



Saudi Arabia bars pilgrims from expressing solidarity with Palestinians at Hajj

Silencing the Voice of Gaza in 'House of God'

Hamas: Blinken part of the problem

Hamas official Osama Hamdan denied that the resistance movement had put forward new ideas for the US-backed proposal for a ceasefire and captive deal in Gaza.

Hamdan, speaking to the pan-Arab Al-Araby TV, also said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was "part of the problem, not the solution" in the Gaza conflict.

Earlier, Blinken said that Hamas had suggested numerous changes, some unworkable, to the Gaza ceasefire proposal, though he also said mediators remained determined to close the gaps.

The UN Security Council approved a US-backed resolution on Monday aimed at ending Israel's genocidal war in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas welcomed the adoption of the resolution but the resistance movement called for assurances that Israel would abide by it.

"Efforts are continuing to study and clarify some matters to ensure implementation by the Israeli side," Hamas spokesperson Jihad Taha said.

He accused Israel of "stalling and procrastinating and creating obstacles in order to continue the aggression (on Gaza)."

Former US diplomat: Biden policy on Israel is putting America at risk

A former American diplomat said the steady stream of U.S. bombs and other weapons sent to Israel with few conditions is putting America's national security at risk as the Arab world grows more volatile -- and hostile to U.S. interests -- than ever.

"None of this is helping Israel," Hala Rharrit said of Israel's ongoing war in Gaza. And the policy of shipping military aid with few conditions to Israel is "fundamentally bad for America," Rharrit told ABC News.

For 18 years, Hala Rharrit was a career veteran diplomat who took pride talking about American values such as human rights and freedom of the press. Now, she's the first U.S. diplomat to resign her post in protest of Biden administration policies toward Israel and the war in Gaza, according to the US news network.

The idea of diplomats and career government workers quitting their posts isn't new. Resignations also occurred in the George W. Bush administration during the Iraq War as officials questioned the rationale for the U.S. invasion and deaths of American service members.

Hezbollah launches largest attack on Israel since Oct. 7

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Scores of "massive" rocket alerts were issued across northern Israeli settlements throughout Wednesday as Hezbollah launched "unprecedented" missile attacks.

More than 50 air raid sirens sounded across swathes of northern Israel. The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) acknowledged that a large number of projectiles had been fired from Lebanon.

Hezbollah launched an initial wave of around 90 missiles on Wednesday morning.

"Crashes were detected in several areas in the north, as a result of which fires broke out in several locations, the details are under investigation," the IOF said.

Following the IOF statement, the Lebanese Hezbollah fired a second barrage, containing at least 70 missiles.

Later in the day, an IOF statement said "more than 160 missiles" were fired by Hezbollah.

The IOF claimed to be striking targets belonging to the resistance group inside Lebanon, but sirens continued to sound in Israeli settlements.

Iran, Qatar sign agreements to strengthen judicial cooperation

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Persian Gulf state of Qatar took new moves to enhance judicial cooperation during Iranian Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei's recent visit to Doha.

Ejei and his accompanying high-level judicial delegation engaged in several discussions with Qatari officials on Tuesday and Wednesday. The visit culminated in the signing of a mutual legal assistance agreement in criminal matters between Iran and Qatar, consisting of 14 articles.

The agreement, signed by Amin Hossein Rahimi, Minister of Justice of Iran, and Isa bin Saad Al Nuaimi, Attorney General of Qatar, aims to facilitate maximum legal and judicial cooperation in criminal matters between the two countries.

Both parties committed to sharing information related to final judgments regarding nationals or citizens of the other party at least once a year and to providing mutual legal assistance requests and judicial representation in criminal matters as per the agreement and their national laws. ▶ Page 3

No positive European JCPOA step in past two years: acting FM

TEHRAN - Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Baqeri Kani of Iran has criticized Western nations for politicizing the International Atomic Energy Agency, highlighting that European parties to the 2015 Iran deal have not taken any constructive steps to reinvigorate the pact over the last two years.

"For the past two years, European nations have failed to make any constructive progress in negotiations. The Western parties, particularly three European countries, have transformed the IAEA into a platform for settling their political disputes with Iran, but their attempts will not be successful," he said when talking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

The IAEA Board of Governors adopted an anti-Iran resolution proposed by the European trio last week, which censures Tehran for its alleged "non-cooperation" with the UN nuclear watchdog.

The resolution calls on Iran to adhere completely to the restrictions established by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an agreement on Iran's nuclear program that was abandoned by Washington in 2018 and disregarded by the European trio in subsequent years. The reprimand was approved with 20 countries in favor, two against, and 12 abstentions.

The JCPOA, signed by Iran, the U.S., UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China in 2015, limits Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the termination of sanctions against the West Asian country. ▶ Page 2

▶ Page 5

Iranian film "Okht-o-Reda" to hit silver screens in Baghdad

TEHRAN- "Okht-o-Reda" ("Reza's Sister"), an Iranian film featuring Hazrat Masumeh (SA), the sister of Imam Reza (AS), on her visit to Iran, is scheduled to be screened simultaneously with the Eid al-Adha on June 16 in the cinemas of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Directed by Mojtaba Tabatabai, director of the acclaimed documentaries "Cloudy Sky" and "The Footsteps of Water", the film will be screened in Baghdad cinemas for 20 days following its international screenings in Lebanon, Pakistan, and Australia.

Additionally, the film will be shown privately in Karbala with the attendance of high-ranking officials.

In 815 CE, Hazrat Masumeh (SA) and a large number of her relatives embarked on a journey from Medina to meet her brother, Imam Reza (AS). ▶ Page 8



University students on Wednesday took over a speech podium by the City Theater of Tehran, a renowned cultural venue, as a platform to voice their aspirations and perspectives on their participation in the upcoming presidential elections.

Guardian Council urges presidential candidates to observe 'ethical principles'

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN- Ayatollah Ahmed Jannati, the secretary of Iran's Guardian Council, has advised presidential candidates to adhere to legal requirements, regulations, and ethical norms during their campaigns.

"We hope that the election candidates and their supporters, by observing legal standards and ethical principles in their election campaigns, will pave the way for a dignified religious democratic election," he stated on Wednesday.

Also warning against foul play, the spokesman for Iran's Judiciary said the candidates' conduct is being closely monitored. "Everything is being monitored, and if any unethical behavior related to the election is observed, ▶ Page 2

Let's thank blood donors for life-saving gifts

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN - Each year countries around the world unite on June 14 to celebrate World Blood Donor Day as a reminder of the crucial role blood donors play in saving lives and improving health outcomes. The event raises awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and extends gratitude to voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

Established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2004, the day calls for action, motivating more individuals to join the global movement of safe blood donation.

