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What message did millions of Iranians participating in the Raisi funeral send?

United for Iran



Iran's President, FM were laid to rest on Thursday amidst nationwide mourning

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World Bank evaluation of Raisi administration proves its economic success

TEHRAN - The World Bank, in its latest report on the economic situation in Iran, has examined the performance of the administration of late President Ebrahim Raisi, indicating its successful track record in the economic sphere.

The WB report shows that the Islamic country's economy experienced sustained growth over the past three years, despite the continuation of economic sanctions and the intensification of geopolitical uncertainties. Although the boom in the oil sector contributed to this growth, the non-oil sector, especially services and industry, was also the main engine of economic growth.

The production sector shifted towards meeting domestic requirements, and this endeavor helped the country neutralize the effects of financial and trade sanctions and the limited access to foreign exchange resources, the report emphasized.

According to the report, the employment sector has also recently reached pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, and the new fiscal policies eased the impact of external shocks on the living standards of vulnerable groups and contributed to the sustainable growth of the Iranian economy. ▶ Page 4

Resistance groups meet with top IRGC commanders

TEHRAN - On the sidelines of the funeral ceremony for the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, leaders of several resistance groups convened with high-ranking commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Tehran.

Among the attendees were Major General Hossein Salami, Chief of the IRGC, and Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, Commander of the IRGC Quds Force. During the meeting, discussions centered on the current political, social, and military conditions in Gaza, particularly focusing on Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the role of the resistance front.

The participants emphasized the necessity of continuing the resistance efforts until the ultimate victory of the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, advocating for the unified participation of all resistance fronts.

On Wednesday morning, millions of Iranians gathered to bid a heartfelt farewell to President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, reflecting the nation's deep mourning and solidarity.

In a poignant and sorrowful display, the people of Tehran gathered in overwhelming numbers to participate in the funeral ceremony for the late President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian. ▶ Page 2



Massive funeral ceremonies for President a message to the world in favor of Islamic Republic: Leader

Leader visits the family of martyr President Raisi

TEHRAN - The late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian were laid to rest in Mashhad and Tehran, respectively, concluding days of funeral attended by several millions of mourners.

The funeral ceremonies, marked by large crowds and heartfelt tributes, showcased the nation's unity and determination in the face of adversity.

President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian were involved in a fatal accident on Sunday they were returning from a dam inauguration ceremony at the common border with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Raisi and his entourage were en route to East Azarbaijan province when the helicopter carrying them crashed in a mountainous area on Sunday.

The incident engulfed Iran in shock and grief, and generated a groundswell of

support and solidarity from Muslims and non-Muslims across the world.

President Raisi was laid to rest at the holy Imam Reza (AS) Shrine in Mashhad on Thursday afternoon. This revered site, which attracts millions of Shia pilgrims

annually, became a focal point for national mourning as citizens from across the country gathered to pay their final respects.

Streets of Mashhad were adorned with posters of President Raisi, black flags, and

religious symbols, particularly around his final resting place, underscoring the profound grief felt by the nation.

Earlier that day, tens of thousands of people lined the streets of Birjand, the capital of South Khorasan province, to bid farewell to the late president as his coffin moved through the main street. President Raisi had served as South Khorasan's representative in the Assembly of Experts, the body responsible for selecting or dismissing Iran's leader.

The massive turnout highlighted the deep admiration for Raisi, remembered as a "devoted, sincere, and tireless president" in the Leader of Islamic revolution's words.

Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, who announced five days of mourning for those who died in the crash, led prayers in Tehran on Wednesday for Raisi's funeral.

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UK-US stance against ICC is scandalous

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN - Like Israel, Britain and the United States feel irritated as International Criminal Court Prosecutor General Ahmad Khan is seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his war minister Yoav Gallant for "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" against the Palestinian people in the blockaded Gaza Strip.

"To draw moral equivalence between the Hamas leadership and the democratically elected leader of Israel, I think, is just plain wrong," British Foreign Secretary Foreign Minister David Cameron said as the chief prosecutor has also requested arrest warrants for three Hamas officials, Ismail Haniyeh, Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif.

There is a big question for Cameron as to why a "democratically elected leader" commits war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Iraqis expand anti-Israeli operations

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has expanded its operations against the Israeli occupation regime, staging five attacks in less than 24 hours against Israeli sites in solidarity with Gaza.

In a statement, accompanied by video footage of the operation, published on Thursday, the Iraqi resistance movement said it had targeted the Israeli city of Eilat, also known as Umm al-Rashrash.

The statement read, "Continuing our approach in resisting occupation, and in support of our people in Gaza, and in response to the massacres committed by the usurping entity against Palestinian civilians including children, women, and elders, the fighters of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq targeted a vital objective in Eilat 'Umm al-Rashrash' this morning, Thursday, May 23, 2024."

The statement also noted that "unmanned aerial vehicles" were used in the operation while adding that the Iraqi resistance "reaffirms its commitment to targeting the enemy's strongholds."

ICJ orders Israel to halt Rafah offensive

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Israel has slipped further into international isolation after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered the regime to stop its offensive in Rafah.

"Israel must immediately halt its military offensive and any other action in Rafah which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part," Nawaf Salam, the ICJ president, said on Friday as he read out a ruling.

Salam described the humanitarian situation in Rafah "disastrous". He noted that United Nations officials have indicated that the situation is set to "intensify even further" if Israel's assault on Rafah continues.

Earlier this month, South Africa filed an urgent request for additional measures against Israel. The African country accused the regime of using forced evacuation orders in Rafah to "endanger rather than protect civilian life."

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Iran, Indonesia PTA to go operational soon

TEHRAN - The director general of the East Asia-Pacific Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) announced that the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Iran and Indonesia is going to go operational soon to enhance trade-economic ties.

Kaveh Daliri said Indonesia is a lucrative market for Iranian products, Mehr News Agency reported.

Increasing the trade exchanges and cooperation between the two countries is the main objective behind signing the agreement, he said, adding that countries facilitate the process of entering each other's markets by considering tariff discounts.

The two countries intend to set up a joint committee for the operationalization of the preferential trade agreement which is tasked with monitoring and updating the lists and discounts that Iran and Indonesia consider for each other. ▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

Iranians disappointed
foreign media

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

Kayhan discussed the disappointment of the Persian-language media due to the unity of the people after the martyrdom of Raisi and his entourage. It wrote: The power of the Iranian nation, in the shadow of obedience to the wise Leader of the Revolution, made foreign media circles disappointed and passive because they wished for instability or changing the course of the Revolution because of the martyrdom of the president. They believed that Iran would suffer from unrest and instability.

However, the stunning presence of the people of Tabriz, Qom, and Tehran in the funeral procession disappointed them to the extent that they decided to accept this disgrace in order to censor the historical presence of the Iranian nation.

Some Zionist circles had been fantasizing for several days and wished that the Islamic Republic of Iran would postpone the important developments in the region with the martyrdom of Ebrahim Raisi, or would retreat from its positions, but this wish was also lost due to the stances of the Leader of the Revolution. But what made the enemies of the Islamic Republic more frustrated was the departure of the leaders and senior officials of 69 countries to Tehran and their offering of condolences and respect to the president and foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: The proud record of diplomacy of the 13th government

The Iran newspaper pointed out the presence of many high-ranking foreign guests in Tehran to participate in the ceremony of martyrs Ebrahim Raisi and Hossein Amir Abdollahian and said: This presence showed the influence of Raisi's presidency on foreign policy.

His tenure showed that Raisi not only did not retreat from the strategy of strengthening regional power and influence and supporting the resistance front, but in the short period of his presidency, he was able to turn Iran into one of the main and serious players in the Middle East. Promoting effective diplomatic relations was actually the golden point of

the diplomacy of the 13th government, which provided the opportunity for Iran and its friends to take greater steps by improving Iranian-Arab relations, including with Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

This wide presence and condolence messages from the world showed that during this period, Raisi significantly influenced the restoration of Iran's relationship and its promotion with the regional and international countries.

Ham Mihan: Interruption in the secret negotiations between Iran and the United States

In a commentary, Ham Mihan dealt with the interruption in the process of negotiations between Iran and the United States. The paper said: Sources close to the negotiations in Oman told the Middle East Eye that Iranian and American delegations have negotiated an end to the Israeli war and a shared desire for change in the Israeli government.

Of course, there may have been discussions about Iran's nuclear program and the reduction of oil sanctions in these negotiations. According to three Iranian sources close to the negotiations, Brett McGurk, senior adviser to Joe Biden, negotiated with Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's representative for negotiations with the West, early this month.

These negotiations were going well and were close to the point of reaching some kind of agreement but now, with the martyrdom of Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister, the negotiations have been interrupted. On the other hand, according to Biden, the JCPOA is dead and we will negotiate after the election provided that it will be a comprehensive negotiation as well as beyond the JCPOA and covers regional issues as well.

