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45 killed, 250 injured in Israeli airstrike against displaced Palestinians in Rafah

Charred Alive in Tents

World condemns massacre of women and children in southern Gaza



© AFP Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike on a camp area housing internally displaced people in Rafah on May 27, 2024.

No hindrance in Iran's support for Palestine: spox

TEHRAN – During a weekly press conference on Monday, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman asserted that the tragic passing of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian will not halt Iran's support for the Palestinian cause.

"Supporting the resistance of the Palestinian people against the occupation of the Zionist regime is a policy based on the values of the revolution and the ideals of the Imam and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Therefore, despite this incident, no disruption will be created in Iran's effective support for the Palestinian people and resistance movements to uphold the rights of Palestine. Iran will continue its unwavering support at various levels with officials of other countries. Supporting the Palestinian people is an ethical duty and an international responsibility," Nasser Kanaani noted while standing beside a picture of the late Amir Abdollahian adorned with a black ribbon.

President Raisi, Minister Amir Abdollahian, and six others lost their lives during a helicopter crash in Iran's mountainous north-western region on May 19. ▶ Page 2

Omani FM holds talks in Tehran, charting course for enhanced ties

TEHRAN – During a meeting with Oman's Foreign Minister on Monday, Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's acting Foreign Minister, emphasized the commitment of Iran and Oman to forging a strong and effective partnership moving forward.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi arrived in Tehran on Monday for a series of meetings with Iranian officials, including a significant discussion with Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani. The Omani Foreign Minister is expected to visit Mohammad Mokhber, Iran's acting President.

The meeting centered on the latest developments in bilateral, regional, and international relations. Following their discussions, both ministers participated in a joint press conference to elaborate on the outcomes and future directions of their cooperation.

Oman's Foreign Minister began the press conference by expressing heartfelt condolences for the recent martyrdom of the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, noting the deep bonds of brotherhood between the two nations.

"My visit is to convey the brotherly feelings and solidarity we have with Iran during this tragic time," he stated, offering prayers for the martyred officials who lost their lives in a helicopter crash on May 19.

The helicopter carrying Raisi and his entourage crashed around afternoon on Sunday as it was on its way to Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan, from a location on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan where the Iranian president had opened a major dam project. ▶ Page 2

Sorrow at every Iranian corner

Small funerals held across Iran following passing of President

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Throughout the past week, news cameras from various global outlets were focused on capturing the emotional scenes of mourning in Iranian streets, as well as the procession of dozens of foreign officials paying their respects to Iran's late President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

The media understandably gave most of its attention to the massive funeral processions taking place in Tehran, Mashhad, Tabriz, and Isfahan. After all, over 12 million Iranians are said to have shown up to bid farewell to President Raisi. Dignitaries from at least 68 countries also rushed to the Iranian capital of Tehran to express condolences. Even notable figures like the Tunisian president and Egyptian Foreign Minister made their first official visits to Iran.

Less highlighted in the media coverage were the heartfelt and intimate gatherings held by citizens in cities and villages across Iran, who were unable to attend the official



ceremonies but wanted to bid their own personal farewells to the late president.

One of these many events that went unnoticed by the mainstream media was a gathering in the northern Iranian city of Rudsar, situated in Gilan Province near the

Caspian Sea. The residents in Rudsar fondly remember President Raisi for his efforts in revitalizing the largest factory in the province during his time as Iran's judiciary chief.

"My son was employed at Rash Electric for years. When the factory was illegally

sold, he along with thousands of others lost their jobs. Dear Raisi heard their concerns, prosecuted those responsible for the closure, and ensured my son was reinstated," recounted a 72-year-old mother sitting in the corner of a local mosque while clutching a copy of the Holy Quran. Her eyes glistened with tears as she expressed her gratitude to President Raisi.

Continuing eastward to a remote village in Mazandaran province, the residents of Khorma Kola donned mourning attire to pay their respects at the funeral of the individual who had brought them immense joy just 10 days earlier.

During his brief visit, President Raisi had inaugurated a large hospital and educational center for the local community. A young villager expressed, "Among the many officials and dignitaries in our country, no one can compare to the dedication and service of President Raisi to his people."

In the northern parts of Khuzestan province, ▶ Page 3

Major railway inaugurated in central Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash inaugurated the important project of Yazd-Eghlid Railway during a visit to Yazd Province on Sunday.

The Yazd-Eghlid Railway which is considered as a connecting route along the North East-South West and South East-South West rail corridor in Iran is 270 km and has 49 km station lines for 12 stations.

As reported, 245 km of this long project is in Yazd Province and 25 km in Fars Province.

This project provides the southwestern provinces of Iran with access to the provinces of Hormozgan, Kerman, Sistan and Baluchistan, South Khorasan, and Razavi Khorasan by reducing the rail distance for more than 310 kilometers. ▶ Page 4



© Mehr/Forough Taherkhani

New Iranian parliament inaugurated, Leader sends message

TEHRAN – The newly-elected Iranian parliament, the 12th of its kind since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, began its first session on Monday.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei delivered a message to the new parliament, which was read to the MPs by the Leader's chief of staff.

In his message, the Leader emphasized the significance of upholding and enhancing "religious democracy," characterizing it as a significant divine blessing bestowed upon the Iranian nation.

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted that each parliament member serves as a representative of the entire nation, underscoring that their primary duty is to safeguard the national interests of the country. ▶ Page 2

Knowledge-based ecosystem grows by 64%

TEHRAN – During the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi, great steps were taken for a knowledge-based ecosystem, resulting in 64 percent growth of the sector.

When the administration took office in August 2021, the law for boosting knowledge-based production was seriously implemented.

The law, including 20 articles, fosters development across various sectors of the technology and innovation ecosystem from investment and infrastructure sectors to the production of knowledge-based and creative products.

The law has brought about amendments to the existing law to support knowledge-based companies and institutions, ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

The opposition is invalid in the eyes of the Iranian people

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

In a note, the Iran newspaper pointed out the discredit of the opposition in the eye of the Iranian people and said: The false illusion of the anti-Iranian opposition has once again appeared with the epic of the Iranian people and the world's respect for the martyred president of the Islamic Republic. This can be seen from the nervous reaction of the anti-revolution movement to the expression of sympathy and condolence of the heads of the countries regarding the martyrdom of our country's president. The Iranian opposition is angrier than ever. Recently, the employees of Zionist International TV criticized and expressed dissatisfaction with the expressions of sympathy and respect, especially from international organizations and even NATO, towards the president of Iran. They said: "It is a joke that we could not stop this global solidarity with Iran. We should have stopped world leaders from condoling and expressing sympathy with Iran. Why did the countries fly their flags at half-mast?! Why did NATO offer condolences?!" These are questions that not only the Persian employees of the Zionist regime but also the entire opposition movement neither have an answer for nor can accept.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: The threat of NATO expansion for Iran

In an analysis, Donya-e-Eqtasad discussed Biden's words about the expansion of NATO's actions in the Middle East and wrote: The thought of NATO expansion should be considered a threat to Iran. Iran believes that the expansion of NATO means the expansion of threats, and the role of the United States alongside the countries of the Persian Gulf creates a new form of hybrid threat. This event will lead to establishing the regional security structure through the actors who are considered among America's allies in the region. Another point is that collective security will have more widespread validity and effectiveness. Naturally, the military presence of extra-regional powers in the Middle East limits the freedom of action of other countries and increases the level of monitoring of Iran's military power at the regional level and political sensitivities towards Iran's behavior. Also, such a presence will cause the regional competitors of the Islamic Republic of Iran to have more motivation to take risks.

Hamshahri: America has to interact with Iran

Hamshahri talked with Abdolreza Farjirad, an

expert on geopolitical issues, and wrote about Iran-U.S. negotiations: Iran and the U.S. should negotiate with each other secretly. Whether we like it or not, America has interests in the region and Iran is also a regional power. Therefore, the two countries must interact so that tension and conflict in the region do not increase. Second, concessions are exchanged, which is common in diplomacy, and based on this exchange of concessions, the national and political interests of the two countries are provided to the best of their ability. America has a challenging election ahead, and Biden is looking for the tensions in the Middle East to be finished by the time of the election, or to be reduced to a point where it will not have much impact on the election. On the other hand, Iran is a regional power. America realized that it could not do anything without interaction with Iran. Therefore, America postponed the nuclear negotiations and JCPOA until after the elections. Iran and the United States have entered the next phase of negotiations, which is to reduce tension, and both countries have chosen the right way to proceed with secret negotiations in order to secure the interests of both sides by reducing tension.

Farahkhetgan: Biden was forced to confess

In an article, Farahkhetgan addressed Biden's confession about the operation of True Promise and said: After this operation, the West tried to make achievements by speaking for the Zionist regime, but they are forced to make confessions that they refused to express before. Recently, Biden said that 99% of the drones that Iran fired at Israel did not reach their targets with the help of American defense, otherwise this attack would have been devastating. In this speech, Biden tried to magnify America's power in this operation. According to the radio of the Zionist regime, the American defense systems fired 8 missiles from the sea to counter the Iranian ballistic missiles. Except for two missiles, the American defense system did not succeed in destroying most of the Iranian ballistic missiles and failed. Biden tried to show American power and hide the failure in an operation that cost more than a billion dollars for the United States and the Zionist regime. It should be noted that this attempt is related to the growth in demand for the purchase of weapons especially Iranian drones as Iranian drones are very efficient for many countries. And this is not pleasant for America.

Iran's envoy to Pakistan praises late Amir Abdollahian's dedication to Palestinian cause

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to Pakistan has highlighted the profound impact of the late Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, underscoring his fervent dedication to matters relating to the Palestinian cause.

In an interview with IRNA's foreign policy correspondent, Reza Amiri Moghadam, the Iranian ambassador to Islamabad, reflected on the personal attributes and professional achievements of the late Amir Abdollahian, emphasizing his pivotal role in advancing Iran's foreign policy goals.

He began by expressing condolences for the tragic loss of several prominent figures, whose passing deeply saddened not only Iran but also the global Muslim and freedom-loving communities.

Amiri Moghadam highlighted, "One of the significant achievements of the thirteenth administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been its unwavering support for Palestine and staunch opposition to Zionist occupation, with Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian playing a vital role in this regard."

Addressing the ongoing crisis in Gaza, he remarked, "The Zionist regime's atrocities against innocent civilians have drawn global condemnation, with the International Court of Justice confirming its genocidal actions. American political elites face domestic backlash for their support of the Zionist regime."

The ambassador emphasized, "Amir Abdollahian remained unwavering in his commitment to the Palestinian cause, even

amidst criticism. His contributions, including speeches at international forums and domestic meetings, underscored his unparalleled dedication."

Regarding international engagement, Amiri Moghadam stated, "Both the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs actively represented Iran's interests in international forums, thanks to coordinated efforts among governmental branches, the military, and adherence to top-level directives, enabling significant strides in foreign policy."

He continued, "The collective efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amir Abdollahian, and the administration have been quite impactful, resulting in notable accomplishments such as improved regional relations and Iran's participation in key international bodies like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS."