This year's theme is "20 Years of Celebrating Giving: Thank You Blood Donors!", selected to commemorate the milestone of the 20th anniversary and the profound impact of blood donation on the lives of patients and donors. ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

Drop of accusations against Iran

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

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed the June 10 verdict by Canada's Ontario Superior Court of Justice that says Ukraine International Airlines is legally responsible for paying full compensation to the families who lost loved ones in the downing of UIA Flight 752 in Iran in January 2020. The paper said: After the declaration of the crash of the Ukrainian plane and the death of all its passengers (in January 2020), the opposition media tried to incite the people against the Islamic Republic by emphasizing the role of human error in the occurrence of this incident so that they can put international pressure on Iran. Even during the protests of 1401(2022), they always tried to put the international community and most importantly the people of Iran against the Islamic Republic. But now the Ontario Court of Justice has condemned Ukraine International Airlines to pay full compensation to the bereaved families. The important point in the ruling is the drop of the accusations against Iran that were raised over these four years regarding the Ukrainian plane accident. In this ruling, it is clearly stated that before the flight of the airplane, the Iranian skies were on alert and that Ukrainian Airlines (UIA) was negligent in this regard.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Unprecedented rise in Iran-Russia ties through comprehensive agreement

In an article, Donya-e-Eqtasad highlighted Moscow's commitment to finalizing the comprehensive cooperation agreement with Iran during a meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Iranian acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani on the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting in the central city of Nizhny Novgorod. It wrote: In January, the Russian Foreign Ministry said that a new intergovernmental agreement that reflects an unprecedented increase in Russia-Iran relations is in its final stages. In the framework of this agreement, Iran is supposed to receive some Sukhoi 35 fighter planes from Moscow. The new agreement between Iran and Russia is comprehensive in various areas of cooperation, including political, regional, international, economic, security, intelligence, cyber, defense, and others. According to Mahmoud Shouri, a Russia expert, the Russians have always complained that the Iranians are delaying the documents too much. Therefore, it seems that a kind of media and public opinion pressure from the Russians is on the agenda for Iran to sign and implement this document

Commander warns of enemy attempts to disrupt Iranian presidential polls



TEHRAN – A senior Iranian Army commander has stated that the enemy's typical goal is to disrupt the upcoming presidential election process and seize the opportunity to prevent the establishment of a strong and revolutionary government.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, made the statement while speaking at a seminar for Army Public Relations officials on Wednesday.

Admiral Sayyari noted that due to the high level of deterrence for the country, the enemy has been unable to launch military attacks against the country, preventing several potential wars.

"Despite all limitations and sanctions, we have achieved a significant position in terms of deterrence," he said.

He praised the resilience and experience of the people, referencing the calm response to the recent helicopter crash that claimed the lives of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign

as soon as possible. With the current situation, the future government will probably welcome this agreement and will need it, even if it has a different attitude.

Ham Mihan: Power politics in the South Caucasus

In an interview with Hassan Beheshtipour, an analyst on Eurasia affairs, Ham Mihan discussed the tension in the South Caucasus and wrote: South Caucasus is known as a place for power politics by regional and international powers. One of the most important issues raised regarding the failure of peace efforts in the South Caucasus is the conflicting interests of foreign actors in the region. Some regional and extra-regional powers are competing in the South Caucasus to break the hegemony of the other. For example, Iran and Turkey are rivals in the region. On the other hand, the Western powers in the South Caucasus are trying to disable Russia. The West's policy is to exclude Iran from any cooperation, block Iran's geopolitical interests, and not allow Iran to engage with other countries. In the South Caucasus, we saw that the Westerners undermined the implementation of the Azerbaijan-Iran-Turkey energy connection project and are trying to prevent Iran from entering regional cooperation.

Iran: BRICS and the precious heritage of the sitting government

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper attached great importance to Iran's success in joining BRICS with the efforts of the 13th government, the sitting government. The paper said: Iran's acceptance into BRICS was because it has the ability and will to challenge Western unilateralism and defy the narrow-minded and destabilizing circle in global management. The 13th government, with a detailed understanding of the changing world order and by using smart diplomacy, succeeded in adopting a balanced approach to foreign policy, occupying a special position in the group of great economic powers and gaining prestige for Iran. For this reason, Iran's membership in BRICS can be considered a precious heritage that was achieved with the correct approach of the 13th government. The active participation of Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Bagheri in the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Summit conveyed the message that the Islamic Republic of Iran is insistent on continuing the approach adopted in 2021 despite the loss of its president and foreign minister.

Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, which might have led to national collapse in other countries.

Referring to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's statements on the importance of elections, Sayyari reiterated that the enemy's goal is to disrupt the election process to destabilize the regime. Their strategies include creating insecurity and despair, as well as false and misleading polarization.

He concluded by emphasizing that a strong turnout at the polls demonstrates the nation's power and can ensure the country's deterrence against both current and future threats.

A strong turnout at the polls ensures the country's deterrence against current and future threats

Following the fatal helicopter crash on May 19, Ayatollah Khamenei assigned Vice President Mohammad Mokhber to assume managing the executive branch as per Article 131 of the Constitution.

Iran is set to hold a presidential election on June 28th. It will be the 14th round of presidential elections since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Guardian Council urges presidential candidates to observe 'ethical principles'

From page 1 ► judicial authorities will take action against individuals in accordance with the law," Asqar Jahangir announced.

On Wednesday, there were also discussions about the candidates that the Guardian Council did not approve to contest the presidential elections. In the past days, some of the rejected nominees took to social media to protest, claiming that the Guardian Council had made errors in evaluating the registered nominees.

In response, the Guardian Council spokesperson refuted these claims, stating that the vetting process is thorough and cannot be influenced by any political group or individual.

"At first, a report about the backgrounds and qualifications of each candidate was presented, and then inquiries about the individuals were raised. Then, based on their knowledge and information, the members of the Guardian Council independently



expressed their opinions. Finally, a vote was taken," Tahan Nazif explained during an interview with the khamenei.ir.

He added that none of the individuals in the 12-member council can be swayed by external pressure or influence.

Negotiations with West takes center stage

In addition to discussing practical economic policies to improve the national economy, two

presidential candidates addressed the JCPOA and negotiations with Western nations on Wednesday.

Mostafa Pourmohammadi highlighted his past experience in negotiations with foreign adversaries to argue that he could reach beneficial agreements with the West.

"I negotiated with Saddam, many of my close associates were martyred by him. I negotiated with the worst enemy of the Iranian

nation. Still, with strength, the backing of national power and intelligence, and negotiation techniques, I managed to reach results," he said during a televised address. "The battlefield and diplomacy should complement each other," he added.

Saeed Jalili also commented on negotiations with Western nations indirectly, criticizing Hassan Rouhani's government who in Jalili's words, tied every aspect of the economy to the revival of the JCPOA.

"Before President Raisi's government, it was claimed that oil could not be sold [due to U.S. sanctions], and we provided solutions for oil exports to the government at that time. These solutions were taken seriously by President Raisi's government, and our oil sales reached over 1.5 million barrels per day.

The surge in exports from almost zero proved that sanctions could be neutralized," he said.

No positive European JCPOA step in past two years: acting FM

From Page 1 ► Washington re-imposed sanctions against Iran when it left the deal three years after its inking, and the European signatories, while still officially part of the pact, followed in their American ally's footsteps by ceasing all trade with Tehran.

"Iran's activities related to the development of its nuclear program will definitely continue to expand within the framework of the NPT and under the supervision of the IAEA," Baqeri stated. The non-Western signatories to the JCPOA, namely Russia and China, have condemned the recent resolution for lacking any "logical basis" as it asks Iran to fully comply with the deal while the West continues to shun it.

