

# TEHRAN TIMES

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Israel's agent Gilad Naom, front third right, and Tamar Kaplan Tourgeman, front center, wait for the start of hearings at the International Court of Justice, in The Hague, Netherlands, Thursday, May 16, 2024.

# Transparent Lies

**Israel denies genocide at ICJ hearing, tries to justify Gaza massacres** ▶ Page 5

## BRICS first step towards a more just world: Iranian diplomat

TEHRAN - Ali Baqeri Kani, the Iranian deputy foreign minister for political affairs, has highlighted the significance of the BRICS group as the primary nucleus and driving force of international collective will to establish a just world and safeguard the interests of independent nations.

The diplomat was speaking at the 15th International Economic Forum "Russia-Islamic World: Kazan Forum 2024," in the city of Kazan which is located in Russia's Tatarstan Republic. He emphasized the pivotal role of BRICS in creating a platform for the collaboration of various regional and international actors to enhance their impact on global affairs.

Baqeri underscored the upcoming BRICS summit in the Republic of Tatarstan, scheduled during Russia's presidency over the group, as a crucial meeting aimed at fostering cooperation among member countries. He reiterated Iran and Russia's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties based on principles of independence and influence regionally and globally, as outlined by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. ▶ Page 2

## Azerbaijan announces new location for embassy in Iran

TEHRAN— The Republic of Azerbaijan's foreign ministry spokesperson, Ayhan Hajzadeh, has announced that a new location for the country's embassy in Tehran has been determined.

Hajzadeh stated that over the past few months, through ongoing contacts and negotiations between the relevant authorities and institutions of Azerbaijan and Iran, the expectations of Azerbaijan were conveyed. Collaborative efforts with the Iranian side were undertaken to relocate the embassy to a site that is safer and meets all necessary conditions.

He reiterated that the new location of the embassy has been determined. ▶ Page 3

## Israel MK: None of Hamas' 24 brigades have been destroyed

Israeli Knesset member, Amit Halevi, confirmed on Thursday that all 24 Hamas brigades are still present in Gaza and not a single one of them has been destroyed, adding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is lying to the Israeli people and inflating the army's achievements, according to Middle East Monitor.

In addition to Hamas's steadfastness, the Islamic Jihad movement still exists, "and they lied to us that it had been eliminated," Halevi added in his interview with Israel's Channel 14. ▶ Page 5

## Palestinians call for Israeli ban as Gaza war spills into football

Bangkok (AFP) - The war in Gaza came to the fore at world football's biggest meeting on Friday as the Palestinian association called for Israel to be immediately suspended from FIFA.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino told the congress in Bangkok that the sport's global governing body will take independent legal advice to consider the Palestinian demand. ▶ Page 3

## Did "friendly fire" kill Israeli soldiers?

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- On May 12, the Israeli military announced 50 Israeli army casualties in Gaza - without distinguishing between the injured and the dead - the single highest casualty rate in a 24-hour time-frame inside the Strip since October 7.

It reflects what many analysts have alluded to. The Palestinian armed resistance forces against Israeli occupation forces (IOF) ▶ Page 5



## Iranians celebrate birth anniversary of Imam Reza (AS) in grand ceremony

TEHRAN - The streets of Tehran were transformed into a vibrant hub of celebration on Friday, as thousands of Imam Reza's (AS) enthusiasts gathered to mark his birth anniversary.

The festivities kicked off at 16:00 local time and continued until 22:00, drawing participants from all walks of life. In a display of unity and devotion, the celebration spanned from Haft-e Tir Square to Valiasr Square, with participants joining in from 10 other major cities across Iran. More than 400 cultural and service stations were set up along the route, manned by 12,000 volunteers from Tehran's religious groups and charities.

The Municipality of Tehran arranged the ceremony while expenses were covered by the generosity of the public and charitable organizations. This year, a special focus was placed on children, who eagerly participated in the festivity with activities like bouncy castles, mini-football, and trampolines, creating a joyous atmosphere filled with religious hymns and excitement.

Imam Reza is the eighth Shia Imam and is especially loved and celebrated by Iranians as his shrine is located in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

## Iran second among Islamic countries in Young University Rankings 2024

TEHRAN - The Times Higher Education has placed Iran second among Islamic countries in terms of the number of universities included in Young University Rankings 2024.

The country now boasts 46 universities included in the Young University Rankings, up from 39 last year and 20 in 2020.

Turkey (58) and Pakistan (33) ranked first and third, respectively.

The Times Higher Education Young University Rankings include institutions that were founded between 1974 and the present.

The 2024 Young Universities rankings include 673 universities that are younger than 50 years of age.

A further 499 universities received 'reporter' status which means they provided data but did not meet the eligibility criteria to receive a rank.

Out of 673 institutions included in Young University Rankings, 272 are from 19 Islamic countries, compared to 213 institutions last year.

The United Arab Emirates (27), Malaysia (32), Turkey (52), and Iran (85) are ranked first to fourth among Islamic countries.

Shiraz University of Technology ranks first in the country; it has been ranked in the top 100 list globally (85). ▶ Page 7

## Jeffery Sachs: "U.S. complicit in Israeli war crimes"

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN - The White House is caught between a rock and a hard place as it continues to receive criticism from both the public and the Israeli lobby in the U.S. for its handling of the war in Gaza.

Washington has sent billions of dollars in aid to Israel since October 7th, backed the regime in the United Nations Security Council at the cost of isolation, and muzzled dissent in American universities by unleashing heavy and unprecedented violence against students asking for divestment from Israel.

But the U.S. seems to be losing at both sides of the ledger. Joe Biden's occasional criticism of Netanyahu has drawn the ire of Israeli donors while his untrammelled support for Bibi's war is causing him to lose young voters. ▶ Page 5





## Iran rejects allegations of interference in Yemen, calls U.S. claims 'short-sighted'

TEHRAN – Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations has forcefully rebutted recent accusations by the United States about the Islamic Republic's interference in Yemen.

In a letter addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the rotating President of the UN Security Council Pedro Comissario Afonso, Amir Saeid Iravani challenged the recent claims made by United States Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Robert Wood during a Security Council meeting on Yemen.

Wood alleged that Iran was supplying "advanced weapons, including ballistic and cruise missiles," to Yemen's military and the Ansarullah resistance movement.

Iravani condemned Wood's remarks, lamenting the use of the Security Council's platform to promote what he termed as the United States' "short-sighted political interests" and to justify its actions in Yemen.

He accused the United States of spreading falsehoods and misinformation about Iran's role in Yemen, which he deemed as contributing to the illegal actions and military aggression against Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Iravani dismissed the remarks as part of a broader agenda aimed at advancing Washington's narrow political interests in the region through the dissemination of false information.

Iran categorically rejected the baseless allegations, reaffirming its adherence to the Security Council's resolutions on Yemen and asserting its compliance with international norms.

Moreover, Iravani underscored Iran's commitment to resolving the Yemen crisis through diplomatic channels and reiterated its support for maritime security and freedom of navigation.

Against the backdrop of escalating tensions in the region, Yemen's armed forces have undertaken numerous military operations targeting shipping linked to Israel since October 2023, following the Western-backed offensive against Palestinians in Gaza.

The United States and Britain have been implicated in airstrikes and missile attacks on Yemen since mid-January, offering significant support to Israel, including arms, financial assistance, and logistical backing.

In a show of solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, Yemeni forces have intercepted ships traveling to and from ports in the Occupied

Territories or affiliated with Israel across various maritime regions.

They have vowed to continue these operations until Israel ceases its aggression and lifts the siege on Gaza.

The ongoing conflict underscores the intricate geopolitical dynamics in the region and the overlapping interests of various stakeholders, heightening concerns about regional stability and the humanitarian situation in Yemen and Gaza.

Currently on trial before the International Court of Justice for genocide against Palestinians, Israel has been waging a devastating war on Gaza since October 7.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, the ongoing conflict has led to the death of 35,303 Palestinians and left 79,261 others wounded.

Additionally, approximately 7,000 individuals remain unaccounted for and are presumed to have perished under the debris of their homes across the Gaza Strip.

Both Palestinian and international organizations report that a significant majority of the casualties are women and children.

The Israeli offensive has exacerbated an acute famine, particularly in northern Gaza, resulting in the deaths of many Palestinians, most of whom are children.

Furthermore, the aggression has forced nearly two million people from various parts of the Gaza Strip to flee their homes, with the majority seeking refuge in the densely populated southern city of Rafah, near the Egyptian border.

This mass displacement represents the largest exodus from Palestine since the Nakba in 1948.

Despite international warnings against a major offensive on the densely populated city, Israel announced on Thursday their plans to intensify ground operations in Rafah, a city in southern Gaza, and deploy additional troops.

Palestinian health officials have warned that the few health facilities still operating are desperately depleted and at growing risk of shutting down as Israel presses on with its Rafah offensive.

Despite Israel's contention at the ICJ that it is facilitating the flow of aid into Gaza, the WHO says it has not been able to get any medical supplies into the enclave since Israeli troops moved towards Rafah.

## Any threat will receive direct response: commander



TEHRAN – The Commander of the Iranian Army Ground Forces says the country will respond directly to any threats originating from the Zionist regime.

Addressing attendees at the Imam Ali Army Officer University in Tehran during a national conference on emerging sciences and technologies in defense-security fields on Thursday, Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari reiterated Iran's position.

He referred to Operation True Promise and noted: "Operation True Promise significantly advanced the dismantling of the Zionist regime," Gen. Heydari remarked.

"Should any threats arise from the Zionist regime against us, the Islamic Republic will respond directly."

On April 14, Iran fired about 300 missiles and drones against military installations in Israel in response to the regime's deadly attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria, on April 1 that martyred seven Iranian military advisors, including two generals.

He stressed the importance of science and technology in addressing global challenges,

highlighting the forefront role of knowledge advancement and the expertise of scientists in countering oppression.

The Iranian commander emphasized the crucial role of science and technology in modern warfare, recognizing that contemporary threats are not only physical but also rooted in knowledge and technology.

Discussing efforts within the Army Ground Forces to bolster scientific capabilities, Heydari showcased initiatives focused on integrating state-of-the-art technologies, such as night-flying helicopters, into military operations.

He acknowledged the invaluable contribution of dedicated scientists within the force, attributing their presence to the Army Ground Forces' ability to overcome operational obstacles and achieve success in challenging environments.

Heydari's statements underscore Iran's dedication to leveraging scientific progress to enhance its defense capabilities and effectively respond to external threats.

In recent years, Iranian military specialists and engineers have achieved notable advancements in producing a diverse array of domestically developed equipment, fostering self-reliance within the armed forces.

Officials from Iran have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to enhancing the nation's military capabilities, particularly in missile technology, emphasizing their defensive nature.

# Stability in Balkans is in Iran's interest: FM

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian reaffirmed Iran's strong dedication to promoting stability and security in the Balkans and fostering peaceful coexistence among all ethnic groups in the region.