Concluding, Moghadam praised the late Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian's personal integrity and diplomatic prowess, noting his significant influence within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has become a cornerstone of Iran's national diplomacy.

President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and six others died on May 19, when their helicopter crashed in foggy weather in the mountains near the northwestern border with Azerbaijan. The charred wreckage of the aircraft was found the following day.

Following the death of Foreign Minister, Iran's cabinet appointed Ali Bagheri Kani as acting Foreign Minister.

Omani FM holds talks in Tehran, charting course for enhanced ties

From page 1 ▶ He further elaborated on the discussions with Iran's acting Foreign Minister, highlighting the continuation of consultations between Iran and Oman on various bilateral and regional issues, with a particular focus on Palestine.

"Our brothers in Palestine are enduring severe oppression, and significant efforts are being made to alleviate their suffering. Our mutual goal is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state," he asserted.

Describing the growing relationship between Iran and Oman, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi noted the ongoing cooperation in trade and cultural exchanges. "Our relations are thriving in multiple areas, including trade agreements and cultural collaborations," he remarked.

Bagheri Kani, on his part, expressed gratitude towards Oman for its supportive gestures during the period of mourning for President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian. He acknowledged the enduring friendship and sincere brotherhood exhibited by Oman, which is deeply appreciated by the Iranian government and its people.

Bagheri Kani continued by discussing the importance of good



neighborliness policy in President Raisi's foreign strategy, which emphasizes economic and trade integration with neighboring countries and fostering elite interactions.

"From the very first day of President Raisi's administration, his approach to foreign policy has been proactive and transparent, building trust and collaboration with our neighbors," he noted.

The acting Foreign Minister emphasized Iran's commitment to maintaining strong ties with its neighbors and working towards regional stability. "Iran is dedicated to ensuring that there are no gaps in its relationships with neighboring countries. We are earnestly working towards creating a safe region in

cooperation with all countries," he stated, celebrating the successes of President Raisi's initiatives as significant achievements for both Iran and the broader region.

Upon concluding the press conference, the Omani Foreign Minister also visited the late Iranian Foreign Minister's family and expressed his sincere condolences.

Iran acting FM, Cuban President's envoy talk enhanced ties

The acting Foreign Minister of Iran also met with Luis Pedroso Cuesta, senior advisor and special envoy of the President of Cuba and discussed matters of bolstering bilateral relations between Tehran and Havana.

Pedroso Cuesta conveyed the heartfelt condolences and sympathies of the Cuban

President, government, and people to the Leader of Islamic Revolution, government, and citizens. In response, Bagheri expressed gratitude for the visit, describing the Cuban messages of sympathy as comforting during this challenging period.

Reflecting on Iran's experience of resilience, solidarity, and cohesion over the past four decades, Bagheri highlighted the nation's ability to turn threats and challenges into opportunities with the support of its people.

Bagheri further noted that strengthening and deepening Iran-Cuba cooperation aligns with the interests of both countries and supports global multilateralism.

Pedroso Cuesta expressed confidence in Iran's ability to navigate this sensitive period successfully.

He described Iran as Cuba's closest friend in the West Asia region, emphasizing the high level of relations between the two countries and Cuba's readiness to enhance and deepen cooperation, particularly in the economic sector.

The Cuban special envoy also called for ongoing close cooperation between Iran and Cuba in international arenas to counter the increasingly weak, yet still domineering, approach of imperialist powers.

No hindrance in Iran's support for Palestine: spox



From page 1 ▶ Reports show the incident occurred due to bad weather conditions with no signs of foul play found so far.

Funeral processions took place in Tabriz, Tehran, and Mashhad for three days last week. Estimates suggest over 12 million people participated in the ceremonies to bid farewell to the martyred officials. Dozens of countries also saw their presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, or other high-ranking officials visit Iran on Wednesday to offer condolences over the tragedy.

"The role of the martyred President in developing Iran's foreign relations with other countries and multilateral structures is undoubtedly a lasting one, and we witnessed a leap in the development of Iran's foreign relations and the elevation of our country's regional and global status. This claim was evident in the abundance of condolence

messages from the early moments of this tragic incident with the Iranian people and the participation of high-ranking delegations in the commemoration ceremony for the esteemed martyrs," Kanaani stated adding that Iran received over 330 condolence messages from the top brass across the world.

During their first session following the chopper crash, various international organizations, including the UN Security Council, also held a moment of silence to honor President Raisi.

President Raisi is credited for expanding dialogue with various countries in the region as well as across the world. During his short three-year tenure, Iran signed a rapprochement deal with Saudi Arabia and gained memberships in important international bodies like the BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Martyr Raisi's administration also began efforts to revive relations with Egypt, whose foreign minister traveled to Iran last week despite the lack of official diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Iran seeks expansion of relations with regional countries

When asked about recent statements by

Bahraini officials announcing that the Persian Gulf state is willing to restore diplomatic ties with Iran, the foreign ministry spokesman said Tehran has taken note of the statements.

"We heard those comments and took note of them. We appreciate the Bahraini king's show of solidarity and message of condolence as well as the presence of Bahrain's Foreign Minister at the ceremony honoring martyr Raisi and martyr Amir Abdollahian," he said, adding that Tehran hopes to "witness an expansion of relations between regional countries with the wisdom of regional leaders."

Elsewhere in his comments, Kanaani said Tehran and Washington have consistently maintained indirect contact and exchanged messages regarding the termination of sanctions in the past months.

"The exchange of messages between Iran and the American side regarding the lifting of sanctions has always been ongoing and has not been discontinued. These negotiations are about nuclear issues and discussions on lifting sanctions, and they have never deviated from this framework. They are solely within the framework of nuclear issues. The content of reports published in some Western media regarding these discussions is not accurate."

New Iranian parliament inaugurated, Leader sends message

From page 1 ▶ Furthermore, the Leader underscored the importance of not excessively approving development plans beyond the allocated budget, cautioning against extreme measures in this regard.

Ayatollah Khamenei urged lawmakers to enhance their collaboration with other branches of the government and adopt a collective approach grounded in

patience.

He reminded legislators that their oath is not merely ceremonial but carries genuine responsibilities. The Leader also expressed gratitude to the members of the previous legislative body for their contributions.

Other high-ranking officials, including acting president Mohammad Mokhber, Judiciary

Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, senior military commanders, and the foreign ambassadors to Tehran also attended the inauguration.

During his first public speech since becoming the caretaker president, Mokhber acknowledged the late Raisi's accomplishments, saying the remaining officials will stay true to the martyred president's aspirations. "This strength, this settlement, and this

power is not a usual thing, they all were because of guidance by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the sincere efforts of Ayatollah Raisi."

Iranians went to polls on March 1 to choose their favorite candidates vying for parliament's 290 seats. The lawmakers are elected for a 4-year term, with no limitation for the incumbent or former parliamentarians to run again.

Jordan's crown prince optimistic about Amman-Tehran dialogue

TEHRAN - Jordan's crown prince, Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, expressed optimism regarding the ongoing dialogues between Amman and Tehran, emphasizing the eagerness of all Arab countries for constructive relations with Iran.

In an interview with the Saudi network Al Arabiya, Crown Prince Al-Hussein highlighted the close relations between Iran and some Arab countries.

He stated, "In Jordan, we consistently strive to reduce regional tensions, and like our Arab counterparts, we seek constructive ties with Iran based on principles of good neighborliness and non-interference."

He stressed the importance of addressing all tension-inducing factors for fostering proper relations, stating, "To establish robust relations, we must resolve underlying tensions."

Crown prince Al-Hussein affirmed the

existence of Jordanian-Iranian dialogue on various issues, expressing hope for fruitful outcomes while emphasizing Jordan's priority to avoid being drawn into regional conflicts.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, he reiterated Jordan's commitment despite the associated political and economic costs, underscoring the nation's duty to the Palestinian people.

He criticized the international community's failure to stop the "massacre" currently taking place in Gaza as he expressed anger, pain and shock over the ongoing Israeli war.

"It is inconceivable that the entire world cannot stop this ongoing tragedy. We are all shocked by the international community's inability to stop this massacre," the crown prince noted.

Israel initiated the Gaza conflict on October 7 in response to a surprise retaliatory operation

by Palestinian Resistance forces in the occupied territories.

Simultaneously, the regime has imposed a nearly complete blockade on the coastal enclave, severely limiting the supply of essential goods such as food, medicine, electricity, and water to Palestinians.

During the ongoing war, the regime has caused the deaths of approximately 35,984 Palestinians, predominantly women and children, while another 80,643 Palestinians have been injured, according to the reports from Health Ministry in the battered enclave.

Israel intensified military operations in Gaza despite the UN's top court ordering it to immediately halt its assault on Rafah. It's not the first time Israel has refused to comply with an order from the World Court.

Small funerals held across Iran following passing of President

From Page 1 ▶ Bakhtiari nomads honored the passing of President Raisi with a traditional funeral ritual called "Kotal," reserved for esteemed individuals. Adorned horses draped in long red, green, and black fabrics moved alongside mourners singing sorrowful eulogies.

Further south in the heart of Khuzestan, an elderly woman in the city of Shadegan lamented the loss of President Raisi as an unprecedented tragedy.

"I cannot express the depth of my sorrow. I dressed in black when I heard the news. We have lost a truly exceptional man who deeply cared for the less fortunate," she shared.



One of the only small and humble funerals that caught the attention of the media, was one held by Bibi Gol, an elderly woman residing in a remote village in the Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. Bibi Gol had written to

President Raisi in his early days in the office, asking him to help with the reconstruction of her residence which had been whittled away after years of uncanny weather conditions. Bibi Gol ended up getting a response from the

president. She now lives in a new home given to her at the late president's order but says she can no longer live her life like she used to, now that her "savior" is gone.

The less publicized events that followed the passing of President Raisi may provide insight into the large attendance at his official funeral services in major cities.

What is more significant than the presence of high-ranking officials paying their respects to the president is the genuine sorrow expressed by the people. President Raisi was dedicated to serving his people, with little concern for publicity and fame, yet ironically gained them through his sincere efforts.

Leader extends condolences to Hezbollah chief over mother's passing



TEHRAN - Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, extended his heartfelt condolences to the Secretary General of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, following the loss of his mother.

In a message conveyed on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his deep sympathy over

the departure of Nasrallah's mother, Nahdiya Safieddine.

The Leader commended the deceased for raising the "tireless Seyyed of resistance", Hassan Nasrallah.

Furthermore, Ayatollah Khamenei invoked divine mercy and forgiveness upon her soul, while also wishing success to Nasrallah and his comrades in their steadfast stance within the vast front of resistance.

On May 25, Hezbollah announced with profound sorrow the passing of Umm Hassan after a prolonged battle with illness. The Lebanese group lauded Umm Hassan as a devoted and virtuous mother who nurtured a devout, diligent, and honorable family.

"The loss is grievous and the sorrow is

great, but we are consoled by the decree of Allah and His will, accepting His judgment and His wisdom," the statement read.

Resistance groups across West Asia have also offered condolences to Hezbollah's secretary general over the passing. "With great sorrow, we received the news of the passing of your honorable mother.

