out a punitive action in a timely, well-prepared manner. "Brigadier

General Ramazan Sharif stated during a press conference in the capital Tehran.

The spokesperson highlighted the fact that Iran could deal a significant blow to Israel despite the regime's sophisticated military and defense capabilities.

"Despite Israel being equipped with the most advanced military technologies, in Operation True Promise, we identified the enemy's weaknesses, showcased our capabilities, and witnessed a successful operation thanks to the efforts of the patriotic military

forces of our country," the general explained.

Sharif also pointed out Washington's acknowledgment of Iran's successful targeting of designated sites during the operation.

"Although the enemy tried to suggest that 99% of Iranian missiles and drones did not hit their target, with God's will, all these false allegations were debunked, and America and other allies of the Zionist regime announced that Iran's attack on designated targets was successful."

On April 14, Iran launched numerous drones and missiles towards the occupied territories in response to an attack by the Israeli regime on Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus. The defense systems of Israel, the U.S., the UK, France, and Jordan worked to intercept Iran's projectiles. However, aerial footage and videos captured during the attack reveal that Tehran successfully struck the military bases it had aimed for. Iranian officials have confirmed that positions from the occupied Golan Heights to the Negev Desert have been destroyed.

Iran can ensure stable energy supply to Afghanistan: deputy ambassador

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Ambassador to Kabul, Hassan Mortazavi, highlighted Iran's commitment to serving as a dependable energy supplier to Afghanistan during a meeting with Abdul Latif Mansoor, the Acting Minister of Water and Energy of Afghanistan's caretaker government in Kabul.

Mortazavi expressed Iran's readiness to export energy to Afghanistan and emphasized the country's potential to play a crucial role as a

reliable partner in this regard. He also expressed optimism about the completion of the Kamal Khan Dam, noting that water cooperation could strengthen ties between Tehran and Kabul, benefiting the Muslim populations of both nations.

Under the 1973 Helmand River Treaty, Iran is entitled to approximately 850 million cubic meters of Helmand water annually. However, due to drought and irregular water conditions in recent

years, Iran's agreed-upon water share has not been fully met, leading to challenges for residents of Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan province.

The Acting Energy Minister of Afghanistan acknowledged that a significant portion of Iran's water share has been provided thus far. The discussions between the two sides also encompassed topics related to water cooperation, including the energy supply chain between Iran and Afghanistan.

Iran to compete at 2024 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia

TEHRAN – Iran's women's team left Tehran for Chonburi, Thailand on Friday to take part at the 2024 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup.

Team Melli Banovan has been pitted in Pool A along with Kazakhstan, Nepal, Oman and Malaysia. Pol B consists of Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Iran will start the campaign on May 13 with a match against Nepal. The 2024 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup is the ninth edition of the Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup, the biennial international women's indoor hockey championship of Asia organized by the Asian Hockey Federation.

It will be held at the Thailand National Sport University in Chonburi, Thailand from May 13 to 16. The winner will qualify for the 2025 Women's FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup.

Iran sends six boxers to Kazakhstan's tournament

TEHRAN – Iran Boxing Federation has sent six boxers to the Astana's tournament.

Danial Shahbakhsh, Ali Habibinezhad, Kasra Tahmasebi, Meysam Gheslaghi, Ali Fathi and Rouzbeh Safari will participate in the tournament.

The Iranian team will compete at the event as part of preparation for the Boxing Road to Paris 2nd World Qualification Tournament in Thailand.

The Tournament will take place in Bangkok, Thailand, from May 24 to June 2 at Indoor Stadium in Bangkok, Thailand, where a total of 51 remaining Paris 2024 Olympic quota places (23 for women and 28 for men) will be up for grabs across 13 Olympic boxing weight categories (6 for women and 7 for men).

Iranian athletes win medals in Doha

TEHRAN – Sobhan Ahmadi and Mehdi Pirjahan of Iran won a gold and silver medal at the 2024 Diamond League in Doha, Qatar.

Ahmadi came first in the 800m Men Final of the West Asian Champs, clocking 1:48.92 minutes.

Qatari athlete Zakaria Elhalaami won a silver with a time of 1:49.98 and the bronze medal went to Iraqi Mezah Nooruldeen Adil with 1:50.17.

Pirjahan also took a silver at the Men's 400 Metres Hurdles with a time of 50.60 seconds.

Lebanese Marc Anthony Ibrahim and Iraqi Ahmed Jamal Aldirawi came first and third with 49.84 and 51.69, respectively.

The Diamond League season continues with the fourth of 15 meetings scheduled this year in Rabat, Morocco on 19 May.

Taekwondo captain Hosseini absent in Asian Championship

TEHRAN – Iran captain Mir Hashem Hosseini will be absent in the 2024 Asian Taekwondo Championship in Vietnam.

The Championship is scheduled to run from May 21 to May 31 at Tien Son Sport Center in the central city of Da Nang.

Hosseini will not be fit for the event and the federation will send Ali Khoshravesh in the -80kg weight class instead of Hosseini.

The Asian Taekwondo Championships 2024 is considered a warmup tournament for the Iranian athletes at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Iran start CAVA Nation's Volleyball League on high

TEHRAN – Iran junior volleyball team defeated Turkmenistan 3-2 (23-25, 21-15, 25-16, 25-23, 19-17) at the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) Nation's Volleyball League.

Iran will play Afghanistan on Sunday.

The competition is being held from May 11 to 17 at the Liaqat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex in Islamabad.

The event has brought six teams from Central Asian countries, including Iran, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and host nation Pakistan together in Islamabad.

The CAVA Nations League holds significant importance as it will be integrated into the world ranking system starting from next year, 2025. This elevation underscores the growing prominence and competitiveness of volleyball within the Central Zone, attracting attention and anticipation from across the globe.

The Central Asian Volleyball Association is the governing body for the sports of indoor, beach and grass volleyball in Central Asia and South Asia.

In the spirit of the FIVB 2001 plan, AVC was the first to create five zonal associations at the 10th general assembly in December 1993.

Iran's fixture at 2024 Asian Junior Handball C'ship Announced

TEHRAN – Iran will meet China on July 15 in Group B of the 18th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship.

Iran will face Kuwait a day later.

The draw for the 18th Asian Men's Junior (U-21) Handball Championship took place at the Jordan Handball Federation headquarters, located at Princess Sumaya Hall, Amman, Jordan.

Draw results:

Group A: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong-China

Group B: Kuwait, Iran, China

Group C: Jordan, India, Oman

Group D: Japan, Republic of Korea, Chinese Taipei, Qatar

The 18th Asian Men's Junior (U-21) Handball Championship is scheduled to take place from July 16 to 27, 2024 in Amman, Jordan.

The championship will serve as a qualifying event for the 25th IHF Men's Junior (U-21) Handball World Championship in Poland, scheduled for June/July 2025. The top four teams from this competition will secure qualification spots for the World Championship.

Japan enters as the defending champion, having won its maiden title in 2022. Notably, Japan and the Republic of Korea are the only teams to have participated in all seventeen previous editions of the championship. Additionally, Qatar has participated in sixteen editions, missing only one. Kuwait and Qatar are the record title holders, each having won the championship on five occasions. The Republic of Korea has won the most medals in the championship, totaling twelve, including three gold, six silver, and three bronze medals.

Female rower secures Paris 2024 Paralympic berth

TEHRAN – Iranian rower Shahla Behrouzrad secured a Paralympic quota for Paris 2024 after making it to the final at the 2024 ICF Paracanoe World Championships in Szeged, Hungary.

Behrouzrad took part in the semi-final round of the Paracanoe World Championships in the women's KL3 class.

She went up against competitors from India, Hungary, Spain, Italy, two Australian opponents, and two Chinese opponents.

Behrouzrad crossed the finish line after rivals from Spain and Italy with a time of 50.96 seconds, securing the third position and advancing to the A-final of the tournament.

Behrouzrad will compete for a medal on Saturday. The team's head coach, Ahmadreza Talebian, is leading the roster consisting of Masood Gheisari (Men's KL3), Saeed Hosseinpour (Men's KL1), and Eslam Jahedi (Men's VL2). Additionally, Shahla Behrouzrad (Women's KL3) is competing for Paralympic qualification.

The 2024 ICF Paracanoe World Championships are taking place in Szeged, Hungary from May 9-12.

Number of exploration drilling rigs to increase fivefold

TEHRAN – The director of exploration at National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said on Friday that the number of exploration drilling rigs in the company is going to increase by fivefold.

Mehdi Fakour said the number of exploration drilling rigs was two in 2021 when the current government took office and the figure is going to reach 10, Shana reported.