During a telephone conversation with Serbian Foreign Minister Marko Djuric on Thursday, Amir Abdollahian extended congratulations on Djuric's recent appointment as Serbia's foreign minister.

Amir Abdollahian emphasized Iran's unwavering stance on respecting the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, assuring Djuric of Iran's commitment to



supporting Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In response, Djuric expressed Serbia's resolve to bolster comprehensive relations with Iran and to maintain bilateral cooperation on the global stage.

Both foreign ministers stressed the significance of

ongoing dialogue to expand mutual relations and to hold further consultations on key regional and international issues.

Notably, Serbia holds a unique position as Iran's primary political partner in the Western Balkans. It is noteworthy that Serbia remains the sole country in the region that has not adhered to the European Union's sanctions against Iran.

This exchange between Iran and Serbia underscores their mutual commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and highlights the importance of diplomatic engagement in addressing regional challenges and fostering cooperation on the global stage.

## Iran rejects Arab League statement on Persian Gulf islands

TEHRAN – Iran has strongly rejected the recent statement issued by the Arab League regarding the Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb islands in the Persian Gulf.

Nasser Kanaani, spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, issued a statement on Friday and criticized the Arab League's position as "baseless" and "unacceptable," reaffirming Iran's claim of sovereignty over the three islands.

The dispute resurfaced following the conclusion of the 33rd Arab League summit held in Manama, Bahrain, where the final statement echoed the United Arab Emirates' ongoing claim to the islands.

Kanaani, responding to this, emphasized that Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb have historically belonged to Iran.

"It has been stated and emphasized many times that the three Iranian islands of Abu Musa as well as Greater and Lesser Tunbs are an integral and eternal part of the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and such baseless claims in the statement in question are rejected," he noted.

Backing Iran's claim with historical, legal, and geographical evidence, Kanaani emphasized the islands' longstanding status as Iranian territory.

Despite a period of British control starting in 1921, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was reaffirmed on November 30, 1971, shortly before the UAE's formation.

Iran has repeatedly stated that it will not hesitate a bit to preserve its territorial integrity.

Additionally, the Arab League's statement addressed the escalating Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip, calling for an immediate end to hostilities, Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories, the lifting of the Gaza siege, and unhindered access for humanitarian aid.

In response, Kanaani appreciated the Arab League's support for the Palestinian cause and condemnation of Israeli actions in Gaza. He underscored the urgent need for unity among Muslim nations to effectively address and counter Israeli aggression.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza persists, as casualties continue to mount amid the ongoing violence.

Recent reports indicate that Israeli actions have resulted in the deaths of 35,303 Palestinians, including a significant number of women and children, emphasizing the urgent need for a lasting solution to the Israeli-



Palestinian conflict.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, the ongoing conflict has left 79,261 individuals wounded.

Additionally, approximately 7,000 individuals remain unaccounted for and are presumed to have perished under the debris of their homes across the Gaza Strip.

A widely criticized Israeli ground operation is currently ongoing in the southern city of Rafah in Gaza. Over a million displaced Palestinians sought refuge in this area after being displaced from their homes in other heavily bombarded parts of Gaza since October.

The UN estimates that approximately 600,000 individuals have fled the region since Israel initiated its assault earlier this month.

## European trio will face accountability for aid to Israel during Iran's retaliation: Quds Force chief

TEHRAN – The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, has declared that the three European countries that deployed warplanes to defend Israel during Iran's retaliatory "True Promise" Operation will be held accountable.

"All criminals should be aware that their actions and atrocities have been meticulously recorded," General Qaani stated on Wednesday.

"France, Germany, and the UK must not deceive themselves into believing that their deployment of aircraft on that fateful night absolved them of responsibility. The issue may have been concluded on that particular evening, but they will undoubtedly face consequences in due course."

General Qaani's remarks came during a ceremony commemorating 40 days since the martyrdom of IRGC General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi and Brigadier General

Mohammad Reza Zahedi, along with five other accompanying officers, in an Israeli terrorist attack against Iran's diplomatic premises in Damascus on April 1.

In response to the attack, the IRGC launched a barrage of drones and missiles targeting the Occupied Territories on April 14. The retaliatory strikes, dubbed "Operation True Promise," inflicted significant damage on Israeli military bases from the Golan



heights to the Negev desert.

According to General Qaani, the United States and the entire Western military alliance of NATO mobilized their full military capabilities to defend the occupying Israeli regime.

"As many as seven to eight naval groups were deployed to the Black Sea to prevent the Iranian operation," the military official explained, adding that over 200 aircraft were also deployed across the region's airspace during the night of the operation.

General Qaani described the aerial area where the operation was carried out as "the most densely populated area in the world in terms of air defence," highlighting the "unprecedented and historically improbable" nature of the operation.

He emphasized that the Islamic Republic had provided ample notice of the impending

operation to various concerned parties.

"True Promise was a transparent operation... The timing of the operation was crystal clear to both the Zionist regime and the United States," the commander said, noting that the Islamic Republic "demonstrated its strength, resilience, and power to the entire world" during the operation.

"The success of Operation True Promise goes beyond the mere number of missiles and drones that struck the Occupied Territories," General Qaani stated. "There are numerous hidden aspects to this operation that will take a considerable amount of time to fully comprehend."

The military official also praised the role played by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in the operation.

"Who in the world possesses the courage to make such a decision?" he asked, recalling that even the United States, Israel's primary ally, had publicly declared following the Israeli terrorist attack that it would not intervene.

Meanwhile, General Qaani cautioned regional and extra-regional nations to learn from the United States' failure to protect the Israeli regime during the Iranian operation, urging them to avoid placing excessive faith in Washington's support.

## BRICS first step towards a more just world: Iranian diplomat

From page 1 ▶ The Deputy Foreign Minister also emphasized the importance of attracting other independent countries to engage with Iran and Russia, noting that the participation of powers like Brazil, South Africa, and India could pave the way for a world founded on mutual cooperation and justice, leading to peace, prosperity, and stability for all nations.

The BRICS group of emerging economic powers is an alliance which was initially formed in 2006 by Russia, China, India, and Brazil, and

was joined four years later by South Africa. It represents 40% of the world's population and a quarter of the global economy. Iran officially became a member of the bloc in January of 2024.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Baqeri congratulated Russian President Vladimir Putin on his re-election and expressed hope for further growth in friendly and cooperative relations between Tehran and Moscow during Putin's new term. He highlighted Iran's active participation in the Russia-Islamic World

Cooperation Summit, emphasizing efforts to enhance economic cooperation between the two sides.

The diplomat stressed the practicality and achievability of enhancing Iran-Russia relations through joint projects and multilateral initiatives. He called for leveraging common capacities to develop bilateral ties and engage other regional and global actors in advancing mutual goals through strategic planning and implementation.



# Azerbaijan announces new location for embassy in Iran

From page 1 ▶ He reiterated that the new location of the embassy has been determined.

Hajizadeh emphasized that appropriate measures are currently being taken to prepare the new site to ensure it meets the required conditions.

Once these preparations are complete, the embassy will resume its activities at the new location.

In mid-March, Abbas Mousavi, Iran's ambassador to Azerbaijan, noted that after attempts by both sides to clear up misconceptions, Tehran and Baku have underlined the need to "open a new chapter" in ties between the two neighbors.

Mousavi shared his thoughts on X after meeting with the Azerbaijani President's aide, Hikmet Hajiyev, in Tehran.

He continued, "In my recent meeting with Hikmet Hajiyev, the assistant of the Azerbaijani President, we reviewed the latest developments in the South Caucasus region and bilateral relations between Iran and Azerbaijan."

"We emphasized the need to open a new chapter in the relations between the two neighbors," the envoy added.

In anticipation of reopening their embassy in the Islamic Republic after diplomatic difficulties over the previous year, an Azerbaijani team visited Tehran.

In an interview with Baku TV, Abbas Mousavi emphasized



that they would not allow "misunderstandings" to continue and damage their relationship while applauding the "historical background" between the two neighboring nations.

Declaring that a group has visited Tehran to begin preparations, he added that the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Tehran would "soon" start its operations.

Mousavi further emphasized that in order to create "greater economic entanglement" between the two neighbors, Tehran and Baku are developing "large economic projects."

He added, "Both nations have worked to overcome past challenges through strategic diplomacy and usher in a new era of bilateral relations."

Mousavi stressed, "The shared history and deep cultural and emotional connections between the peoples on both sides of the

approximately 800-kilometer border between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan prevent issues and misunderstandings from lingering."

**The Azerbaijani embassy will resume its operations after a new location is prepared.**

He continued, "We have actively pursued a course of reconciliation and renewal in bilateral relations, leveraging wisdom, insight, and foresight."

The disruptive influence of shared adversaries, alongside select regional actors and regimes, particularly through

their security apparatus, is palpable in exacerbating tensions between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan."

Mousavi further affirmed the steadfast and principled approach of the current Iranian administration's neighborliness policy.

After an attack on the nation's embassy in Tehran in January of last year, which Baku called a "terrorist act," the country's relations with Iran slid.

"Personal and family-related problems" were the attack's motivation, according to an early Iranian inquiry.

Last year, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman told reporters that the Republic of Azerbaijan has assured Iran that it has no intention to take military action against neighboring Armenia.

"We are in contact with the officials of Armenia and Azerbaijan."

Officials of Armenia had expressed worry over a possible new clash on the part of Azerbaijan but officials of Azerbaijan have sent messages to us that they have no intention to take any military action," Nasser Kanaani stated.

"Because of the importance of the developments in the Caucasus and the impact of any instability, unrest, and new tension in the region on the entire region," Iran is sensitive about the security of its northern borders and is closely watching the situation, he pointed out.

## Army chief asserts Opt. True Promise accelerates Palestine liberation

TEHRAN— The Chief of Iran's Army, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, has declared that the Islamic Republic's retaliatory response to the Zionist regime, known as Operation True Promise, will hasten the liberation of Palestine and the downfall of the Zionist regime.

During a visit to the Friday prayer Imam of Paveh, a city in western Iran, General Mousavi emphasized that this operation has invigorated the regional resistance movement.

On April 1, the Israeli regime conducted airstrikes on the consular section of Iran's embassy in Damascus, Syria, resulting in the deaths of two IRGC generals, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi, along with five of their accompanying officers.

In response, the IRGC launched Operation True Promise on April 13, targeting Israeli military

bases across the occupied Palestinian territories with a series of drone and missile strikes.

General Mousavi also praised the discernment of the people of Paveh, acknowledging the city's historical significance in the Islamic Revolution.

Highlighting the implications of Operation True Promise, General Mousavi stated that the global community now recognizes the Islamic Republic as a formidable power, attributing this strength to the unwavering resolve of the Iranian nation.

Additionally, General Mousavi affirmed the role of the Iranian Army as the guardian of the nation.

He emphasized that the Army, in conjunction with the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Faraja, Basij, and other dear forces under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, is dedicated to ensuring the well-being of the region's populace.



In conclusion, General Mousavi remarked that the primary objective of Operation Al Aqsa Storm was to reassert the centrality of the Palestinian issue within the Islamic world.

The Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, executed by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas on October 7, 2023, marked a pivotal event that significantly altered the geopolitical landscape of Palestine and the broader West Asia region.

## Global uprising for Gaza hastens Zionists' demise: advisor

TEHRAN— A newly appointed Sociocultural advisor to President Ebrahim Raisi has asserted that increased access to virtual platforms has exposed the realities of Israel and its allies, suggesting that the global uprising spurred by Zionist actions will expedite the fall of Tel Aviv.

Mohammad Hosseini, who previously served as Vice-President for parliamentary

affairs, highlighted the authority, dignity, security, and territorial integrity enjoyed by Iran, which he attributed to the sacrifices of the Islamic Revolution's martyrs.

Hosseini condemned the genocidal campaign by Israel in Gaza over the past seven months, claiming that these actions have stirred the conscience of students worldwide.

He emphasized that individuals

of all backgrounds—regardless of color, language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or race—cannot remain silent upon witnessing the brutality of the Zionists.

Hosseini noted that professors and students across the United States, Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan, and other countries have been vocal in their protests against the genocide, despite the repercussions such as beatings, arrests, suspensions, expulsions,

and job losses.

In his concluding remarks, Hosseini argued that despite efforts by the "media empire of the colonial regime" to shape public opinion with its own narratives, the access of resistance supporters and advocates for Gaza to virtual spaces has illuminated the brutal nature of the Zionist regime and its supporters to the global populace.

## Pakistan advocates strengthening partnership between Chabahar, Gwadar ports

TEHRAN— The Spokesperson and Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan has emphasized the enduring brotherly relations between Tehran and Islamabad, reiterating Pakistan's strong commitment to enhancing cooperation between Chabahar and Gwadar Ports.

During the weekly press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra addressed the recent 10-year agreement signed between India and Iran concerning Chabahar port on May 13, and the subsequent reaction from the U.S.

Zahra clarified that Pakistan refrains from commenting on Iran's agreements with other countries and does not engage in discussions about the positions of third parties.

The agreement between India and Iran aims to facilitate the long-term development of the

Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar port, with operations managed by a subsidiary of India Global Ports Limited (IGPL).

The Indian firm plans to invest \$120 million in equipping the terminal, and India has also extended a credit line of \$250 million to improve infrastructure around Chabahar.

Following the agreement, the U.S. issued a warning that entities involved in business deals with Iran could face sanctions.

U.S. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel highlighted the potential risks associated with engaging in commercial activities with Iran.

Zahra also underscored the significance of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Pakistan in April, describing it as a pivotal moment for bilateral cooperation.

President Raisi's visit, accompanied by a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, included key meetings with Pakistani officials.

During his two-day stay in Islamabad, President Raisi set an ambitious target of \$10 billion in bilateral trade, emphasizing the 900-kilometer shared border as a valuable opportunity for the development and prosperity of border areas.

President Raisi's visit followed a period of brief border tensions between the two countries in January.

In her concluding remarks, Zahra expressed Pakistan's readiness to expand bilateral cooperation with Iran, including the signing of an agreement to further the partnership between the ports of Chabahar in Iran and Gwadar in Pakistan.

### Palestinians call for Israeli ban as Gaza war spills into football

From Page 1 ▶ The Palestine Football Association (PFA) and its backers had hoped there would be an immediate vote on a possible ban, which has the support of the Asian Football Confederation, of which it is a member.

Israel called the ban call «cynical».

But Infantino said: «FIFA will mandate as of now an independent legal expertise to assess the three requests made by the Palestinian football association and make sure that the status and regulations of FIFA are applied in the correct way.

«Due to the urgency of the situation, an extraordinary FIFA council will be convened and take place before July 20 of this year to review the results of the assessment and take the decisions that are appropriate.» PFA head Jibril Rajoub minutes earlier took the stage in the Thai capital to demand Israel's «immediate» suspension. He said the Israeli FA (IFA) had broken FIFA rules, saying: «FIFA cannot afford to remain indifferent to these violations or to the ongoing genocide in Palestine.»

### Iran to compete at 2024 World Para Athletics C'ships

TEHRAN – Iran has sent 17 Para athletes to the 2024 World Para Athletics Championships in Kobe, Japan. Yasin Khosravi, Amanollah Papi, Aliasghar Javanmardi, Sadeq Beyt Sayah, Alireza Mokhtari, Hamed Amiri, Hadi Kaeidi, Hashemeh Motaghian, Elham Salehi, Zeynab Moradi Rashno, Mehdi Olad, Amirhossein Alipour, Ali Pirouj, Sajad Nikparast, Saman Pakbaz, Hajar Safarzadeh and Saeid Afrooz will represent Iran in the prestigious event.

The 2024 World Para Athletics Championships is an upcoming Paralympic track and field meet organized by the World Para Athletics subcommittee of the International Paralympic Committee.

It will be the 11th edition of the event and it is scheduled to be held in the Kobe Universiade Memorial Stadium in Kobe, Japan, from May 17 to 25. This will be the first time the event is held in East Asia. The event was initially scheduled for September 2021 but it was rescheduled to avoid clashing with the 2020 Summer Paralympics which were rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Iran come fifth at 2024 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Cambodia to come fifth in the 2024 Women's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup on Thursday. The match finished 1-1 in regular time and Team Melli beat their opponents 2-0 in the penalty shootout. Iran had defeated Oman and Vietnam and lost to Malaysia and Kazakhstan in Pool A.

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. The completion was held at the Thailand National Sport University in Chonburi, Thailand from May 13 to 16.

The Women's Indoor Asia Cup 2024 holds significant importance as it serves as a qualifying tournament for the FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup 2025. With only the winners of the Asia Cup securing a spot in the World Cup, the level of competition and intensity in the tournament is expected to be exceptionally high. This format places immense pressure on all participating teams, as only the champions will earn the opportunity to compete on one of the grandest stages in indoor hockey, the FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup 2025.

### Habibinezhad wins bronze at Kazakhstan's Boxing tournament

TEHRAN – Iranian boxer Ali Habibinezhad claimed a bronze medal at the Astana tournament.

He defeated boxers from Kazakhstan on his way to the final. The Iranian team 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 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).

### Philippines to host 2025 FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup

TEHRAN – The Philippines has been chosen to host the first-ever FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup next year after the International Football Federation Congress laid out its latest schedule.

This competition will be the first time it will be held in the country. Iran can take part in the first edition as one of three Asian teams as well as host Philippines. Team Melli Banovan has won two editions of the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup in 2015 and 2018.

### Iran lose to Brazil volleyball team: friendly

TEHRAN – Iran's national volleyball team lost to Brazil in two friendly matches. Team Melli lost to their powerhouse rival 4-1 on Thursday in the first warm-up match and suffered the second loss on Friday.

Team Melli will play one more match as part of preparation for the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL). Iran will open the campaign on May 22 in Brazil in a match against Serbia.

The 2024 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League will be the sixth edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League, an annual men's international volleyball tournament. The competition will be held from May 21 to June 30.

### Pakistan beat Iran at CAVA Nations League

TEHRAN – Pakistan defeated Iran 3-1 (25-18, 23-25, 25-16, 25-20) in the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) on Thursday.

Iran U20 volleyball team defeated Turkmenistan and Afghanistan and lost to Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the tournament.

The CAVA Nations League took place in Islamabad, Pakistan from May 11 to 17 at the Liaqat Gymnasium, promising to be a thrilling display of athleticism and sportsmanship.

The event 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.

### Ghaedi scores as Ittihad Kalba defeat Al Ain

TEHRAN – Ittihad Kalba clinched a crucial victory against Al Ain in the 23rd round of the ADNOC Professional League courtesy of a goal from Mehdi Ghaedi. In the match which took place at Khalifa Bin Zayed Stadium, Ghaedi was on target just seven minutes into the match. Ittihad Kalba was reduced to 10 men in the 37th minute after Filip Kiss was shown a red card. With this win, Ittihad Kalba bolstered its standing in the league, accumulating a total of 24 points and securing the 10th place. Meanwhile, Al Ain's point tally remained at 39, maintaining its position in fourth place.



## Raisi inaugurates development projects worth \$5.1m in Mazandaran

TEHRAN – During a visit to the northern province of Mazandaran on Thursday, President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated four major port development projects with a total investment of 2.55 trillion rials (\$5.1 million) in Amirabad Port.

Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash also accompanied the president in the inauguration ceremony, IRNA reported. Upon arrival to the province, President Raisi described Mazandaran Province as a region enjoying great potential to move towards more development.

Speaking to reporters, the president underlined agriculture, industry, tourism, forest, sea and especially efficient and sincere human resources as the special capacities of the northern province for economic progress, adding, “Universities and scientific centres, as well as the historical background and numerous personalities that excel not only in the province and the country but also in the World of Islam, along with the history and civilisation and the religious identity of the people of Mazandaran, are significant capacities for the growth and development of this province.”

Raisi stated that “During the first provincial visit of the government to Mazandaran, we had good resolutions and that good measures have been taken to implement them,”

“In this trip, we will monitor the quality of the implementation of these resolutions to see the impact of the steps taken to implement them to contribute to the growth and progress of the province”, he added.

Raisi continued to point out that the government’s actions in the field of building housing and creating employment in the province, adding, “The government has also been able to revive more than 300 production units in the province that were unfortunately stagnant, which has created many job opportunities”.

The President said, “I hope that on this trip we will be able to make effective decisions to meet some of the needs of the province that the honourable governor general, the honourable representative of the supreme leader in the province, the managers, representatives, armed forces, dear Basiji forces and all the managers in the province have reviewed before.”

## ‘Iran determined to expand electricity ties with Turkey’



TEHRAN – The head of Iran’s Power Generation, Distribution and Transmission Company (TAVANIR) has emphasized the country’s resolve to develop electricity trade with Turkey.

Speaking in a meeting held between a high-ranking delegation of Iran’s power industry and senior managers of the Turkish Energy Exchange Company (EPIAŞ), Mostafa Rajabi-Mashhadi stated that Iran is ready to welcome Turkish investors in the country’s electricity industry,

especially in renewable energies

During the meeting, the CEO of the Turkish Energy Exchange stressed the need to bolster bilateral cooperation in the financial markets of electricity, according to IRNA.

Also, the manager of the strategy development of Turkish Energy Exchange Company expounded on the structure and method of electricity transactions at Turkey’s Energy Exchange and introduced the upcoming programs in the development of the electricity trade and diversification of the energy portfolio in 2035 Vision Plan with a focus on the renewable power plants.

The head of Iran’s TAVANIR Company traveled to Turkey at the head of a delegation comprising the CEO of the Iran Energy Exchange, deputy head of TAVANIR for the market development affairs, and also the director general of the foreign trade office of the electricity.

## Deals worth \$2.75b signed for developing sea-based economy

TEHRAN – Iranian firms have signed 21 contracts valued at \$2.75 billion to develop sea-based technologies during the 1st edition of Iran Sea-Based Economy International Matchmaking Event (ISBE 2024) in Qeshm Island, southern Iran

The contracts included cooperation agreements for the purchase of five vessels to be used in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), construction of five other vessels, the launch of a smart dry port in Zahedan, offering smart shipping services, as well as the purchase and construction of 40,000 TEUs, IRNA reported.