Iran scaled back on its commitments under the JCPOA in 2020, after Europe failed to put to work a financial system it said would help circumvent U.S. sanctions. Despite the fallout of the JCPOA, Iran's nuclear facilities remain the most heavily inspected in the world.

Israel should not embroil itself in a bigger crisis

When questioned about Israeli threats of

a potential attack on Lebanon, Baqeri stated that Iran advises the Zionists not to fall from "the Gaza hole into the Lebanon pit," using an expression in Persian to warn against getting involved in more serious troubles.

"Resistance, whether in Palestine or Lebanon, is so powerful that it will not allow the Zionists to achieve any of their goals," the acting foreign minister stated, adding that Israel should try to remember its colossal defeats at the hands of resistance forces in 2000 and 2006, before deciding to threaten the Lebanese with war.

The Israeli regime began an unprecedented war in Gaza after Palestinian resistance forces carried out a successful operation deep inside the occupied territories on October 7.

When commencing its military campaign, the regime said it aimed to "eradicate Hamas" and free all the Israelis taken capture on the day of the operation.

After 8 months of harrowing violence against Palestinians in Gaza, the regime managed to free 4 hostages in a bloody massacre in a central Gaza refugee camp.



Israel received logistical help from the U.S. and the UK while it used UNRWA aid trucks to penetrate the camp.

Hamas says 3 other captives were killed alongside over 200 Palestinians during Israel's raid on the camp. Estimates show that at least 120 Israeli hostages remain in Gaza.

Analysts believe Israel's extremely lackluster performance against Hamas forces in the past months means it stands no chance against Lebanon's Hezbollah, a group believed to have one of the most powerful militaries in the region.

The West should negotiate new nuclear deal with Iran's new admin: expert

TEHRAN - A Middle East security and nuclear policy specialist at Princeton University says "the United States and Europe should try to negotiate a new nuclear deal with Iran's new administration."

Writing an article in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on June 11, Seyed Hossein Mousavian says, "The global powers still have an opportunity to engage Iran in a 'New Nuclear Deal': lifting nuclear sanctions in exchange for Iran's full and permanent commitment to implementing comprehensive transparency measures in the JCPOA, which would grant the agency (IAEA) full visibility into Iran's nuclear activities.

Following is a summary of the article titled "The West has a 15-month opportunity for a new nuclear deal with Iran that precludes an Iranian Bomb":

The Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) voted last week to censure Iran for failing to cooperate fully in the inspection regime set up under the 2015 nuclear deal to make Iran's program more transparent and to set limits that would prevent redirection of nuclear material to make weapons. But the deal has failed for many reasons, not just Iran's interference with IAEA inspectors.

Censure resolutions by the IAEA board are not legally binding but send a strong political and diplomatic message. The representative of Iran's mission to the United Nations stated, "The decision of the Western countries was hasty and unwise,

and it will undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the process of diplomatic engagement and constructive cooperation." Today, Iran may be only weeks away from having material for several nuclear weapons. The new President and cabinet of Iran will be determined within the next two months.

The United States and Europe should try to negotiate a new nuclear deal with Iran's new administration.

At the IAEA board meeting, China, Iran, and Russia issued a joint statement blaming the US for its "unlawful and unilateral withdrawal" from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) and the imposition of "unilateral and illegal sanctions" against Iran. The three countries wrote that "[s]hould the full implementation of the JCPOA be in place today, it would have alleviated the overwhelming majority of existing questions regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program on a mutually accepted basis. The IAEA Secretariat too would have had broader verification and monitoring means."

The three countries confirmed their readiness to restore the agreement based on the text of a draft agreement initially circulated in August 2022 by European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and blamed the United States and the European signatories to the 2015 deal for blocking the draft for "the sake of their own political considerations".

The nuclear crisis with Iran began in 2003. But the divergence between Iran and the West on nuclear issues started after the

1979 revolution in Iran. Now, 45 years later, a last chance is still open for a positive resolution.

During the reign of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran was a regional ally of the United States, which supported the Shah's interest in acquiring nuclear technology. After the 1979 revolution that deposed the Shah and an ensuing crisis, the United States saw Iran as a threat and led the West in a ban on nuclear technology exports to Iran, a move that resulted in the cancelation of all Western nuclear agreements with Iran.

This strategy led Iran to move towards self-sufficiency in nuclear technology. After Iran acquired enrichment technology, America's policy shifted from "zero nuclear technology" to "zero uranium enrichment," accepting Iran's right to access peaceful nuclear technology excluding enrichment and plutonium separation.

From 2003 to 2013, negotiations between Iran and global powers regarding Iran's enrichment program ended in failure. Then the Obama Administration shifted U.S. policy from "zero enrichment" to "zero nuclear weapons," leading to the conclusion of the JCPOA in 2015 between Iran and five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany. The agreement was approved by UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The JCPOA was the most comprehensive nonproliferation agreement in history, with Iran accepting and adhering to the highest level of nuclear transparency and inspections and accepting limitations in its nuclear

program that went well beyond the Non-Proliferation Treaty's requirements.

In May 2018, however, even though the IAEA had certified that Iran was in compliance with all its commitments, President Trump withdrew the United States from the agreement, restored US sanctions on Iran, and added 1,500 new ones. Europe decided to comply with US sanctions. After President Biden took office in 2021, he and the European Union tried to revive the JCPOA, but ultimately they imposed hundreds of new sanctions. This led Iran to impose its own form of pressure by expanding its enrichment activities to include enriching uranium to 60 percent uranium 235—a level. Although the JCPOA had kept Iran at least a year away from producing enough weapon-grade for a first nuclear weapon, Tehran is now estimated to be just two weeks away from producing that amount of fissile material, effectively becoming a "nuclear threshold state" like Japan.

Western nuclear sanctions over the past 45 years have caused hundreds of billions, perhaps trillions, of dollars in damage to Iran's economy. Meanwhile, the West has not achieved its primary goal—preventing Iran from attaining the capability to make a nuclear weapon quickly. The continuing pressure game in regard to Iran's nuclear program has been a lose-lose strategy for both Iran and the West. The reality: The West is unwilling to compensate for Iran's economic losses.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tehran Times, Armenpress sign MOU for cooperation

TEHRAN – The Tehran Times under the Mehr Media Group inked a memorandum of understanding with Armenia's Armenpress News Agency on Wednesday to begin cooperation in different fields.

During an online signing ceremony, both sides hailed the occasion as a crucial point in ties between Iran and Armenia.

"Iran and Armenia have always maintained a close, warm, and friendly relationship, with close political ties between our nations. However, there has not been such significant and remarkable activity in the media and cultural fields," said Mohammadmahdi Rahmati, Mehr Media Group's CEO. "We are very pleased that we can take a step, in the continuation of this warm and long-standing relationship between the two countries, to address the lack of media and cultural cooperation," he added.

Rahmati noted that the



burgeoning cooperation will help make it possible for the public in both countries to receive first-hand and accurate news about regional affairs, in today's sensitive environment.

"Both Iran and Armenia are often subjected to news blackouts or the spread of fake news by hostile media from other countries. This leads to misunderstandings and incorrect perceptions between

the two nations. I hope that our connection and cooperation will overcome this issue and correct these misunderstandings," he explained.