Nine oil and gas fields were discovered in the tenure of the 13th Administration, he announced,

Speaking on the sidelines of his visit to the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining

and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024), Fakour added that “In the last 2.5 years, we have witnessed growths of 400, 300, 189 and 127 percent, respectively in the field of 2D seismography, 3D seismography, magnetometry, and 3D seismic processing compared to related figures for the preceding four years,” the official stated.

“Currently, the exploration success rate in the world stands at 10 percent, while this figure is 100 percent in Iran, as in Iraq, it hits 50 percent, in Oman 30 percent, in the United Arab Emirates 15 percent, and in Qatar five percent,” he stated.

Yemen keen on expansion of energy ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Yemen's Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim Mohammed al-Dailami called for the expansion of energy cooperation between his country and Iran along with the exchange of scientific and technical oil data.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Ahmad Asadzadeh, the Iranian deputy oil minister for international affairs and trade on the sidelines of the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024) on Friday. Despite the cruel sanctions, Iran has succeeded to have commercial exchanges in the international arena in the field of oil, the envoy said.

The diplomat went on to say that private companies in Iran have noteworthy experiences on exploration works, so we can benefit from the capability in Yemen. Asadzadeh for his part said: “In recent years, talks have been held between the two countries in the field of oil industry, and we

will share all our experiences with the country.”

He expressed his hope that we can witness a strong oil industry in Yemen with cooperation and consultation. In addition to 1,500 Iranian firms, a sum of 250 companies from 12 countries have taken part in Iran Oil Show 2024, whose motto is “Petroleum industry, production leap and technological optimization”?

Participants from the upstream, intermediate and downstream sectors of the oil industry, along with associations and unions of oil industry equipment manufacturers, first-time producers NTBFs are showcasing their achievements in the Iran Oil Show 2024, which is the most important Iranian event related to the oil industry.

Inaugurated on Wednesday, the exhibition will be open to visitors at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground every day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (0530 to 1230 GMT) until Saturday.

POGC head calls for investment in South Pars

TEHRAN – Managing Director of the Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) Mohammadhosain Motejali has said that the giant South Pars gas field provides 70 percent of domestic needs for natural gas, which is the reason behind the importance of pouring money into the development of the field.

Speaking in a specialized meeting of the POGC on attracting investment and providing commodities and new technologies for gas field development plans he said that concurrent with the 13th administration's taking office, when the Petroleum Ministry took the initiative to accelerate the implementation of uncompleted projects, among them raising gas production capacity, some effective measures were taken to reinforce energy security including launching production from the giant South Pars gas field phase 11.

“Despite launching new phases and rising gas production, the gap between gas production and consumption has been widening increasingly, surfacing natural gas imbalances in some seasons of the year,” he said.

Over the past 25 years, the Petroleum Ministry and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) have deployed various approaches to meet the necessary capital for developing the upstream sector of the South Pars gas field, he said, noting up to now as much as 86 billion dollars have been invested in developing the giant gas field mainly through signing buyback and EPC contracts

plus newly signed contracts between NIOC and domestic investors and contractors.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said: “In addition to accelerating gas field development plans of Kish, Farzad B, North Pars, Golshan, Ferdowsi, Balal, the second phase of oil layers of the South Pars gas field as well as its boosting pressure programs; it is necessary to attract new investments as well as deploying new technologies.”

The POGC head further said two decades after the beginning of gas production in the South Pars gas field, there are signs of a gradual decrease of pressure from reservoirs, adding efforts are underway to sustain the level of gas withdrawal by using different methods including acidizing wells and drilling new wells.

previous years’ mechanisms of allocating part of oil revenues to the development of upstream sector projects should be reinforced while at the same time, new approaches are needed to be deployed for the implementation of these huge projects, Motejali said. “POGC, with the production of more than 700 million cubic meters of gas per day, carries alone the burden of meeting 70 percent of the country's needs, an issue that underlines the importance of taking into consideration sustainability and maintaining the amount of gas withdrawal from South Pars gas field more than before.” The official concluded.

Iran, South Korea private sectors urged to help expand bilateral trade

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh has stressed that the private sectors of Iran and South Korea can help give a boost to trade ties between the two countries.

Hassanzadeh made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran with South Korean Ambassador to Iran Kim Jun-pyo, the ICCIMA portal reported.

He highlighted the need for South Korea to ease visa requirements for Iranian economic actors.

The Korean economy has been able to intensify its position in Iranian society with four brands namely Samsung, LG, Daewoo, and Hyundai, Hassanzadeh said. Noting that arbitrary sanctions on Tehran are hindering Iran's relations with South Korea, he however stressed that the Iranian private sector expects the private sector actors of other countries to continue with their trade exchanges with Iran despite the pressure of sanctions.

Iran boasts high potentials in techno-engineering services, building refineries, food industries, construction industry, automotive parts and pharmaceuticals, the Iran Chamber of Commerce president said, urging both Tehran and Seoul to focus on these areas.

He put the volume of trade between Iran and South Korea at \$800 million which he believed is far behind the potentials of the two countries.

In the meantime, the Korean ambassador said that the future of relations between the two countries is promising.

He said that although the Korean companies were not present at the Iran Expo 2024, he participated in the event and witnessed the Iranian national capabilities. Due to the sanctions on Tehran, Korean companies cannot easily engage in trade with Iran, the ambassador said, while noting that increasing the level of exchanges is possible and the mechanisms have to be found.

\$19b of investment opportunities up for grabs in Iran's refining industries

TEHRAN – The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) managing director announced on Friday that investment opportunities valued at \$19 billion are ready for investors in Iranian refining industries.

Speaking in a press conference on the sidelines of the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024), Jalil Salari said the largest Izomax unit in the Middle East with a capacity of 42,000 barrels will be operational in the Abadan refinery in the coming two months.

He went on to say that with the launch of the Izomax unit and the completion of the development and stabilization plan, about 3 million liters per day will be added to the diesel output capacity as daily gasoline production of the refinery will rise by 1.5 million liters.



He also announced the inauguration of the desulfurization and gasoline production units of the Shiraz Refinery until September 19, and said “With the launch of these units, 4 million liters of oil and gas and 1.5 million liters of gasoline will be added to the production of the country.”

“The quality improvement

plan of Tehran Oil Refinery is also being implemented. By the end of the current [Iranian] year (March 20, 2025), the amount of gasoline produced in the refinery will increase from six million liters to 7.5 million liters per day, and furthermore, the quality of gasoline will be up to Euro 5 which currently is Euro 4.”

Salari also announced the

launch of more than 1,100 kilometers of pipelines this year and noted that with the inauguration of these lines, the daily consumption of 67 million liters of diesel will be saved in the country.

“In addition, 70,000 barrels will be added to the refining capacity of the refining complexes, which will increase the daily production of gasoline and gasoil by 1.6 and 2.5 million liters, respectively.”

He announced the connection of power plants to the national trunkline stating that a 10-percent increase will be registered in rail infrastructure for the development of transportation and improvement of transit conditions.

Diversification of the fuel basket is on the agenda, as by converting methanol to gasoline, 7.5 million liters will be added to the country's gasoline, he said.

Number of knowledge-based companies in oil industry exceeds 676

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji stated that the number of knowledge-based companies has reached more than 676, adding that nearly a thousand contracts worth 1 billion dollars have been signed with these companies.

On the sideline of the cabinet meeting, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji stated that all capable domestic companies have participated in the 28th Tehran International Oil and Gas Expo.

Owji stated that the 13th Iranian administration is not dependent on foreigners and the JCPOA, using the capacity of domestic contractors.

Iran also plans to increase oil production to more than 5.5 million barrels and gas to more than 1.25 billion cubic meters.

He continued that the number of knowledge-based companies has reached more than 676, adding that nearly a thousand contracts worth 1 billion dollars have been signed with these companies.

Back in March, Mehdi Abbasi, an assistant, and advisor to the head of the Oil Ministry's Department of Engineering, Research and Technology (DOERT) said the ministry has created a stable market for knowledge-based companies.

Talking to Shana, the official added that a sustainable market was one of the dire needs of knowledge-based firms, which has been met by the four main subsidiary companies of the Oil Ministry.

Given the Oil Ministry's policies on supporting Iranian manufacturers, domestic producers and knowledge-based companies on the Approved Vendor List (AVL) have for the first time in the country's oil industry outnumbered suppliers, as their number has risen to 2,500 from 1,500 at the beginning of the incumbent government's term.

Oil Minister Javad Oji introduced 540 items to knowledge-based companies in May 2023, recalled the official, explaining some of the products and equipment have entered the stage of first-time production and contract.