Two other contracts were about the purchase and construction of 12 container ships and five other methanol carrying ships.

The ISBE 2024 opened in a ceremony participated by Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Abbas Aliabadi in Qeshm Island on Tuesday and wrapped up on Friday.

The event focused on the development of domestic and foreign cooperation among players of sea-based economy.

Within the framework of this event, which was

jointly organized by the Supreme Council of Marine Industries of the country and the Qeshm Free Zone, various specialized meetings and panels were held and Iranian companies were given the opportunity to gain more familiarity with their counterparts for cooperating in the fields of combined transportation and maritime logistics, shipping, shipbuilding, marine structures, exploration, extraction and transfer of oil and condensates, bunkering and fuel supply services for vessels, port services, customs, fisheries and fishing, tourism and maritime recreation and expand multilateral cooperation through the interaction among activists in the field of sea-based economy.

Back in September 2023, Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) Head Ali-Akbar Safaei said the government has a strategic plan for developing the maritime economy in the country and to this end, 27 strategic coastal points have been selected in which infrastructural projects are underway.

The official made the remarks in a ceremony held on the occasion of World Maritime Day.

## Iran’s trade with neighbors exceeds \$90b: FM

TEHRAN – The trade between the Islamic Republic of Iran and its neighbors has reached over \$90 billion, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says. Ebrahim Raisi’s government attaches importance to the establishment of relations with neighbors, Amirabdollahian said on Thursday on the sidelines of the 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF).

Iran enjoys strong relations with all its northern, western, eastern, and southern neighbors, he noted. Neighborhood policy has helped Iran to take important steps in the development of economy, science, and technology, as well as scientific, cultural tourism and academic cooperation, he added.

Given the high capacity in Iran in the field of

industry and mining, the country has strong cooperation with neighboring countries, the Iranian foreign minister stated.

Civilization and Persian language issues are important in interaction with Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan, he said, adding that Iran has taken very effective measures in this regard and the recent visit of Raisi to Pakistan has been made within this framework.

Tehran International Book Fair is taking place from May 8 to 18 under the motto ‘Let’s Read, Create’. In total, about 60 foreign publishers are taking part in the book fair, presenting around 50,000 books compared to 45,000 books last year.

# Iran to host trilateral customs, transportation event with Russia, Azerbaijan

TEHRAN – Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has said the country is going to host a trilateral customs and transportation meeting with Russia and Azerbaijan.

According to Jalali, the event will be held in Iran’s northwestern city of Astara in early June, IRNA reported.

Jalali made the announcement on the sidelines of the Russia-Islamic World Kazan Forum 2024 in Russia’s Tatarstan region on Thursday.

Speaking at the forum, Jalali said strengthening cooperation in logistics and accelerating the process of exchanging goods via the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) will be on the agenda of the customs and transportation authorities of the three countries.

Iran’s ambassador to Russia further referred to the INSTC as a very big project of the two countries and said: “Transporting goods using this international passage increased significantly in 2023.”

Tehran and Moscow are finalizing the draft of a contract for the implementation of the agreement to construct the Rasht-Astara Railway.

In a meeting held between Jalali and Deputy Minister of Russian Railways Sergey Pavlov in mid-April, the two sides emphasized compiling the contract for the implementation of the agreement to construct the Rasht-Astara Railway.

During the meeting, the two sides explored avenues for the



development of transportation within the framework of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

In addition, the two sides examined the trend of bilateral cooperation regarding the construction of the Rasht-Astara Railway with the framework of the INSTC, according to the website of Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

The Deputy Minister of Russian Railways acknowledged during the meeting that transporting containerized cargo from the eastern side of the INSTC registered a 400 percent growth through ‘Sarakhs’ and ‘Incheh boroun’ customs in the first quarter of the current year (January-March) compared to the same period last year.

Talks are ongoing between Tehran and Moscow to determine the tariff for transporting chemical fertilizer and coal from Russia to Iran, the United Arab Emirates and India, Pavlov added.

Iran and Russia, both under harsh Western sanctions, on May 17 inked an agreement on the long-

stalled construction of a railway connecting the northern Iranian cities of Rasht and Astara.

Spanning 162 km (100.6 miles), the railway is a crucial element of the INSTC. The corridor integrates road, rail, and sea transportation, facilitating the movement of goods between Russia and India via Iran.

Through a video conference, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin addressed the ceremony in Tehran where the two countries’ transport ministers signed the agreement.

Raisi thanked Putin and the Russian government for their involvement in the initiative and referred to it as an “important strategic step” in bilateral cooperation that will benefit all countries involved in the INSTC. Putin, for his part, called the occasion a “landmark moment for the entire global transport infrastructure.”

According to this agreement, the Russian Federation will invest 1.6 billion euros in this railway route.

Iran has been a key player in

the INSTC and stands to benefit greatly from its full realization. As reported by Amwaj media, the Raisi government has seemingly banked significantly on transit becoming a top revenue generator. But Iran stands to gain from the project in more ways.

The operationalization of the corridor could mean improved relations between Iran and India, aligning New Delhi more closely with Tehran’s regional interests.

A vital element of the INSTC, the Rasht-Astara railway project has been stalled for years due to costs, engineering, and logistical complications.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei stressed the importance of completing the stretch of the railway in his July 2022 meeting with Putin in Tehran.

VTB’s new office in Tehran is part of Iran and Russia’s ongoing efforts to connect their banking systems.

The two countries signed an agreement on January 29 to link their inter-bank messaging systems.

Due to Western sanctions, both countries have been cut off from SWIFT—a leading Belgium-based financial messaging service.

Both Iran and Russia are looking to reap the potential economic benefits of increased transit amid Western sanctions.

The Raisi government seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of sanctions through de-dollarization of trade and the establishment of direct banking and payment channels outside the international banking system.

## Tehran, Kabul to ditch US dollar in bilateral trade

TEHRAN – Negotiations are ongoing between Iran and Afghanistan for sidelining US dollar in bilateral transactions.

The deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said that talks are ongoing between the two countries for the implementation of “offshore rial” in Afghanistan.

Mohsen Karimi pointed out that ‘offshore rial’ is used with the aim of supporting the economic activists and exporters of the private sector of the country.

The project of ditching the US dollar and using rial in foreign trade exchanges has always been followed up by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to neutralize sanctions, he underlined.

Earlier, CBI Governor Mohammad Reza Farzin had announced that using the ‘offshore rial’ in

trade with Russia, Afghanistan, and Iraq is on the agenda, adding that the idea of ditching the US dollar has produced positive results.

Iran and Afghanistan plan to increase their trade to \$10 billion within 3 to 5 years, according to the Taliban’s Minister of Commerce and Industry.

Economic Adviser of the Iranian President’s Special Envoy in Afghanistan Affairs Mohammad-Mehdi Javanmard-Ghassab, has said that according to the announcement of the Taliban’s Minister of Commerce and Industry, the trade between the two countries will reach from the current \$1.6 billion to \$10 billion.

This Iranian official made the remarks in early November 2023, on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of a memorandum of economic cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan.

He said that this amount had previously reached \$3 billion, but both sides want to increase the volume of trade between the two countries to the mentioned amount in the announced period.

Of course, there are certainly many variables in this field, including the need to increase production in Afghanistan, the Economic Adviser of the Iranian President’s Special Envoy in Afghanistan Affairs emphasized.

Senior officials from Iran and Afghanistan have explored ways of expanding economic ties between the two countries to increase trade exchanges to a target of \$10 billion.

Iran’s capital Tehran hosted an Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Committee meeting on November 4, for the first time after the Taliban came to power.

## RAI earmarks \$500m for renovating railway fleet

TEHRAN – The head of the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) said a \$500 million fund has been allocated for purchasing the equipment, repairing and modernizing the railway fleet of the country using oil bartering.

Miad Salehi made the remarks in a meeting with the producers and repairmen of the railway fleet of the country, adding that another \$500 million will also be earmarked for buying locomotives.

The official further pointed out that the construction of 50 freight locomotives of the company will be awarded to the private sector in the next month, the website of Iran’s

Ministry of Transport and Urban Development (MRUD) reported.

With the coordination made in this regard, the contract for awarding the construction of 50 freight locomotives and another contract of investment for repairing 15 other locomotives (ROT) will be unveiled in a ceremony as well, the deputy transport minister added.

In late September 2023, Salehi said that with the diversification of financing and support for domestic production in the coming months, the domestic fleet of rail transport will develop by leaps and bounds.

During a press conference held in early August 2023, Salehi

mentioned the development of railways as a necessary factor for the economic surge in the country.

He reiterated that the development of the transportation sector is vital for the economic surge, and the railway is the pillar for development in this sector.

The official also stated that RAI is seriously negotiating with other countries, especially the neighbors, to promote railway transit via Iran.

The official further mentioned domestic production, and said, “We pay special attention to domestic production and facilitating it.”

The development of the railway sector has been one of the macro

policies of the Iranian government as it has been emphasized by the general policies of the country’s national development plans.

In this regard, the national railway fleet has constantly received new domestically-made locomotives and wagons in the past and current Iranian calendar years.

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

## Tehran, Doha to expand aviation cooperation

TEHRAN – Officials from Iran and Qatar emphasized the need for expanding cooperation in the field of aviation.

Head of Iranian Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) Mohammad Mohammadibakhsh and Head of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) Mohammed Falah Al Hajri held talks in the Qatari capital of Doha on bilateral ties and development of relations in the field of aviation.

The two sides exchanged views on increasing the level of bilateral cooperation, deepening mutual ties, and developing the aviation relations between the two countries, IRNA reported.

Iran’s Ambassador to Doha Ali Salehabadi also

attended the meeting.

Back in July 2022, Iran and Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to increase cooperation between the aviation industries of the two countries.

The MOU was signed by Mohammadi-Bakhsh and Faleh Al-Hajri in a meeting held in Tehran.

The agreement was made following two rounds of bilateral talks in Doha and the Iranian southern Kish Island.

In February 2022, Iran and Qatar had also signed six MOUs to cooperate in various areas of transportation including air and maritime as well as in the preparations for the World Cup 2022.

The MOUs were endorsed by Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Rostam Qasemi and Qatar’s Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti in Kish Island.

The documents included an agreement previously approved by Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi during his visit to Qatar, as well as, three cooperation MOUs on air transportation, an MOU on maritime transportation, and a document on cooperation regarding Qatar World Cup 2022.

During his meeting with Qasemi, Al Sulaiti also expressed his country’s willingness for the expansion of maritime ties with Iran’s southern coastal provinces.



# Transparent lies

## Israel denies genocide at ICJ hearing, tries to justify Gaza massacres

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Israel used its notorious propaganda machine at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by citing the most outrageous lies in an attempt to distract global attention away from the atrocious crimes that it has been committing in the Gaza Strip since October 7.