The director of Armenpress, for her part, said that the new milestone is a significant point in the broader context of media cooperation between Armenia and Iran.

"This MOU is not just a

document; it is a shared commitment to fostering a dynamic exchange of news and information. As media institutions, we are tasked with the responsibility to inform, educate, and connect people across borders and cultures. I am confident that the partnership we are enhancing today will facilitate the exchange of comprehensive coverage, deeper insights, and a richer understanding of the events that shape our countries," Narine Nazaryan stated.

"I am confident that through this collaboration, we will not only overcome the challenges of misinformation and technological changes but also set new benchmarks for excellence in journalism," she added.

Each party also extended an invitation to the other, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the realities within their countries.

Tehran condemns massacre of innocent civilians in Sudan

TEHRAN – The spokesman for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the killing of innocent civilians in Sudan.

On Wednesday, Nasser Kanaani described the killing and wounding of hundreds of innocent individuals, including women and children, in the attack on the village of "Wad al-Noura" as a horrific and shocking event.

He stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is severely concerned about the ongoing civil war in Sudan and the severe plight of innocent citizens in various conflict-affected regions of the country.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed profound sympathy with the families affected by the ongoing clashes.

He called for the swift restoration of peace and steady living conditions in Sudan, as well as an immediate halt to the massacre and killing of innocent people.

Kanaani emphasized the responsibility of the international community, especially human rights organizations, to take effective measures to end the current situation in Sudan.

Kanaani's statement underscored the urgent need for global intervention and humanitarian efforts to end the violence and support the Sudanese people during this critical time.

An attack by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on a village in central Sudan has killed "up to 100" people, according to local activists.

The Wad Madani Resistance Committees reported late Wednesday on social media that the RSF, engaged in a prolonged conflict with the regular army, launched a two-wave assault on the village of Wad al-Noura in Gezira state, using heavy artillery.

Photos shared by the committees showed numerous bodies wrapped for burial in what was described as a "mass grave" in the village square.

Among the victims were women, children, and the elderly, according to Mini Arko Minawi, the governor of Darfur province. He confirmed the massacre with a video showing the shrouded bodies on the social media platform X.

The RSF has repeatedly besieged and

attacked villages throughout Sudan, particularly in Gezira state, where they seized control of the capital, Wad Madani, in December.

In a statement on Wednesday, the RSF claimed to have targeted army and allied militia bases around Wad al-Noura but did not acknowledge any civilian casualties.

Following reports of the killings, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, the UN's Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, called for a thorough investigation and accountability.

"Even by the tragic standards of Sudan's conflict, the images from Wad al-Noura are heart-breaking," Nkweta-Salami said in a statement.

"Human tragedy has become a hallmark of life in Sudan. We cannot allow impunity to become another one."

Sudan's civil war began in April 2023, sparked by a rivalry between Sudan's army chief, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and his deputy and RSF commander, Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagaló, which escalated into a full-blown conflict.

Iran, Qatar sign agreements to strengthen judicial cooperation

From Page 1 **Iran-Qatar cooperation 'desirable and progressive'**

During a meeting with the head of Qatar's Supreme Judicial Council, Ejei highlighted the development of cooperation and relations between the two countries in various fields.

"The cooperation between the two countries of Iran and Qatar in political and regional issues is desirable and progressive, and this

has been more prominent in recent years and during the presidency of Ayatollah Raisi, the late president of our country," Ejei explained. He stressed the necessity for legal and judicial relations to expand and grow in tandem with the development of political, economic, and cultural ties between Iran and Qatar.

For his part, Hassan bin Lahdan Al Hassan Al Mohammadi, conveyed his desire for the visit to last longer,

expressing hopes for greater interaction between the Iranian and Qatari judicial systems. He welcomed the development and deepening of relations between the two countries, especially in the judicial field, and expressed willingness to visit Iran in the near future.

"We welcome the development and deepening of relations between Qatar and Iran, especially in the judicial field, and we hope

that in the near future, conditions will be created for senior Iranian and Qatari judicial authorities to witness court proceedings in each other's countries in person," the Qatari official said.

"Given the proximity of Iran and Qatar, the Iranian community present in our country is a large community, and our view of Iranians present in Qatar is similar to our view of Qatari citizens," he added.

Military advisor says Iran showcased growing defense power in True Promise Operation



TEHRAN – Iran showcased its growing defense power in the True Promise Operation, a top military adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has stated.

In remarks on Wednesday, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi highlighted the nation's missile capabilities during the retaliatory military operation.

Operation True Promise, launched on April 13, involved the Iranian Armed Forces firing dozens of drones and missiles at Israeli military bases in the occupied territories.

It was a direct response to Israel's aggression against the Iranian diplomatic premise in Damascus on April 1, which resulted in the martyrdom of two IRGC generals and five accompanying officers.

"During Operation True Promise, more than

100 missiles were launched towards Israel in just 100 seconds, at a rate of one missile per second. The United States, Israel, and their regional allies never anticipated that Iran could execute such a precise and large-scale operation," the former IRGC chief revealed.

General Rahim Safavi also elaborated on the international response, noting, "The Americans mobilized CENTCOM and EUCOM forces to the Mediterranean Sea, deploying over 250 fighter and support aircraft and ships equipped with anti-missile systems.

They also utilized all their radars and those of some regional countries. Recently, the Pentagon released a report on Operation True Promise, acknowledging Iran's capabilities."

Emphasizing Iran's defensive stance, the general stated, "We do not seek territorial expansion, but if any country, including the United States, attacks us, we are capable of responding across the seas."

Reflecting on the historical context, General Rahim Safavi remarked, "Just as the young generation of Iran under the leadership of Imam Khomeini performed miracles during the Iran-Iraq war, today's generation, under the leadership of the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, will also achieve

remarkable feats. One such feat was Operation True Promise, which astonished both the world and our enemies."

'Strengthening national power and unity must be on next president's agenda'

Turning to current events, General Rahim Safavi highlighted the significance of the June 28 presidential election, saying, "We hope that the Iranian people will elect a president who will strengthen national power and cohesion, address the country's challenges, and promote national unity.

The president must avoid polarizing society and should not create any division."

The election was called after President Ebrahim Raisi lost his life along with seven others on May 19, when a helicopter carrying them crashed into a mountainous area in northwest Iran amid foggy weather.

In his concluding remarks, the general addressed Iran's international relations. "Currently, Iran's relations with Russia and China are relatively good. Additionally, we maintain relations with Europe and other countries as well."

Rahim Safavi's statements underscore the strategic and defensive priorities of Iran while calling for unity and effective leadership in the face of both internal and external challenges.

Osmar Vieira leaves Persepolis: official

TEHRAN – Brazilian coach Osmar Loss Vieira left Iranian football club Persepolis.

The 49-year-old coach, who was named as head coach of Persepolis in January as Yahya Golmohammadi's replacement, led the Iranian giants to 2023/24 Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) title.

As an assistant, Osmar helped Persepolis win Iran's league and Hazfi Cup.

"I have been away from my family and friends for two years and it is not easy to express. The time will never go back. I spent many nights worrying about my wife and daughter whether they can return home safe. Now, my decision is to be along with my family. Hope to see you soon," Osmar Loss Vieira said.