Abbasi pointed to imports of foreign products and equipment, which are also produced in Iran, as a major concern for knowledge-based companies, adding, “In addition to items the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade has imposed import ban on, the oil minister has banned the import of over 250 products and equipment.”

Aiming to produce essential equipment inside the country and make maximum use of

knowledge-based companies' capacities, the Oil Ministry has signed agreements worth \$5.2 billion with the Presidential Office of Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy, he continued.

The Oil Ministry stood top as the leading supporter of knowledge-based companies and first-time production for the second year in a row in 2023, said the assistant and advisor to the DOERT head.

Up to now, 62 projects valued at \$92 million have been signed with 51 knowledge-based companies, mentioned the official, adding the supply cost will decrease by 30 to 60 percent when the products imported from foreign countries are made inside Iran by putting the aforesaid contracts into practice.

According to him, more than \$350 million will be saved annually when the projects are carried out.

Abbasi said 14 items, including turboexpander, cryogenic cold box exchanger, and centrifugal compressor, have been produced for the first time and used in refineries and other oil complexes.

The revival of low-producing and closed oil wells, first-time production of strategic equipment, collection of associated gases, development of

sulfur chain value, and promotion of oil products' quality are among the most effective measures of knowledge-based companies, he pointed out.

The oil industry needs 99 catalysts, said the assistant, adding only three catalysts had been indigenized until 2001 while the number of homegrown catalysts rose to 13 in 2011 and has now reached 95.

The Oil Ministry not only has created markets for Iranian companies, but also has facilitated exports of knowledge-based firms' products, Abbasi said.

In addition to the formation of a working group for technical and engineering services exports comprising DOERT, the Department of International Affairs and Commerce (DIAC), and other subsidiaries, the Oil Ministry's affiliated companies have carried out other important measures such as the overhaul and renovation of refineries in foreign countries, making every effort to make maximum use of domestic manufacturers and knowledge-based companies, he pointed out.

For instance, the official continued, 2.7 million items made by Iranian manufacturers were supplied to Venezuela for renovating its El Palito refinery.

Asian, African, Pacific media visit Huawei exhibition hall in Beijing



By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING – A group of journalists from the Asian, African, and Pacific countries visited the largest exhibition hall of China's giant technology company Huawei in Beijing.

The visit was arranged by China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC).

The journalists spent Friday morning visiting the Huawei Beijing R&D Da Vinci Executive Exhibition Center, which is the company's future oriented high-end strategic dialogue center.

As the company's largest comprehensive exhibition hall, Huawei have taken inspiration from Da Vinci.

The exhibition hall covers all the company's products and solutions, and also explains Huawei's leadership in industry and technology.

The guests were briefed about the exhibition hall which covers an area of about 70,000

square meters, future trends, challenges, and strategic directions.

The hall consists of 10 exhibition booths, Vision and Mission, New Values Together, Huawei Cloud, Digital Power, Innovative Digital Infrastructure, Guide to the Intelligent World, Intelligent Automotive Solution, Terminals, Cutting-edge Technology, and ICT Talent Partner Development.

Founded in 1987, Huawei is a leading global provider of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices. The company has more than 207,000 employees and operate in over 170 countries and regions, serving more than three billion people around the world.

The company is committed to bringing digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world.

Huawei, the Chinese giant, has made impressive strides in the global telecommunications sector, serving as an excellent example of China's exceptional manufacturing capabilities. The company has demonstrated resilience, innovation and strategic market positioning despite challenges.

Huawei's success demonstrates its unwavering focus on research and development, its ability to tailor solutions to meet the diverse needs of different regions, particularly developing and under-developed

countries, and its achievement of cost-effectiveness without compromising quality.

It has facilitated a transformation in the global economic landscape, enabling these countries to share the fruits of globalization and embark on a fast track to development. Huawei represents Chinese companies that have contributed to the world's peaceful development.

As previously mentioned, China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) arranged the visit to Huawei exhibition hall for the Asian, African, and Pacific journalists.

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

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

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

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

What does UN General Assembly's overwhelming vote for establishing a Palestinian state mean?

Historic vote for Palestine

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The adoption of a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly that overwhelmingly backed the Palestinian bid for full UN membership has highlighted growing global solidarity with Palestinians in the wake of Israel's brutal war on the Gaza Strip.

On Friday, the assembly approved the resolution by a vote of 143 to 9 with 25 abstentions.

The United States was among the countries that voted against the resolution. However, some of Washington's allies including France supported it. Some European nations such as Britain and Germany abstained.

Additional rights

The resolution does not give Palestine full membership but recognizes it as qualified to join the United Nations.

The vote grants additional rights and privileges to Palestine within the General Assembly while calling on the Security Council to reconsider its request to become the 194th member of the United Nations.

Membership can only be decided upon by the 15-member Security Council.

'Historic vote'

The Palestinian ambassador to the UN highlighted the significance of the resolution as he touched upon the plight of Palestinians in Gaza and in particular in Rafah.

"As we speak, 1.4 million Palestinians in Rafah wonder if they will survive the day and wonder where to go next. There is nowhere left to go," Riyadh Mansour said in remarks before the vote.

He added, "I have stood hundreds of times before at this podium, often in tragic circumstances, but none comparable to the ones my people endured today ... never for a more significant vote than the one about to take place, a historic one."

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population have sought refuge in Rafah and are living there amid poor conditions. The majority of them are displaced people who have fled Israeli strikes in other parts of the Gaza Strip.



Israel launched a ground offensive in Rafah on Monday. Since then, the regime has ordered evacuation orders for Palestinians in some parts of the city.

Israel has slaughtered nearly 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza since early October; 70 percent of whom are women and children. Fears are growing over new massacres in Rafah if the regime goes on with its military operations there.

US hypocrisy

Unsurprisingly, Israel's ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, lashed out at the General Assembly for putting the resolution to vote.

The US, Israel's main supporter, vowed to use its veto again if the question of Palestinian membership returns to the Security Council.

"Our vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood; we have been very clear that we support it and seek to advance it meaningfully. Instead, it is an acknowledgement that statehood will only come from a process that involves direct negotiations between the parties," Deputy US Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood told the General Assembly.

On April 18, the US vetoed a widely backed Security Council resolution that would have paved the way for full UN membership for Palestine.

The US was the only country that blocked the resolution. Britain and Switzerland abstained while 12 other countries voted in favor.

The US move brought its grow-

ing isolation to the fore and a pledge to veto a new resolution demonstrates its hypocrisy.

On one hand, the US expresses support for Palestinian statehood and on the other it blocks efforts in this regard.

The US says Israel and Palestinians should hold direct negotiations on the matter.

Uterior motives

It is as clear as day that talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel since early 1990 have exacerbated the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people.

Over the past three decades, Israel has expanded its settlements which are illegal under international law, demolished Palestinian homes and committed heinous crimes in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In fact, talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the format of the so-called two-state solution have emboldened Israel to continue its land grab policy and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Since Israel declared war on Gaza on October 7, the US has called for intensified efforts to move toward the two-state solution.

The US call has been in line with its plans to divert attention away from Israel's war of genocide in Gaza.

In fact, Israel does not intend to allow the formation of an independent Palestinian state.

According to a document that was leaked after Israel launched

war on Gaza more than seven months ago, the Israeli Intelligence Ministry had called on the regime's army to evacuate the civilian population to Egypt's Sinai.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his far rights ministers have also supported the mass expulsion of the Palestinians.

Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said in November that he was not entirely satisfied with the scale of Israel's war on Gaza.

He floated the idea of dropping a nuclear bomb in Gaza "to kill everyone".

Such comments show that Israel seeks to establish full control over Gaza and then expel Palestinians from the West Bank.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said last month, "I fear that after finishing off Gaza, Israel would head to the West Bank and deport its people to Jordan."

Negotiation with a regime that has no scruples about mass murder remains absolutely futile.

Israel has also disregarded international law. It has turned a blind eye to a January ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that calls on the regime to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza.

The vote at the UN General Assembly sheds light on the fact that Israel and its abettor, the United States, have become more isolated and humiliated than ever.

This is a huge victory for Palestinians which is rooted in their fierce resistance against the occupying Israeli regime.

Assessments by the Israeli and US intelligence services have revealed that support for the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been on the rise despite Israel's brutal war on the territory.

Support for Palestine is also growing across the world. Pro-Palestinian protests at US universities and colleges which have spilled over to Europe, Canada, Australia and beyond have disgraced Washington and some of its Western allies as they continue to justify Israel's atrocious crimes.

French Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière backed Palestine UN membership bid.

"France recalls that the procedure for admitting a new Member State is defined by the UN Charter, and it must not be circumvented," he said.