At an ICJ hearing on Friday, Israeli officials and lawyers rejected allegations of genocide in Gaza brought up by South Africa and instead tried to give cock-and-bull stories.

### Israel justifies genocide

Israeli deputy attorney general Gilad Noam told judges, "This war, like all wars, is tragic and terrible for Israelis and Palestinians and it has exacted a terrible human price. But it is not genocide."

Noam accused South Africa of making "a mockery of the heinous charge of genocide."

And this is how he sought to justify the Israeli army's massacre of civilians in Gaza. "Any state put in Israel's difficult position would do the same," Noam claimed.

### Sheer hypocrisy

Another member of Israel's legal team defended the regime's military conduct, saying it has allowed in fuel and medication to Gaza.

"Israel takes extraordinary measures in order to minimize the harm to civilians in Gaza," Tamar Kaplan-Tourgeman told the ICJ.

A protester shouting "Liars" briefly interrupted Kaplan-Tourgeman's final remarks.

Israel has largely restricted the entry of food, water, medicines and other essentials to Gaza over the past seven months, which in the eye of UN experts, amounts to intentionally starving Palestinians.



"There is no reason to intentionally block the passage of humanitarian aid or intentionally obliterate small-scale fishing vessels, greenhouses and orchards in Gaza – other than to deny people access to food," Michael Fakhri, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, told the Guardian, in February.

"Intentionally depriving people of food is clearly a war crime. Israel has announced its intention to destroy the Palestinian people, in whole or in part, simply for being Palestinian. In my view as a UN human rights expert, this is now a situation of genocide. This means the state of Israel in its entirety is culpable and should be held accountable – not just individuals or this government or that person," Fakhri added.

### Breaking Geneva Convention

The members of the Israeli team were speaking in the second day of two days of hearings at the United Nations top court. South Africa's lawyers outlined their case on Thursday.

Pretoria on Thursday called on the ICJ judges to order Israel to end its ground assault on Rafah. They said the military incursion

puts Palestinian life in the territory at imminent risk of destruction.

"It has become increasingly clear that Israel's actions in Rafah are part of the end game in which Gaza is utterly destroyed as an area capable of human habitation... This is the last step in the destruction of Gaza and its Palestinian people," Vaughan Lowe, a British lawyer, who was part of the South African legal team that presented its case on Thursday, said.

South African lawyers also accused Israel of breaking the 1948 Genocide Convention.

### Gaza carnage

Israel declared war on Gaza after Hamas carried out a surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7. Since then, Israel has slaughtered more than 35,300 Palestinians in the territory.

At the beginning of the war, Israel ordered Palestinians in the northern parts of the Gaza Strip to evacuate to the southern cities of Khan Younis and Rafah. Consequently, more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population, who had fled Israeli strikes, took shelter in Rafah amid dire conditions.

On May 6, Israel began a ground military operation in Rafah despite

warnings about the humanitarian consequences of the offensive. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been forced to flee Gaza's southernmost city in the past two weeks.

The Israeli army says the Rafah offensive is aimed at targeting fighters of the Hamas resistance movement.

However, more civilians are falling victim as Israel expands its assault on the city.

### Defying intl. law

The two-day hearings were part of South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in the Gaza Strip that were filed in December last year.

In late January this year, the ICJ ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. But Israel has turned a blind eye to the riling and continued its deadly strikes in the Gaza Strip.

The ICJ has no means of enforcing its orders.

But the South Africa case has contributed to the international pressure on Israel to put a halt to its brutal onslaught.

### Israel PR machine

The comments made by the Israeli team at the ICJ hearing demonstrate the regime's utter contempt for the UN court.

A week ago, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan pulled out a paper shredder at the podium of the General Assembly and shredded a copy of the UN Charter. He wanted to vent his anger at the assembly's resolution in support of Palestinian membership.

Such moves by Israel show that the regime has no scruples about making a mockery of international law.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Did "friendly fire" kill Israeli soldiers?

### Israeli narration of events contradicts Palestinian sources

From page 1 ► In Gaza has not been significantly dented as Benjamin Netanyahu's government has stated.

On Thursday, the occupation regime's military said five of its paratroopers had been killed by Israeli tank shells in the northern Gaza city of Jabalia.

Seven other troops were injured by tank fire, three of them remain in a serious condition, according to Israeli media.

Whether the casualties were a result of "friendly fire" or subject to attacks by the armed wings of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad – both of whom have video documented a growing number of operations against the invading forces in Jabalia on a daily basis over the past week – is up for debate.

Sources familiar with the latest operations by armed Palestinian factions inside Gaza say they have received messages suggesting many sur-

prises await the IOF in Jabalia and elsewhere.

The same sources say "the Qassam [armed wing of Hamas] and Saraya [al-Quds, armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad] deserve credit for the number of casualties they have inflicted on the occupation's army."

The pattern of Israeli media reports on IOF casualties in Gaza with such limited information highlights the level of censorship that the Israeli security apparatus has imposed on its media.

Some Israelis have said the lack of media coverage on IOF casualties is aimed at avoiding public opposition growing against what is widely believed to be a far deadlier war for the IOF than what is being published.

Experts point out that media censorship on the IOF serves security purposes for the occupation soldiers as Hamas is capable of using the reports as a source of intelligence gathering for its guerrilla-style operations in the enclave.

Apart from the five Israeli troops killed by apparent "friendly fire", the Israeli army announced that a sergeant was killed on Thursday in an operational accident when ammunition exploded.

Six troops were announced dead in one day. All by accident or friendly fire raises question marks. Is the IOF facing a level of hysteria in Gaza, or is the media coverage trying to downplay the strength of Hamas?

It's not the first time that the IOF has said its soldiers have been killed in Gaza by "friendly fire"; incidents have been cited that even include "trampling".

Having repeatedly declared victory in northern Gaza months ago while declaring the defeat of Hamas, the IOF is back in northern Gaza with large-scale operations to fight Hamas.

(See full text at [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com))

the United States in that brutality, and the urgent need for a sovereign State of Palestine alongside the state of Israel, according to the Arab Peace Initiative and the Declaration of the Arab and Islamic Leaders in Riyadh on November 11, 2023. These protests are not motivated by anti-Semitism. They are motivated by the students' desire for peace and justice.

**What is your assessment of the university administrators' response to student protests? Do you believe the use of force and violence against the students has been justified?**

The administrators in many universities, including my own, panicked in response to pressures from politicians and from university donors. They certainly should not have called the police; that was in no way necessary or appropriate. They should have engaged in dialogue with the students. They should have promoted opportunities for learning, reflection and dialogue within the

university community. They should have called on faculty and students to search for pathways to peace. They should have respected the right of students to protest and should have recognized the urgent motivation of the students in protesting a slaughter underway in Gaza and the need for peace and the two-state solution.

**Do you perceive any influence from the Israeli lobby on the curriculum regarding Israel-Palestine at American universities, particularly Columbia?**

The Israel lobby and individual donors are trying to suppress pro-Palestine protests and discourse. This is wrong. The more one knows the history of the region, the more one can see the true path to peace and co-existence of the region. Achieving justice and political self-determination of Palestine as part of the two-state solution is in the interest of the whole world.

(See full text at [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com))

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Spain to recognize Palestinian state together with other countries

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Friday he will on Wednesday announce the date on which Madrid will recognize a Palestinian state along with other nations.

"We are in the process of coordinating with other countries," he said during an interview with private Spanish television station La Sexta when asked if this step would be taken on Tuesday as announced by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, AFP reported.

Sanchez said in March that Spain and Ireland, along with Slovenia and Malta had agreed to take the first steps towards recognition of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, seeing a two-state solution as essential for lasting peace.

Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said Tuesday that Dublin was certain to recognize Palestinian statehood by the end of the month but the "specific date is still fluid".

### Pro-Israel billionaires caught plotting to crackdown student protests: Post

A group of prominent American Jewish billionaires and business leaders have been privately pressuring New York City Mayor, Eric Adams, to deploy the police against pro-Palestinian student protesters at Columbia University, and even offered to pay for private investigators to assist the New York Police Department in handling the protests, according to a report by The Washington Post.

The revelations, based on a WhatsApp chat log obtained by the newspaper, shed light on the group's efforts to shape public opinion and influence government actions in favour of Israel, while simultaneously, those involved have claimed that exposing the influence campaign of American Zionists is racist because it repeats a common anti-Semitic trope about Jewish power.

The WhatsApp group, titled "Israel Current Events", was initiated shortly after the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel and eventually grew to include around 100 members, many of whom are featured on Forbes's annual list of billionaires.

The chat's participants include Kind snack company founder Daniel Lubetzky, hedge fund manager Daniel Loeb, billionaire Len Blavatnik, real estate investor Joseph Sitt, former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, Dell founder and CEO Michael Dell, hedge fund manager Bill Ackman and Joshua Kushner, founder of Thrive Capital and brother to Jared Kushner, former President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

### Yemen downs advanced \$30 million US spy drone

Yemen's army says it has shot down an American spy drone by "a locally-made missile" in the province of Ma'rib, amid escalating tensions in the region over Israel's US-backed genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

In a statement issued on Friday and carried by Yemen news agency SABA, Yemen's armed forces announced that the country's air defenses downed the MQ-9 drone using a surface-to-air missile on

Thursday night, Press TV reported.

According to the statement, the drone "was carrying out hostile acts in the airspace of Ma'rib." The statement stressed that the country's armed forces are fully prepared to thwart all the enemies' plots.

The Yemeni military said it was the fourth aircraft, estimated to be worth \$30 million, downed as part of its operations against Israel for its genocidal war in Gaza.

### 75 rockets fired at northern Israel

Israel's military said around 75 rockets were fired at northern Israel from Lebanese territory.

The rocket barrage came after Israel earlier launched several air raids deep into Lebanese territory, with one killing three people, including a Hezbollah member, according to Lebanese media.

### Red Crescent: 15,000 children have been killed in Gaza

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said on Thursday that 15,103 children have been killed since the start of the Israeli brutal war on the Gaza Strip on October 7.

The total death toll from Israel's onslaught on the Palestinian territory has surpassed 35,300.

### Anti-Zionist academic interrogated by federal agents on Gaza views

Prominent Israeli academic Ilan Pappé said he was interrogated by the Department of Homeland Security after arriving in the US on Monday, Middle East Eye reported on Friday.

Arriving at Detroit airport, the academic – known for his stridently anti-Zionist views and research – said he was subjected to two hours of questioning.

Amongst the questions, he was asked whether he was a Hamas supporter and whether he regarded the Israeli assault on Gaza as a "genocide".

### Putin and Xi strengthen strategic ties at summit

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, have signed a joint statement on deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between their two nations at a summit that framed their relationship as a stabilizing force in a chaotic world.

Speaking at a joint press conference on Thursday, Xi said: "China is willing to ... jointly achieve the development and rejuvenation of our respective countries, and work together to uphold fairness and justice in the world."