It does not seem that another round of negotiations between Iran and America will be held soon because the U.S. presidential election is near and after Raisi's martyrdom, Iran must hold presidential elections within 50 days, and it is unlikely that important foreign policy decisions will be made during this period.

Resistance groups meet with
top IRGC commanders

From page 1 ▶ In a stirring display of collective grief and solidarity, the streets of Tehran overflowed with mourners on Wednesday morning, an hour before the official commencement of the funeral ceremony.

The unprecedented turnout was a testament to the profound impact of the late president on the Iranian people.

Long before the ceremony's start, a sea of sorrowful citizens moved toward Tehran University, their voices echoing with chants that conveyed their deep mourning for President Raisi.

From all walks of life, they gathered to offer

prayers over his body, united in their grief.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, led the funeral prayers for the late president and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, with prominent Iranian officials and military commanders in attendance. The solemnity of the moment was palpable as the nation bade farewell to its esteemed figures.

Following the prayers, the funeral procession commenced from Tehran University to Azadi Square.

Thousands of Tehranians, enduring hours under the scorching sun, lined the streets to pay their last respects. Heartfelt messages adorned their hands, bearing inscriptions like "I am proud that I voted for a martyr," "We will not forget the servant of the nation," and "Our chosen one was chosen by God."

This historic gathering not only honored the legacy of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian but also underscored the enduring bond between the figures and the people they served with unwavering dedication.

U.S. senator questions sanctions' effectiveness on Iran, Russia, and China

TEHRAN - Senator Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, has openly questioned the impact of imposing sanctions on the advancement of Iran, China, and Russia, suggesting they have been largely ineffective.

"Sanctions really are not having value unless you want to negotiate removing sanctions to get better behavior," Paul remarked during an address to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Paul advocated for a shift from sanctions to diplomacy, emphasizing that Washington

should prioritize diplomatic interactions over the imposition of further sanctions.

Contrasting Paul's stance, Blinken acknowledged during a Senate hearing on Tuesday evening that since President Joe Biden took office, Washington has imposed more than 600 sanctions against Iranian individuals and institutions.

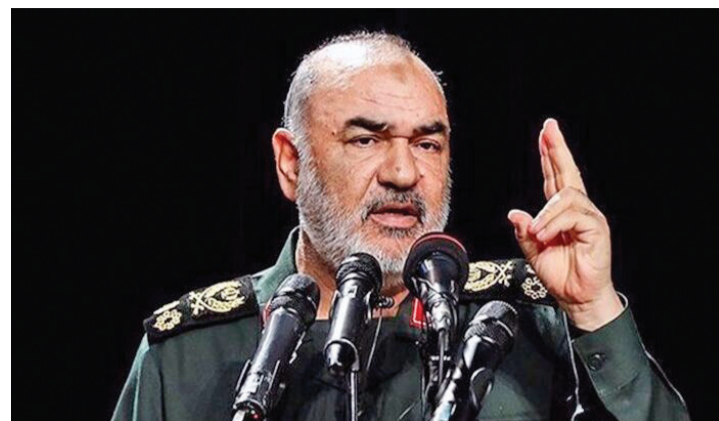
Despite these measures, Blinken conceded that the U.S. has struggled to curb Iran's financial activities, particularly its oil sales.

IRGC chief commends late President's
bravery in retaliatory strike against Israel

TEHRAN - The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has praised the late President Ebrahim Raisi for his "indescribable bravery" during Iran's retaliatory operation against Israel.

Major General Hossein Salami made these comments on Friday at the burial of IRGC Brigadier General Mehdi Mousavi at the Shah Abdolazim shrine in Shahr-e Rey, south of Tehran.

Mousavi, who headed Raisi's security detail, perished alongside the president and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a helicopter crash near Iran's northwestern border with



Azerbaijan on Sunday.

"Martyr Raisi showed indescribable bravery in Operation True Promise," Salami said, referring to the April 14 operation

where Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at military bases in the occupied territories.

"With the government's powerful diplomacy, we were able

to strike at the heart of the global arrogance, and Amir Abdollahian performed his duties excellently," Salami added.

Operation True Promise occurred shortly after Israeli airstrikes hit the consular annex of Iran's embassy in Damascus, Syria, killing 13 people, including seven IRGC military advisors.

Salami emphasized that despite the loss of President Raisi and other officials, Iran's authority remains steadfast under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. "We are not afraid of any power... The enemy has used all its resources to harm Iran, but it has failed in all fields," he stated.

Martyr Amir Abdollahian strengthened Iran's position in
the world: Bolivia's ambassador

By Mona Hojat Ansari

Tehran - Hossein Amir Abdollahian was widely regarded as a dedicated and diligent diplomat throughout his relatively long career.

Before tragically losing his life in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran's East Azerbaijan province on Sunday, he had been serving as the country's foreign minister for the past three years.

To gain deeper insights into the character, efforts, and nature of Minister Amir Abdollahian, the Tehran Times conducted an exclusive interview with Romina Guadalupe Pérez Ramos, the Ambassador of Bolivia to Iran.

The interview transcript can be read below:

Q: As the Ambassador of Bolivia, how do you assess the role and impacts of the actions of martyr Amir Abdollahian in regional and global diplomacy?

A: Martyr Hossein Amir Abdollahian, as Iran's Foreign Minister, not only excelled in his role but also elevated the nation's foreign policy on regional and global fronts.

Iran has a transparent foreign policy in the region and the world. Under President Raisi's leadership, Minister Amir Abdollahian implemented Iran's clear foreign policy strategies through diplomacy. Their combined efforts significantly enhanced Iran's international standing. Their contributions have been widely recognized by global leaders who have expressed condolences and solidarity with Iran in the past few days.

The martyrs forged strong diplomatic ties with world leaders, particularly in Western and Central Asia, as well as Russia. This led to new levels of political and military cooperation. Iran's

relations with China also flourished, culminating in its full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Iran's transformation into a major player in the Eurasian Economic Union is another testament to the two officials' achievements.

Moreover, they strengthened relations with developing economies through BRICS membership, demonstrating the success of their multilateral diplomacy. Their speeches at the United Nations and other organizations consistently upheld principles of justice and international law. They promoted multilateralism and regional security based on government sovereignty.

Throughout their lives, martyr Ebrahim Raisi and martyr Hossein Amir Abdollahian held high positions and important responsibilities that required a patriotic and revolutionary spirit based on national and regional interests, which also reached the international level. Amir Abdollahian's role in multilateral and bilateral diplomacy was particularly noteworthy. He emphasized Iran's impactful role as part of the "Axis of Resistance" and promoted the teachings of General Qassem Soleimani. As I understood, martyr Amir Abdollahian was close to the Quds Force, which is why he mentioned that "strengthening the resistance front is on the agenda of the new government."

We must also acknowledge the significant contributions of Martyr Hossein Amir Abdollahian in recent regional events, particularly during the Zionist regime's war against Gaza.

Despite the relentless aggression and attacks by Israel and the United States against Iran, including economic siege, assassinations, attacks on allies, and the deadly assault on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Martyr Amir Abdollahian demonstrated his diplomatic skills and unwavering commitment to preventing further escalation and conflict.

Iran's response to these provocations was guided by international law. Through extensive diplomatic efforts, including trips abroad and meetings with foreign officials in Tehran, Martyr

Amir Abdollahian worked tirelessly to contain and prevent the spread of war. His commendable diplomacy yielded positive results, both regionally and internationally.

Another notable aspect of his legacy is his initiative to re-establish relations with Saudi Arabia. This diplomatic move had the potential to improve regional stability and security by reducing external interference and fostering cooperation between the two countries.

Q: What was the nature of relations between Iran and Bolivia during the time of Martyr Amir Abdollahian?

A: Relations, especially after the tragic coup that took place in Bolivia, have been strengthened. The coup led to the takeover of the de facto government against the country's constitution and the closure of the Bolivian embassy in Iran in 2019 and 2020.

During the tenure of martyrs Ebrahim Raisi and Amir Abdollahian, the people of Bolivia overthrew the dictatorship on the streets and at the ballot boxes, and Luis Arce Catacora was appointed as the legitimate president of Bolivia. Gradually, relations were strengthened, and the unfinished cooperation that remained from the government of Evo Morales since 2019 was resumed.

During this period, Iran and Bolivia resumed the cooperation agreements that had been initiated under the government of Evo Morales but remained unfinished due to the coup. To further strengthen bilateral ties, a comprehensive two-way agenda was adopted in 2021.