We extend our condolences and sympathy to Your Eminence, at a time when our people in Lebanon are standing in solidarity with their brothers in Palestine," said Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' political chief, in a Sunday statement.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement also expressed "sincere condolences and sympathy" towards the Hezbollah chief.

Russian Duma deputy: Raisi's tenure enabled global cooperation

TEHRAN - A prominent member of Russia's State Duma has praised the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi for strengthening Iran-Russia relations and enabling collaborative solutions to global issues.

Alexander Babakov, a deputy of the State Duma (Russian parliament), emphasized that Raisi's leadership facilitated significant progress not only on regional matters but also on a global scale.

In an interview with Iranian news outlet IRNA, Babakov shared his thoughts after signing the memorial book for the President Raisi and his companions, who tragically died in a helicopter crash on May 19.

This signing took place at the Iranian Embassy's ceremonial hall in Moscow.

Babakov noted, "Raisi's contributions to advancing Iran-Russia relations were highly valuable. His presidency occurred during a very challenging period filled with various events, and he

navigated through these times admirably."

Babakov commended Raisi's unwavering commitment to his ideals. "Mr. Raisi's steadfast belief and insistence on moving towards his goals are worthy of great respect and recognition," he said.

Highlighting Raisi's achievements, Babakov pointed to Iran's membership in the BRICS group and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. "This achievement underscores the late president's sense of responsibility towards the Iranian people," he added.

Expressing his condolences, Babakov described Raisi's passing as a significant loss. "While his death is a great loss, we believe that not only will the historical memory and recollections persist, but more importantly, the actions taken by President Raisi will continue to inspire future endeavors."

Prior to this, condolences were offered by various high-ranking

Russian officials, including the President, Prime Minister, heads of both parliamentary chambers (the Federation Council and the State Duma), the Secretary of the Security Council, the Foreign Minister, the head of the Duma's International Committee, the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, the head of the Muslim Religious Affairs Department, media managers, activists, and several other Russian personalities. The head of the Russian State Duma also traveled to Iran to attend the funeral of the martyred president on behalf of Russia.

The helicopter carrying Raisi and his entourage crashed around afternoon on Sunday as it was on its way to Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan, from a location on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan where the Iranian president had opened a major dam project.

Rescuers found the wreckage of the helicopter early on Monday after hours of extensive search

which involved more than 70 teams.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and two senior provincial officials along with crew members and bodyguards also died as a result of the crash.

Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber has been appointed to assume interim duties after the death of the president.

In the wake of the passing of the Iranian President, the country's constitutional mandate outlined in Article 131 necessitates the swift organization of presidential elections in a timeframe of 50 days. A council comprising representatives from the judiciary, legislative, and the First Vice President is tasked with overseeing this transition.

Following the council's deliberations and the subsequent approval by the Guardian Council, plans have been set in motion for early nationwide presidential elections scheduled for June 28, 2024.



was filmed saying while talking to the family of the late Raisi after leading the funeral prayer for the martyr.

Elections are set to take place on June 28.

Iran managed to avoid disruptions thanks to Leader after president's passing: senior commander

TEHRAN - The commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force has hailed Iran's ability in managing to maintain order after the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi on May 19, contributing to the success to the wise conduct of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. "Thanks to the existence of a system based on the guardianship, divine favors, and wise presence of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, no disruption occurred in the work and assigned affairs of the country after this tragic incident," Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari said during his speech at a military gathering.

President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and six other officials perished during a helicopter crash in Iran's mountainous northwestern region. Iran's Leader appointed Vice President Mohammad Mokhber as the caretaker president a day after the tragic news and called for snap elections.

In his meetings with the families of the martyrs, Ayatollah Khamenei expressed great sorrow over the passing of President Raisi and his companions but emphasized that their legacy would persist. "You lost one of the best humans that ever graced the face of the earth. There is, however, no option but to endure this [sadness] for almighty God," he

lost and the material damages caused by the recent floods. Expressing heartfelt sympathy, the embassy extended its support to the friendly Republic of Armenia, particularly to those impacted by this tragic event.

Torrential rains have swollen rivers in the north and northeastern parts of Armenia,

claiming the lives of at least four people as the country comes to terms with the worst flooding in decades. Hundreds of people have been evacuated in the region, which has also seen water, electricity, and gas services disrupted. The flooding has also affected transport connections with neighboring Georgia.

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Club director confirms talks with Ghoddos

TEHRAN - Saman Ghoddos is still in the process of officially leaving Brentford, and it seems he could soon be signing with a new club.

Swedish outlet Fotboll Direkt reports that Malmo FF has already made an approach to sign the 30-year-old.

Sports director Daniel Anderson confirms that with the player running out of contract with Brentford, it already got in touch for his signing.

"He is, as I have said before, always a player who is interesting to follow. Obviously, a great player at a high level. There is a little contact, but not much."

Fotboll Direkt claims that Malmo had already been interested in signing Ghoddos last summer, and now they finally get the chance to land him for free.

The midfielder joined Brentford back in 2020, when loaned by Amiens SC, and had his move made permanent just a few months after that, in January 2021.

In four years with the Bees, he made 108 appearances, with six goals and eight assists, many times being used as a fullback. He was barely used this season, with just 756 minutes on the pitch, and it seemed clear that he'd end up walking out of the club at the end of his contract. Now there's a good chance to head back to Sweden, as despite playing for Iran's national team, he was born in Malmo.

Group F: Iran, Venezuela, Guatemala, France

Taremi scores as Porto defeat Sporting in Portuguese Cup final

TEHRAN - Porto claimed their 20th Portuguese Cup title in its history with a victory sealed by Mehdi Taremi's goal, converting a penalty in extra time.

In the final match, the "Dragons" faced off against the newly crowned Lisbon champion, Sporting.

Lisbon's defender, St. Juste, played a crucial role in the game. Initially, he scored from a corner kick, putting his team ahead in the 20th minute.

Porto's Evanilson capitalized on a defensive error and equalized the score five minutes later.

St. Juste was shown a red card in the 29th minute.

After the break, Porto dominated possession, but Sporting always had a response, leading to no winner being determined in regular time.

The decisive moment came in the middle of the first extra time. Porto was awarded a penalty, confidently converted by Mehdi Taremi.

Iran 6th in AFC Club Competitions Ranking

TEHRAN - The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed the latest AFC Club Competitions Ranking, with Saudi Arabia taking the top spot and Iran sit sixth.

With a total of 103,148 points to their name, chart-toppers Saudi Arabia are followed by Japan and Korea Republic in the second and third places respectively.

The West Asians' comfortable lead is largely thanks to the stellar performance of the Kingdom's top clubs in recent seasons, including Al Hilal SFC's AFC Champions League (ACL) titles in 2019 and 2021, and a runners-up finish in 2022.

The consistent performance of Japanese clubs in the Knockout Stages of the ACL collectively contributed to the East Asians claiming the second spot on the rankings with 96,999 points.

Placing third with 93,600 points, Korea Republic have been yet another perennial contender for the throne where Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC etched their name on the trophy in 2016, while Pohang Steelers settled for the runners-up position in 2021.

The UAE, who earned a total of 74,873 points, owe much of their fourth-place finish to Al Ain, who finished the 2023/24 season as champions of the final edition of the competition, after narrowly missing out on the title in 2016.

Qatar are fifth with 70,330 points and Iran sit sixth with 68,640 points.

Persepolis defender Gvelesiani fit for Shamas Azar crucial match

TEHRAN - Persepolis football team defender Giorgi Gvelesiani is fit to accompany his team in the crucial match against Shams Azar.

Persepolis are scheduled to play Shams Azar in Qazvin in the penultimate match of 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) Tuesday night.

The center back was absent in the match against struggling Esteghlal Khuzestan, where Persepolis came from three goals down to win the match 4-3.

Gvelesiani's absence against Shams Azar could be a big blow to Persepolis since the team need a win to remain the top title contenders.

The 33-year-old Georgian international defender has been recently invited to his national team for the Euro 2024.

2024 VNL: Iran suffer close loss against Argentina

TEHRAN - Iran suffered a close 3-2 (25-23, 29-31, 25-20, 20-25, 13-15) loss against Argentina early Monday in the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) held in Brazil.

Bruno Lima scored 20 points for Argentina and Iran's Morteza Sharifi topscored the match with 26 points.

Team Melli, led by Mauricio Motta Paes, lost to Serbia (3-0), Italy (3-0), Cuba (3-1) and Argentina (3-2) in the competition.

The 2024 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League is the sixth edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League, an annual men's international volleyball tournament.

The competition is currently held from 21 May to 30 June 2024 and the final round will take place at Atlas Arena, ?ód?, Poland.

World Ranking Points will be awarded or deducted after each match of the preliminary rounds of the competition and this will be important for some of the teams who haven't qualified for Paris 2024 yet: five additional Olympic quotas will be decided using the FIVB rankings in June 2024.

Iran handed easy draw in 2024 Futsal World Cup

TEHRAN - Iran learned their fate at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Uzbekistan 2024 following the official draw in Samarkand on Sunday.

The 24 teams were divided into six groups for the September 14-October 6 global showpiece that will be contested in three cities: Andijan, Bukhara and Tashkent.

Iran, who impressed on route to lifting the AFC Futsal Asian Cup trophy for a 13th time, will face Venezuela, Guatemala and France in Group F.

World No 4 Iran, making their ninth consecutive appearance, will be aiming to better their third place finish achieved in 2016.

DRAW RESULT

Group A: Uzbekistan, Netherlands, Paraguay, Costa Rica

Group B: Brazil, Cuba, Croatia, Thailand

Group C: Argentina, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Angola

Group D: Spain, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Libya

Group E: Portugal, Panama, Tajikistan, Morocco

Major railway inaugurated in central Iran

From page 1 ► Among the aim of this project is facilitating rail freight transport from economic centers of active mines adjacent to the project, including Yazd dry port, Abarkoh's Sarmad Iron and steel, iron ore concentrate, Abadeh refractory soil, etc. Due to having a more than 30 percent return on investment, this project was the top priority for operation by the Islamic Republic of Iran Railway. Transporting more than three million tons freights in the first year of operation and more than 7 million tons in the 20th year of

operation is expected.

Also, transport of one million passengers in the first year of operation and 3 million passengers in the 20th year of operation are planned for this project. In addition, the speed of the passenger train is 160 km/h and the speed of the freight train is 120 km/h. Additionally, Mehriz Railway Station is opened today. In this visit, 4157 housing units of the National Housing Movement Plan are inaugurated. Also, 4412 pieces of land within the same plan will be transferred to the qualified applicants.

Iran imports 4.6 tons of gold bullion bars in March-May

TEHRAN - Iran's Customs Administration (IRICA) has reported that 4.6 metric tons of gold worth \$330 million were cleared through customs ports and imported into the country during the first two months of the current year.

The figure is 3.8 times more than the same period last year, when 1.2 metric tons (mt) of gold bullion worth \$79 million were imported into the country, IRNA reported citing figures from IRICA. Imam Khomeini Airport Customs was the origin of over 91% of gold bullion imports in the first two

months of this year (March 20 to May 20).