Reporting from Beijing, Al Jazeera's Katrina Yu said Xi "made the point that Russia-China cooperation did not target any third party, that it was a mutually respectful, beneficial partnership and that he hoped that the war in Ukraine ... would be solved peacefully".

Putin expressed gratitude to Xi for efforts to resolve the war in Ukraine.

### Israel MK: None of Hamas' 24 brigades have been destroyed

For its part, the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth quoted Minister of Economy and Industry, Nir Barkat, as saying that Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant have brought Israel to an unprecedented and dire security level, adding, "We have given Netanyahu and Gallant seven months,

but they did not achieve any results."

Israeli media on Thursday said Gallant's statements regarding the Gaza Strip "reveal a fault line that has gradually worsened in the political and security leadership in recent months."

(See full text at [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com))

**Recent global headlines have all focused on the situation at American universities. Do you believe the students advocating for divestment from Israeli institutions are motivated by antisemitism or have ties to Hamas, as depicted in the American mainstream media?**

Students are protesting the murderous brutality of Israel in Gaza, the complicity of



## Tabriz to host conference on historical property conservation

TEHRAN – The 13th edition of a biennial conference on the conservation and restoration of historical-cultural relics and architectural elements will be held at Tabriz Islamic Art University on May 19 and 20.

Organized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the conference will sharpen the focus on climate change and its impact on cultural heritage.

According to organizers, the conference aims to address persistent droughts, seasonal floods, and microclimatic changes affecting both indoor and outdoor environments of cultural heritage sites in recent years.

It will cover six scientific sessions on climate change and cultural heritage; critique and theoretical foundations; practical conservation and restoration efforts; preventive conservation; ancient and modern materials and technologies; and practical conservation and restoration efforts for architectural decorations and outdoor works.

Subtopics include the gradual drying of Lake Urmia and its consequences for regional cultural heritage, the relationship between climate and culture, the detrimental effects of climate change on cultural heritage, crisis management in the face of climatic hazards, educating and involving local communities in protecting cultural heritage from climate risks, community-based approaches to mitigating climate risks, traditional knowledge and practices of local communities in coping with climate hazards, and sustainable development strategies based on climate resilience.

Organizers said that the biennial event promises to bring together experts, scholars, and practitioners to discuss and develop



strategies for the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage in the face of modern challenges.

Last year, Iran's deputy tourism minister said that the country ranked 5th in the world for the amount of intangible cultural heritage registered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

As mentioned by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the Islamic Republic firmly adheres to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

A new study reported by Live Science in April suggested the early humans lived on the Iranian Plateau for 20,000 years after leaving Africa.

"As Homo sapiens migrated out of Africa, they left minimal evidence of their movements until resurfacing in Eurasia 20,000 years later. This leaves a puzzling question: where did they reside during this interval?"

According to this well-established hypothesis, the human species, having evolved to its modern form in East Africa some 150,000 years ago, thereafter embarked on populating the entire globe in a stepwise migration process beginning about 70,000–90,000 BP.

## Restoration of 17th-century Aveh caravanserai enters 3rd phase

TEHRAN – The third phase of the comprehensive restoration of the historical Aveh Caravanserai has commenced, according to the deputy tourism chief of Markazi province.

This 17th-century huge inn, located in Saveh County, has been undergoing restoration to preserve its historical and architectural significance, Hossein Mahmoudi said on Thursday.

"Considering the annual allocation of funds for the restoration of this historical caravanserai, 13 billion rials (some \$22,000) will be spent on this restoration project this year," the official stated.

The previous year saw the completion of the first and second phases, which included reinforcing the foundations and brick columns, as well as repairing damaged arches and vaults, the official explained.

Moreover, Mahmoudi provided details on the current phase, stating, "This stage focuses on restoring the remaining parts of the arches and walls that still require attention. Following this, we will repoint the masonry joints and replace the deteriorated bricks in various sections."

Mahmoudi emphasized that the final phase, contingent upon securing the necessary funding, will involve landscaping and paving the caravanserai's grounds, ultimately leading to its full operational restoration.

The Safavid monument enjoys a symmetrical plan of four iwans, representing the classic form of a caravanserai. It consists of various sections, including the central courtyard, entrance, iwans, chambers, and stables.

For long, Iranian caravanserais have been a testimony to the rich circuits of traveling and trade in ancient Iran, providing shelter, food, and water for caravans, pilgrims, and other trekkers.

Caravanserai, derived from the compound of "caravan" and "Sara," symbolized a haven for groups of travelers. These structures typically boasted massive portals supported by sturdy walls, with guest rooms encircling a central courtyard and stables tucked behind them, often accessible through yard corners. The earliest caravanserais in Iran trace back to the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC).

# Gold Bowl of Hasanlu to go on view at Urmia Museum

TEHRAN – The millennia-old Gold Bowl of Hasanlu, a significant archaeological find named after the location where it was excavated some 66 years ago, will be showcased at the Urmia Museum in celebration of Cultural Heritage Week.

The loan exhibition, organized by the National Museum of Iran, will run from May 18 to 24, the provincial tourism chief said on Thursday.

In a recent press conference, Morteza Safari expressed excitement over the return of the Gold Bowl to West Azarbaijan after several years, inviting history enthusiasts to visit the Urmia Museum to view this exquisite piece.

The Urmia Museum, one of Iran's richest and largest museums, houses 25,000 historical objects. However, due to space limitations, the official said that only 10 to 15 percent of these artifacts are on display at any given time. Moreover, he highlighted the need for expanding the museum's exhibition space, with plans to triple its current capacity in the near future.

He also emphasized the ongoing efforts to preserve the province's cultural heritage, noting that 50 historical sites are currently under restoration. These efforts include organizing journalist tours to notable locations such as the Grand Mosque and



several historical mansions.

The treasured artifact was unearthed by Emamqoli Mohammad Hasanluei from the ruins of a burned ancient building at Tepe Hasanlu, near Naghadeh and Lake Urmia in West Azarbaijan province.

Engraved with images of gods and rituals, a stone cylinder with gold caps, a figurine of laminated ivory, and a sword hilt with a bronze guard, the Gold Bowl of Hasanlu was discovered almost 3,000 years later near the skeletal hand of an individual who had been fleeing with it at the end of the 9th century BC. The excavation was led by the celebrated anthropologist and archaeologist Robert H. Dyson, Jr., a prominent figure in Iran's archaeological scene in the mid-20th century.

violent siege, some soldiers managed to penetrate it, grabbing valuable treasures, including the prized gold bowl. The hypothesis suggests that the building collapsed due to fire, crushing the warriors and their possessions under layers of debris. They remained there for around 3,000 years until the groundbreaking discovery in 1958.

Due to the lack of written records, very little is known about the inhabitants of Hasanlu and their invaders. "There is no written evidence from Hasanlu that would attest to the identity of the inhabitants. We know neither the ancient name of the site nor the state to which it may have belonged, much less the linguistic and/or ethnic affiliations of its population – neither preceding nor during the period with which we are concerned," writes Irene J. Winter in an article titled "The Hasanlu Gold Bowl: Thirty Years Later."

Among the most important objects uncovered at Hasanlu were an unusually decorated silver bowl, several iron garment pins headed by bronze lions, a solid gold bowl, a knife handle with gold cloisonné, and two hollow bronze horse heads that served to hold liquids.

The Gold Bowl of Hasanlu is currently kept at the National Museum of Iran in downtown Tehran.

## Whispers of antiquity: Sistan-Baluchestan to unveil ancient tabletop games

TEHRAN – Some of the world's oldest tabletop games are arranged to be showcased in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province in part of programs to celebrate National Cultural Heritage Week and International Museum Day.

Speaking on Wednesday, the provincial tourism chief announced that during the Cultural Heritage Week [May 17 to 23], and in close collaboration with the National Museum of Iran, the province will unveil ancient pastimes like the renowned "Ancient Burnt City Game," offering a captivating glimpse into millennia-old civilizations.

"During this week, more than 125 programs will be implemented in the province," Tehrani-Moqaddam further elaborated. "One of the important points of this week is the unveiling of the oldest tabletop games of the ancient world."

The board games, he continued, which have been transferred from the National Museum of Iran, will be available for public viewing until late June at the Great Museum of Zahedan.

The director-general further explained that these objects represent three tabletop games related to southeastern Iran, known as some of the oldest tabletop games in the world, including the "Ancient Burnt City Game" which is famous for its similarity to

the game of snakes and ladders and is made of ebony wood with its unique pieces.

"The second game, called the 'Jiroft Board Game,' is made of stone and dates back to the Bronze Age," he brought to light. "With about 5,000 years of history,"

Tehrani-Moqaddam also outlined that the third case is a part of the 'Sistan Pirzal Hill Tabletop Game,' belonging to the Bronze Age and made of terracotta. Some of its pieces were discovered in archaeological excavations in 2021 and will be on public display during this week.

According to the event organizers, arranging a three-day coaching course for the Ancient Burnt City Game is also among the programs planned for the future league of this game.

This year, 'Cultural Heritage, Public Participation and Social Responsibility' is considered the main slogan and approach of the week, and various special programs have been planned throughout the week, Mohammad-Hadi Tehrani-Moqaddam added.

The director-general highlighted that the slogan "Museums for Education and Research" has been set by the International Council of Museums (ICOM)

"An exhibition of recent findings of the Burnt City will also be held at the Burnt

City Museum in the course of Cultural Heritage Week," Tehrani-Moqaddam wined up. "Where, for the first time, the Burnt City Marble Cup will be showcased."

Also known as Shahr-e Sukhteh, or Shahr-i Sokhta, Burnt City is associated with four rounds of civilization, all burnt down by catastrophic sets of fire. The site is situated in the Sistan-Baluchestan province, which was once a junction of Bronze-Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau.

According to the UN cultural body, changes in water courses and climate change led to the eventual abandonment of the city in the early second millennium. The structures, burial grounds, and many significant artifacts unearthed there and their well-preserved state due to the dry desert climate make this site a rich source of information regarding the emergence of complex societies and contacts between them in the third millennium BC.

Burnt City, which was once situated at the junction of Bronze Age trade routes crossing the Iranian plateau, was populated during four main periods up to 1800 BC. Previous rounds of excavations showed that its residents had great skills in weaving, and creating fine arts such as decorative objects, stone carving, and pottery painting.

## Iran in frames



People walk along Imam Khomeini Square in Hamadan. The square's design was conceived and executed by Karl Frisch, a German architect. Despite being over a century old, this square continues to play a crucial role in the layout of adjacent streets and bazaar.

## Special guests of North Khorasan delight birders

TEHRAN – On Wednesday, North Khorasan played host to a lively event, dedicated to bird-watching in the days in which the provincial wetlands welcomed special winged visitors.

A Garmeh county's official in charge of tourism, speaking on Thursday, pinpointed that the one-day event, organized in celebration of National Cultural Heritage Week witnessed warm participation from birders.

Vahid Mahmoudifar noted that the vibrant tour took place in collaboration with North Khorasan's Tour Leaders Association.