The first joint commission meeting was held to establish a cooperation framework in various fields, including politics, economics, social affairs, culture, science, technology, and security. A working program was developed and is currently being implemented by both countries. Since the establishment of the joint commission, cooperation between Iran and Bolivia has continued to grow and expand, contributing to the strengthening of relations between the two nations.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Islamabad expresses confidence in Tehran's investigation
of Raisi's helicopter crash

TEHRAN - Pakistan has formally expressed its confidence in Iran's comprehensive investigation capabilities following the tragic helicopter crash that claimed the lives of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and their accompanying delegation.

During a weekly press briefing at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra underscored Islamabad's belief in Tehran's proficiency in conducting a thorough probe into the incident.

Zahra highlighted the recent visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to Tehran, where he extended his condolences over the loss of Iran's president and his associates.

In a meeting with Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammad Shahbaz Sharif, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, lauded Islamabad for its heartfelt condolences over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted

the potential for a new peak in relations under Pakistan's new government and referenced President Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan as a significant step towards enhancing cooperation.

"Relations with Pakistan are very important for the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we view this country in a completely brotherly manner. However, the relations between the two countries have had ups and downs in recent years, and we believe that under the new government of Pakistan, there is the possibility of a renewed peak in these relations," the Leader stated.

Following the tragic death of the Iranian president and Foreign Minister, Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran, in an interview with the Tehran Times, stated that as a gesture of solidarity with the Iranian nation, the "Pakistani flag will be flown at half-mast."

"I am deeply saddened by the martyrdom of Honourable President Raisi, the Foreign Minister, and their entourage. Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian was an exemplary human being. I was profoundly impressed by his

grace, humility, thoughtfulness, and foresightedness," Muhammad Mudassar Tipu said following the tragic loss of Iranian president and Foreign Minister.

When asked about his experience working with the Iranian Foreign Minister, the Pakistani ambassador remarked, "Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian was extremely kind to me. I believe he was one of the most significant statesmen in the world. He had deep insight into geopolitical issues, strategic clarity, and pursued Iran's interests with remarkable dedication."

In conclusion, Zahra expressed Islamabad's readiness to collaborate with Tehran in the investigation of the helicopter crash, should Iran request assistance. She emphasized that Pakistan stands prepared to support Iran in any capacity required to ensure a thorough and transparent investigation into the tragic incident.

According to the initial report from the Armed Forces regarding the tragic incident, certain aspects require additional time for a conclusive determination, while

other findings can be stated with certainty:

The helicopter maintained its planned route and did not deviate from the designated flight path.

Approximately one and a half minutes before the crash, the pilot of the helicopter carrying the president and foreign minister communicated with the other two helicopters in the flight group.

No bullet marks or similar damage were observed on the remaining components of the crashed helicopter.

The helicopter caught fire upon impact with the ground.

Due to the area's complexity, fog, and low temperatures, the reconnaissance operation extended into the night and continued until Monday morning. At 5 a.m., with the assistance of Iranian drones, the precise location of the crash was identified, and ground reconnaissance forces were deployed to the site.

No suspicious communications were noted between the watchtower and the flight crew.

Iran-Indonesia PTA to go operational soon



TEHRAN - The director general of the East Asia-Pacific Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) announced that the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Iran and Indonesia is going to go operational soon to enhance trade-economic ties.

Kaveh Daliri said Indonesia is a lucrative market for Iranian products, Mehr News Agency reported.

Increasing the trade exchanges and cooperation between the two countries is the main objective behind signing the agreement, he said, adding that countries facilitate the process of entering each other's markets by considering tariff discounts.

The two countries intend to set up a joint committee for the operationalization of the preferential trade agreement which is tasked with monitoring and updating the lists and discounts that Iran and Indonesia consider for each other.

Indonesia has the highest Muslim population in the world, so this Southeast Asian country is a good and profitable market for Iranian products, Daliri underlined.

Once the preferential trade agreement is signed, the volume of the trade exchanges between the two countries will considerably increase, the director general emphasized.

Raw materials for edibles, oil-based materials, medical equipment with high added value, and electronic parts are among the export products that the two sides have considered discounts, the TPOI official added.

Earlier on May 17, the Iranian Parliament gave the go-ahead to PTA with Indonesia. The

lawmakers passed a bill on the preferential trade agreement between Iran and Indonesia after discussing a report from the Parliament's Economic Commission in that regard.

The PTA was signed between Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo in Jakarta on May 23, 2023.

Writing on his official X account, Iran's Deputy Minister of Agriculture Alireza Peimanpak hailed the agreement as the first PTA with an Asia-Pacific country.

Indonesia is one of the world's consumption markets, and this country's market is the main destination for many countries' export goods. Considering Indonesia's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and low tariffs for imports to this country, Iran can also take advantage of the economic status of Indonesia and expand its trade with this country.

In recent years, Iran has started to sign preferential trade agreements with other countries to expand its economic relations through the reduction of tariff rates. A clear example of this policy is the trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Pakistan, based on them zero tariffs are to be applied on at least 100 items.

The data of the last decade of Iran's trade with Indonesia show that the peak of Iran's trade relations with this country was in the Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20, 2022), which can be a turning point in the history of trade between the two countries.

Iran's 10-year exports to Indonesia show that in 1400, the highest value of exports to Indonesia occurred in the last ten years, which was \$1.081 billion.

Iran's export to Indonesia in the last ten years shows an upward trend, as the exports to this country have increased from 60 million dollars in 1392 to more than one billion dollars in 1400. This is a sign of the potential of relations between the two countries in the economic area.

Novak expresses condolences over tragic loss of Pres. Raisi

TEHRAN - The Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Russian Federation has expressed his condolences on the tragic loss of the Iranian president Ibrahim Raisi during a phone call with the Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji.

Alexandre Novak also expressed sympathy with the Iranian people and bereaved families of the chopper crash incident calling the late President Raisi a patriotic, national, and influential person who played a great role in promoting the place of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the world scene.

"The incident of tragic loss of Ibrahim Raisi was very saddening for me because of close collaboration; so his memory will remain alive in Russia forever." The Russian official said.

Iran and Russia relations will be expanded further against the will of those who are against expanding the two countries' bilateral relations, Novak added.

He called on the Iranian minister to convey his sympathy to the president and other deceased relatives as well.

The incident of the tragic loss of Ibrahim Raisi is catastrophic for the Iranian people as well as friendly and neighboring countries like Russia, Novak said.

In response, Oji thanked Russian people and officials for expressing their sympathy with the Iranian people saying he would convey the message of condolence to the bereaved families on behalf of Novak and other Russian



officials.

"Ibrahim Raisi was a very outstanding personality in view of promoting relations with other countries including Russia and could play a unique role in expanding Iran's economic ties with other countries, the Iranian minister said.

"The roadmap drawn by the late president will be followed without any disruption to boost Iran's strategic cooperation with other countries even though his absence is very hard and unbelievable for us as the persons who worked closely with him, so we are praying God to give us the patience to tolerate the grief," he added.

Iranian president, Ibrahim Raisi, and seven others on board lost their lives during a chopper crash incident in northwest Iran. He was returning from an inauguration ceremony in which he and his counterpart from the Azerbaijan Republic, Ilham Alyev, opened a dam on the Aras River steaming along the common border on 19 May.

World Bank evaluation of Raisi administration proves its economic success

From page 1 ▶ The report also explained that Iran's economic growth in the first half of 2023-2024 reached 5.1 percent, adding that the value added of the oil sector reached 17.1 percent due to the success of the Raisi administration in marketing for exports and that the non-oil sector also experienced strong growth of 3.8 percent, and job creation grew by 2.9 percent.

It is expected that economic growth of the Islamic Republic will reach 2.8 percent in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026, according to the report.

The World Bank, in its latest Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report released on January 9, said the Iranian economy grew by 4.2 percent in 2023, despite a sharp, long-lasting slowdown in the global economy.

Based on the WB data, the economic growth of West Asian and North African countries has decreased from 5.8 percent in 2022 to 1.9 percent in 2023, indicating that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2023 has been more than twice



the economic growth of this region.

"Growth picked up in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as increases in oil production and exports more than offset weak external non-oil demand," the report said.

According to the estimates of this international organization, following the global economy, Iran's economic growth is also expected to recede slightly to 3.7 percent in 2024. The Islamic Republic's GDP growth in 2022 was 3.8 percent.

The economic growth of Europe

and Central Asia, which decreased from 7.1 percent in 2021 to 1.2 percent in 2022, has also grown slightly to 2.7 this year however the figure is seen to fall to 2.4 percent in 2024.

According to the report, global growth is projected to slow for the third year in a row—from 2.6 percent last year to 2.4 percent in 2024, almost three-quarters of a percentage point below the average of the 2010s. Developing economies are projected to grow just 3.9 percent, more than one percentage point below the average of the previous decade.