Late in 2022, the Iranian government approved a plan to facilitate the import of gold as part of its anti-sanctions policy, allowing businesses to import gold to settle their export-related foreign exchange dues to the government.

According to a new directive from the IRICA, imports of gold bullion are exempt from direct taxes, until further notice. The directive states that the import of various types of gold bullion will continue to be exempt from value-added tax (VAT) as well.

Quanzhou, a prosperous city visited by Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta

By Mahnaz Abdi

FUJIAN- As a part of their one-week trip to Fujian Province, in the southeast of China, a number of foreign journalists visited Quanzhou historical city in this province. Quanzhou, a coastal city in Fujian, is renowned for its long history and rich culture. It was once the starting point of the ancient Maritime Silk Road and a global maritime trade center back in the Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties.

Quanzhou is a prefecture-level port city on

the north bank of the Jin River, beside the Taiwan Strait in southern Fujian. It is Fujian's largest most populous metropolitan region.

Quanzhou was China's major port for foreign traders, who knew it as Zaiton, during the 11th through 14th centuries. It was visited by both Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta; both travelers praised it as one of the most prosperous and glorious cities in the world.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran-EU trade rises 8% in Q1 2024

TEHRAN - The trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €1.276 billion in the first three months of 2024, registering an eight percent growth year on year, according to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat.

Based on the Eurostat data, the trade between the two sides stood at €1.18 billion in the previous year's first three months.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to March 2024 stood at €1.06 billion, registering an increase of 10 percent compared to the same period of the previous year when the EU exports to Iran were reported to be €958 million.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €216 million in the first quarter of 2024 with a three percent decrease compared



to the same period last year. In the same quarter of the previous year, €220 million of goods were imported from Iran.

As previously announced by Eurostat, the value of trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €4.732 billion in 2023.

The trade between the two

sides fell nine percent in 2023 in comparison to the preceding year when the figure stood at €5.244 billion.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran from January to December 2023 stood at €3.993 billion, registering a decrease of six percent compared to the same period of 2022 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to

be €4.187 billion.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €799 million in 2023 with a 24 percent decrease compared to 2022. EU imported €1.057 billion of goods from Iran in January-December 2022.

According to Eurostat, Germany was Iran's top trade partner in Europe in 2023. The country accounted for 36 percent of the Iran-EU total trade in 2023. The total trade between Iran and Germany reached €1.432 billion last year.

Germany exported €1.199 billion of goods to Iran and imported €233 million from Iran. German exports to Iran decreased by 24 percent and imports by 16 percent, year on year.

Italy and the Netherlands were the second and third biggest European trade partners of the Islamic Republic in the previous year.

Transit of goods through Iran up by 56%

TEHRAN - The transit of foreign goods through Iran has increased by 56.5 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-May 20) compared to the same period last year, according to the latest report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA reported on Sunday that over 3.6 million metric tons (mt) of goods were transited through Iran in the mentioned two months, Mehr News Agency reported.

Parvizkhan customs on Iran's western borders with the Iraqi Kurdistan Region ranked first by registering 1.07 mt of commodities in the two-month period, which accounted for 29.5 percent of

the foreign transit.

Shahid Rajaei customs in the southern country recorded the second-largest foreign transit in the period, registering 893,000 mt of goods.

Also, 474,000 mt of the commodities went through Bashmaq customs which connects Iran to Iraq, coming third in this regard.

During this period, the largest increase in foreign transit went to the customs of Piranshahr, Sarakhs, and Parvizkhan, marking a rise of 726 percent, 294 percent, and 238 percent, respectively.

As previously announced by IRICA, 17.79 million tons of commodities were transited through the

country in the past Iranian calendar year 1402.

Transit of commodities through Iran increased by 36.52 percent during the previous year compared to the preceding year.

As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative offered by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Quarterly pistachio exports to EU up 17% y/y

TEHRAN - The statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat) has announced that in the first quarter of the current year, Iran's pistachio exports to the member states of the European Union increased by 17 percent compared to the same period last year, reaching €34 million.

In the same period of 2023 (from January to March), Iran's pistachio exports to the European Union stood at €29 million.

However, from January to March 2024, Iran's exports of pistachios with shells to the EU decreased by 3.0 percent compared to the same period last year. The exports amounted to €8.7 million in the first four months of 2024, down from €9 million during the same period in 2023.

Iran's exports of shelled pistachios to Europe during the mentioned period in 2024 increased by 26 percent, reaching €25.3 million. In the first quarter of 2023, Iran had exported €20 million

worth of shelled pistachios to Europe.

Among the European countries, Germany ranked as the largest importer of Iranian pistachios in the first quarter of the current year. Approximately 71 percent (equivalent to €24.3 million) of the total Iranian pistachio exports to the EU (€34 million) were delivered to Germany. After the United States, Iran stood as the second-largest exporter of pistachios to the European Union in the first quarter of 2024.

Khandouzi: Privatization of Shazand Petrochemical Marks Culmination of BMI's Asset Divestiture

The Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Ehsan Khandouzi, commended the management and staff of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) for their achievements in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (March 20, 2023 to March 20, 2024). He emphasized that the privatization of Shazand Petrochemical, previously owned by BMI, represents the pinnacle of the bank's efforts to divest surplus assets. Khandouzi urged BMI to take significant steps in the current year to cease acquiring lands and properties and instead focus on selling companies.

A conference was held in Tehran to evaluate BMI's performance in 1402 and outline its plans for 1403. Attendees included Khandouzi, Abolfazl Najjarzadeh (CEO of BMI), Mohammad Javad Sharifzadeh (Deputy Minister of Banking, Insurance, and State Companies), Hassan Kiaei (Director General of Banking and Insurance Affairs), and members of BMI's board of directors and CEO.

In his address, Khandouzi acknowledged BMI's year of achievements and expressed hope that the bank's initiatives would help resolve accumulated losses and imbalances. He stressed the need for improved management quality and accelerated quantitative measures. The minister also emphasized the importance of completing unfinished projects, resolving inequalities, and providing credit services, particularly in supply chain finance.

Khandouzi pointed out the effective actions of the bank in selling properties and added: This action is not possible except with the collective will of the board of directors and bank managers, and we also support the brave managers to make such important decisions so that in 1403 we see the sale of inactive companies much more than last year.

The minister also addressed the issue of credit and said: Special attention should be paid to issues related to the provision of credit services, and Melli Bank should take steps in this area and provide credit services and play a leading role to see the best example Supply chain finances (SCFs) in BMI. In this way, the policymaker will be sure that the resources are used in the right direction, that is, production.

Microloan Disbursements Reach 58 Thousand Billion Tomans in 1402



Najjarzadeh presented a report on BMI's performance in 1402, highlighting the completion of 145 projects, including those focused on comprehensive banking, digital transformation, and efficient resource management. He noted that 65 projects will be concluded and 22 new ones initiated in the current year.

Najjarzadeh: Skill-Based Hiring Will Become More Important in The BMI

The CEO of BMI emphasized the importance of skill-based hiring, with plans to strengthen this approach in 1403.

"In this filed, a plan was implemented to make all hirings in the bank and its subsidiaries through the the Recruitment Committee. This process will be strengthened in 1403 so that all recruitments are done based on their skills," he added.

"To address employee shortages, the bank implemented electronic and technological services, recruiting 1,832 individuals through written exams," he highlighted.

Najjarzadeh further pointed to the livelihood of the bank's employees and demanded to solve these problems in the current year.

BMI Takes Significant Step in Property Divestiture

He pointed to the emphasis of the Supreme Leader and the 13th administration on the withdrawal of banks from buying properties and investing in projects that are outside the banks' mission and added: Last year, the BMI sold about 36 thousand billion tomans of its assets to the private

sector, which is the first step in the history of the bank and has been unprecedented.

CEO of BMI added: This year our mission is to sell most of the stagnant bank assets to let the bank allocate its resources to lending and new investments.

Referring to Turning unproductive properties into productive assets, Najjarzadeh emphasized: BMI held 113 auctions for unproductive properties, selling 5,500 billion tomans worth of assets.

He stated: This year, all the Stagnant Assets of the bank and its subsidiary companies have been identified and auctions have been held since the beginning of the year, which will definitely continue strongly.



The CEO of Bank Melli of Iran mentioned that the bank has a large number of small customers, so the payment of microloans holds a special place within the bank. He referred to the payment of a 58 trillion tomans interest-free loan fund.

Regarding the approach of the Melli Bank of Iran in supporting knowledge-based companies, Najjarzadeh stated: BMI's support for knowledge-based companies, including a 5 thousand billion Tomans contract with the National Innovation Fund-INIF. The bank paid 17 thousand billion tomans in loans and issued 3 thousand billion tomans in guarantees.

BMI steps up supporting the National Housing Movement

The CEO the bank emphasized that BMI is accelerating its support for the National Housing Movement, concluding 80 thousand contracts valued at 19 thousand billion tomans.

"We will fulfill all these obligations after solving some problems in 2014," Najjarzadeh noted.

The CEO expressed commitment to fulfilling these obligations after resolving certain issues.

Najjarzadeh praised the integration of Noor Institute into the National Bank of Iran, which transferred 30,000 billion Rials in facilities and employed 2,000 employees.

Najjarzadeh said: Whenever the issue integration of a group has been raised in the

country, not only the government but the entire political system was involved in it, but last year, with the government's planning and the support of the Ministry of Economy, the integration of Noor Institute into the National Bank of Iran was done without any challenge. He did not come and this is one of the good achievements of the 13th government.

He added: As a result, 30,000 billion Rials of Noor Institute facilities were transferred to National Bank, and about 2,000 of its human resources were employed in the bank.

BMI Achieves Record Capital Increase

The CEO of BMI considered the capital increase of the bank as one of the most important developments of the bank at the end of last year and said: Until now, the capital increase was the result of revaluation of assets, but at the end of last year, for the first time, and with the support of the government, the capital increase was made from cash, which was unprecedented.

Referring to the plans of the bank for this year, he emphasized: Continuing profitability, management of resources and expenses, stopping overdrafts, moving towards smart banking, and completely withdrawing from traditional banking are among the bank's goals this year. It is also planned to sell 50 thousand billion Tomans from the Bank's stagnant assets, and we have done the best of our abilities to realize it.

In the end, he appreciated the support of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance and the Ministry of Economy and said: Last year, 4 thousand billion Tomans in loan that were not paid were collected and it is expected that we will receive more loans this year.



BMI Account Holders Can Designate Authorized Signatories for EV Purchases

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) customers interested in purchasing electric vehicles (EVs) can designate authorized signatories for their bank accounts by accessing the Firoozeh subpage on the website.

As per the BMI's public relations report, the sale of EVs commenced on May 19 and will continue until May 25 via the "EVs Supply website." Therefore, account holders intending to purchase these vehicles must authorize their account signatories and maintain a balance of 100 million Tomans in the account.

To designate signatories, applicants can conveniently complete the process online by visiting <https://firoozeh.bmi.ir>.

Applicants looking to buy electric vehicles between Thursday, May 16, and May 22 at 1:00 p.m. are required to designate their accounts' authorized signatories.