He also noted that France is in favor of the admission of Palestine as a full member of the Organization, which is why it voted in favor at the Security Council last month. De Rivière also insisted on France's demand for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Irish deputy premier said it is time for Palestine to take "its rightful place amongst the nations of the world".

"I welcome that the United Nations General Assembly has passed the Resolution on Palestine's membership of the UN by an overwhelming majority, with 143 states voting in favor - more than 80% of UN members voting. I am proud that Ireland took a leadership role in co-sponsoring the Resolution, and voting in favor," Micheal Martin added.

The director of the Center for Islam and Global Affairs at Istanbul Zaim University said the way the world dealt with apartheid South Africa could serve as a guide for UN member states going forward.

"The UN and many countries around the world imposed sanctions and all kinds of economic penalties on South Africa, eventually even kicking out South Africa from the General Assembly," Sami al-Arian said.

"I think they can try that path as well because Israel has been defying their will for the longest time."

Israeli envoy's paper shredder publicity stunt falls flat

Israel, US suffer utter diplomatic isolation, humiliation

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Israeli ambassador's shredding of the United Nations Charter while standing in anger at the UN podium reflects how Tel Aviv views the world's most important international organization.

Gilad Erdan conducted the PR stunt on the global stage in protest against the vast majority of the international community voting in favor of a Palestinian state.

While many have mocked the move by the Israeli representative, a lot of other critics have pointed out how it depicts the reality of the Israeli military's actions in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months.

The regime has so far killed over 35,000 Palestinians, injured at least 80,000 others, forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands, starved people, and pushed northern Gaza to a state of famine by obstructing the entry of humanitarian aid.

This is while residential areas of the enclave have been razed to the ground by an indiscriminate bombing campaign that has resulted in women and children being the majority of casualties.

The Israeli political and military leadership stands accused of violating many aspects of international law enshrined in the UN Charter amid the countless war crimes that have been committed in the Gaza Strip.

This is the same UN Charter that the Israeli ambassador destroyed in front of an international audience at the General Assembly headquarters in New York, using a small shredder machine that tore up the UN rulebook to small pieces.

Tel Aviv has hit out at other UN agencies, leveling accusations against the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court both of which are top UN tribunals as well as making what has been described as "absurd" allegations against the main UN humanitarian agency in Gaza UNRWA.

In defense of genocide

By Aina Ademola Adeniran

LAGOS, Nigeria - The Western world is in a fissionary state, a transformative change is emerging, protests have broken out in major cities in Europe and America including tertiary institutions demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and an end to Israeli occupation.

These harmless protesters - many of them students - who are supposed to be protected by the constitution have faced nothing but repression and persecution by the security operatives. It has become glaring that not only is the Zionist state of Israel on trial for war crimes, the entire Western political system which have aided and abetted these crimes in defiance of public opinion is also on trial as regards who it truly represents: the masses of the people or business and political interests?

It has become abundantly clear that America - and many nations in the Western world - operate a one-party political system albeit disguised as a multiparty system with the spurious ideals of equality, justice and human rights. In the context of the United States, the American public have an illusion of choice because both the Democrats and the Republicans represent the interests of the same people: the billionaire ruling elites. The presidency is merely the 'face' of the government as those who call the shots and make binding decisions are unelected officials like international lobby groups like AIPAC (arguably one of the most powerful lobby groups in the world); NGOs, intelligence agencies like the CIA, corporate business interests like the arms manufacturing industry and big pharmaceutical companies - this is the template upon which American political system operates.

The American public, every four years, are left to choose between a fox and a wolf, either way, they end up choosing a canine: the same people from the same class with the same worldview, representing the same interests. It is clear that the United States of America is a plutocratic system, regardless of whoever is in power, either Joseph Biden or Donald Trump, either the Democrats or Republicans, the US foreign and domestic policies remain the same: in service of vested business and political interests. This comes to show that, the United States which has, for decades, posed as the bastion of democracy and human



Israel's Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan destroys a copy of the UN Charter as he addresses delegates during the United Nations General Assembly in New York

The UN Human Rights Office has been on the receiving end of repeated defamatory remarks by the cabinet ministers of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for its regular condemnation of Israeli human rights violations against Palestinian civilians in the blockaded Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank and al-Quds (Jerusalem).

The outburst of anger by the regime's ambassador also stems from the occupation regime's isolation in the world.

This was highlighted in the outcome of the UN General Assembly vote in favor of a Palestinian state.

Israeli leaders had already used the podium at the General Assembly before to make a mockery of international law and regulations.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has previously held up cartoon-like placards in a bid to scaremonger the world about Iran's nuclear program, which the International Atomic Energy Agency (the UN Nuclear Agency) and the U.S. intelligence community have repeatedly declared is peaceful.

The clown shows by Israeli leaders at the General Assembly have failed to change global opinion in the past. It is unlikely to do so now amid the death and destruction campaign that the regime is committing on a daily basis in Gaza in violation of the basic principles of the UN Charter.

rights, which has invaded and destroyed independent sovereign nations in a bid to 'spread' democracy does not even have these ideals she preaches very ferociously abroad at home.

However, American plutocracy is in its twilight days, the politicians are now embattled with a moral dilemma, capitalism has gotten to its most desperate stage and we now witness the crackdown on freedom of the press, freedom speech, freedom of association (the mitochondria of a democracy); gross human rights abuse with the anointing of Western governments, notably America, indiscriminate flouting of international laws and conventions without consequences - all these makes the Western world, notoriously the United States active participants in Israeli war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

Following the United States' unilateral veto against a permanent humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, her refusal of Palestine's application to the United Nations as a member state, her inability to hold the Israeli far-right government to account by making sure it adheres to international law, the United States has etched itself in the minds of millions of people in the global south - and millions within the West itself - as merely the diplomatic wing of Zionism that carries out the wishes of vested international interests.

Despite the International Court of Justice's verdict - the highest arbiter of justice on the planet - indicting Israel and accusing her of plausibly committing genocide in the Gaza Strip, despite seven World Central Kitchen workers - according to Al Jazeera - including nationals of Australia, Poland, Britain, United States and Canada killed in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Occupation Forces, despite more than two hundred humanitarian aid workers - many of them United Nations workers - killed by Israeli fire in Gaza, despite the gory images coming out from Gaza of starving and decomposing civilians under the ruins of their homes, despite the scores of journalists assassinated in Gaza, in spite of the mass protests in London, New York, Paris and other major Western cities calling their governments to place an arms embargo on Israel, Western politicians keep parroting the same thing: Israel has a right to defend itself.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

China's permanent representative to the UN welcomed the UNGA resolution saying Palestine should share the same status as Israel within the body.

Fu Cong slammed the US for "mercilessly" vetoing Palestine's bid for full membership at the UNSC on April 18.

"The US has repeatedly used veto in an unjustified attempt to obstruct the international community's efforts to correct the historical injustice on Palestine. This is not commensurate with the role of a responsible major country."

Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram said there will come a day when Israel will be held accountable for the crimes committed against Palestinians, especially in Gaza.

Akram said the insults hurled at the UNGA are "the arrogance of the aggressor" reflecting the impunity of the occupier.

He also expressed hope that the international community will appropriately respond in that regard.

The ambassador underscored that the resolution's adoption will determine the widespread support for Palestine to be accorded full UN membership.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said her country could recognize Palestinian statehood before a formal peace process between Palestinian authorities and Israel is complete.

Wong stressed the UNGA vote was "not about whether Australia recognizes Palestine" as its own state.

"What we would say, and what I do say, is Australia no longer believes that recognition can only come at the end of a peace process. It could occur as part of a peace process."

The UAE envoy said the UNGA resolution recommends that the Security Council reconsider Palestine's full UN membership application. "Today marks a defining moment," Mohamed Issa Hamad Mohamed Abushahab said on behalf of the Arab Group.

He said the State of Palestine has demonstrated that it deserves full membership in the international community by acceding to international treaties, adhering to the UN Charter and meeting requirements of statehood. The ambassador added that the Security Council must respond to the will of the international community.

Russia's ambassador took a job at the US at the UNGA meeting. Vassily Nebenzia said the resolution was complicated because it attempted to advance Palestinian membership as far as possible, without provoking another veto from Washington. He added that Palestine deserves nothing less than a full membership.

"Only full-fledged membership will allow Palestine to stand alongside other members of the Organization and enjoy the rights that this status implies." He accused the US of holding the Security Council "hostage" over events in West Asia.

The director of the Center for Islam and Global Affairs at Istanbul Zaim University said the way the world dealt with apartheid South Africa could serve as a guide for UN member states going forward.

"The UN and many countries around the world imposed sanctions and all kinds of economic penalties on South Africa, eventually even kicking out South Africa from the General Assembly," Sami al-Arian said.