Regarding the location of the birdwatching event, the official stated that Kaftarak Dam, a haven for migratory birds, making it an ideal spot for those seeking a touch of adventure, was a selected area to conduct the tour.

"Since late March, more than 3000 migratory birds have made appearances to the region's wetlands," Mahmoudifar noted.

The winged visitors, he continued, comprising a diverse array of species including cranes, pelicans, ducks, geese, and flamingos have descended upon the province's wildlife refuges.

This influx of migratory birds has been facilitated by the favorable spring rains, which have created optimal conditions, Mahmoudifar further elaborated. Moreover, the official added that in the wake of recognizing the importance of preserving these habitats, necessary coordination has been established to ensure the continuous monitoring and protection of the wetland ecosystems by environmentalists and wild-

life authorities.

Birdwatching, also known as birding, is a popular recreational activity and scientific pursuit centered around observing and identifying birds in their natural habitats. Dating back to the late 19th century, birdwatching has evolved from a casual pastime to a globally recognized hobby with dedicated enthusiasts spanning all ages and backgrounds. Birdwatching gained widespread popularity in the mid-20th century, fueled by advances in optics and the publication of field guides that facilitated bird identification. Today, birdwatchers armed with binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides venture into diverse habitats ranging from forests and wetlands to urban parks in search of avian species. Birdwatching offers a multitude of benefits beyond



mere enjoyment. It promotes outdoor recreation, fosters a deeper connection with nature, and provides valuable data for scientific research and conservation efforts.

Bird counts and migration monitoring rely on the contributions of birdwatchers to track population trends and assess the health of bird populations worldwide. Whether it's for leisure, education, or conservation, birdwatching continues to captivate and inspire people around the world, making it a timeless and rewarding pursuit.



# IRCS, ICRC join hands to support Afghan refugees

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) in Iran are conducting joint programs to address the challenges facing Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranians residing in Golshahr district in Mashhad, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

“The initiative to provide primary health and rehabilitation services to Afghan immigrants and residents of Golshahr district is part of the joint program,” IRNA quoted Razieh Alishvandi, the IRCS director for international affairs, as saying.

Based on the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was signed in the Iranian calendar year 1392 (2013–2014), IRCS and ICRC agreed to support the rehabilitated refugees.

The program aims to provide basic health, mental health, educational, and social services. It also focuses on providing preventive and social assistance and reducing social harm to the target population, she added.

Physically disabled people will benefit from rehabilitation services and mobility aids including orthotics and prostheses, wheelchairs, walkers, and sticks, Alishvandi noted.

They will also enjoy relevant physical therapy services such as physiotherapy or occupational therapy based on the committee's definitions.

The service recipients will



be identified by the Society for Recovery and Support to be approved by the representative of the ICRC and then referred to the IRCS to receive these services.

The project is being implemented in four provinces on the eastern border of the country after the arrival of Afghan immigrants who left their countries because of the new governance in Afghanistan.

Funded by ICRC, the necessary preparations have been made to equip the IRCS rehabilitation centers in Mashhad which offer services to a large number of residents and Afghan nationals.

## Mine awareness project

The project aims to raise public awareness of the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance left over from the war, especially in six provinces namely Kord-

estan, Kermanshah, Ilam, West Azarbijan, Khuzestan, and Khorasan-Razavi, Alishvandi said.

The project also includes increasing foreign nationals' awareness of landmine dangers while returning to their home country through shared borders.

## International humanitarian law project

Considering the mission of the ICRC in educating and promoting international humanitarian law during peacetime, the committee has had extensive collaborations with the IRCS and the secretariat of the National Humanitarian Rights Committee which are ongoing, the official mentioned.

A total of 30 provincial educational workshops have been held to familiarize the IRCS staff with the structure of the inter-

national movement and humanitarian rights. The workshops are scheduled to continue in the future.

IRCS and ICRC have also cooperated in holding numerous conferences on international humanitarian law, like an international congress on the occupation of Palestine.

Moreover, the ICRC and the IRCS hold coordination meetings to boost their contribution to the regional and international conferences and promote international humanitarian law, the same as cooperating for the 34th international conference of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC), which will be held in Geneva in October this year.

## Health services to vulnerable immigrants

In December 2023, Alishvandi, and Vincent Cassard, the head of the ICRC delegation in Iran, paid a visit to the Golshahr project site, the IRCS website reported.

The project focused on the provision of health services to pregnant women, and people who are suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, mental health disorders, and physical disorders, Alishvandi said.

“The Society for Recovery and Support provides an opportunity for Afghan women who need psychological support to share and solve their problems.”

## Iran second among Islamic countries in Young University Rankings 2024

From page 1 ▶ Iran University of Medical Sciences (119), Isfahan University of Technology (136), Imam Khomeini International University (177), Kashan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services (186), and Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences (197) were ranked second to sixth, respectively.

A total of 13 universities are ranked 200–250; five are ranked 251–300; seven are ranked 301–350; four are ranked 351–400; 14 are ranked 401–450; two are ranked 501–600; and two others are ranked +600.

According to the latest Times Higher Education Young University Rankings, Asia is now home to almost half of the world's young research universities.

The number of Asian universities on the list has nearly doubled in five years, climbing from 165 in 2020 (representing 40 percent of the table) to 327 this year (49 percent).

There has been a rise in the ranking position of many institutions in Turkey, India, as well as Iran.

Turkey now has 58 universities in the ranking, up from 47 last year and just 23 in 2020.

India is represented by 55 ranked institutions, up from 45 last year and 26 in 2020.

The Young University Rankings applies the same methodology as the Times Higher Education (THE), but the weightings have been adjusted to give less weight to reputation.

The universities are judged across all their core missions – teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook – to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons available.

## Other rankings

SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2024 placed 197 Iranian universities among the top institutions in the world compared to 194 universities in 2023.

The SIR is a classification of academic and research-related institutions ranked by a composite indicator that combines three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact measured by their web visibility.

In the latest ranking, the Tehran University of Medical Sciences (5) and the University of Tehran (10) are among the top ten institutions in West Asia. They were ranked 6th and 11th, respectively, in the 2023 ranking.

The Research rankings of the Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the University of Tehran are 175 and 290, respectively, in the world.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranking has improved from 486, in 2023, to 452 in 2024 marking it the top university in Iran.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences holds first position in Medicine, 2nd in Dentistry, 5th in pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceuticals in West Asia.

It is also ranked 34th in Dentistry globally.

The University of Tehran is ranked 2nd in the country and 827th worldwide.

The University of Tehran is placed 1st in Business, Management, and Accounting (38th in the world), 3rd in Economics, Econometrics, and Finance, and 4th in Engineering in West Asia.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences; Mashhad University of Medical Sciences; and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences; are placed third to fifth in the country respectively.

These institutions' rankings in West Asia are as follows.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences ranks 3rd in Medicine, and 6th in Dentistry.

Mashhad University of Medical Sciences ranks 4th in pharmacology, Toxicology, and



Pharmaceutics.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranks 2nd in pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics (47th worldwide), and 5th in Energy.

The 14th edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2024 included 17 Iranian universities in 17 subject entries, compared with 16 universities in 2023.

University of Tehran (346), Sharif University of Technology (401–450) in Engineering and Technology; Tehran University of Medical Sciences (358), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (451–500), University of Tehran (451–500), and Shiraz University of medical sciences (501–550) in Life sciences and Medicine; and University of Tehran (401–450), and Sharif University of Technology (501–550) in Natural Science are the top universities.

A total of 435 Iranian institutions were among 11,989 institutions ranked in Webometrics world ranking 2024.

Tehran University was the top among Iranian institutions.

Its ranking had improved from 305 in 2023 to 285 in 2024, Mehr news agency reported.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (445), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (606), Sharif University of Technology (639), Amirkabir University of Technology (792), Iran Science and Technology (890), Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (920), Iran Medical Sciences University (940), Ferdowsi University of

Mashhad (940), and Shahid Beheshti University (967) were ranked second to tenth, respectively, in the country.

According to this year's ranking, 338 other institutions have been ranked between 4,000 to 31,000.

According to the results of the 2023–2024 edition of the University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), 71 Iranian institutions were included in the ranking compared to 64 institutions in the 2022–2023 edition.

URAP World Ranking is based on six academic performance indicators including number of articles, citations, total document, scientific productivity, research impact, and international collaboration.

In the academic performance ranking of 71 universities in Iran, Tehran University was ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231, IRNA reported.

Tehran University of Medical Science (277), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (436) were ranked second and third, respectively.

The Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) has released a report, ranking 115 governmental and 17 non-governmental universities according to six indices.

Education counts for 30 percent, Research counts for 25 percent, Technology and Innovation counts for 20 percent, International Outlook counts for 10 percent, and Social Services, Infrastructure, and Facilities counts for 5 percent. ISNA quoted the ISC head Ahmad Fazl-zadeh as saying.

The universities of Tehran, Ferdowsi of Mashhad, Tarbiat Modarres, Shahid Beheshti, and Shiraz were placed first to fifth in the ranking.

A total of 36 Iranian universities are featured on the GreenMetric World University Ranking 2023 results released in Dubai on December 5.

## Some 75 animal species in Iran on IUCN Red List

TEHRAN –Out of the 1036 vertebrate animal species of the country, around 75 are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, according to an official with the Department of Environment (DOE).

Iran is one of the most important countries in terms of biodiversity in the world thanks to its climatic and geographic diversity.

Out of 209 mammals, 560 birds, 242 reptiles, and 25 amphibians, some 75 species were included on the IUCN Red List in 2022, ISNA quoted Marzieh Mousavi as saying.

She made the remarks on the occasion of World Endangered Species Day which is observed each year on the third Friday of May.

The endangered species are mostly found in developing countries which suffer from severe financial problems, poverty, and unstable development. Having diverse ecosystems, the species' diversity is high in these countries which are mostly in America and even Asia. In contrast, Europe has less diversity, but they are well-preserved, Mousavi mentioned.

The species are globally categorized as endangered, critically endangered, and vul-

nerable. However, in Iran endangered and critically endangered species are classified together, and protected species are in a separate category, the official stressed.

The official went on to say that among endangered animal species, bustards and Asiatic cheetahs are in a more critical situation, there are roughly 19 species of bustards and 25 species of cheetahs identified in the country.

Of course, the DOE has taken measures to increase the population of these species.

Efforts are being made to increase their population through habitat protection and prey management in Turan, Miandasht, and its neighboring areas, she noted.

The DOE is trying to improve the role of the private sector and local communities in creating a more sustainable livelihood and increasing their protection so that if a cheetah steps out of the protected areas, it survives.

The official went on to elaborate on the main threats to the survival of species including habitat destruction and road accidents, drought, herd dogs, and invasive species.

“50 percent of carnivore deaths are related

to road accidents on the edge of protected areas.

Improving the security of the roads, like Abbas Abad road, enhancing road lighting, and fencing are part of the measures taken, but more funds need to be allocated for this purpose,” she noted.

Habitat destruction is another factor that affects the extinction of a species. Road construction, mining, overgrazing, and land use change greatly damage wildlife habitats and reduce population size and genetic diversity within a species.