"After a disappointing performance last year, low-income countries should grow 5.5 percent, weaker than previously expected. By the end of 2024, people in about one out of every four developing countries and about 40 percent of low-income countries will still be poorer than they were on the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. In advanced economies, meanwhile, growth is set to slow to 1.2 percent this year from 1.5 percent in 2023," the WB stated.

"As the world nears the midpoint of what was intended to be a transformative decade for development, the global economy is set to rack up a sorry record by the end of 2024—the slowest half-decade of GDP growth in 30 years," the entity said.

By one measure, the global economy is in a better place than it was a year ago: the risk of a global recession has receded, largely because of the strength of the U.S. economy. But mounting geopolitical tensions could create fresh near-term hazards for the world economy, according to the report.

Oji outlines Raisi administration's oil industry achievements



TEHRAN - In a talk show on national TV, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji, explained how the late president, Ibrahim Raisi, was serious about developing oil industry projects.

During the program, Oji said that since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the country had witnessed desirable achievements in the oil sector but none of them were comparable with the great steps taken during the ruling of the 13th administration; which took office in August 2021 under the leadership of President Raisi.

"Before we come together in 13th administration, my knowledge of the late president Ayatollah Raisi was limited to his activities at holy shrine of Imam Reza but it culminated when he was elected as Iranian president and formed the cabinet in which I was appointed as the minister of petroleum," Oji said.

The minister said in his televised interview that during the tenure of the 13th administration led by Ibrahim Raisi as the president "we witnessed great leaps forward in view of implementation of oil industry projects, developing upstream and downstream projects including developing oil and gas fields, relying on domestic capabilities, rising oil exports and specifically paying attention to social responsibility."

Raisi insisted on people's participation in the implementation of oil industry projects, he said adding "in the first months of the 13th administration taking office, we travelled to oil-rich regions, where by looking at flares the president got worried and ordered removing gas flares by collecting the associated gases."

He continued: we followed the president demand seriously so that at the end of last Iranian calendar year, 1402, 20 March 2024, we succeeded in collecting 11.5 million cubic meters of associated gases per day which is going to rise to 30 million cubic meters a day at the end of current Iranian calendar year on 19 March 2025.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said: energy imbalances, optimizing energy use and joint oil and gas fields development were among the main concerns of the president so that in

every meeting we had he was seeking briefing about the progress of the oil industry projects, insisting on rising production and exports, creating jobs as well as oil revenues situation.

According to Oji, the president, in all his working tours, which went beyond 10 visits to oil industry installations, was very willing to talk with experts insisting that the petroleum ministry should do its best to persuade Iranian elites and experts not to leave the country and it was after his emphasize on the issue that we could absorb more than 900 graduates of Petroleum University of Technology.

He further noted that a great part of Iran's success to raise oil exports was due to his trips to foreign countries, in which he was presenting Iranian capabilities, trying to build confidence in relations with other countries.

The Oil Ministry was the most successful department of the administration in view of attracting foreign investment in Raisi's administration, he said, adding the president was very insistent that selling materials as a row should be stopped.

"The 13th administration could raise oil exports by 2.5 times despite harsh sanctions," Oji concluded.

Iran's foreign trade on upward trajectory during President Raisi's term: IRICA

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign trade registered a considerable jump during the late President Ebrahim Raisi's administration (32 months in service) and reached more than \$301 billion, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said.

About 347 million tons of goods, valued at over \$137.8 billion, were exported from the country between August 2021 and April 22, 2024, showing a 17.19 and 1.5 percent hike in terms of value and weight respectively compared to the same period in the previous administration, it said.

The report added that \$48 billion of products were exported from the country in 2021, showing a 40 percent hike compared to a year earlier.

More than \$53 billion of

products were imported into the country in 2021, showing a 36 percent hike compared to a year before, it noted.

IRICA put the export of non-oil goods in 2022 at \$53 billion, showing about 10 percent increase compared to a year earlier.

The country imported \$59 billion of products in 2022, registering a 13 percent hike compared to a year before.

Iran exported about \$87 billion worth of products including oil, electricity, technical and engineering services last year (ended March 19, 2024), showing a 58 percent hike compared to a year earlier, the report said.

The value of Iran's foreign trade (total imports and exports) registered a 47.63 percent hike

in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19 to April 22, 2024), based on the IRICA data.

The country's foreign trade, including crude oil, gas condensates, technical engineering services, and electricity, reached \$10.420 billion between March 19 and April 22, 2024, showing a 47.63 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

In this period, Iran exported \$7.680 billion worth of products, while importing \$2.740 billion of goods into the country, the IRICA data indicated.

Iran's trade balance, with crude oil, gas condensates, technical engineering services, and electricity included, turned positive as much as \$4.940 billion

in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year.

As reported, Iran exported \$4.180 billion worth of crude oil, gas condensates, and fuel oil from March 19 to April 22, 2024.

Some 9.7 million tons of goods were exported from the country in the mentioned month.

A helicopter carrying President Raisi and his entourage crashed in northwestern mountainous forests on May 19.

The crash killed President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, Friday prayers leader of Tabriz Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem, Governor of East Azarbaijan Malek Rahmati, the commander of the president's security team, two pilots and a flight crew.

Visa waiver between Iran, Thailand to be pursued: Envoy

TEHRAN - The commercial envoy and second deputy of Thailand's Embassy in Iran, Trirong Wan-Ar-ree, said his country is pursuing a visa waiver agreement between Tehran and Bangkok.

Speaking in a meeting with economic activists in Shiraz, Iran's southern province of Fars, he noted that the Thai

Embassy in Iran is after developing and expanding trade and economic relations with the Islamic Republic and with its different provinces.

He emphasized that tourism is one of the sectors in which the Thai government has established good relations with Iranian provinces.

The commercial attaché of the Thai

Embassy pointed to his country's need for Iranian high-quality products including steel, technical and engineering services, dairy industries and aquaculture products and said Iran has other economic advantages as well and so the embassy is after establishing economic ties with the different Iranian provinces, IRNA reported.

Back in January, the Ambassador of Thailand in Tehran Pichit Boonsud has said his country is eager to increase the level of trade relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Speaking in a meeting with the Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Hossein Selahvarzi on Monday,

the Thai envoy said: "My mission's priority is to find ways to increase the level of economic cooperation, especially between the private sectors of the two countries."

Selahvarzi for his part said one of the main plans of the ICCIMA is to strengthen cooperation with the countries of East Asia and in this regard,

the chamber has determined short-term and long-term objectives for the development of trade exchanges with the mentioned countries.

"We believe that if the private sectors of Iran and Thailand have more interaction, the volume of trade between the two countries will increase," he added.

ICJ orders Israel to halt Rafah offensive

Israel has butchered 35,800 Palestinians and wounded over 80,000 others in the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7

From page 1 ▶ Pretoria's move was part of a larger case it brought against Israel which accuses the Tel Aviv regime of committing genocide against Palestinians during the Gaza war.

Israel has remained defiant in the face of growing international calls to end its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip as the death toll from the military campaign in the besieged Palestinian territory keeps rising.

Israeli carnage

According to the Health Ministry in Gaza,

at least 35,800 Palestinians have been killed and more than 80,000 others wounded since Israel launched war on the territory on October 7.

More than 900,000 Palestinians have also been displaced since Israel launched a ground offensive in Rafah on May 6.

The United Nations says the displaced Palestinians lack shelter, food, water and other essentials.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population had been crammed into Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city, before Israel carried out the offensive. They had fled Israeli strikes from other parts of the territory.

US agencies and aid organizations have warned of a humanitarian catastrophe if Israel expands its assault on Rafah.

Israel remains accused of starving Palestinians and perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip.

In February, Michael Fakhri, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, told the Guardian that Israel is deliberately starving Palestinians.

On Monday, Karim Khan, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), said he had requested arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and war minister Yoav Gallant on allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity over the Gaza war.

The ICC prosecutor said the accusations against the Israeli premier and war minister include "causing



extermination, causing starvation as a method of war, including the denial of humanitarian relief supplies, deliberately targeting civilians in conflict."

Netanyahu, however, has spurned the arrest warrants and vowed to continue the Gaza war despite growing anti-war protests and rising civilian death toll.

US Senator Bernie Sanders: World cannot allow Israel's barbarism to continue in the Gaza Strip.

Protests against the Gaza war have been a regular occurrence in Israel over the past months. The protesters want a ceasefire, the return of captives, early elections and Netanyahu's resignation.

No to genocide

On Friday, protesters gathered outside the US consulate general in West Jerusalem (al-Quds) calling for an end to Israel's war on Gaza.

The demonstrators demanded that Washington stop arming the Israeli "genocide" in the besieged Palestinian territory.