At least 45 killed, 250 injured in Israeli airstrike against displaced Palestinians in Rafah

Charred alive in tents

World condemns the massacre of Palestinian women and children in southern Gaza

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN-International outrage is reverberating over an Israeli savage attack against civilians in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah.

On Sunday night, Israeli warplanes fired eight missiles toward a tent camp in Tel Al-Sultan neighborhood in western Rafah where thousands of Palestinians were taking shelter.

Footage on social media showed flames sweeping through the camp as screaming people fled for safety. Videos also showed disturbing images including severely burned corpses and a man holding what appears to be the headless body of a little kid.

By Monday evening, it was reported that at least 45 people had been killed and 250 others injured. Most of the victims are women and children.

According to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), the dead included women and children, with many "burned alive" inside their tents.

Israeli officials had designated the makeshift camp a safe zone.

Israel admitted it had carried out the attack but said it struck a " Hamas compound" and killed two senior members of the group.

And this is how the regime tried to play down the tragic deaths of displaced Palestinians there.

"The strike was carried out against legitimate targets under international law, using through the use of precise munitions and on the basis of precise intelligence that indicated Hamas' use of the area," the Israeli army said in a statement.

The attack has sparked condemnation from Palestinian officials, global organizations and countries around the world.

Massacre beyond all limits

The Palestinian presidency accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians.

"The deliberate targeting of displaced persons' tents in Rafah by the Israeli occupation army constitutes a massacre beyond all limits. Immediate intervention is required to halt these crimes against the Palestinian people," Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said.

He added, "The perpetration of this heinous massacre by the Israeli occupation forces defies all international legal rulings, particularly the clear and explicit ICJ decision demanding the cessation of attacks on Rafah and the protection of the Palestinian people."

On Friday, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), issued a dramatic ruling, ordering Israel to "immediately halt its military offensive in Rafah".

But, Sunday's massacre in the tent camp indicated Israel's blatant disregard for the ruling issued by the UN's top court.



"Egregious affront"

Hamas denounced the Israeli assault as an "egregious affront" to the ICJ ruling.

The resistance movement urged Muslims around the world to step up their anti-Israeli activism in the face of the regime's war of genocide that was launched on October 7.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri also said the United States is responsible for aiding Israel with weapons and money in the wake of the Sunday massacre.

UNRWA: "Gaza hell on earth"

The United Nations Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, described the Israeli attack as "horrifying".

"Information coming out of Rafah about further attacks on families seeking shelter is horrifying. There are reports of mass casualties including children and women among those killed. Gaza is hell on earth. Images from last night are yet another testament to that," UNRWA wrote on X.

"Insane war crimes"

Iran called on the international community to give a practical response to the Israeli bombing.

"This barbaric crime is a clear example of a war crime and an obvious violation of the interim orders issued by the International Court of Justice," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

"Whenever the child-killing Zionist regime suffers humiliating defeats in the battlefield, it commits such insane war crimes against Palestinian civilians," Nasser Kanaani said on X.

UN rapporteur: Impose sanctions on Israel

The UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territory said the Israeli bombing of the tent camp highlights the regime's cruelty.

"This cruelty, along with blatant defiance of the int'l law and system, is unacceptable. The #GazaGenocide? will not easily end without external pressure: Israel must face sanctions, justice, suspension of agreements, trade, partnership and investments, as well as participation in int'l forums," Francesca Albanese wrote on X.

EU says "horrified by news coming out of Rafah"

The EU foreign policy chief ac-

used Israel of ignoring the order by the ICJ, known as the World Court.

Josep Borrell said the ruling must be implemented.

Borrell also said on X, "Horrified by news coming out of #Rafah on Israeli strikes killing dozens of displaced persons, including small children. I condemn this in the strongest terms. There is no safe place in Gaza. These attacks must stop immediately. ICJ orders & IHL must be respected by all parties."

Spain, Norway and Ireland which have announced that they formally recognize Palestine as a state on May 28 also made a blistering attack on Israel.

Irish FM calls the attack "barbaric"

The Irish foreign minister described the attack as "barbaric".

"One cannot bomb an area like that without shocking consequences in terms of innocent children and civilians. We would urge Israel to stop, to stop now, in terms of the military operation in Rafah," Micheal Martin said.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said the gravity of the attack against the tent camp was larger than previous strikes amid the ICJ ruling ordering Israel to halt its Rafah offensive.

Norway's foreign minister slammed Israel for defying the ICJ order.

Espen Barth Eide said the attacks are a "material breach of the decision of the highest court of the world. We've had a compulsory order from the International Court of Justice ordering Israel to stop its attack in Rafah. It is compulsory. It's binding," according to Al Jazeera.

France "outraged by Israeli strike"

The French president said he was "outraged by the Israeli strikes that have killed many displaced persons in Rafah".

"These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians. I call for full respect for international law and an immediate ceasefire," Emmanuel Macron said on X.

UK puts condemnation on hold

Britain also reacted to the Israeli assault but stopped short

of condemning the regime for the massacre.

"The UK is clear that we do not support a major military operation in Rafah without a plan to protect the hundreds of thousands of civilians who remain there. The fastest way to end the conflict is to secure a deal which gets the hostages out and allows for a pause in the fighting in Gaza. We must then work with our international partners to turn that pause into a long-term sustainable ceasefire," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

The government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is under pressure to halt arms supplies to Israel over the regime's brutal onslaught on Gaza which has claimed the lives of more than 36,000 Palestinians since early October.

"Failure of humanity"

Britain's former Labour Party leader described Israel's attack on the camp a "monstrous failure of humanity".

"Palestinian children should wake up feeling excited to go to school and play with their friends. Instead, for those murdered in Rafah, their last moments on this earth were filled with unimaginable fear as bombs rained down on their tents. What a monstrous failure of humanity," Jeremy Corbyn wrote on X.

Israel's bombing of the tent camp clearly demonstrates that it is making a mockery of justice amid the ICJ ruling.

Israel's horrible crime against civilians in the Rafah neighborhood indicates that the regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has no scruples about violating international humanitarian law.

Israel has perpetrated appalling atrocities in the Gaza Strip with impunity over the past months in the face of unwavering support from Western countries, in particular the United States.

Israeli officials must be held to account for committing despicable crimes against Palestinians.

Western officials who continue to support Israel are also complicit in the regime's brutalities.

Israel is killing Palestinian civilians because it has been unable to defeat resistance groups in the battlefield.

The Israeli army has suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of Hamas amid growing support for the resistance movement.

The Israeli bombing of the tent camp was carried out in revenge for Israel's failure to bring the Palestinian resistance to its knees.

At the weekend, Hamas fired missiles toward Tel Aviv. It also killed and captured Israeli soldiers during fighting in a tunnel in northern Gaza which is a show of resilience after nearly eight months into Israel's massive air, sea and ground assaults.

More importantly, Israeli ignorance of measures taken by international institutions, including the UN General Assembly and orders by top UN courts - the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court - highlighted how much Netanyahu is violating international law and in particular international humanitarian law.

Finally, public surveys show the rising number of Israelis who are opposed to the genocidal Israeli war and the high number of Palestinians who are refusing to leave Gaza despite the barbaric nature of the Israeli bombardment. Gazans have sent a clear message: there won't be another Nakba. They would rather die than be displaced again as has been advocated by Netanyahu's cabinet.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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WORLD HEADLINES

Egyptian, Israeli troops trade fire

Israeli and Egyptian forces have exchanged fire near Rafah amid growing tensions between the two sides over the Tel Aviv regime's onslaught on the Gaza Strip.

Citing military sources, Israeli media said Egyptian troops fired at Israeli soldiers who returned fire.

An Egyptian soldier was killed in the exchange of fire.

The Egyptian Armed Forces said they are conducting an investigation into the shooting.

Daily News Egypt, an independent English-language Egyptian newspaper, cited unnamed sources as saying Egyptian soldiers were "affected" by the Rafah massacre on Sunday.

Israeli forces seized the Rafah border crossing earlier this month as they launched an offensive in Rafah.

The occupation of the crossing has increased tensions between Egypt and Israel, threatening a peace treaty between the two sides, which had previously fought four wars.

UK doctor: Gaza hospitals operating in 'Medieval' conditions

Gaza hospitals are reduced to practicing "medieval medicine", a British surgeon recently returned from the bombed Palestinian territory said on Monday.

"It's absolutely true to describe it as medieval medicine. It is what you would hear about or read about what would be happening in Europe maybe 300, 400 years ago," Dr Khaled Dawas, head of gastrointestinal surgery at University College London Hospitals, told AFP in an interview.

Dawas described dire conditions in Gaza, with medical staff operating virtually without supplies, power supplies intermittent and patients lying on the floor.

He returned at the end of April from his two-week stint to help overstretched Palestinian hospital surgeons -- his second wartime stay there, following one in January.

"By April they were seeing this constant, constant volume of dying and dead bodies coming into the hospitals and any human wouldn't be able to tolerate it," he said.

"They carry on working, but you can see the effect of that. They're all extremely burdened by what they're doing."

UNICEF: End senseless killing of Rafah kids

The head of UNICEF on Monday demanded an "end to the senseless killing of children" following the Israeli airstrike on tents housing displaced people in Rafah, a city in southern Gaza Strip, Anadolu news agency reported.

"Images of burned children and families emerging from bombed tents in Rafah shocks us all. The reported killing of children sheltering in makeshift tents is unconscionable," Catharine Russell wrote on X.

Underscoring the severity of the situation, Russell said: "For over 7 months, we've witnessed this tragedy unfold, resulting in thousands of children killed or injured."

CAIR: No more shifting red lines in Gaza

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said US President Joe Biden will once again cross red lines set by himself and the international community if he keeps arming Israel despite the carnage in Rafah, according to Al Jazeera.

"No more shifting red lines, no more calls for

[Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu's government to investigate itself, and no more military, financial or diplomatic support for this genocide," the US group said in a post on X.

"All Americans are being stained with the blood of innocent Palestinians by your support for this slaughter. It must end. Now."

Italy rebukes NATO call for more strikes on Russia

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and other top officials have accused NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg of escalating tensions with Moscow over comments he made on use of Western arms by Kiev.

Stoltenberg claimed last week that the "time has come" for members of the US-led military bloc to reconsider their policies and let Ukraine use Western weapons to launch strikes deep into Russian territory, RT reported.

"I don't know why Stoltenberg said such a thing, I think we have to be very careful," Meloni told Italy's Rai 3 TV channel on Sunday. The Italian prime minister stressed that "NATO must remain firm, not give the signal that it is giving in," but advised "greater caution."

"There are many questionable statements," Meloni added, recalling how she rebuked French President Emmanuel Macron over his remarks on potentially sending troops to Ukraine.

Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini told an election rally on Sunday that Stoltenberg "cannot speak on behalf of the Italian people."

"NATO cannot force us to kill in Russia, nor can anyone force us to send Italian soldiers to fight or die in Ukraine," Salvini said.

2,000 feared buried under Papua New Guinea landslide

As many as 2,000 people are feared to have been buried by last week's massive landslide in Papua New Guinea, according to the country's National Disaster Centre, as survivors recounted the horror of losing so many loved ones.