Former Iran national football team head coach Dragan Skocic is a candidate to lead Persepolis.

Iran, Uzbekistan share spoils

TEHRAN – Iran topped Group E after ending their Preliminary Joint Qualification – Round 2 for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 campaign with a goalless draw against Uzbekistan on Tuesday.

The match at Azadi Stadium saw a closely fought contest as they repeated their stalemate from the reverse fixture in Tashkent which finished 2-2, with Iran finishing as group winners thanks to a superior goal difference.

Also, Turkmenistan and Hong Kong shared the spoils in a goalless draw.

Iran topped the group with 14 points.

Ghalenoei satisfied with draw in battle of equals

TEHRAN – Iran national football team head coach Amir Ghalenoei is satisfied with the draw against Uzbekistan.

Iran and Uzbekistan showed why they were the two best teams in Group E of the Preliminary Joint Qualification – Round 2 for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 after they played to an entertaining goalless draw on Tuesday.

Iran topped the group ahead of Uzbekistan due to a superior goal difference with head coach Amir Ghalenoei keen to praise his players for overcoming difficult traveling conditions as well as Uzbekistan's rise in recent years.

"I would like to thank the fans for their support until the last seconds. I would also like to give special thanks to my players," said Ghalenoei.

"We made a 20-hour flight to Hong Kong in difficult conditions, which had an effect on many. We did not play well in the first half because of fatigue. We have to play better in the next round.

"It's worth noting that Uzbekistan has made good investments in football in recent years and is achieving significant results. Uzbekistan has achieved growth with two players becoming champion and runner-up in Iran."

Beiranvand linked with Spartak: report

TEHRAN – The Red and Whites are actively studying the candidacy of the Iranian national team goalkeeper.

According to the source, Alireza Beiranvand may move to Spartak. The goalkeeper's candidacy was proposed by the red and white team of Moscow.

Beiranvand is the country's first goalkeeper. The 31-year-old goalkeeper previously tried his hand at Europe having stints with Belgians side Antwerp and Portuguese club Boavista.

The goalkeeper now plays in his home country for league champions Persepolis. He was the team's number one at the last World Championships.

Azizi re-elected as president of Iran Tennis Federation

TEHRAN – Davoud Azizi was re-elected unopposed as president of the Iran's Tennis Federation on Wednesday.

He was re-elected for a four-year term till 2028.

In the elections held at Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Azizi secured 46 of 49 votes cast.

The tennis federation has 63 members.

Zahedi scores brace in Emperor Cup

TEHRAN – Avispa Fukuoka Iranian forward Shahab Zahedi netted a brace in the match against Fukuyama City on Wednesday.

Avispa defeated Fukuyama City 8-0 in the Emperor Cup Round of 32.

Zahedi was on target twice in the 65th and 81st minute.

Emperor Cup is a Japanese annual football competition. It has the longest tradition of any football match in Japan, dating back to 1921, before the formation of the J.League, current JFL (not former JFL) and their predecessor, Japan Soccer League.

Tough draw awaits Iran

TEHRAN – The Preliminary Joint Qualification – Round 2 for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 has concluded, revealing the 18 teams that advanced to the final stage.

Iran, alongside powerhouses Japan and South Korea, find themselves in the top seedings for the crucial third round draw. Australia, Qatar, and Iraq occupy the second pot, while Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Jordan sit in the third. The remaining teams are distributed across three more pots based on their FIFA rankings.

Group stage format and path to the World Cup

The final round will feature three groups of six teams, with the top two teams from each group automatically qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

The third-place finishers from each group will then be divided into two playoff groups, where the winners will secure the remaining two direct berths.

The remaining two third-place teams will face each other in an intercontinental playoff to determine Asia's final representative at the World Cup.

Potential scenarios for Iran

Iran could face a challenging group if draw with Australia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, and North Korea. This scenario would make direct qualification a daunting task for Team Melli. Other potentially difficult draws include pairings with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, and North Korea, or Australia, Uzbekistan, UAE, China, and Kuwait.

On the other hand, Iran could also land a favorable group with Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia.

This scenario would significantly increase Iran's chances of securing a direct qualification spot. Other potentially easier draws include pairings with Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Palestine, and Indonesia, or Iraq, Jordan, UAE, Kyrgyzstan, and Indonesia.

The draw for the third round of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers will be conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on June 27.

Team Melli face 10 crucial matches in this stage, each one holding the potential to shape their World Cup aspirations. The stakes are high, and the pressure is on as Amir Ghalenoei's side embark on this decisive phase of the qualification journey.

Iran to import 500MW of electricity to meet peak summer demand

TEHRAN - The Iranian Energy Ministry's Spokesman for the electricity sector Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi has said the country is going to import 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity from Armenia and Turkmenistan to meet the summer's peak consumption demand.

"Importing electricity will be carried out along with other measures to provide sustainable electricity in the summer period," Rajabi Mashhadi said in a press conference on Wednesday.

Rajabi Mashhadi announced a 9,000 MW increase in the country's power plant capacity, which was done by the private and public sectors.

Daily electricity consumption in Iran reached 69,370 MW on Monday, June 10, registering a 7,000 MW increase compared to the same date last year, according to the data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC).

According to IGMC, the gradual increase in temperature has caused a surge in the use of air conditioning appliances, and consequently, electricity consumption has also begun to increase again.

Based on IGMC data, the country's electricity consumption stood at 61,300 MW on the same day last year.

In order to meet the electricity demand in



the peak summer period, the Iranian Energy Ministry has put several programs on its agenda among which increasing electricity production and managing consumption are the major ones.

The ministry is going to implement a comprehensive program during the summer, based on which low-consuming households are going to be rewarded while the subscribers whose consumption exceeds the normal level will face a penalty.

Over the past decade, constant temperature rises and the significant decrease in rainfalls across Iran have put the country in a hard situation regarding electricity supply during peak consumption periods.

Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) has repeatedly announced that the company is implementing a variety of programs for managing the situation and preventing blackouts in the country.

Beijing Daxing International Airport visited by international journalists

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING- A number of journalists from some Asian, African and Oceanic countries paid a visit to Beijing Daxing International Airport on Tuesday.

The visit to the airport was organized by the China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC).

Beijing Daxing International Airport (hereinafter referred to as Daxing Airport), is a major landmark project in the capital that President Xi Jinping has taken special care of and personally promoted, a backbone project for promoting the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, and a new gateway to the world.

On February 23, 2017, when President Xi Jinping inspected Daxing International Airport under construction, he emphasized that this new airport (Beijing Daxing International Airport) is a major landmark project in the capital, and serves as a new impetus for the country's development.

On September 25, 2019, Xi attended the operation ceremony of the Daxing Airport and pointed out the need not only to build Daxing International Airport with high quality, but also to operate it at a higher level, building it into a world-class airport with safety guaranteed, green features, intelligent functions and humanistic quality.

Daxing Airport is located in the core hinterland of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, on the southern extension of the central axis of Beijing, and at the midpoint of the line between the Beijing Municipal Administrative Center (BMC) and the Xiongan New Area of Hebei Province, holding a unique geographical location.