They also accused the Netanyahu regime of starving Palestinians in Gaza, saying the starvation of Gazans amounts to a war crime.

Israeli forces detained several

people as they tried to disperse the demonstration.

Similar protests have been held across the globe including in the United States.

In recent weeks, US universities and colleges have seen huge protests against Israel's war on Gaza. Students have set up encampments at college campuses calling on their institutions to cut financial ties with companies that benefit from Israel's war on Gaza.

Some American politicians have also urged Washington to exert pressure on Israel to stop its brutal onslaught on Gaza.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Senator Bernie Sanders denounced Israel's actions in Gaza as "barbarism".

"The world community has got to have certain standards, or else we move into barbarism," Sanders said.

The 82-year-old leftist and two-time presidential candidate from Vermont made the comments as he cited earlier orders given by Gallant for his troops.

"I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed," Gallant said on October 9.

Sanders also defended the ICC's request to issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant.

He said the ICC is "trying to hold at least some minimum standards of what governments have got to do".

The Israeli prime minister is pro-

longing the Gaza war to achieve "total victory" over Hamas, "destroy" the resistance movement and release the remaining captives.

Nonetheless, after more than seven months, he has not only failed to defeat Hamas but also, according to the Israeli military's intelligence, support for the resistance movement has grown.

Netanyahu's goal of securing the release of captives is also a failed strategy as more of them are losing their lives during Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip.

More than 100 captives are still believed to be held in Gaza.

Over 1,100 people were killed and about 250 others were taken captive when Hamas carried out a surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7. Over 100 captives were freed in a swap deal with Hamas in November last year. Other captives have died during Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip.

Israel was only able to secure the release of captives through talks with Hamas.

Israel has been unable to bring Hamas to its knees because the resistance fighters have maintained their military capabilities and launched attacks against the regime's troops.

Protesters outside US consulate general in al-Quds call on Washington to stop arming Israel.

Hamas has turned Israel's dream of crushing the Palestinian resistance into a nightmare.

More Israeli soldiers and captives will fall victim to Netanyahu's war-mongering policy as long as he tries to prolong the war. The continuation of the onslaught will also further expose the regime's global isolation as more countries are recognizing Palestine as a state.

WORLD HEADLINES

Borrell warns Israel not to threaten ICC judges

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Friday some European countries were trying to intimidate International Criminal Court judges over a case against Israeli leaders, and must stop "meddling" and respect the court.

"The prosecutor (Karim Khan) has done nothing more than make an accusation and the court will decide," Borrell told Spanish broadcaster TVE. "In the meantime, I ask everyone, starting with the Israeli government and some European governments, not to intimidate the judges."

"Don't threaten them, don't try to influence their decision, sometimes with threats and very harsh disqualifications," he added.

China stages mock missile strikes on Taiwan

China staged mock missile strikes and dispatched fighter jets carrying live missiles along with bombers on Friday, state broadcaster CCTV said, as part of exercises Beijing has said were launched to punish Taiwan's new president, Lai Ching-te.

The bombers set up several attack formations in waters east of Taiwan, carrying out mock attacks in coordination with naval vessels, it added, as China tested its ability to "seize power" and control key areas of Taiwan, according to Reuters.

The two days of drills in the Taiwan Strait and around groups of Taiwan-controlled islands near the Chinese coast, which a Taiwanese official said also included the mock bombing of foreign vessels, started just three days after Lai took office on Monday. Taiwan has condemned China's actions.

Germany says it would detain Netanyahu if ICC arrest warrant issued

The spokesperson for the German government on Wednesday said they would "of course" abide by an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest order for Israeli officials if approved.

Steffen Hebestreit, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesperson, was responding to a question on whether the Germany would execute an ICC arrest order against Benjamin Netanyahu for alleged war crimes.

"Of course. Yes, we abide by the law," Hebestreit reportedly said.

Israel forbids Spanish consulate in al-Quds from serving Palestinians

Foreign Minister Israel Katz announced Friday that the Spanish consulate in al-Quds will no longer provide services to Palestinians from the West Bank following Spain's announcement that it will recognize an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"I have decided to sever the connection between the Spanish mission to Israel and the Palestinians, and to prohibit the Spanish consulate in Jerusalem (al-Quds) from providing services to Palestinians from the West Bank," Katz said in a statement.

Iraqis expand anti-Israeli operations

Five attacks in less than 24 hours in solidarity with Gaza

From page 1 ▶ Later on Thursday, another statement was published that declared "the Islamic Resistance in Iraq targeted vital objectives in our occupied lands at the port of Haifa."

This time, the Iraqi resistance said "developed cruise missiles of the 'Alarqab' type" were used in the operation.

Also, on Thursday, unmanned aerial vehicles "targeted a military site in the occupied Golan Heights".

Another operation was also staged late Thursday evening. The Iraqi resistance said the site of the target was again in Eilat (Umm al-Rashrash), with the use of two unmanned aerial vehicles.

By early Friday, another statement was put out that declared the port of Haifa had been targeted again with drones "as part of the second phase".

In another development, the Secretary-General of Iraq's Hezbollah brigades discussed developments on the situation in Gaza with the leader of Yemen's Ansarullah and coordination among armed forces that have displayed solidarity with Gaza.

Abu Hussein Al-Hamedawi highlighted in a phone call on Friday with the leader of the Yemeni revolution in Sana'a, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the necessity of maintaining readiness and high coordination among the Axis of Resistance forces, especially between Iraq and Yemen, to support the oppressed Palestinian people.

The anti-American Iraqi resistance commander pointed out, "The military operations of the Yemeni forces have greatly contributed to imposing a blockade on maritime navigation for the Zionist entity and ships heading to the ports of occupied Palestine, prompting American and British ships and those dealing with the entity to raise flags of other countries to hide and escape from the strikes of the honorable Yemeni men."

For his part, al-Houthi praised "the operations



of the Iraqi resistance that targeted vital targets deep within the usurping entity."

Al-Houthi also underlined, "Coordination among the axis forces in the region will increase the impact of their operations against the Zionist enemy, and strengthen the resilience of the resistance fighters until the cessation of war and the lifting of the siege on the Gaza Strip."

Both Ansarullah in Yemen and the Iraqi resistance have declared that the next phase of their operations will include a blockade of Israeli ships and Israeli-linked ships in the Mediterranean Sea.

Yemeni forces have said their operations will also expand to the Indian Ocean as well as targeting vessels belonging to any country that has links with the occupation regime.

The two forces - Iraqis and Yemenis - have repeatedly stated that their armed operations will come to a halt once the genocidal war on Gaza ends and the siege on the enclave is lifted.

Analysts say the Islamic Resistance in Iraq and Ansarullah, which controls most of Yemen, began preparing and targeting Israeli interests many months ago when it became clear that the regime's bombing campaign on Gaza was mostly killing women and children and the destruction in the enclave had reached a level that spelled potential genocide.

UK-US stance against ICC is scandalous

From page 1 ▶ Cameron has closed its eyes to the fact that so far Israel has killed about 32 Palestinians in Gaza for every person killed in the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. However, findings show that most of those 1,140 who were killed in southern Israel were targeted by Israeli troops and air force fighters.

It may be argued that Hamas initiated the war. However, the question is which side has created such a situation. Backed unjustifiably by certain Western countries, including the U.S. and Britain, Israel has refused to implement UN Security Council resolutions 224 and 338 that oblige Israel to return to the 1967 borders and refused all initiatives including the land for peace initiative by the Arab countries.

Israel has not only refused to implement the legally binding Security Council resolutions it has also annexed more Palestinian lands in the West Bank at a higher speed. It has also put 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza in a cage.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also said the arrest warrant request for Netanyahu is "a profoundly wrong-headed" decision that would complicate the prospects of reaching a deal on negotiations to achieve a hostage deal and a ceasefire.

Cameron also echoed Blinken, arguing the move will complicate efforts to release hostages and establish a ceasefire. "I don't believe for one moment that seeking these warrants is going to help get the hostages out, it's not going to help get aid in, and it's not going to help deliver a sustainable ceasefire," Cameron told the House of Lords.

Blinken and Cameron are quite aware that their respective countries along with certain other Western countries are part of the problem rather than a solution to

the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current Gaza war in particular.

On May 7, Hamas accepted an Egyptian-Qatari cease-fire proposal, but Israel said the deal did not meet its core demands and it was pushing ahead with an assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Before May 7, the United States had blocked all efforts by the UN Security Council to announce a ceasefire in Gaza. Even after long efforts and many amendments the Council approved a draft ceasefire resolution, Israel did not heed it and went ahead with its carnage in Gaza. It is chiefly because Israel is aware that its allies - the U.S. and Britain - will protect it from being held accountable for its crimes.

The motives for Israel's behavior are clear. It wants submission.