The landslide occurred in the mountainous Enga region in northern Papua New Guinea on Friday and the latest missing figure is a sharp rise from earlier estimates, CNN reported.

Locals have been left reeling after tons of rock and mud smashed into their homes as they slept. Rescuers have struggled to reach such a remote part of what is already one of Asia's poorest nations leaving locals with little choice but to dig through the collapsed mountainside with whatever tools they have.

Media watchdog files ICC case over journalists' deaths in Gaza

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Monday it had filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court over Palestinian journalists killed or injured in Gaza.

RSF said it was asking the ICC's prosecutor to investigate war crimes committed by the Israeli army against at least nine Palestinian reporters since December 15, AFP reported.

The ICC said in January it was probing potential crimes against journalists since the outbreak of Israel's war on Gaza, which has cost the lives of more than 100 reporters.

RSF said it had "reasonable grounds for thinking that some of these journalists were deliberately killed and that the others were the victims of deliberate IDF attacks against civilians."

This specific complaint -- the third the RSF has made -- concerns eight Palestinian journalists killed between December 20 and May 20, and one other who sustained injuries.

"All concerned journalists were killed (or injured) in the course of their work," RSF said in a statement.

Hamas on the offensive Palestinian resistance changes tactics

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - As the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) commit further massacres against civilians in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian resistance has changed its strategy from defensive to offensive.

There are several factors behind this strategic tactic.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet rejected the ceasefire deal proposed to Hamas and Tel Aviv by the Egyptians, Qataris and the United States.

It showed that Netanyahu is not interested in peace, prompting the resistance to go on the offensive against the IOF in an effort to force a ceasefire.

The Israeli rejection of a sustainable ceasefire

has also proven, once again, to the Palestinians that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza lies solely with Netanyahu's government and its indiscriminate orders to the IOF.

The second factor is that the Gaza resistance was not the side seeking an all-out regional war. But Netanyahu's cabinet was. However, Iran's Operation True Promise (carried out after the Israeli military bombed Tehran's consulate building in Damascus) and the position of the United States, which essentially informed its Israeli ally that America would not partake in attacking Iran the possibility of an all-out regional war was greatly reduced.

The Israelis did not respond to Operation True Promise. This allowed the Palestinian resistance to change the rules of the game.

More importantly, Israeli ignorance of measures taken by international institutions, including the UN General Assembly and orders by top UN courts - the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court - highlighted how much Netanyahu is violating international law and in particular international humanitarian law.

Finally, public surveys show the rising number of Israelis who are opposed to the genocidal Israeli war and the high number of Palestinians who are refusing to leave Gaza despite the barbaric nature of the Israeli bombardment. Gazans have sent a clear message: there won't be another Nakba. They would rather die than be displaced again as has been advocated by Netanyahu's cabinet.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

UNESCO-listed Qasabeh Qanat hosts inbound tourists

TEHRAN – Gonabad's historical Qasabeh Qanat, a UNESCO World Heritage site, has welcomed a group of overseas tourists.

On Sunday evening, the ancient Qasabeh Qanat, saw its first international visitors in the course of the current Persian year (started on March 20), according to the local official in charge of tourism.

Mehdi zolfaqari further elaborated that the team consisting of 13 tourists hailing from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, and Australia arrived to marvel at the 2,500-year-old engineering wonder.

"After exploring the site, the group continued their journey," he brought to light. "Departing Gonabad for Mashhad, the provincial capital, as part of their broader tour of Iran."

The Qasabeh Qanat, which boasts a history spanning over 2,500 years, is celebrated as the oldest and largest qanat in Iran. It stands as a testament to the ingenuity and advanced engineering skills of ancient Persian civilizations in managing water resources. This impressive feat of engineering provided a reliable water supply for agricultural and domestic use.

Its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2007 underscores its global significance and the need to preserve such historical sites for future generations.

The Qasabeh Qanat stretches over 33 kilometers, with its mother well located at the northern slope of Siah Kuh and the qanat's current emergence in the eastern part of the town known as "Qasabeh Shahr." The intricate system is composed of two main branches and six subsidiary channels, featuring a mother well depth of about 300 meters at its deepest point.



Remarkably, the qanat has an impressive water output of more than 130 liters per second, showcasing the advanced understanding of hydro-engineering possessed by its ancient builders.

This qanat, inscribed on Iran's national heritage list in 2000, is a marvel of engineering and water resource management. Its design and construction techniques have fascinated historians, engineers, and tourists alike. The site continues to draw attention not only for its historical value but also for its potential to educate current and future generations about sustainable water management practices.

Gonabad itself is a treasure trove of history, with over 250 identified historical sites, 148 of which have been registered on the national heritage list. Among these, the Qasabeh Qanat holds a distinguished position. Its role in supporting agriculture and daily life in ancient times makes it an essential part of the region's heritage.

Gonabad is located 287 kilometers south of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province. With its ancient qanat and numerous historical sites, Gonabad remains a beacon for those interested in exploring Iran's rich and diverse cultural history.

Thousands protest against mass tourism in Spain's Balearic Islands

Thousands of people protested in Spain's Balearic Islands on Saturday against mass tourism ahead of the summer season.

Holding posters reading SOS Residents, Enough Mass Tourism, protesters marched through Palma de Mallorca, the capital of the largest Balearic Island. About 10,000 demonstrators took part, a Spanish National police spokesperson said.

A smaller protest with a few hundred people was staged in Menorca.

"We want the authorities to stop people who have not lived here more than five years from buying properties and to put more controls on holiday accommodation," said Carme Reines, from a collective which organized the protest in Palma de Mallorca.

Javier Carbonell, a real estate agent, said over half of rental properties were used for holiday rents and were not affordable for locals.

"We want less mass tourism and more sustainable tourism," Carbonell said.

After Catalonia, the Balearic Islands was the second most popular region of Spain for tourists last year, attracting 14.4 million hol-

idaymakers, the Spanish National Statistics Institute said.

Some 18 million tourists visited Catalonia and 13.9 million people visited the Canary Islands, the Spanish archipelago off Western Africa.

Tourism generates 45% of the Balearic Islands' gross domestic product, according to data from Exceltur, an industry organization.

On Friday, about 1,000 protesters took part in a demonstration against mass tourism in Ibiza, one of the most popular Balearic Islands.

"We want a limit on new tourist places and a ban on more illegal flats. With less flats around on the market, it pushes up the price," said Rafael Gimenez, a spokesman for Prou Ibiza which organized Friday's protest.

In April, thousands of people protested in the Canary Islands, calling for a temporary limit on tourist arrivals to stem a boom in short-term holiday rentals and hotel construction that is increasing housing costs for locals.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran in frames



Sunlight, passing through mosaic windows, paints a tourist's face, in Nasir al-Mulk mosque, Shiraz.

From Yazd to Khiva: twin gems of ancient architecture and culture

By Afshin Majlesi

TASHKENT - In the vast expanse of Asia, among the myriad of ancient cities, two stand out for their striking similarities and rich cultural heritage: Yazd in Iran and Khiva in Uzbekistan.

Though separated by miles of desert and mountains, Yazd and Khiva each offer their own unique glimpses into the past, with architectural wonders that tell stories of resilience, faith, and artistry.

Whether it's the ingenious wind-catchers of Yazd or the stunning minarets of Khiva, these cities captivate the imagination and offer a deep connection to the distant past. Reading travelogs, we see that many sightseers have said visiting these cities is like stepping into a different era, where the echoes of history resonate through every alley and courtyard.

For instance, the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, with its towering minarets and intricate tilework, stands as a testament to the city's Islamic heritage. The Zoroastrian Fire Temple, with a flame said to have been burning for over a thousand years, highlights the city's diverse religious history. And in Khiva, the Djuma Mosque, with its forest of 212 wooden columns, offers a unique architectural experience. Here, madrasahs, such as those of Alla-Kulli-Khan and Muhammad Aminkhon, not only served as educational centers but also as hubs of social ac-



tivity, reflecting the city's role as a center of learning and culture.

When it comes to cultural festivals and traditions, both are vibrant with cultural practices and festivals. Yazd is renowned for its Nowruz (Persian New Year) celebrations and the unique Muharram rituals of Ashura, which attract visitors from around the world. These events offer a deep insight into the spiritual and social fabric of Iranian culture.

Khiva, on the other hand, hosts the annual Khorezm Dance Festival, celebrating traditional Uzbek dance and music. This festival brings the city's streets to life with color and rhythm, offering visitors an immersive cultural experience.

A formal connection

In February 2021, these two ancient cities were officially twinned through an online Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed

by the mayors of Yazd and Khiva. This agreement underscored their cultural and historical connections and laid the groundwork for collaboration in cultural preservation and tourism development.

UNESCO labels

The historical cores of Yazd and Khiva (Itchan Kala, which is the inner fortress of Khiva), have been recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage sites. This recognition is due to their well-preserved mosques, historic schools (madrasahs), caravanserais, rising minarets, and traditional houses.

Suggestions for enhanced partnership

Yazd and Khiva have the potential to create a powerful partnership that enhances cultural exchange and boosts tourism. Here are some proposals to enrich links between the two: cultural exchange programs, joint tourism packages,

combined cultural festivals, collaborative digital platforms such as virtual tours and digital archives, joint social media campaigns, educational and research collaborations, enhanced transportation links, and joint restoration projects.

And more significantly, producing films, documentaries, or series about Yazd and Khiva can significantly raise public awareness about their cultural, touristic, and historical significance. In fact, films and documentaries vigorously help bring the unique cultural heritage of Yazd and Khiva to life through compelling visuals and storytelling. By highlighting the intricate details of their architecture, traditions, and daily life, audiences can gain a deeper appreciation of these cities' rich histories.

For example, a documentary featuring the wind-catchers of Yazd and the minarets of Khiva can visually demonstrate the ingenuity and aesthetic beauty of these architectural marvels. In addition, travel documentaries and feature films can inspire viewers to visit Yazd and Khiva by showcasing their stunning landscapes, historical sites, and vibrant cultures.

All and all, creating a robust partnership between Yazd and Khiva helps promote sustainable tourism and ensures the preservation of their invaluable heritage for future generations.

Sustan wetland: Gilan's human-made marvel amidst nature's splendor



TEHRAN - In the lush landscapes of Gilan, Iran, lies picturesque Sustan wetland within the verdant city of Lahijan, often hailed as the jewel of the province.

Remarkably, Sustan wetland, devoid of natural origins, was created less than a century ago by locals to irrigate their agricultural lands.

Located near the village of Sustan, the wetland is approximately 5 kilometers southeast of Lahijan and around 50 kilometers southeast of Rasht, the province's capital. Sustan borders the village of Kooh Bijar to the north and Lahijan to the south and west.

The word "Sustan" is derived from two parts, meaning "stone mountain" in Gilaki-local language-, taken from a village near the wetland.

Sustan wetland in Lahijan stands out as one of the most vital habitats for lotus and water lily. Surrounded by towering mountains and unique vegetation, this freshwater marsh enriches Lahijan's natural charm.

During their migratory journey, birds such as teals and coots choose this extraordinary landscape as a stopover.