"I think they can try that path as well because Israel has been defying their will for the longest time."

Chefs de cuisine to convene at Kish expo



TEHRAN – As the countdown to the Kish International Tourism Exhibition has started, some Iranian chefs are invited to participate to enrich the event.

A provincial official in charge of tourism marketing, on Saturday, stated that the assembly of cooks is planned to take place simultaneously with the Kish International Tourism Exhibition, covering May 19 to 22.

Naser Qasemi-Nia highlighted that the gathering is dedicated to promote island's attractions and honor their determining role in tourism development.

Elaborating on the participants, the official pinpointed that more than 30 chefs de cuisine, from Kish Island only, are invited to attend this assembly.

Qasemi-Nia further explained that the gathering features honoring veterans, sharing experiences, and panel discussions.

Recreational tours showcasing the unique attractions of Kish are also planned, he added.

"This gathering is held in memory of the renowned Iranian writer and translator, Najaf Daryabandari," the official concluded, "The author of 'Mostatab-e Ashpazi' (a journey through Persian cooking)."

Earlier this year, on April 23, Kish Free Zone's deputy of tourism announced that Kish Island,

renowned for its vibrant tourism ecosystem, is set to host a tourism exhibition, aiming to showcase Iran's comprehensive tourism to the world.

"With the slogan of 'introducing Iran's capacities to the world,'" Adiban noted. "Kish International Tourism Exhibition is planned to witness participation from active members in the tourism industry."

The event will focus on the significant role of promotional activities and media in drawing attention to the tourism capacities, the official added.

Adiban pointed out the exhibition's varied agenda, including a hotel management symposium, a gathering of tourism bloggers and a meeting of Iranian chefs, which are among the event's key highlights.

Furthermore, Abbas Zeinalnia, the organizer of the exhibition, detailed the primary goals of the event, which include fostering synergies, enhancing knowledge and awareness about the latest trends in tourism and presenting new tools and services.

"This exhibition is a platform for introducing and supporting creative tourism products," Zeinalnia noted. "As well as for raising the level of industry standards through educational workshops and specialized meetings."

The official who presides over the event announced that the Kish International Tourism Exhibition will welcome attendees from May 19 to 22.

Zeinalnia in his concluding remarks pinpointed that the preparations for the Kish International Tourism Exhibition began in February, with the Kish Free Zone Organization and the private sector jointly contributing to what is anticipated to be a special event in Iran's tourism calendar.

Exhibit highlights Zoroastrian's cultural contribution

TEHRAN – On May 10, an exhibition of handicrafts made by Zoroastrian artisans was held in the UNESCO-listed city of Yazd in the heart of Iran.

Held at the Fire Temple of Yazd, also known as Yazd Atash Behram, the event was initially intended to commemorate the memory of Farangis Yeganegi, the esteemed founder and director of the Iranian Handicrafts Organization.

It brought together artisans from Yazd, which holds a special place in the country's cultural scene, renowned for its rich Zoroastrian heritage and centuries-old traditions.

In addition, the event hosted live workshops during which craftspeople showed off skills inherited from previous generations.

In July 2017, the historical core of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind

catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Cultural heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. Furthermore, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

The historical core of Yazd is chockfull of mud-brick houses, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

Iran in frames



Nomadic children are seen in front of a simply-ornated tent at the foot of the Zagros Mountain range. In their playful innocence, they carry forward the rich heritage of their Turkic ancestors, preserving a timeless way of life.

Excavations unearth ancient layers of history at Falak ol-Aflak hill

TEHRAN – A team of archaeologists has embarked on a groundbreaking excavation project at Falak ol-Aflak hill, the site of the famed Sassanid-era fortress in Lorestan province.

With the official approval of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the expedition led by Hamzeh Qobadizadeh, an esteemed archaeologist, commenced the meticulous process of stratigraphic excavation aimed at uncovering layers of ancient civilizations.

The team explored a trench measuring 25 meters by two meters on the steep slope of the fortress's southern side, parallel to its tower No. 3, in a north-south direction.

The archaeological team, comprising members of the University of Kermanshah's archaeology department, meticulously conducted the excavation process based on natural stratification. They precisely documented and described each phenomenon and any changes within the layers, defining their spatial relationships.

Approximately 250 cubic meters of soil were excavated during the exploration, with the greatest depth



measured at around 11 meters in the northern half relative to the fixed point, CHTN reported on Saturday.

Remarkably, the stratigraphic excavation unveiled a mosaic of historical periods, ranging from contemporary eras to ancient civilizations such as the ears of Ilkhanids, Seljuks, and Parthians, as well as the Iron Age, Bronze Age, and New Stone Age.

Qobadizadeh highlighted the significance of the discoveries, noting that the majority of excavation unearthed from the southern workshop pertained to contemporary periods. "This accumulation comprised architectural debris, waste rem-

nants, and construction materials, forming thick sedimentary layers on the slope."

Moreover, remnants of a residential area, including an adobe wall, plastered floors, and an oven, were uncovered at the southernmost part of the workshop.

Analysis suggests these structures likely date back to the late Qajar period and early Pahlavi era, shedding light on the evolution of settlement patterns over time.

In the northern section of the workshop, beneath contemporary debris, the team uncovered the first preserved layers, revealing stone-

built walls adorned with plaster and a clay floor.

These remnants, possibly remnants of a pre-fortress structure, exhibit architectural features reminiscent of the Saluki and Ashkanid periods, the source reported.

The excavation also yielded notable findings from the Bronze and New Stone Ages, including Neolithic pottery and artifacts associated with early settlements.

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

The unmissable eight-towered fortress dominates Khorramabad as one of the most visited travel destinations in the region for both domestic and foreign sightseers.

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

Khuzestan enraptures tens of Indonesian tourists

TEHRAN – 170 Indonesian tourists arrived in Iran's Khuzestan on Saturday to explore the provincial touristic attractions and economic capacities.

The familiarization tour is part of a broader strategy to boost inbound tourism, Abadan's tourism chief said on Friday.

A wide array of events is arranged to provide the best possible experience for the Indonesians, Seyyed-Shamsuddin Noorbakhsh added.

Putting inbound tourism front and center not only significantly expand cash inflow, but also creates a great platform to spotlight potentials within the country, according to the official.

"With underway efforts at the provincial level, tourist arrivals are impressively arising," Noor-

Bakhsh winded up. "Which is on account of planning various initiatives and lurching professional events."

Khuzestan province, located in southwest Iran, boasts a rich tapestry of cultural, historical and natural attractions. Its diverse landscapes, from lush plains to rugged mountains, offer a myriad of experiences for travelers.

The province is renowned for its ancient heritage, with sites like Chogha Zanbil, an ancient Elamite complex dating back to 1250 BC and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing innovative water management techniques from the 5th century BC.

Nature enthusiasts can explore the mesmer-

izing wetlands, home to diverse flora and fauna, or venture into the Zagros Mountains. The Karun River with the highest water flow, and Iran's only navigable river, provides opportunities for boating and fishing, while the palm groves of Dezful offer tranquil retreats amidst picturesque scenery.

Khuzestan is also famous for its rich tapestry of cultures. This multiculturalism is reflected in the local cuisine, traditional music and crafts, making it a vibrant place for cultural tourism.

With its blend of ancient history, natural beauty, and cultural richness, Khuzestan province offers a captivating journey for travelers seeking authentic experiences in Iran.

TACI, ACD unite for women's tourism rally

TEHRAN – Key talks between the cultural coordination center of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue and the Touring & Automobile Club of Iran have highlighted a push for a women's tourism rally as an international collaboration.

Mohammad Jafari-Malek, ACD envoy, during his meeting with TACI CEO Mohammad-Hossein Soufi, discussed the potential for cooperation, dialogue, and cultural exchange between the two organizations.

Jafari-Malek highlighted the prominent role of women in Asian culture as one of the important

axes of the assembly's activities.

He stated that the successful execution of events at the Touring & Automobile Club of Iran, such as exhibitions and rallies on an international scale, has led to the attention of the ACD towards implementing the cultural and tourism project "Asian women's rally" with a focus on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"Cultural revival of the Silk Road" was another important topic of discussion during this meeting, where both parties exchanged views on designing and executing international rallies along the Silk Road route with the participation

of member countries of ACD to achieve this goal.

Moreover, Soufi expressed the club's readiness to implement joint programs with ACD, emphasizing special attention to women and organizing tourism rallies to increase social excitement.

He hoped that with the collaboration of these two international organizations, effective steps would be taken to introduce Iran as a safe and beautiful destination to the world.

The ACD is an intergovernmental institution consisting of 35 countries and the most comprehensive



Asian organization, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran holding the presidency since September 2023.