Drought has resulted in decrease vegetation diversity and lack of food for herbivorous species. As the population of herbivores declines, the carnivores are forced to move out of their domain and venture into residential areas in search of prey. Sometimes, it leads to a conflict between humans and predators prompting humans to use poisons and traps to reduce the conflict by killing them.

Stray herd dogs have also emerged as serious menace to animal species, especially the Pallas cat that resides in the highlands. In this regard, people should be informed of the threats posed by dogs to refrain from feeding them.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20–May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaiean as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

## بارش‌های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود.

ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.





MAY 18, 2024

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*If you cannot get things as much as you desire than be contented with what you have.*

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:25 Dawn: 3:16 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:56 (tomorrow)

## What's in Tehran art galleries



ELHAM HEIDARI

SOLO EXHIBITION

FLOWING NATURE

MAY 17 - JUN 2 TEHRAN

### Painting

\* Paintings by Elham Heidari are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled "Flowing Nature", the exhibit will be running until June 2 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.

\* Bita Goudarzi, Ghazaleh Nasoudi and Sahel Yahyai are displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until May 22 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley, near Daneshju Park.



\* An exhibition of paintings by a group of artists including Ahura Khalaj, Samaneh Abai, Atefeh Amirmia, Shahrzad Bayati, Mehraz Mehrabian and several others is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

Entitled "What's Going on In This City?", the exhibition will run until May 28 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

\* Paintings by Faran Fereydouni are on display in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Blu Sky, Shining Sun, Black Bird" will continue until May 31 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Hafte Tir Square.

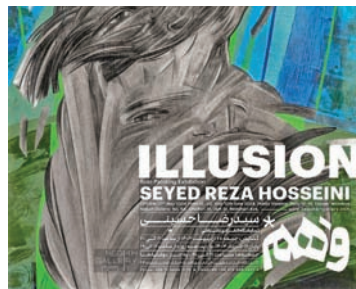


\* A collection of paintings by Parisa Amanollahi are currently on display in an exhibit at Jaleh Gallery.

Entitled "Rabbit Hole", the exhibition runs until May 31 at the gallery located at No. 3, Noshahr Alley, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

\* Paintings by Yurik Karim Masihi are currently on view in an exhibition at Dena Gallery.

The exhibit will run until May 31 at the gallery that can be found at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



\* Seyyed Reza Hosseini is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Negah Gallery.

The exhibit named "Illusion" will run until June 5 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.

\* An exhibition of paintings by Ghazaleh Erfani is currently underway at Sharif Gallery.

Titled "Playground", the exhibit will be running until May 31 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



\* A collection of paintings by Ali Ganjavi is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit named "Dark Day" will be running until May 31 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

### Sculpture

\* Sculptures by Farzaneh Bahram Nuri are currently on display in an exhibit at Yafteh Gallery.

The exhibition named "Human and Endless Conversations" will run until May 31 at the gallery located at 8 Taleqani Dead End, Yarmohammadi St. in the Darus Neighborhood.



# Iranian calligraphers unite to protest Israeli atrocities

TEHRAN- A group of Iranian calligraphers has come together to protest Israeli atrocities against Palestinians through a unique form of artistic expression, writing the Al-Fil Surah in solidarity with the Palestinian cause on the sidelines of "Narration of Rain" Quranic art exhibition.

The event, which took place on Thursday, aimed to raise awareness about the genocide in Palestine, ILNA reported.

The exhibition, hosted by the Niavaran Cultural Center in collaboration with the Quranic Research Center, featured the third specialized session on calligraphy.

The event was attended by renowned calligraphy experts, including Alireza Bakhshi, Iraj Naimai, and Mohammad Ali Qorbani.

During the Quranic script workshop, experienced calligraphy masters led the session, including Ahmad Abdolrezaei, Majid Saeid Kafi, Zahra Meibodi, Ehsan Kazemi, Nasser Tavusi and others. The workshop focused on the art of calligraphy and its significance in Islamic culture.

In the evening, a specialized session was held on "Opportunities and Capacities of Naskh Script in Contemporary



Era", featuring speeches by experts including Iraj Naimai, Alireza Bakhshi, Mohammad Ali Qorbani, and Ahmad Abdolrezaei.

The "Narration of Rain" exhibition will run until May 20 and features over 200 works by Iranian artists. The exhibition aims to showcase the beauty of Islamic calligraphy and promote cultural exchange between Iran and other countries.

The Quranic art exhibition "Narration of Rain" is a unique cultural event that highlights the importance of Islamic calligraphy and promotes cultural exchange between Iran and other countries.

Quranic calligraphy holds profound spiritual significance

as it involves the intricate and skilled rendition of verses from the Quran, the holy book of Islam. This unique form of calligraphy requires not only technical precision but also a deep understanding of the sacred text, with each stroke and curve carefully crafted to convey the beauty and essence of the divine words.

Quranic calligraphy is not merely a visual art but a form of devotion and reverence, with calligraphers often spending years honing their skills to master the intricate script and create works that inspire awe and contemplation.

The art of Quranic calligraphy

has been passed down through generations, with each calligrapher infusing their own style and interpretation into their work.

From elaborate compositions adorning mosque walls to delicate manuscripts housed in museums and collections, Quranic calligraphy showcases the harmonious blend of artistry and spirituality.

The intricate patterns and fluid movements of the Arabic script serve to enhance the meaning and significance of the verses, inviting viewers to reflect on the profound teachings of the Quran and appreciate the beauty of the written word.

## Zahra Khoshkam passes away at 77

TEHRAN-Iranian actress Zahra Khoshkam passed away on Thursday night in Tehran at the age of 77.

The funeral procession for the late actress will be held on Saturday in Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery in southern Tehran and she will be buried in the artists' block of the ceremony, Mehr reported.

Khoshkam, whose acting career spanned over five decades, was the wife of the late filmmaker Ali Hatami and the mother of the actress Leila Hatami, who is globally renowned



for her performance in the Oscar-winning film by Asghar Farhadi "A Separation".

Also known as Zari Khoshkam, she was born in the historical city of Isfahan and studied in Tehran and London before taking up cinema as her career when she was 24.

She acted in the series "Nightingales" (1988) by Ali Hatami, as well as the feature films "Golden Blood" (2022) by Ebrahim Sheibani, "Flaming" (2018) by Hamid Nematollah, and "What's the Time in Your World" (2014) and "The Portrait of a Lady Far Away" (2005) both by her former son-in-law Ali Mosaafa.

## Iranian actor Milad Shajareh wins at American festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film "Cocoon" written and directed by Saied Bojnourdi has won an award at the 15th Annual World Music and Independent Film Festival in Virginia, the U.S.

The festival, which was held in early May, presented the award for Best Actor in SouthWestern Film category to Milad Shajareh for his performance in "Cocoon," Mehr reported on Friday.

"Cocoon" is the story of a child called Mousa who suffered a nervous shock during the aerial bombardments of the war. He gradually weaves a mental cocoon for himself and avoids others. This loneliness has turned

him into a painter, but the void of love in his life is evident. However, the entrance of love changes his life path.

Mahmoud Koneshlou, Sadaf Baradaran, Sara Haqqou, Sadaf Haqqou, Morteza Mousavi and Zahra Khozouee comprise the rest of the cast.

Shajareh is known for the feature film "48FM" (2020), the series "Queen of Beggars" (2021), and the short film "The Story of a Passenger Who Was Lost in His Last Journey" (2022).

Established in 2010, the unique and prestigious World Music & Independent Film Festival

(WMIFF) is an IMDB-qualifying event held annually.

The festival attracts celebrities, media journalists, civic and community leaders, film crews and film enthusiasts from around the globe, as well as the DC metropolitan area (which includes Virginia and Maryland).

MIFF was established to celebrate and provide a platform of achievements for international cinema artists.

Dedicated to building a global film community and supporting emerging filmmakers, WMIFF offers all selected artists exceptional exposure with an

inclusive vibe that has won over alumni, attendees, and industry members alike. WMIFF festivities are open to all, featuring some of the most talented artists in both film and music. It showcases and recognizes all independent artists worldwide.

WMIFF has continued to strive and improve on its mission to promote and provide opportunities for artists of all genres to hone their skills and gain access to opportunities via our events, promotions, and networking opportunities. Its awardees and nominees have won or been nominated for Oscars, Emmy's, Golden Globes.

## Persian translation of "The Book of Gaza" released at 35th TIBF

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of "The Book of Gaza: A City in Short Fiction" edited by the Palestinian writer Atef Abu Saif has been released during the 35th Tehran International Book Fair, which is underway in Tehran, from May 8 to 18.

A ndisheh Molana Publishing House has published the book with a translation by S amaneh Kadkhodaei Marghzar, Mehr reported.

The book brings together a dozen of Palestine's greatest modern prose writers. The unique anthology sets contemporary stories against the backdrop of one of the world's most talked-about cities, Gaza.

Together, these stories will enable readers to go beyond the global media coverage and enter into the daily life of ordinary characters struggling to live with dignity in what is effectively the world's largest prison. The authors range from highly acclaimed writers to exciting new voices in Arabic literature, including the "Father of the Palestinian" short story, Zaki Al Ela, and a new generation of young women bloggers and activists, such

as Mona Abu Sharikhm, Dawlat Al Masri, and Najla Attalah.

The other featured authors include Atef Abu Saif, Talal Abu Shawish, Yusra al Khatib, Asmaa al-Ghoul, Ghareeb Asqalani, Nayrouz Qarmout, and Abdallah Tayeh.

Under the Israeli occupation of the '70s and '80s, writers in Gaza had to go to considerable lengths to ever have a chance of seeing their work in print. Manuscripts were written out longhand, invariably under pseudonyms, and smuggled out of the Strip to Jerusalem, Cairo or Beirut, where they then had to be typed up. Consequently, fiction grew shorter, novels became novellas, and short stories flourished as the city's form of choice. Indeed, to Palestinians elsewhere, Gaza became known as "the exporter of oranges and short stories".

This anthology brings together some of the pioneers of the Gazan short story from that era, as well as younger exponents of the form, with ten stories that offer glimpses of life in the Strip that go beyond the global media headlines; stories of anxiety, oppression, and violence, but also of resilience and hope, of

what it means to be a Palestinian, and how that identity is continually being reformed; stories of ordinary characters struggling to live with dignity in what many have called "the largest prison in the world".

The books by Atef Abu Saif, 50, have been translated into various languages, and his writings have also been featured in The New York Times, The Guardian, Guernica, and Slate. He has served as a spokesman for Fatah and served as Minister for Culture in the Palestine Authority since 2019.

Abu Saif was born in Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. He studied at the University of Birzeit and the University of Bradford before going on to obtain a PhD from the European University Institute in Florence.

Since his literary debut in the late 1990s, Abu Saif has written a number of novels and short story collections. His novel "A Suspended Life" (2014) was shortlisted for the 2015 Arabic Booker Prize. He has published five other novels and two collections of short stories as well.