After the operation of Daxing Airport, it functions independently from the Beijing Capital International Airport, and the two airports collaborate with their respective base airlines to establish a globally competitive hub route network.

Simultaneously, in conjunction with Tianjin Binhai International Airport and Shijiazhuang Zhengding International Airport, they form a world-class airport cluster known as the "Four Airports within Three Cities", characterized by complementary functions and coordinated linkage. This integration better serves the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and supports the construction of the Xiongan New Area.

Daxing Airport adheres to the new development philosophy and adopts the mode of rolling development and phased construction.

tion.

The long-term planning aims to meet the need of annual passenger throughput of over 100 million and serve about 880 thousand flights annually, with 6 civil aviation runways planned.

The near-term planning aims to meet the need of annual passenger throughput of 72 million and serve about 630 thousand flights annually.

The ground transportation of Daxing Airport integrates high-speed railway, urban railway, expressway and other transportation forms, forming a comprehensive transportation network, with high efficiency, convenience and strong connectivity capacity.

With 100 percent green buildings and a recycling rate of 16 percent for renewable resources, it is an environmentally friendly aviation hub.

In terms of the flight network, at present, the total number of flight time slots at Daxing Airport is 966 per day, of which 901 per day is domestic (885 per day for domestic passenger transport and 16 per day for domestic cargo), and 65 per day for international and the regions of Chinese Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. In January, there were 42 operating airlines (37 passenger airlines and 5 cargo airlines).

The passenger airlines operate a total of 183 routes, including 148 domestic routes, 2 routes to the regions of Chinese Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, 33 international routes, and 175 accessible destinations, including 139 domestic destinations, 2 destinations in the regions of Chinese Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and 34 international destinations.

As earlier mentioned, the visit to Beijing Daxing International Airport was organized by the China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC).

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

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

In 2024 edition of the program, started in late February, over 100 journalists from more than 90 countries are participating.

Tehran-Dushanbe trade ties on upward trajectory: envoy

TEHRAN - Iran and Tajikistan signed 44 cooperation documents in the previous three years, which shows that relations between the two countries are on a trajectory of growth, the Tajik envoy to Iran said.

Nizamuddin Zahidov pointed to the expansion of relations between Tehran and Dushanbe and said the two sides signed 44 cooperation documents over the past three years.

Speaking in a meeting with the head of Iran Mapping Organization to follow up the agreements inked previously between the two countries, he underlined that Iran and Tajikistan have witnessed the expansion of political, economic and cultural relations over the past years.

Zahidov put the value of trade exchanges between the two countries in the last Iranian year (ended March 19, 2024) at \$270 million, IRNA reported.

The presidents of the two countries agreed that the value of bilateral trade should reach \$500 million in near future and this shows that the bilateral cooperation is on an upward trajectory especially in the fields of trade and economy, the am-



bassador stressed.

Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe hosted the 16th meeting of Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee in late December 2023.

Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian and Tajikistan Energy and Water Resources Minister Daler Juma co-chaired the two countries' Joint Economic Committee meeting.

Meanwhile, the first specialized exhibition "Made in Iran" was also held on the sidelines of this meeting.

The exhibition, aimed at introducing the capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in basic industries, with the presence of 30 top Iranian

companies, is being held in Dushanbe, during December 26-29.

Iran and Tajikistan on November 8, 2023 signed a joint statement and 18 cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to deepen bilateral strategic relations.

The joint statement was signed between late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe.

The documents and MOUs were inked by the Iranian and Tajik ministers in the presence of the two presidents.

As reported, the documents and MOUs pertained to a roadmap for long-term bilateral trade and economic cooperation till 2030, mutual visa-free access, anti-drug trafficking operations, transportation, crisis management, and the establishment of joint free economic zones, as well as inter-city cooperation in various fields.

During a meeting earlier in the day, Raisi said Iran and Tajikistan could increase their annual trade transactions to \$500 million in the first step.

Raisi stressed that historical, religious, and cultural commonalities shared by the two countries provide a favorable ground for enhancing bilateral relations in all aspects.

The Tajik president, for his part, highlighted the necessity to develop bilateral ties, particularly in mining, health, science and technology, and agriculture sectors.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Raisi arrived in Dushanbe on November 8, 2023. During the day, he also attended a meeting of the two countries traders and businessmen.

Iran imports over 12,000 passenger cars in 3 months

TEHRAN - The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said more than 12,000 brand-new passenger cars were imported into the customs campuses of the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 to June 10, 2024).

Offering the latest report on the situation of import of passenger cars into the country, Mohammad Rezvani said a total of 12,704 passenger cars have so far been imported into the country's customs this year.

He went on to say that 4,015 of the passenger cars have been cleared and imported into the customs offices of the country.

Rezvani put the value of the cars imported into the country at \$88 million.

The deputy minister of economy added that 11,122 passenger cars, valued at \$218 million, were imported into the country in the past Iranian cal-

endar year (March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024).

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade lifted the ban on car imports in late May 2022.

The decision was made to reduce the imbalance between supply and demand and to improve the country's economic conditions with regard to foreign currency revenues.

Iranian automakers currently produce about one million cars annually, while the domestic demand for automobiles is over 1.5 million, so since the domestic manufacturers are not able to meet the market's demand the government decided to allow imports.

Iran's major carmakers produced more than 1.13 million passenger cars in the previous calendar year ending March 19, showing a six percent growth compared to the figure for the previous year, an industry official said.

Mehrdad Khosravi, director of the Automotive Industries Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade, said the production of pickup trucks also saw a 32 percent increase this year at 166,000 vehicles.

Over 40,000 commercial vehicles, including different kinds of vans, minibuses, buses, trucks, and trailers, have also been manufactured this year, which is about two percent more than last year's output in this sector, he added.

Khosravi pointed out that the private sector's share in the automotive industry was 23 percent of the total production with around 307,000 vehicles.

The production of motorcycles was also on an upward trajectory last year at over 600,000 motorcycles, the official said. That is an increase of about 28 percent compared to the previous year's output.

Russia, Iran continuing work on cooperation agreement: Kremlin

TEHRAN - Moscow and Tehran are continuing their work on a comprehensive bilateral cooperation agreement, although the schedule of specific events may shift, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

Earlier Russia's RIA state news agency reported that the agreement had been temporarily suspended due to problems faced by Iranian partners, however, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said this was not the case.

Iran and Russia have been working on this agreement for two years, and the latest draft of

the texts are being exchanged.

According to Jalali, this text must be adjusted and coordinated with various institutions inside the country which takes time.

"Our efforts have been and are to get this agreement signed by the authorities of the two countries in 2024," he said.

Jalali added that currently, the text is in Iran's hands, hoping that various institutions respond as soon as possible to sign the agreement.

He further said that during a meeting on Monday, June 10, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lav-

rov and Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani insisted that the two countries sign this agreement as soon as possible.

Work on a new major agreement between Moscow and Tehran was announced in September 2022 during a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and late President Ebrahim Raisi.

In January, Russia's Foreign Ministry had said a new interstate treaty reflecting the "unprecedented upswing" in Russia-Iran ties was in the final stages of being agreed, and Putin and Raisi were expected to sign it soon, the report added.