Iran's Yazd was selected as the cultural and tourism capital by the ACD this year, and ambassadors of member countries visited this city in March.

Ultan Qalasi: salvage work unveils ancient burial site in Ardabil province

TEHRAN – In a race against time to preserve archaeological heritage, an emergency excavation has unearthed a burial site at Ultan Qalasi in Ardabil province, revealing artifacts dating back to the Iron Age.

Led by archaeologist Mehdi Jahed, the salvage operation was initiated following the accidental discovery of ancient graves during the construction of the Parsabad-Sarband highway in Ardabil province, covering an area approximately 70 meters long and 25 meters wide.

Jahed explained that salvage archeology refers to the study of archaeological sites threatened by imminent destruction due to development proj-

ects such as road construction and dam building.

The emergency excavation at Ultan Qalasi was prompted by the unearthing of ancient graves along the highway's expansion route.

Describing the excavation process, Jahed revealed that the identification of the site occurred when human burial artifacts, including pottery vessels, were exposed during work for road infrastructure.

Subsequently, the current salvage work was arranged under the supervision of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, he said.

So far, the team has dug two trenches measur-

ing 5 by 10 meters, a trench measuring 18 by 10 meters, and three trenches measuring 10 by 10 meters along the main route.

The ongoing excavation at Ultan Qalasi holds promise for further insights into ancient burial practices and the cultural landscape of Ardabil province.

Situated on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well known for having abundant natural beauty, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble. It is freezing in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year.

Wooden well from Bronze Age excavated

The remains of a wooden well dating back to the Bronze Age have been discovered during works to build a new road in England.

The well-preserved find has been excavated by experts at Oxford Archaeology working on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

It was found at the site of the project to build the south-westerly section of the Benson Relief Road.

Senior project manager John Boothroyd said the work was carried out in "extremely challeng-

ing conditions".

The well was uncovered during an archaeology "strip, map and sample" exercise.

It was a planning condition for the road scheme, to make sure any archaeological finds were recorded.

Judy Roberts, cabinet member for infrastructure and development strategy, said it gave "fantastic insight into the area's past land use".

She added: "It is thought the well may have been used for agricultural irrigation purposes

for settlements nearby. Archaeological surveys like this are an important part of the process of delivering construction schemes."

"They help us identify and understand past residents of the area and record them for future generations," She continued.

Mr Boothroyd said preservation of wooden structures from the period was rare, and in this case the remains had survived "due to being buried in waterlogged ground".

(Source: BBC)

UNODC, Iran discuss enhanced cooperation on drug-related crimes

TEHRAN – The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Iranian law enforcement force have explored ways to boost cooperation in areas related to drug trafficking and drug-related crimes.

During a meeting between the UNODC representative in Tehran, Alexander Fedulov, and Director General of Iranian Interpol Brigadier General Majid Karimi, the two officials revised the activities under implementation, and discussed the scope and perspective of future cooperation, the UN website announced in a press release on May 1.

In this meeting, Fedulov briefed the Iranian side on the recent activities and procurements conducted by UNODC Iran under the generous funds received from the UNODC traditional donors.

He reiterated the readiness of the UNODC to delegate technical and procurement support to the Islamic Republic of Iran under the UNODC Iran Country Partnership Program with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Brigadier General Karimi, for his part, stated that drugs are obviously one of the pillars of the UNODC mandate as reflected in its name, though various topics on crimes could also be addressed by this Office, and inter alia he suggested cooperation to address challenges posed by drug trafficking and drug related crimes.

This meeting was organized as part of the activities foreseen in the framework of sub-program 1 "Border Management and Illicit Trafficking" and sub-program 2 "Crime,



Corruption, and Criminal Justice" of the UNODC Country Partnership Program for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

UNODC supports Iran in fight against drugs

Iran remains one of the major transit routes for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to European countries. The UNODC has built a strong partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in several areas including the capacity building for the Iranian law enforcement and has been providing technical assistance to the Iranian Government in their fight against illicit trafficking of drugs and precursors.

The Iranian anti-narcotics police (ANP) canteen center received a total of ten trained detecting dogs from the UNODC.

The UNODC procured these trained dogs on February 29, the UN website announced in a press release on March 17.

According to the UNODC website, this procurement is part of sub-program 1 of the UNODC Country Partnership Program (CPP) in Iran, with the goal of enhancing the operational capabilities of the anti-narcotics police.

The instructors led a two-week training program to enhance the handlers' skills in combating illicit drug trafficking across the country.

On February 13, in an effort to boost the Iranian Financial Intelligence Unit (IRFIU) infrastructure in the fight against transnational organized crime, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism, the UNODC in Iran procured 15 desktop computers for IRFIU.

The provision of these computers aligns with the UNODC Country Partnership Program in the Islamic Republic of Iran from 2023 to 2026, to enhance institutional knowledge and capacities in countering various forms of illicit activities related to money laundering, organized crime, and financing terrorism.

The procurement was made possible through the funding received from the Russian Federation.

In January, the UNODC in Iran held a five-day specialized training course for experts and officers from the Drug Control Headquarters, Anti-Narcotics Police, and Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, Russia.

The course titled "Searching Method of Illicit Drugs with Use of Trained Dogs", was organized with the cooperation of the Central Customs Canine Training Centre of the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation, which is a World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Dog Training Centre, in Moscow Region, from January 22 to 26.

Anti-narcotics police and law enforcement experts and officers from the Drug Control Headquarters participated in a three-day study visit organized by the UNODC office in Iran from December 4-6, 2023, in Tashkent – Uzbekistan.

The study visit encompassed various activities and topics, inter alia session on "Construction and structure of an optimal canine center; management of an optimal canine center; staffing of an optimal canine center; breeding, health, treatment, food, etc. for drug-detecting dogs", the report added.

Highlighting the importance of international cooperation in the fight against narcotics, Fedulov hoped that future activities of a similar nature would continue upon the provision of support by donors.

Iran is main wintering habitat in West Asia for migratory birds: official

TEHRAN – Iran is the most important country in West Asia in terms of housing migratory birds in winter as around two million birds fly each year to spend winter in the country's wetlands, according to an official with the Department of Environment (DOE).

Encompassing numerous wetlands, reservoirs, and diverse water bodies, Iran welcomes millions of migratory birds every year.

The country has also emerged as the most important stopover for migratory birds in their flight route from Siberia to the Nile as sixteen percent of them select to spend the winter in the country, ISNA quoted Hassan Akbari as saying.

He made the remarks on the occasion of World Migratory Bird Day which is celebrated on May 11 to raise awareness about the importance of migratory birds and the need to protect them.

A diverse array of migratory birds fly to the country, with more than 160 species of aqua and waterside birds identified in Iran which is a significant number.

Despite limited water resources in the domestic habitats of the country, the study of the migratory bird population trend shows that the abundance and diversity of the birds that enter the country have not decreased. Majority of them have flown to the coastal areas of the Caspian and the Persian Gulf, though.

Iran hosts more than five percent of the

world's migratory birds in 450 sites in winter, Akbari said.

"Every year some 30 to 40 million birds are counted all over the world and the related statistics are recorded in the International Waterfowl Census (IWC) database," he added.

The collected data and related analyses have significant scientific value in protecting wetlands, beaches, and biodiversity, he noted.

Iran joined the international census of wintering water birds as the first West Asian country at the same time as European countries in 1976.

In the early years, the counting of water birds was limited to the species that could be hunted including swans, geese, ducks, and common terns. Since 1987, other aquatic birds have been added to the list.

Pointing out that in the past 6 decades, the counting of wintering water birds in Iran has been a priority of the Department of Environment, he added, "Thanks to favorable geographical conditions, climatic diversity, wetlands, and aquatic habitats, including the Caspian Sea in the north, the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea in the south, Iran hosts millions of migratory and wintering water birds yearly."

The annual census for migratory birds in Iran begins in the middle of the Iranian calendar month of Dey (December 22-January 20) and ends in the middle of the month of Bahman (Jan-

uary 21-February 19) in more than 450 sites in 30 provinces with the help of headquarters, provincial experts and professional birdwatchers of non-governmental organizations.

In the last three decades, over 8.1 million birds were counted on average, which is about five percent of the world's population of migratory birds and more than 16 percent of the population of migrant birds taking the route from Siberia to the Nile.

World Migratory Bird Day

Migratory birds play an important role in ecosystems globally by controlling pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds.

Each year the World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on May 11 to raise awareness about the importance of migratory birds and the need to protect them.

Migratory birds play an important role in ecosystems globally by controlling pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds.

This year it will be celebrated on 11th May and 12th October.