It's recommended to visit Sustan wetland in the morning, as the floating lotus flowers bloom during daylight hours, offering a unique experience of the lush green surroundings.

The best time to visit the wetland is undoubtedly during spring and summer. The blooming lotus flowers, lush greenery, and wildflowers create a picturesque view of the wetland area.

However, it's important to note that due to its artificial nature, Sustan wetland may have limited water during the hot months of the year.

Although the marshy flowers wither as the cold season approaches, the arrival of migratory birds signals a renewed beginning. Whether you choose to visit Sustan wetland during the cold months or prefer the warmth of sunny days, the region's rare wildlife species are always present to offer you a delightful experience.

Iran's tourism gets boost with hundreds of investment packages

TEHRAN - Signaling a significant push for tourism growth, more than 600 investment packages have been introduced by Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry.

An official in charge of tourism investments, on Monday, revealed a comprehensive initiative aimed at bolstering the tourism sector through strategic investment collaborations.

Ahmad Tajari highlighted the joint efforts between governmental entities and the private sector, resulting in the development of 636 investment packages meticulously crafted to showcase the country's tourism potential and attract both domestic and international invest-

ors.

"Not only do they serve to identify and promote existing tourism assets," he added. "But they also create conducive environments for engaging qualified investors while facilitating the investment processes."

Tajari further elaborated on the collaborative nature of this endeavor, citing the involvement of various governmental bodies across different sectors.

Specifically, he noted that 184 investment packages were formulated in partnership with the private sector, indicating a strong commitment from businesses to contribute to the growth and development of

the tourism industry.

Additionally, 143 investment packages were crafted with the active participation and support of municipal authorities, underlining the importance of local government engagement in tourism initiatives.

Furthermore, Tajari highlighted the specific focus areas of these investment packages, with 125 packages dedicated to tourism ventures related to water resources, water therapy, and water-based recreational activities.

Expanding on the breadth of collaboration, the Director General outlined additional partnerships that contributed to the formulation of investment packages. These

included initiatives with natural resource entities, historical preservation funds, airport authorities, agricultural and land management agencies, as well as urban development and free zone authorities.

The unveiling of these 636 investment packages signals a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to revitalize and expand the tourism sector, according to the related officials.

By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of both public and private stakeholders, the initiative aims to attract substantial investment, foster sustainable tourism development, and position the country as a premier destination on the global tourism map.

Grave robbers looted lavish 1,800-year-old tombs in China — but missed this one

Archaeologists in China have discovered the 1,800-year-old tombs of a wealthy family, but soon realized that of the three lavish burials, only one had escaped the attention of grave robbers.

Although the two looted tombs are now in poor condition, the other tomb is untouched and contains more than 70 artifacts, including an iron sword and a bronze mirror, placed there as grave offerings.

The burials, which date to the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 CE) were found during excavation at Dazhuangzi Village in the southern part of

Rizhao, a coastal city in Shandong province about 360 miles (580 kilometers) southeast of Beijing.

According to a translated statement from China's Institute of Archaeology, the tombs were under a burial mound at a local park that had been badly damaged by farming in the past, and the excavations there were carried out before the park was expanded.

Two people had been buried in each of the three tombs, in coffins made of wood; and all three had sloping, paved "tomb roads" leading down to them. One of the looted tombs and the

unlooted tomb contain inscriptions with the surname "Huan," which implies the tomb complex belonged to the same wealthy family, the statement noted.

All three tombs at Rizhao were important discoveries, the statement said; but the untouched tomb, in particular, will help reveal more about burial practices in Shandong during the Han dynasty.

(Source: Live science)

ToT workshops held to improve media health literacy

TEHRAN –The ministry of health in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) organized two training of trainers (ToT) workshops to help health experts boost their knowledge on media health literacy.

The workshops were held in Tehran in the first week of May.

Some 80 health education and health promotion experts from the ministry of health participated in the workshops.

The participants enhanced their knowledge and exchanged views on media health literacy to tackle misinformation and disinformation in different health-related areas.

Participants in this three-day ToT engaged in fruitful discussions on media health literacy and reviewed lessons learned in the past years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as charted the way forward.

The training aimed to help health practitioners differentiate misinformation and disinformation against proven facts on health-related information in the media and learn how to react appropriately to incorrect information.

The facilitators of the workshops included top national lecturers from different partner organizations, namely the Iranian Audio-Visual Regulatory Authority (SATRA), the Iranian Cyber Space Police (FATA), the Parliament News Department, Tehran University, and Iran's Media Literacy Organization.

In the next step, the trained health practitioners will hold provincial workshops on media health literacy across the country for health volunteers and ambassadors.

Learning how to deal with misinformation and disinformation in health-related areas enhances the media health literacy of society and contributes to improved accessibility of reliable healthcare information for the public, especially families, mothers, and children.



Recent services

The ministry of education and the UNICEF held a workshop for principals of Upper Secondary Boarding Schools from 10 provinces to boost their capacities in developing students' skills which are essential to find a decent job.

The four-day long workshop was held from April 27 to 30. A total of 90 Upper Secondary Boarding School principals from 10 provinces of Kordestan, Kermanshah, Hamedan, Ilam, Zanjan, Markazi, Qazvin, Ardebil, West and East Azarbaijan attended the workshop.

UNICEF's collaboration with the ministry of education focuses on adolescents in boarding schools, which are secondary schools in disadvantaged parts of the country.

The training opportunity provides school principals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support the students, at these schools in rural and remote regions, in improving their self-assurance, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

This series of workshops marks the initial phase that will span across all provinces throughout the year, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on May 9.

UNICEF has provided safe and supportive spaces for Afghan children in the Torbat-e Jam Refugee Settlement in Khorasan Razavi Province to develop skills essential for dealing with life challenges.

UNICEF-supported Child-Friendly Space (CFS) in Iran is one of the three centers made possible by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations' financial aid.

CSFs provide children the chance to play and grow, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on April 30.

Following the destructive floods that hit Sistan-Baluchestan province in February, UNICEF was actively engaged in providing essential aid to the affected communities mainly women and children.

Funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), UNICEF procured 2900 essential hygiene packs including 2000 household hygiene kits, 300 baby kits, 500 Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits, and 100 incontinence kits to prevent disease outbreaks and promote children's overall well-being, the UNICEF website reported on April 30.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Ministry of Energy, prioritized the provision of safe water and sanitation services to households and communities affected by the disaster to ensure that children and families stay safe and healthy.

UNICEF has also delivered ten water tankers and over 3 tons of percholine powder to the affect-

ed areas, ensuring access to safe drinking water.

As part of UNICEF's humanitarian response to the flood-affected communities in Sistan-Baluchestan, children and families in the affected villages of Dashtiari district will receive 2900 hygiene packs.

The UNICEF supported the delivery of 564,000 doses of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) for the prevention of pneumococcal-related infections and deaths among children in Iran.

The measure was adopted in support of the introduction of PCV in the national childhood immunization program in the country, the UNICEF website reported on March 17.

The consignment was the first shipment of PCV to the country, using Iran's financial resources left over from the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, through UNICEF procurement services.

The shipment arrived from India and landed at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on March 17.

On January 27, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, and the UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding to develop an innovation ecosystem for children and adolescents in the country.

The MOU was signed by Amir-Hossein Mirabadi, an official with the Vice Presidency, and Nandy, IRNA reported.

Moreover, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education has provided eight prefabricated healthcare rooms to address health challenges in quake-hit villages in Khoy County.

The main objective is to provide uninterrupted primary medical care for the affected children and their families, according to a press release by the UNICEF website on January 23.

Iran sends second humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has sent the second shipment of humanitarian aid to flood-affected people in Afghanistan.

It includes biological items such as medicines, foodstuff, blankets, tents, and other things, Tasnim News Agency reported.

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 8,696 families have been affected by recent floods in the provinces of Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar.

OCHA revealed that nearly 350 people have died in these floods while over 1,651 others have been injured.

Floods in the northern region have affected 1,870 houses, with 84 reported deaths, 5 injuries, and approximately 40 individuals still missing.

In the western region, floods have affected 6,000 houses, resulting in 5 fatalities and over 100 injuries.

On May 23, the IRCS sent the first consignment of relief items to flood victims in Afghanistan.

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

The donated goods included 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 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."

He added that it's important that transparent procedures are in place for accepting humanitarian assistance to ensure fairness. The challenging decision-making process, highlighted by the life-saving efforts during the Herat earthquake, underscores the need for coordinated and transparent approaches in crisis response."

The World Food Program has reported that over 1,000 houses have been destroyed, leaving countless families homeless and vulnerable. The toll on human life and infrastructure continues to rise as emergency responders struggle to reach remote and inaccessible areas.

Knowledge-based ecosystem grows by 64%

From page 1 ▶ removing barriers to competitive production and improving the country's financial system to boost the knowledge-based economy.

Tax exemptions and credits are among the most important components of the law that have had a significant effect in increasing the share of research and development in the GDP in the past two years.

In recent years, the development of the country's knowledge-based ecosystem has become a public demand mainly due to the role played by experts of knowledge-based companies in addressing the country's challenges, including sanctions and providing timely solutions to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

The rise in the number of knowledge-based companies from about 6,000 to nearly 10,000 knowledge-based companies indicates a growth of 64 percent in the knowledge-based ecosystem

within two years.

Knowledge-based companies' products from the Iranian year 1399 (2020-2021) to 1401 (2022-2023) increased by about 100 percent reaching \$1,132 million from \$296 million. The knowledge-based companies' imports also increased by 50 percent from \$1,633 million to \$3,855 million.

Innovative companies with a share of about 20 percent of all knowledge-based companies, account for 67 percent of income and more than 75 percent of exports and imports. However, technology companies with a share of less than 7 percent have about 30 percent of revenue and over 20 percent of knowledge-based foreign trade.

According to the vice presidency of science, technology and knowledge-based economy, the administration of the late president focused on both quantitative and qualitative expansion of knowledge-based companies exemplified by the

change in support and evaluation system for the knowledge-based companies and institutions.

The quantitative development of knowledge-based companies has led to an increase in their employment by 8.4 folds, with more than 420,000 individuals currently working in knowledge-based related jobs.

Instead of focusing on the level of technology development, as in the past, companies are categorized based on economic power so that they can benefit from the support proportion to the size of the company.

It lays the ground for large industrial firms to move towards innovation and technology, and help the country's macroeconomics move in line with global trends towards technology development and innovation.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

System to be set up for agricultural drought

A system will be launched to monitor, forecast and report the agricultural lands being hit by drought, Amir Qaderi, an official with Disaster Management Organization has announced.

Over a meeting of a special working group for addressing drought and risks threatening agricultural sector, a plan for establishing a system for monitoring and forecasting agricultural drought in the country was approved and submitted to the Disaster Management Organization for review, he explained.

"Following the study of other countries' experiences and existing global methods, the necessity of establishing a domestic system to recognize the lands prone to agricultural drought was emphasized," he noted.

سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران ایجاد می‌شود

معاون امور بازرسی و بازرگانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور از ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران خبر داد. به گزارش پایگاه اطلاع‌رسانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور، امیر قادری روز یکشنبه با اعلام این خبر گفت: طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران طی جلسه‌ای با حضور مدیران و کارشناسان سازمان مدیریت بحران و وزارت جهاد کشاورزی بررسی شد. وی ادامه داد: پس از بررسی تجارب داخلی و روش‌های موجود جهانی، ضرورت استقرار نمونه بومی پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی مورد تأکید قرار گرفت و با مشارکت مراکز پژوهشی سازمان هواشناسی کشور و پژوهشکده حفاظت خاک و آبخیزداری طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران پیشنهاد شد.



MAY 28, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

How happy is he who sincerely devotes exclusively to Allah his entire life, including his actions, knowledge, love, hatred, receiving, relinquishing, speech, silence, and his words and deeds.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:33 Dawn: 3:08 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:51 (tomorrow)

Tehran meeting to commemorate Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall



TEHRAN- A number of Iranian literati will come together in a session at the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia in Tehran on Wednesday to pay tribute to the Austrian orientalist and historian Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall.

The meeting entitled "An Evening with Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall and the Iranian World" is organized to commemorate 250th birthday anniversary of the celebrated orientalist.

Organized in collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum Tehran (Österreichisches Kulturforum Teheran-ÖKFT), the session will be dedicated to the life and works of this great scholar and Iranologist from Austria.

During the event, the importance of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall as a translator of the Quran and the Divan of Hafez, as well as his participation in publishing and understanding Islamic literature in German-speaking countries, will be highlighted.

The attendees and speakers of the event will include the director of the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia Kazem Mousavi Bojnourdi, Austrian Ambassador to Tehran Wolf Dietrich Heim, the director of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna Emil Brix, researcher at the Institute of Iranian Studies at Austrian Academy of Sciences Sibylle Wentker and Iranian scholars Saied Firouzabadi, Alireza Barduni and Ali Dehbashi.

Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall was a prolific writer and scholar, and his works spanned a wide range of subjects. One of his most notable works is his 10-volume "Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches" (History of the Ottoman Empire), published between 1827 and 1835. This

monumental work is considered one of the most comprehensive and authoritative histories of the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to his work on the Ottoman Empire, Hammer-Purgstall also wrote extensively on Islamic literature and culture. He was one of the first Western scholars to study and translate Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts, and his works include translations of Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Wahshiyah's "Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained" and Evliya Efendi's "Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa". He also wrote on the history of Arabic literature, including his seven-volume "Literaturgeschichte der Araber" (History of Arabic Literature), which was left unfinished at the time of his death.

Hammer-Purgstall's works also include several studies on Middle Eastern history and culture. He wrote about the history of the Golden Horde in Kiptschak, as well as the Ilchane dynasty in Persia. He also wrote about the history of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, and published a comprehensive history of the Ottoman Empire's administrative system.

In addition to his historical and literary works, Hammer-Purgstall also wrote about travels and geography.

He published accounts of his own travels, including "Umblick auf einer Reise von Constantinopel nach Brussa und dem Olympos" (View from a Journey from Constantinople to Brussa and Olympus), and wrote about the geography and culture of the Middle East.

Finally, Hammer-Purgstall also wrote about the history of Islamic mysticism and Sufism. He published a comprehensive study of the Assassin sect, which was based on his own research and translations of primary sources.

Overall, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's works are a testament to his vast knowledge and expertise in Middle Eastern history, literature, and culture.

His writings continue to be studied by scholars today, and provide a valuable window into the intellectual and cultural landscape of Europe during the 19th century.

Iran participating in Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair

TEHRAN-Iran is participating in this year's edition of Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair (KLIBF) after several years of absence, Iran's cultural attaché in Malaysia has said.

"Fortunately, we are witnessing an unprecedented reception from the participants," Honaronline quoted Habib-Reza Arzani as saying on Monday.

"This year, with special assistance from the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and following cultural negotiations by cultural attaché office of Iran in Malaysia, we have participated in two sections of the exhibition," he added.

According to Arzani, Iran is present in the book sales and distribution section as well as the ASEAN Rights Fair (ARF) where publishers across the region trade rights with each other and others from all over the world.

"In this year's exhibition, diverse books from 17 countries have been presented, covering various topics and languages," he stated.

Arzani emphasized that the extensive participation of domestic



and international publishers alongside each other, as well as interactions with authors and industry figures can significantly contribute to promoting book reading.

Ministry of Education Malaysia via the National Book Council of Malaysia (NBCM) has organized the Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair in collaboration with six Malaysian

book industry associations. KLIBF is an annual major event in the global publishing calendar.

Besides, various activities are being carried out by publishers across the region, which accelerate the celebration and excitement of KLIBF.

The launch of books, seminars, conventions and so forth are among the activities conducted to cater the

needs of book-lovers community from all walks of life.

Having launched on May 24, the book fair will run until June 2 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center, with the participation of 17 countries, including Iran, China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Singapore, and Brunei among others.

Iran's "Between the Cliffs" wins awards at Russian festival



TEHRAN- Iranian director Mokhtar Abdollahi's "Between the Cliffs" has been honored at the Hero International Film Festival for Children and Youth, which came to an end at the Russian city of Krasnoyarsk on Saturday.

The film received the People's Choice Award, while its teenage actress Andia Yahyapour won the best performance award, Mehr reported on Monday.

"Between the Cliffs" tells the story of Ebrahim and his little sister Ilma, who tend their cattle in the mountains when their parents go to town on

an errand.

In a rock crevice, honeybees buzz and Ebrahim climbs for their nest. Easier said than done – with an injured foot, Ebrahim gets stuck on a ledge. Now it's up to Ilma to manage on her own.

Hamidreza Gheibi, Andia Yahyapour, Maryam Alahmad and Esmaeil Moradi are in the cast of the film that is produced by the Documentary, Experimental and Animation Film Center of Iran.

Mokhtar Abdollahi, 47, is a graduate of scriptwriting. He is best known for his short story collection, "Seven" (2009), and his novel, "Cubic Man" (2012).

"Between the Cliffs" is Abdollahi's debut feature film that was made in 2021. The 78-minute drama was premiered at the national competition section of Isfahan Children's Film Festival in Iran and won Grand Prix and the Best Child Actress Award in the event.

The Hero International Film Festival for Children and Youth is a unique platform that encourages

thought-provoking discussions about the moral compass of modern youth. The festival organizers believe that this is a crucial topic in today's education, and that values such as patriotism, tolerance, and traditional virtues are essential for shaping young minds.

The festival's diverse programming features a range of genres, including fiction, animation, and documentary, all showcasing heroes who inspire us to make a positive impact.

The concept of heroism is explored in all aspects of the festival, from big-screen films to interactive discussions.

The question of who is the modern hero for children and adolescents is a topic of ongoing debate among cinema professionals and audiences alike.

To foster this discussion, the festival also hosts a special club for children, where they can engage in discussions and reflections after watching a film.

Loose adaptation of Dante's "The Divine Comedy" on stage at Tehran's Art Palace

TEHRAN-A loose adaptation of "The Divine Comedy" by the famous Italian writer and poet Dante Alighieri is on stage at the Art Palace in Tehran.

Pouria Golestani has directed the play and performs in it along with Yaser Khaseb, Ghazaleh Roghani, Hamid Rashid, Amin Varkesh, and Hamid Shamshiri.

An Italian narrative poem, "The Divine Comedy" is widely considered the pre-eminent work in Italian literature and one of the greatest works of Western literature. The poem's imaginative vision of the afterlife is representative of the medieval worldview as it existed in the Western Church by the 14th

century. It is divided into three parts: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso.

The poem discusses "the state of the soul after death and presents an image of divine justice meted out as due punishment or reward," and describes Dante's travels through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Allegorically, the poem represents the soul's journey towards God, beginning with the recognition and rejection of sin (Inferno), followed by the penitent Christian life (Purgatorio), which is then followed by the soul's ascent to God (Paradiso).

In the poem, the pilgrim Dante is accompanied by three guides: Virgil,

who represents human reason, and who guides him for all of Inferno and most of Purgatorio; Beatrice, who represents divine revelation in addition to theology, grace, and faith, and guides him from the end of Purgatorio onwards; and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who represents contemplative mysticism, guiding him in the final cantos of Paradiso.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was an Italian poet, writer, and philosopher. He is known for establishing the use of the vernacular in literature at a time when most poetry was written in Latin, which was accessible only to educated readers. His use of the

Florentine dialect for works such as "Divine Comedy" helped establish the modern-day standardized Italian language.

By writing his poem in the Italian vernacular rather than in Latin, Dante influenced the course of literary development, making Italian the literary language in western Europe for several centuries. His work set a precedent that important Italian writers such as Petrarch and Boccaccio would later follow.

The play will remain on stage until June 11 at the Art Palace located at the Art Palace located at No. 50, Zand-e-Vakil Alley, Razi St., Neauphle le chateau St., Hafez Ave.

Cartoon of Day



Netanyahu and International Justice
Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

New publication strives to teach critical thinking skills to children

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Teaching Critical Thinking Skills" written by Catherine Delamain and Jill Spring has been released in the Iranian book market.

Maryam Moayerzadeh has translated the book and it has been published by Doxa Cultural Institute in Tehran, Mehr reported.

The practical teaching resource has been designed to give children aged 9 to 12 the basic tools required to challenge some of the conflicting information which they may encounter in everyday life. With increasing exposure to modern information technology and social media, amongst other things, children are increasingly exposed to misleading information that can seriously influence their worldview and self-esteem. The sooner they are helped to approach some of this material with a critical eye, the better they will be able to make independent judgements and resist undue persuasion.

The key features of the book include short texts designed to give opportunities for critical examination, created to be points of discussion with individuals, groups or whole classes;

topics covering seven areas of critical thought, ordered in level of difficulty, including finding contradictions, and detecting bias and fake news; and supporting teacher prompts and questions, as well as photocopiable resources without prompts.

The ability to question and evaluate information is an essential life skill, as well as a key skill for academic learning, yet it remains one of the most challenging aspects of comprehension to teach. This is a vital text for teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals looking to develop critical thinking skills in their students.

Jill Spring is a retired speech and language therapist who specialized in child speech and language disorder and autistic spectrum disorder. After qualifying in 1972 she worked in a variety of paediatric settings, including community clinics, assessment centers, opportunity playgroups and mainstream schools.

From 1996 to 2014, she worked in specialist language units attached to mainstream schools, spending two years managing one of these units. Before retiring in January 2016, she

was responsible for coordinating the Education Commissioned Communication Plan support service for children with complex speech, language and communication difficulties. She also worked as part of the multi-disciplinary team responsible for assessment and diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders in West Dorset.

Catherine Delamain is a retired speech and language therapist. Her varied career included work in an audiology unit, and with the children of armed forces overseas. She spent a year visiting speech and language therapy departments in American universities and hospitals.

Her last post involved management of children with a wide range of needs in a large speech and language therapy service, where she also formed part of a pioneering team assessing autistic spectrum disorders. After retirement, she worked in association with a senior educational psychologist lecturing teachers on how to support children with communication difficulties in mainstream and special schools.