D-8 ministerial meeting stresses barter trade, E-trade

TEHRAN - Ministers and other high-ranking officials attending a meeting of trade ministers of the Developing-8 have urged the need for exercising barter trade and using E-trade in exchanges among member countries.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Mehdi Zeyghami represented Iran in the meeting in Istanbul, Turkey on Tuesday.

Zeyghami, who is the head of the country's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), briefed the participating officials on Iran's stances regarding foreign trade, especially with the D-8 countries.

According to the official, Iran's membership in BRICS group of developing countries and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is indicative of the country's resolve to expand economic relations with world nations.

The D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

The combined population of the eight countries is about 1.2 billion or 60 percent of all Muslims, or

close to 13 percent of the world's population, and covers an area of 7.6 million square kilometers, five percent of world land area.

In 2006, trade between the D-8 member states stood at \$35 billion, and it was around \$68 billion in 2010.

Transactions between the eight developing countries accounted for 3.3 percent of world trade in 2010. The total nominal GDP of the eight nations was around 4.92 trillion as of 2023.

Iran's May oil output rises 7,000 bpd: OPEC

TEHRAN - Iran produced 3.226 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil in May, registering a 7,000 bpd increase compared to the previous month, according to OPEC's latest monthly report.

Based on secondary sources, Iran produced 3.219 million bpd of crude oil in April, the report said.

The Islamic Republic's average crude output for the first quarter of 2024 stood at 3.177 million bpd indicating a 23,000 bpd increase compared to the figure for the fourth quarter of 2023, the report said.

The report put the average Iranian crude output for 2022 at 2.554 million bpd, while the average output in 2023 was 2.859 million bpd.

These statistics show that the Islamic Republic

has maintained its place as the third-largest oil producer among the OPEC members.

The country's heavy crude oil price stood at \$84.13 in May, registering a 5.2 percent decline compared to the previous month, according to the OPEC report.

Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$88.79 per barrel in March.

The country's average heavy crude price was \$83.41 since the beginning of 2024 up to the report's publishing date, in comparison to \$80.46 in the previous year's same period.

Earlier in April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that Iran's oil production in 2023 saw an increase of 500,000 bpd in comparison to the previous year, reaching 3.1 million bpd.

According to the IMF data, the oil sector of Iran's economy recorded a noteworthy growth of 15 percent in 2023. Over the three years of late President Ebrahim Raisi's tenure, this sector experienced a double-digit growth; therefore, the oil sector saw 10.1 percent, 10 percent, and 15 percent growth respectively in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

It is predicted that Iran's oil production will increase by another 100,000 bpd, reaching 3.2 million bpd in 2024.

Iran's gas production also increased from the equivalent of 4.8 million barrels of oil per day in 2022 to the equivalent of 5.1 million bpd in 2023. According to IMF, the figure is expected to rise by 300,000 bpd to reach the equivalent of 5.4 million bpd in 2024.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Silencing the voice of Gaza in 'house of God'

Saudi Arabia bars pilgrims from expressing solidarity with Palestinians at Hajj

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Muslim pilgrims from across the world have streamed into the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj pilgrimage against the backdrop of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

The Hajj pilgrimage is a powerful symbol of unity and solidarity among Muslims.

The plight of people in the Gaza Strip has attached considerable significance to this year's rituals which will officially begin on Friday.

Global support for Palestine

Since Israel launched war on Gaza, Muslims around the world have expressed outrage over the regime's crimes in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Non-Muslims have also joined Muslims in many countries to vent their anger at Israel's barbaric atrocities.

The US, Canada, Europe, Australia and other countries have seen huge protests against Israel's brutal onslaught on Gaza over the past eight months which has claimed the lives of more than 37,000 Palestinians.

Solidarity with Gazans

The Hajj could be an opportunity to throw a spotlight on cold-blooded savagery of the Israeli regime against Palestinians in Gaza.

Muslims want to seize this opportunity to increase global pressure on Israel to stop its war of genocide against Palestinians.

Political slogans?



Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia has poured cold water on any efforts that are aimed at highlighting the pain and suffering of oppressed Palestinians and expressing solidarity with them.

Last week, Saudi Arabia's minister in charge of religious pilgrimages, said there is no place for "political slogans" in Hajj.

"Hajj is for worship and not for any political slogans, and this is what the leadership of the kingdom want to ensure - that Hajj contains the highest manifestations of humility, tranquility and spirituality," Tawfiq al-Rabiah told reporters in Riyadh.

Ignoring genocide

His comments sparked outrage on social media. Social media users have accused the Kingdom of turning a blind eye to the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

"Protest or performance is bound to happen by individuals or groups of pilgrims, and Saudis understand this is a slippery

slope," Umer Karim, an expert on Saudi politics at the University of Birmingham said, according to AFP.

He added, "Thus for Saudi rulers conducting hajj is a matter of prestige but also a test of their governance."

Madawi al-Rasheed, a Saudi academic and opposition figure based in London also said, "The Saudis will increase their control over the pilgrims to prevent any mobilization around support for Gaza. It remains to be seen whether the pilgrims will respect Saudi wishes."

Appeasing criminals

Undoubtedly, protests against Israel's brutalities in Gaza will not only raise eyebrows in Tel Aviv but also in Washington.

That's why Saudi Arabia tries to prevent Hajj pilgrims from expressing their support for Palestinians.

In other words, in the eyes

of Saudis opposing genocide and shedding light on the ethnic cleansing of Gazans amounts to political activity.

But, remaining silent on massacres perpetrated against defenseless civilians is against the teachings of Hajj.

Normalization over ethics

Saudi Arabia has tried to depict itself as the defender of the rights of Palestinians. The Kingdom, however, was considering establishing formal diplomatic ties with Israel before October 7.

But, it had to suspend its normalization plans due to global outcry over the Israeli carnage in Gaza.

Palestinians have described normalization of ties between Arab states and Israel as a stab in the back of the Palestinian people and their cause.

People in the Arab world are also opposed to the establishment of relations with the apartheid regime.

Presently, Saudi Arabia has barred any activities during Hajj that may undermine future ties between the Kingdom and Israel.

This clearly shows that regardless of the mass massacre of Palestinians in Gaza, Saudi leaders will not abandon normalization plans with Israel.

Arab countries that have normalized relations with Israel or those that are seeking to do so are complicit in the Israeli crimes against Palestinians.

WORLD HEADLINES

Report: Hamas seeking US guarantees over Gaza ceasefire plan

Hamas wants written guarantees from the United States for a permanent ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip in order to sign off on a US-backed truce proposal, two Egyptian security sources said.

Mediators Qatar and Egypt said Hamas had responded on Tuesday to the phased ceasefire plan for an end to the eight-month Israeli war on Gaza, without giving details, Middle East Eye reported.

The Egyptian sources and a third source with knowledge of the talks said Hamas had concerns that the current proposal does not provide explicit guarantees over the transition from the first phase of the plan, which includes a six-week truce and the release of some captives, to the second phase, which includes a permanent ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal.

The Egyptian sources said Hamas would only accept the plan if the guarantees were in place, and Egypt was in contact with the US about the demand.

"Hamas wants reassurances of an automatic transition from one phase to another as per the agreement laid out by US President Biden," the third source said.

Hamas and Egyptian authorities did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Rally with its star leader, Jordan Bardella.