The theme for the 2024 annual celebration is "Protect insects, protect birds".

It focuses on the crucial relationship between migratory birds and insects, highlighting their interdependent existence and the threats both face.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

World's first 'subway library' to open in Tehran

For the first time in the underground transportation system worldwide, a public library will be opened in Tehran subway.

According to the memorandum signed between the Tehran Metro and the Tehran public libraries foundation, libraries will be launched in seven selected stations, first of which will be inaugurated on August 12, ISNA reported.

The library, called "Metro Book", is in line with the cultural programs to promote the culture of reading and increase per capita reading among subway passengers during intra-city trips.

With a capacity of more than 5,000 books, it provides services from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

افتتاح کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران برای اولین بار در جهان

برای اولین بار در سامانه حمل و نقل متروهای جهان، کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران افتتاح می شود. به گزارش ایسنا، قرار است طبق تفاهم نامه منعقد شده بین شرکت بهره برداری متروی تهران و حومه و نهاد کتابخانه های عمومی استان تهران در هفت ایستگاه منتخب «مترو کتاب» راه اندازی شود. این کتابخانه در راستای برنامه های فرهنگی متروی تهران مبنی بر ترویج فرهنگ کتابخوانی و افزایش سرانه مطالعه در میان مسافران مترو هنگام سفرهای درون شهری این کتابخانه با ظرفیت بیش از ۵۰۰۰ عنوان کتاب به صورت فیزیکی از ساعت ۸ صبح تا ۲۰ به طور مستمر به ارائه خدمات می دهد.

Health ministry plays key role in youth law enforcement

From page 1 ► The health ministry's responsibilities in the field of health and education are well-defined and it has successfully implemented more than 95 percent of its tasks in the youth law, he added.

Saber Jabbari, the head of the health ministry's youthful population center, for his part, said the ministry was recognized as the best organization, implementing programs for the youth in the last year, which ended on March 19.

"A total of 32,000 nurse aides are providing health care services in rural and urban areas. Also, 22,000 health care providers offer fertility services in urban areas, with 13,809 of them being midwives," Jabari further noted.

There are 10,200 midwives working in delivery rooms. Also, 2,086 and 6,689 gynecologists are working in state sectors and private sectors, respectively, Jabari noted.

Over 188,000 registered births were third-born, more than 63,000 births were fourth-born, and over 20,000 were fifth-born children.

A total of 462 marriage education centers are active in the country training various topics such as sexual health, fertility, and the complications of the prevention of pregnancy to young couples.

Furthermore, healthcare centers provide 113 free services to pregnant mothers, and the pre-pregnancy care index has increased by 50 percent to maintain the health of the mother and the child (fetus).

Fertility rate should reach 2.5

In November 2023, Jabbari said that the



total fertility rate should reach 2.5 from 1.66 before the closure of the demographic window in the next five years.

"The country is on the threshold of aging; to tackle this crisis, we must promote child-bearing and youth population," IRNA quoted Jabbari as saying.

Over the last 30 years, the total fertility rate of the country has declined, but in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 2022–March 2023), the downward trend in fertility came to a halt, he added.

"Carrying out programs that are focusing on the youth population at the national level is a strategy to increase the total fertility rate," Jabbari stressed.

Talking about modern methods of infertility treatment, he said all modern methods of infertility treatment are offered in the country.

A center in the Ministry of Health provides services in the field of care, education, and counseling, as well as facilitating successful and stable marriages, healthy fertility, and promoting natural childbirth, early diagnosis of infertility, and timely treatment, he pointed out.

A nation of networks: Iran's NIN unmasked

By Imad Payande

The Internet-based digital revolution is racing ahead like a runaway train, leaving policymakers in its dust or even less. In the fast lane, countries are struggling to keep up with the lightning-fast evolution of, now ubiquitous, AI-powered products. But one country, Iran, is stuck in neutral; its "National Network of Information" policy mired in misunderstanding and ambiguity. It's a tale of missed opportunities, as the government fails to catch the digital wave, instead finding itself swept away by the tide of technological advancements. Will the Iranian government be able to reverse gear and get back on track, or will it be forever left in the slow lane, watching as other countries zoom past, leaving it in their dust?

Google agreed to follow Australia's revenue model and executive instructions, advised by the country's regulatory body when publishing news on its platform. When it comes to fake news and misinformation, countries such as France, Singapore, and the United Kingdom have also had successful experiences in persuading social media platforms to enforce their national rules. The experience of the Iranian government working with the Durov brothers clearly shows that at least at one time, such a strategy was on the country's agenda. However, the big question mark is whether the ruling system ever had objectives of this sort in mind while developing the national network of information. These forms of cooperation – seemingly- don't require documents adopted by the authoritative power and administration of vast bureaucracies. So, let's think twice about this problem.

In 2000, Cord Meyer, a senior CIA officer, wrote a piece to heap praise on the CIA for its role in covertly establishing and sponsoring Radio Free Europe, describing it as one of the most prominent innovations of the U.S. in defeating the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War. In exploring the underlying cause of the unduly success of this project in the Eastern Bloc countries and the consequently widespread public dissatisfaction, he argues that the CIA was certain from the beginning that no matter how the Soviet Union and Western Germany responded to this emerging phenomenon, they were destined to fail.

In other words, the former CIA officer claims when, in 1950, the United States heavily invested in consolidating communication infrastructure (transmitting and amplifying



frequency), started news-editorial offices, trained media personnel, and formulated agenda-setting principles for social phenomena, it was unequivocal that authoritarian communist leaders would merely resort to the conventional practices of physical interference such as making arrests, framing people, assassination, and strategies of that nature. It was like trying to stop an exponentially growing avalanche simply with a wooden barrier. Thus, during the 1950s, Radio Free Europe amplified the population of ardent advocates of capitalism by thousands a day, while central governments in the Eastern Bloc – in blissful ignorance- were busy interrogating citizens on the charges of working for this medium.

NIN, from data to value

In the history books, the story of developing countries' relationship with modern technologies, particularly ICT, is a familiar one. The same thought pattern emerges time and time again: the desire to form committees, commissions, and councils to tackle the latest innovations. But, as the clock ticks on, technology leaves policymakers in the dust. Take the example of Iran's "National Network of Information", a policy that has been touted as a solution to the country's digital woes. But, in reality, it's a phrase that's as vague as it is ambitious. The problem lies in the ambiguity surrounding this policy, which has led to widespread confusion about what it actually means.

The concept of a "National Network of Information" is often seen as a substitute for the global Internet, but it's a false equivalence. The two are fundamentally different, with the latter being a global network of interconnected computers, while the former is a domestic infrastructure designed to facilitate information exchange within a country. The issue is not just semantic; it's a symptom of a deeper problem.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The mind of a wise man is the safest custody of secrets; cheerfulness is the key to friendship; patience and forbearance will conceal many defects.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:07 Evening: 19:20 Dawn: 3:23 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:01 (tomorrow)

Adaptation of Stephen Belber's "Tape" to be staged at Iranshahr Theater



TEHRAN-The play "Misery" directed by Pouya Saeidi will be performed at Iranshahr Theater in Tehran from May 14.

It is an adaptation of Stephen Belber's 1999 play "Tape" in which Kazem Sayahi, Mojtaba Pirzadeh, and Setareh Pesyani perform, ISNA reported.

The story is about two best friends from high school—Jon and Vince—who reunite ten years later at a motel in Michigan.

Over the course of an evening, Vince pressures Jon to admit that he date-raped Amy Randall, a girl they both dated in high school, only then to reveal that he has recorded their entire conversation.

Vince then uses the tape to force Jon to personally apologize to Amy that evening, after inviting her to join them for dinner. Differing memories of the event collide, and the complexities and social pressures of the relationships are revisited, in a final confrontation in which Jon, Amy, and Vince argue over the truth of what happened that night. It follows classical unities of action, time and space, featuring three characters in a single plot regarding their differing perspectives of past events, in one unbroken period of real-time, in a single motel room set.

The play sparks discussions about consent, power dynamics, and sexual assault. These performances are designed to challenge individuals and communities to examine their own core values and pursue positive action.

This is pop-psychology speculation, but the fact is that any part of personal history that is sought to be erased could have long term repercussions.

But then, as the great Kurosawa film "Rashomon," so eloquently conveyed, the same event can be interpreted and remembered differently by the people concerned.

All this is a lot to pack in a 100-minute play, tempered with dark humor, and full credit to the playwright for this twisty text with realistic dialogue.

Interestingly, "Tape" was turned into a film by none other than Richard Linklater, with Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman and Robert Sean Leonard—a lot more claustrophobic than the play, because on stage all action taking place in a single room is acceptable.