However, after nearly eight months of war, Israel has failed to release hostages. Hamas agreed to release about 100 hostages, mostly women, elderly and wounded hostages, only after a temporary ceasefire. Contrary to what Cameron and Blinken claim Israel is not seeking the release of hostages. Israel wants to drive the Palestinians out of Gaza no matter if all its remaining hostages are killed as a result of its bombardments.

In his address to the House of Lords, Cameron used the term "sustainable ceasefire" in Gaza. Yet, he knows very well that a "sustainable ceasefire" is only achieved through a "sustainable" deal according to which Palestinians have their own independent and sovereign state within the 1948 borders otherwise any talk of sustainable peace is just a mirage.

The United States has also become so aggressive that it is openly threatening Ahmad Khan. Blinken said the Biden administration would be happy to work with Congress to formulate "an appropriate response" to the ICC chief prosecutor. Earlier, certain hawkish senators had signed a letter threatening the ICC judges.

In his interview with CNN on May 20, when Ahmad Khan first broke the story that the ICC is seeking an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, he said some elected leaders had told him that the ICC was built for Africa and "thugs like Vladimir Putin". Although Khan did not mention leader or leaders, it is clear that he was referring to President Joe Biden.

Biden has also described the allegations against Israel as "outrageous". Speaking at a Jewish American Heritage Month event at the White House on Monday, Biden said, "Let me be clear, we reject the ICC's application for arrest warrants against Israeli leaders."

The U.S. along with certain other Western countries are just prolonging the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through their unmeasured remarks, unjustified support, and erroneous actions. For example, the proposal by American Senator Lindsey Graham to nuke Gaz is only comparable with the statement by ultra-right Israeli ministers such as Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu who also proposed dropping nuclear bombs on the Gaza Strip. Or when the United States stands against the global will backing Palestine's full membership in the United Nations and unfortunately some lackey states vote in tandem with Washington.

In summary, siding with war criminals like Netanyahu and trying to protect them from facing justice is scandalous and shows disdain for international law.

Fars launches crafts job creation initiative in memory of President Raisi

TEHRAN - Fars province has initiated a project aimed at creating jobs in the handicrafts sector, in honor of Martyr President Seyyed-Ebrahim Raisi, who lost his life last week in a helicopter crash, with a pilot program starting in Kharameh county.

Speaking on Friday, the provincial Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced the initiation of the project to create and transform jobs into handicrafts, named after Martyr Ayatollah Raisi.

"Raisi's significant contributions in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts are well-known," Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi noted. "Paving the way for enhanced public service."

Sabet-Eqlidi emphasized that the "Shahid Jomhour" handicrafts job creation plan aims to foster entrepreneurship, development, and the flourishing of handicraft production.

"The pilot project will be executed in Kharameh County," the director-general further pinpointed.

Shedding light on the details, he elaborated that the project will prioritize training, promotion, and market creation in various traditional craft fields, tailored to the interests and tastes of the people of the county. The plan's key objectives include boosting production, familiarizing locals with traditional arts, generating income, and enhancing the local economy, according to the official. The initiative aligns with the national slogan of the year, "Production Leap, with Public Participation."

Regarding singling out Kharameh, Sabet-Eqlidi explained that the county was chosen as the pilot site because, despite its historical reliance on agriculture, especially rice cultivation, years of drought have rendered farming unsustainable. Consequently, transitioning to handicrafts presents a new opportunity for the region, he added.

Moreover, the official outlined that the production and sale of handicrafts offer a golden economic opportunity for the local population, given the lower investment required compared to other sectors and the high profitability with



An undated photo depicts the late Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi (R), talking to a craftswoman at a handicrafts exhibition in Shahrekord

accurate marketing strategies.

"Handicrafts such as traditional Carpet Weaving, Khatam Kari (marquetry), and Minakari (enamel work) will be taught as part of the project," Sabet-Eqlidi wended up.

Fars province, located in southern Iran, boasts a rich heritage of traditional handicrafts that reflect its cultural and historical depth. The region is renowned for its intricate and diverse craftsmanship. One of the most prominent handicrafts of Fars is Gabbeh weaving, a type of Persian carpet characterized by its simple, bold designs and vibrant colors. These hand-knotted rugs, often made by tribal artisans, are known for their thick texture and use of natural dyes.

Another significant craft is Khatam Kari (marquetry), an ancient Persian art form that involves inlaying delicate pieces of wood, bone, and metal into geometric patterns, commonly used to decorate boxes, frames, and furniture.

Minakari (enamel work) is also notable in Fars, where artisans create elaborate designs on metal surfaces, typically using rich blues and intricate patterns. The handicrafts of Fars are not only a source of aesthetic pleasure but also an important aspect of the local economy, providing livelihoods for many artisans.

Chehel Tekeh Duzi: a vibrant handicraft from southwest Iran

TEHRAN - Chehel Tekeh Duzi, also known as scrap quilting, is a cherished handicraft from the Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, southwest Iran.

This traditional embroidery, also referred to as "Khatami Duzi", "Landreh Duzi", or "Tekeh Duzi", has been passed down through generations, preserving its cultural and artistic heritage.

According to Visit Iran, Chehel Tekeh Duzi involves sewing together various pieces of fabric, including simple, floral, striped, and polka-dotted patterns. The name "Chehel Tekeh" translates to "made of forty pieces," highlighting the intricate and composite nature of this craft.

To make it, a number of fabrics are meticulously cut into squares, triangles, rectangles, and diamonds, which are then joined on the back using simple stitches before being tightly sewn together.

The beauty of Chehel Tekeh Duzi lies in the harmonious composition of colors and the careful arrangement of fabric pieces. By creatively combining different sizes and patterns, artisans

produce visually striking quilts.

When the pieces are uniformly shaped, particularly as squares, rectangles, or triangles, the final products resemble "Khatam", an ancient Iranian inlaying technique, hence the alternate name "Katami Duzi". To enhance the aesthetic appeal, silk stitch work is sometimes added to the seams of the quilt, a technique more prevalent in older samples. This delicate embroidery adds a layer of sophistication and intricacy to the already beautiful patterns. Chehel Tekeh Duzi is more than just a craft; it is a cultural emblem of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, reflecting the region's rich artistic traditions.

The continuity of this handicraft across generations underscores its importance in the local heritage, where each piece tells a story of cultural identity and artistic expression.

Chahmahal-Bakhtiari as one of the various destinations in the west side of Iran, the ones which are generally lesser-known to potential sightseers and vacationers, is seeking to absorb travelers with an eye toward fostering tourism provincially.

Iran in frames



A cyclist rides through Shahrdari Square in Rasht, known for its vibrant atmosphere as a hub for locals and visitors alike.

From mosques to mausoleums: architecture under Seljuk patronage

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - The Seljuk Dynasty, the first Turkish rulers of the Muslim world, brought a renaissance to the Islamic Caliphate, characterized by religious fervor and robust governance.

This period, spanning from 1037 to 1194, saw groundbreaking advancements in architecture and urban planning that left a lasting impact on the Islamic world. Notably, the Seljuks are celebrated for their introduction of the four Iwan mosque layouts, the proliferation of Madrasas, the evolution of mausoleum architecture, and the establishment of caravanserais, among other contributions.

In Iran, the Seljuk period saw the emergence of a new minaret form that diverged significantly from North African styles. The cylindrical minaret with tapered shafts and balconies supported by Muqarnas (a form of ornamented vaulting) became prevalent. Notable early examples include the minarets in Saveh and Damghan, which set the standard for subsequent Islamic architecture across much of Asia.

Reflecting their enthusiasm for commerce, the Seljuks established numerous caravanserais along key trade routes. These structures provided essential services to merchants and other travelers,



A view of Kharaghan twin towers, built near Qazvin in c. 1053 to house the remains of Seljuk princes.

including shelter and food, at regular intervals of approximately 30 kilometers. Architecturally, caravanserais featured a central courtyard surrounded by iwans and various rooms designated for lodging, storage, and stables.

This innovative design not only supported trade but also contributed to the economic prosperity of the Seljuk Empire?

One of the Seljuks' most significant architectural innovations was the transformation of the traditional hypostyle mosque with the introduction of the Iwan plan.

Originally a feature in Sassanian architecture, an Iwan is a vaulted

hall or space, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open.

This design element became a defining feature in Seljuk mosques, culminating in the four Iwan mosque plans, exemplified by the Friday Mosque (aka the Jameh Mosque) of Isfahan. This mosque, originally constructed by the Abbasids in the 9th century, was enhanced under Seljuk rule with a grand brick dome in front of the Mihrab, built upon the order of Caliph Nezam Al-Mulk.

Under Seljuk's patronage, mausoleum architecture flourished, evolving from early Islamic funerary monuments.