Released in 2001, "Tape" is a micro-budget film shot on digital video – it looks like Linklater went out and bought a camcorder at Best Buy and decided to shoot a movie. It takes place in a single hotel room.

There are three characters. It's a simple set-up, with not much in the way of what mainstream viewers would call "action."

Like many of the films in Linklater's oeuvre, most notably the "Before Sunrise"/"Before Sunset" duology, this is a film that relies first and foremost on dialogue.

Stephen Belber, 57, is an American playwright, screenwriter and film director. His plays have been produced on Broadway and in over 50 countries.

The Persian adaptation will remain on stage until June 21 at Iranshahr Theater located in Artists Park on North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

Cartoon of Day



The killing continues

Cartoonist: Sanouni Imad from Morocco

Foreign attendees hail magnificence of Tehran International Book Fair

From Page 1 ▶ The International section boasts a diverse selection of titles, primarily in English and Arabic. However, visitors can also explore books in Turkish, Russian, French, German, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

Yemen is the special guest of this year's edition. Other countries whose pavilions have been set up at the fair include, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Qatar, Lebanon, Pakistan, Mexico, and Venezuela among others.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Elena Pavlova, the Public Relations Manager of the Russian Book Union, shared insights into Russia's participation in the fair.



Representing her country's publications at the Russian Pavilion, she said: "We serve as the coordinator for the presence of Russian publishers and authors in the TIBF."

When asked about collaboration on translations, Pavlova highlighted existing cooperation and emphasized their desire to further strengthen these ties.

"We're presenting works by contemporary Russian authors and hosting public sessions within our pavilion to introduce these books," she said. "We're particularly heartened by the participation of Iranian translators and their enthusiasm for our works."

Pavlova expressed her belief that the TIBF is one of the largest book fairs globally, exceeding many in Asia and Europe. "Organizing this event for the 35th edition, the sheer number of books presented, and the enthusiastic crowds attending the fair are testaments to the Iranian people's love for books. I have no doubt the TIBF will continue to thrive for many years to come. I wish the best for the next editions of the fair and hope for more publications and visitors."

She also addressed the challenges faced by the Russian publishing industry, acknowledging the negative impact of rising paper costs on book production and pricing.

When asked how much such exhibitions can influence the promotion of book reading culture among people, Pavlova underlined: "While in a book fair, people are surrounded by a vast array of vibrant books. They hold the books in their hands, open them, and go through the pages; this gives them great pleasure. Then they start reading the books and get deeper pleasure out of them. Therefore, with thousands



of books on display, these events offer immense enjoyment and undoubtedly encourage people to read more. This way, book fairs play a crucial role in promoting reading culture."

The Tehran Times also interviewed Rahman-Ali Mir-Alizadeh, Director General of Publishing and Press for Tajikistan's Ministry of Culture, who is representing his country's publications at the Tajikistan Pavilion.



He expressed his gratitude to the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for the annual invitation and highlighted the importance of the fair in showcasing new titles, fostering collaboration opportunities, and strengthening cultural ties between nations.

Pointing to the common cultural and literary background and similar language (Persian) between Iran and Tajikistan, he noted that the Tajikistan Pavilion offers a window into contemporary Tajik literature. Visitors will find a selection of poetry, prose, historical works, and research publications, all written in the Cyrillic script. This focus on modern writers and poets provides the Iranian audience with a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the current literary landscape of Tajikistan.

Lauding the Tehran International Book Fair as the largest he has encountered, Mir-Alizadeh said: "Having participated in book fairs worldwide, none compare to the sheer scale of this event. Iran is the cradle of literature and civilization and Iranian people are fond of books."

He also addressed the challenges facing Tajikistan's publishing industry, saying "The digital age and rising paper

costs present new hurdles. However, books remain essential nourishment for the mind, just as food is for the body. Despite price increases, people continue to purchase them."

When asked about the influence of book fairs on promoting the reading culture in the public despite the challenges, he emphasized: "No effort goes unrewarded. Organizing these grand exhibitions is crucial as the influence of books on society is undeniable."

Calling the TIBF "one of the world's most magnificent book fairs," Mir-Alizadeh concluded: "Participating and witnessing the enthusiastic public turnout is truly invigorating."

Mehmet Burhan GENÇ, Chairman of the Board of Directors at TBYM - Turkish Press and Publishing Professional Association – who was at the Türkiye Pavilion also spoke with the Tehran Times about the presence of Turkish publishers at the TIBF.



"Eight Turkish publishers, supported by the Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, are showcasing about 500 titles in this pavilion. Seven other publishers have also participated in the fair independently," he said.

Noting that it is his second time in the book fair, he called it an influential event in the region. "However, it can expand its reach by attracting more international publishers."

"I have attended book fairs in Bologna, Frankfurt, Sharjah, and more. I see TIBF's unique appeal and believe it has the potential to become a major player on the global stage," he stated.

On the collaboration between the publishers of the two nations, Burhan GENÇ said: "An ambitious

project is underway to translate several books from Persian to Turkish and vice versa. I suppose 200 titles have so far been translated."

Regarding the challenges the publishing industry in Türkiye faces, he said: "The rising cost of paper is a global concern for publishers. Due to the financial constraints, basic needs such as food and clothing are the main priority of the people, making book purchases less frequent."

However, he believes that such book fairs can have a great influence on encouraging people to buy and read more books.

Millions of visitors inspect the Tehran International Book Fair every year, including university students, scholars, and their families.

The annual cultural event, which is the largest of its kind in Iran, is being held both physically and virtually. Visitors can explore physical stands at the Mosalla while also participating virtually through the official website ketab.ir. This dual approach allows for broader accessibility and engagement.

The fair covers a wide range of themes, including literature, history, philosophy, science, art, and children's books.

Throughout the fair, renowned authors and intellectuals will participate in book signings, panel discussions, and talks. These sessions provide a unique opportunity for readers to interact with their favorite writers.

Visitors can purchase books directly from publishers' stands. Many exhibitors offer special discounts during the fair, making it an ideal time to expand one's personal library.

Having launched on May 8, the 35th TIBF, with the slogan "Let's Read and Create," will run through May 18 at Imam Khomeini Mosalla in central Tehran.

Leftwing intellectuals, artists want Brazil to stop buying weapons from Israel

A group of Brazilian artists and intellectuals including singer-songwriter Chico Buarque and his wife Carol Proner, have signed a letter for President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to stop buying weapons from Israel. The initiative was also endorsed by Amnesty International (AI) and several far-left political parties who have requested a meeting with the head of state to deliver the note.

The signatories call for "the immediate suspension of all defense agreements and export and import licenses for military equipment with Israel and Israeli companies." The initiative came days after the Brazilian Army chose the Israeli company Elbit Systems to supply 36 155mm howitzer armored vehicles in an operation that would result in between 200 and 400 new direct jobs and 400 to 700 indirect jobs created in the South American country.

The Haifa-based Elbit is believed to be one of the main suppliers of armaments to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Its exports have increased during the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Merco Press reported.

The Brazilian armed forces and the Israeli defense system have a long-standing and strong

relationship, so the purchase of the Atmos motorized howitzers from Elbit would not have come as a surprise had it not been for Lula's stance and that of the Workers' Party. Brazil's Navy depends on the Israelis for the maintenance of the turbines of its A4 Skyhawk fighters.

Earlier this year, Lula was considered "persona non grata" by Tel Aviv for his remarks likening the ongoing military deployment in the Gaza Strip to the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany during World War II. He is not "welcome in Israel" until he apologizes for his comments during an appearance in Africa. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Lula was trivializing the Holocaust. In the signatories' view, "the Brazilian government must take concrete and immediate measures to prevent the perpetuation of Israel's violations of the imperative norms of international law, distancing itself from any cooperation with such violations." The operation with Elbit amounting to between \$150 and \$200 million also includes a simulator to train Brazilian operational teams.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian police bought weapons and even espionage material from Israeli

companies and the Army completed the recent purchase of Spike LR anti-tank missiles. However, the delivery has been delayed due to the war in Gaza. Israel launched a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate the movement's surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. At least 35,000 Palestinians have been killed and 78,000 injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza in over seven months of ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip. The war has also caused massive material destruction in Gaza.

Gaza is one of the most densely populated places on the planet, where before the war 2.3 million people had been living on a 365-square-kilometer strip of land.

According to satellite analyses by Scher and Jamon Van Den Hoek, an associate professor of geography at Oregon State University, 56.9 percent of Gaza buildings were damaged or destroyed as of April 21.

In Gaza City, home to some 600,000 people before the war, the situation is dire: almost three-quarters (74.3 percent) of its buildings have been damaged or destroyed.