These structures, often octagonal, cylindrical, or square, were topped with domes or conical roofs and served as the final resting places for rulers, religious scholars, and notable figures. Prominent examples include the Gunbad-e-Qabus in Gorgan, the Borj-e Toghrol in Rey, and the twin towers of Kharaghan, showcasing the Seljuks' architectural ingenuity and reverence for their predecessors.

Moreover, Seljuks were instrumental in expanding the use of Madrasas, especially in the Khorasan region. These institutions, which functioned as educational centers, adopted the four Iwan plans, creating spaces that facilitated both teaching and learning. The Madrasas built between 1080 and 1092 in Khargird of Khurasan region exemplify this architectural and educational advancement.

The Seljuk's architectural legacy is a testament to their innovative spirit and cultural impact. By transforming mosque design, expanding educational institutions, facilitating trade, and developing intricate mausoleums, the Seljuks not only revived the Islamic Caliphate but also set new standards in Islamic architecture. Their contributions continue to inspire and influence architectural practices in the Muslim world and beyond.

Couple's 100-year-old car traverses Iran on way to Australia



TEHRAN - After 12 days of winding their way through Iranian soil, an Australian couple, traveling in a classic Bean from England to Australia, has brought the curtain on their journey through the Islamic Republic.

Lang and Bev Kidby, who began their journey on April 1, from London, passed through countries including France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, and entered Iran through the Bazargan border crossing on Sunday, May 12.

During their 12-day trip in the Islamic Republic, the globetrotters paid some visits to the historical, cultural, and touristic attractions of cities such as Maku, Tabriz, Zanjan, and Tehran, and after a one-day stop in the capital, they headed to Kashan, Isfahan and Yazd.

Throughout their stop-off in Tehran, Lang and Bev, they toured the Historical Car Museum of Niavaran Complex, which is a home to a great number of eye-catching classic precious vehicles.

Kerman, Bam, and Zahedan were the other cities that the Australian couple passed through, each welcoming the cherished guests with open arms.

On Thursday morning, May 23, continuing their long 26000-kilometers journey, 2500 kilometers of which passed through Iran, the adventurous couple finally entered Pakistan from Mirjaveh border, taking memories of exploring days across the country with themselves.

In 1927, an Australian tourist named Francis

Birtles, who was interested in driving and traveling, traveled from London to Australia with this Bean car and visited countries such as Iran along his route.

The couple have now redone the overland expedition almost a hundred years since Birtles's journey, with the car these days classified as a valuable historical vehicle.

Lang and Bev Kidby, supported by the Historical Vehicles Association of Iran, in collaboration with the Touring and Automobile Club of Iran (TACI) traversed through the Islamic Republic, resuming the journey through countries including Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Singapore and finally will reach their destination in Australia.

Earlier this month, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the Deputy Minister for Tourism, brought to light that more than 450,000 inbound tourists traveled to Iran throughout the very first month of the Persian New Year [covering March 20 to April 19], which demonstrates a 30% influx in overseas tourists compared to the corresponding time of a year earlier.

Textile history museum in Kashan: a journey through threads of time

TEHRAN - The textile history museum of Kashan stands as a testament to the rich cultural heritage and enduring legacy of textile craft skills in the ancient city.

Occupying a historical house that spans an impressive 600 square meters, the museum is a meticulously curated space that celebrates the intricate art of textile production and the city's cultural and economic fabric for centuries.

The museum, with its 14 exquisitely designed rooms, not only highlights the artistry involved but also provides a comprehensive look at the traditional methods that have been perfected over generations.

Each room is dedicated to a different aspect of the craft, housing hundreds of authentic textiles, along with the tools and equipment used by the ethnic communities of the region. One of the museum's primary objectives is to illuminate the complex process of textile production. Starting from the raw materials to the weaving stage, all the way to the

final product, the museum employs life-sized wax figures to bring this process to life.

This realistic portrayal allows visitors to witness the painstaking effort and skill involved in creating each piece, offering a deeper appreciation for the artisans' work.

A unique feature of the museum is the interactive opportunities it offers. Visitors can test their skills on a loom, gaining firsthand experience of the traditional weaving techniques.

This hands-on engagement not only educates but also fosters a connection to the heritage of textile production.

Additionally, the museum showcases contemporary works inspired by traditional designs, highlighting the fusion of heritage and innovation that keeps the craft relevant in modern times.

The museum also celebrates the production of traditional textiles such as brocade and velvet. These fabrics, characterized by their intricate patterns and luxurious

textures, are created using various weaving techniques, including jacquard and handloom.

Kashan is renowned for its exquisite handmade carpets, a craft that has been a cornerstone of the city's textile industry for centuries. Silk weaving is another significant aspect of Kashan's textile heritage known for its softness, sheen, and durability, often used to create elegant garments, scarves, and decorative pieces. A considerable number of people in Kashan are involved in textile production, with skills and techniques being passed down from one generation to the next.



Vacancy Notice

The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R. Iran, intends to National Programme Associate, Sexual and Reproductive Health (FTA) at GS6 level for its office in Tehran, Iran.

Details of the Advertised vacancy can be found on UNFPA website on the following link: <https://iran.unfpa.org>

Please apply online by 11 June 2024, 12 PM Tehran Time. This vacancy is open only for Iranian Nationals.

Important Note:

- There is no application, processing or other fees at any stage of the application process.
- UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status or disabilities.
- Women and people with disabilities are highly encouraged to apply.

World Space Week to put spotlight on 'Space, Climate Change'

TEHRAN –The World Space Week Association has announced the theme of the World Space Week 2024, October 4 to 10, will be 'Space and Climate Change'.

The theme highlights the transformative impact of space technology on climate change and emphasizes the key role of space exploration in enhancing our understanding and management of global climate, Mehr news agency reported.

The World Space Week 2024 will seek to educate, inspire, and effectively connect the global communities by focusing on the powerful alliance between space technology and climate science.

Throughout the week, efforts will be made to highlight the vital role of satellites and space technology in monitoring climate change and developing effective strategies to reduce the harmful effects of climate change.

"We will emphasize the essential role that space plays in monitoring the Earth's climate and mitigating climate change," World Space Week Association quoted Dennis Stone, Association President, as saying.

"This theme aims to spark worldwide educational and pub-



lic outreach initiatives, showcasing the crucial and integral part that space plays in understanding our global environment," he said.

It will be the 25th celebration of World Space Week since its declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, Stone noted.

"We hope that World Space Week 2024 initiates a global conversation about the connection between space and climate change," said Alma Okpalefe, the Association's Executive Director.

"As space research equips us with vital data about the health of our planet, we must utilize it

October 10, 1967: The signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Holding World Space Week aims to provide unique leverage in space outreach and education, educate people around the world about the benefits that they receive from space, encourage greater use of space for sustainable economic development, demonstrate public support for space programs, excite young people about science, technology, engineering, and math, and foster international cooperation in space outreach and education.

World Space Week consists of thousands of space-related events held by space agencies, aerospace companies, schools, museums, astronomy clubs, and others in a common timeframe to achieve greater student and public impact through synchronization.

to effect meaningful climate action," she said.

The United Nations General Assembly declared in 1999 that World Space Week will be held each year from October 4-10. These dates commemorate two events:

October 4, 1957: Launch of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, thus opening the way for space exploration

The theme emphasizes the key role of space exploration in enhancing the management of global climate.

Iran voices opposition to decriminalization of drugs

TEHRAN – Iraj Kakavand, the anti-narcotics police chief, has announced the country's opposition to the legalization and decriminalization of drugs.

One of the most important challenges of the present era is the rising production and smuggling of new drugs and psychotropic substances, Kakavand said at the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group meeting in Moscow on May 21.

The meeting was attended by the heads and employees of the relevant BRICS authorities and their diplomatic missions in Russia.

These drugs pose serious threats to the health of the society, especially the youth, and weaken the economic, social, and political stability and development of the member countries, he added.

Undoubtedly, narcotics are one of the deadliest challenges that the world is facing which also fuels many terrorist activities around the world.

Guided by religious values, responsibility and philanthropy, and adherence to international treaties and conventions, Iran has taken effective measures to deal with narcotics by adopting a balanced strategy in the fight against illicit drugs, the official noted.

"In addition to our country, other countries on the route and destination have also benefited from these actions," Kakavand stated.

Certainly, some 4,000 martyrs and more than 12,000 veterans prove Iran has paid the costs in the battle against drugs.

It is important that all countries, away from their political tendencies, adopt an operational view, boost their cooperation, and play their role in the targeted fight against drug trafficking.

Therefore, considering the crucial and in-

fluential role of regional and international organizations in setting and implementing programs as well as coordinating the counter-narcotics forces of countries, it is expected that these institutions ceaselessly provide financial and equipment support for the countries at the front lines of the fight against drugs.

Referring to the complexities of drug trafficking at the international level and the fact that traffickers exploit legal trade channels and commercial shipments, Kakavand stressed the importance of implementing strategies to identify key actors in drug trafficking at the international level and sharing the information with the anti-narcotics police of the involved countries.

The official also announced the seizure of more than 662 tons of narcotics in 2023 and the first 4 months of 2024 in Iran which mainly targeted countries other than Iran.

"It confirms that despite the existing reports regarding the cessation and decrease in opium cultivation and production in Afghanistan, there has been no noticeable reduction in drug smuggling which has to concern not only Iran and Afghanistan's neighboring countries but also the countries present in the meeting," he added.

Kakavand also offered Iran's proposals and elaborated on the country's effective implementation of the anti-narcotics program including compilation and implementation of the comprehensive document on treatment and harm reduction; the expansion of treatment centers both quantitatively and qualitatively, the maximum use of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (7,200 centers), employing diverse treatment methods including pharmaceuticals and psychological and social interventions.

BRICS anti-drug meeting

Police Lieutenant General Ivan Gorbunov, who heads the Main Directorate for Drug Control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, delivered a welcome address at the opening ceremony. In his remarks, he emphasized the need to coordinate international cooperation to effectively combat drug trafficking, which has become a global problem of our times.

BRICS officials and representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Russian Federal Security Service, the Russian Federal Customs Service, and the Russian Federal Financial Monitoring Service who attended the event also noted the importance of developing cooperation in the BRICS format in their speeches.

During the event, which was held in person for the first time since 2017, the participants exchanged information about key trends with drugs in their countries and discussed promising areas of methodological and practical interaction. The expansion of BRICS has made it possible to broaden the dialogue, include interesting aspects of anti-drug efforts, and also discuss opportunities to develop law enforcement potential and contacts between the relevant authorities.

The meeting participants considered proposals from the Russian side on the further conceptual development of the BRICS Anti-Drug Group and the final joint communique of the meeting, which is titled 'BRICS Cooperation in Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking, Including the Capacity-building of Drug Law Enforcement Agencies to Counter Challenges and Threats'.

The meeting took place in a friendly, constructive atmosphere and helped to reach mutual understanding on key agenda items.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. "The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster," he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامهای امضا می شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.

Pakistan seeks joint nanotech, biotech research with Iran

TEHRAN –In a meeting held at Iran's headquarters for the development of nanotechnology on Friday, Pakistan asked for establishing a joint research institute of nanotechnology and biotechnology.

The chairman of Pakistan's Lahore University, Awaiz Raof, and the nano-technology innovation council's director for international affairs, Mohammad Baqeri-Motlaq, discussed the potential for developing cooperation between the two countries, ISNA reported.

The Pakistani official expressed interest in starting a nano-technology center at Lahore University.

Baqeri-Motlaq, for his part, presented a report on Iran's advancements and achievements in nanotechnology, focusing on educational activities and joint scientific cooperation.

The official went on to suggest conducting collaborative research, publishing joint scientific articles in Iranian journals, as well as holding workshops, training courses, and scientific conferences.

Moreover, he proposed signing a memorandum of understanding, which was welcomed by Raof.

Visiting Iran-made nano-tech products, Raof stressed that Pakistan is mainly interested in cooperation in nanomedicine and military fields.

Expanding scientific ties

"The main challenges in the development of Islamabad-Tehran relations have been overcome and the two countries are ready to boost ties in higher education, science, and technology," the chairman of Pakistan's higher education commission has said.

A delegation of Pakistani academic members headed by Mukhtar Ahmed visited Iran's House of Innovation and Technology (HiT) on January 15, IRNA reported.

Iran and Pakistan, while expressing willingness to expand cooperation, highlighted the importance of enhancing scientific relations.

"Iran is ready to cooperate with Pakistan in technological fields. Information and communication technology, agriculture, and health are among the fields in which the two countries can boost cooperation," Amir-Hossein Mir-Abadi, an official with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology said in a meeting with Mukhtar Ahmed, ISNA reported.

Ahmed, for his part, said that Iran and Pakistan are confronting similar problems and challenges; these common issues can lay the basis for boosting mutual relations and cooperation. "Pakistan is interested in cooperating and interacting with Iran in scientific and technological fields."

The Pakistani official went on to say that the sanctions have made Iran more successful in scientific fields.

Exchanging academic staff including professors and students and conducting joint projects can be among other options of cooperation between Iran and Pakistan, he added.

IRCS send relief consignment to flood-hit Afghanistan

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society has sent a consignment of relief items to flood victims in Afghanistan.

On May 10, devastating floods and torrents of water swept through multiple cities and villages in northern Afghanistan.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that at least 60,000 people have been affected by recent floods in the provinces of Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar.

Citing the Taliban-run refugee ministry, OCHA revealed that nearly 350 people have died in these floods while over 1,500 others have been injured.

The first plane carrying humanitarian cargo to those affected by recent flood in Afghanistan landed in Mazar-e-Sharif on May 23, IRCS website quoted Razieh Alishvandi, the IRCS director for international affairs, as saying.

Donated goods included biological items, tents, blankets, and foodstuff.

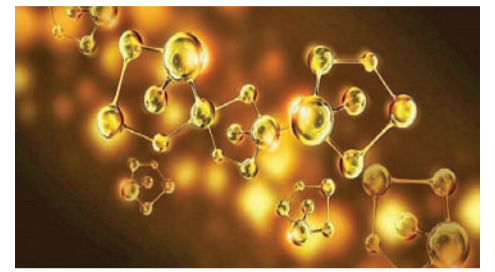
Afghanistan commends Iran's aid

In a tweet on May 13, Rahmatullah Faizan, the deputy representative of the Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Herat, lauded Iran's swift response following natural disasters in Afghanistan.

Faizan highlighted Iran's immediate assistance and deployment of rescue teams to Herat following the earthquake.

He also noted Tehran's support in the aftermath of flooding in northern Afghanistan.

Expressing optimism, Faizan voiced hope for the



Talking about setting up national pavilions in different countries, Ahmed said Pakistan is ready to hold Iranian pavilions, too.

He hoped that the bilateral cooperation would be extended into regional cooperation including other countries such as India and Bangladesh.

Nano-tech products

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years, proving the country's scientific development, is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the world's fourth place.

Nanotech products are exported to countries from five continents.

Some 358 companies are operating in the field of nanotechnology in the country and 1608 products and equipment have received nanotechnology certificates.

Over the past year (ended March 20), the total sales of Iranian nanoproducts were equal to 115 trillion rials (nearly \$425 million).

The expansion of nanotechnology export programs in recent years and the establishment of bases for exporting nanotechnology products to China, India, Indonesia, Syria, Turkey, and Iraq have provided the opportunity for the entry of Iranian nanotechnology goods, equipment, and services into global markets.

Some 42 percent of the products in this field are related to construction, more than 17 percent to the field of oil, gas, and petrochemicals, 13 percent to the field of automobiles, and over 10 percent to the field of optoelectronics.

In June 2023, Vice President for Science and Technology, Sourena Sattari, announced, "Some 270 companies are active in the nanotechnology field and it is predicted that their revenue will reach up to 80 trillion rials (nearly \$310 million).

Iran's ranking in nanotechnology articles citation in 2019 significantly improved compared to 2018, as it moved 26 levels higher, according to StatNano's statistics collected from the WoS database.

Based on a report Nanotechnology Publications report, Iran ranked 38 worldwide for the average number of times the nano-articles have been cited in the Journal Citation Reports in 2019, while in 2018, it was placed 64.

It also ranked 4th for the highest number of nano-article publications.

continued strengthening of friendly relations between Tehran and Kabul.

On May 12, Iran extended its heartfelt condolences to Afghanistan following the devastating flash floods that have swept through the country's northern areas.

In a statement issued by Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani, Iran expressed profound sadness over the natural disaster, which has claimed the lives of at least 300 Afghans and displaced thousands more in recent days.

According to Afghanistan's defense ministry, emergency personnel had been deployed to the affected areas and were rushed to rescue injured and stranded people.

Iran's Special Envoy for Afghanistan also announced that Iran is prepared to send relief forces, medical teams, and essential aid supplies requested by Afghan authorities.

Hassan Kazemi-Qomi shared on his personal social media account: "The recent floods in northern Afghanistan, which resulted in the loss of many lives, have deeply saddened me. While expressing solidarity with the Afghan people, Iran stands ready to send relief forces, medical teams, and necessary aid supplies, which are sincere gifts from the Iranian people to the people of Afghanistan. These will be delivered through organizations like the Red Crescent and the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee to the affected regions as swiftly as possible."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