Over 94mn EU citizens at poverty risk

The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU hit 94.6 million in 2023, the region's statistical bureau Eurostat said Wednesday.

The figure is 21% of the EU population, meaning that more than one in five people is at risk, according to the data, Anadolu reported.

The highest risk was in Romania with 32%, followed by Bulgaria at 30%, Spain at 27%, and Greece at 26%.

The lowest was in Czechia at 12%, followed by Slovenia with 14% and Finland, and Poland came in at 16%.

The risk was higher for women, young adults, those with low education and unemployed individuals.

Data showed that women in the EU experienced a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion at 22.4%, compared to men at 20.3%.

While the employed faced an 11.3% risk of poverty or social exclusion, the unemployed faced a significantly higher risk at 66.3%.

The last year's figure was 95.3 million, making up 21% of the EU's population.

The assessment of the risk of poverty or social exclusion involves factors such as income levels, material and social deprivation, and work intensity.

CENTCOM Commander visited Israel during Nuseirat camp massacre

The commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), General Erik Kurilla, visited Israel over the weekend at the invitation of Israeli Chief of Staff General Herzi Halevi, the Israeli military announced on Tuesday according to Middle East Monitor.

The visit coincided with Israel's gruesome massacre of at least 275 Palestinians and the wounding of 689 others in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on Saturday during an operation to rescue four hostages.

"Kurilla and Halevi held an operational situation assessment, discussed recent regional challenges and the strengthening of the strategic partnership against the Iranian threat," Israeli occupation army spokesman Avichai Adraee said on X on Tuesday. "They also discussed developments in the war against Hamas [sic] in the Gaza Strip and ongoing Hezbollah attacks from Lebanon."

The occupation army did not elaborate on the programme of Kurilla's visit.

Meanwhile, the military wing of Hamas, Al-Qassam Brigades, announced that the Israeli bombing of Nuseirat had also killed three Israeli prisoners.

Amid allegations of direct US involvement in the assault on Nuseirat — a survivor claims to have seen US Rangers — Washington and Tel Aviv have denied reports of using the US built "humanitarian" pier to facilitate the massacre in the camp.

However, according to eyewitness accounts and a video shared across Israeli Telegram channels, the operation was launched from the US-built pier and included the use of an aid delivery truck to hide Israeli commandos as they infiltrated the overcrowded camp.

Over 37,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and 85,000 others have been wounded, since Israel started its genocidal war against the besieged enclave. An estimated 10,000 Palestinians remain missing, presumed dead, under the rubble of their homes destroyed by Israeli forces.

Israel kills nearly 500 medical personnel in Gaza

The Health Ministry in Gaza has said that Israeli forces killed at least 498 health personnel and medical specialists and detained at least 310 others since the war began.

In a report, the ministry said only 16 hospitals remain partially operational while 64 health centers out of a total of 90 are out of service with more than 130 ambulances destroyed, Al Jazeera reported.

The total number of requests for treatment abroad reached 25,000, but the number of those who were approved to travel was only 6,645, the ministry said. Only 4,895 of those have actually been able to make the journey out of the Gaza Strip.

The ministry added that 1.5 million infectious diseases have been recorded since Israel began its onslaught on Gaza.

Macron urges unity against far right

French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday urged moderate politicians from the left and the right to regroup to defeat the far right in the upcoming national legislative elections he had called for after his party's crushing defeat in the European parliamentary vote.

A somber-looking Macron addressed French voters for the first time since his stunning decision on Sunday to dissolve the National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament, AP reported.

His move triggered an early legislative election that will take place in two rounds on June 30 and July 7, three weeks after the far-right National Rally party of Marine Le Pen triumphed at the vote for the European Union Parliament.

During a press conference on Wednesday, Macron said he decided on the risky move because he could not ignore the new political reality after his pro-European party was handed a chastening defeat and garnered less than half the support of the National

Hezbollah launches largest attack on Israel since Oct. 7

Lebanese resistance movement wages "unprecedented" missile salvos

From page 1 ► As Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the massive rocket barrages, reports emerged that drones were being used to target Israeli military sites, including in Zar'it.

An attack on the Israeli military research and development company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems has also been reported.

Sirens also sounded in Safad, Rosh Pina, and Tabarayya, along with numerous other towns in the Israeli-occupied al-Jaleel region (also known as Galilee). Following the attack, the IOF instructed Israelis within ten kilometers of the Lebanese border to take shelter.

According to Israeli media, a massive fire has broken out in the Biriya forest near Safad, with more than a dozen firefighting teams and aircraft working to contain it.

The Israeli news outlet Ynet described the attack as "unprecedented". It cited the mayor of Tabarayya, Yossi Nevea, as saying, "The feeling is very difficult, this is the first time in months that there has been an alarm here."

Footage posted on social media shows attempts by the Israeli Iron Dome to intercept the incoming rocket fire and impacts of the strikes in Meron.

The Meron military air traffic control and surveillance station, believed to be the largest base in the north, has been subject to regular attacks by Hezbollah.

The Lebanese resistance movement has been waging attacks on Israel on a daily basis in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Hezbollah and the Israeli military have been trading fire since the start of the U.S.-backed Israeli war on the besieged and occupied enclave in October last year.

The hostilities have steadily intensified since October, fueling concern of a bigger confrontation between the heavily armed Lebanese movement and the Israeli regime.

An Israeli strike in a southern Lebanese village late on Tuesday night killed four people, including Taleb Sami Abdallah (Abu Taleb), a prominent leader of the resistance movement.

In more than ten statements published throughout Wednesday, Hezbollah said it carried a number of operations in response to the assassination, including the firing of guided missiles at an Israeli military factory.

According to the statements, the resistance movement said it attacked multiple Israeli military sites including a base in Ein Zeitim, Ami'ad and other military locations in Israeli-occupied Lebanese land, as well as the military air surveillance base in Meron.

The resistance movement also announced that it targeted an armored military vehicle factory.

In each operation, dozens of advanced Katyusha rockets were used, according to Hezbollah.

Senior Hezbollah official, Hashem Safiedine, said on Wednesday that the resistance movement will increase the intensity, force and quantity of its operations against the Israeli occupation.

Former US diplomat: Biden policy on Israel is putting America at risk

Ex-State Department spokesperson says America has lost ground in the Arab world

A former American diplomat said the steady stream of U.S. bombs and other weapons sent to Israel with few conditions is putting America's national security at risk as the Arab world grows more volatile -- and hostile to U.S. interests -- than ever.

"None of this is helping Israel," Rharrit said of Israel's ongoing war in Gaza. And the policy of shipping military aid with few conditions to Israel is "fundamentally bad for America," Hala Rharrit told ABC News.

For 18 years, Hala Rharrit was a career veteran diplomat who took pride talking about American values such as human rights and freedom of the press. Now, she's the first U.S. diplomat to resign her post in protest of Biden administration policies toward Israel and the war in Gaza, according to the US news network.

The idea of diplomats and career govern-

ment workers quitting their posts isn't new. Resignations also occurred in the George W. Bush administration during the Iraq War as officials questioned the rationale for the U.S. invasion and deaths of American service members.

Those protest resignations are back on the rise this spring as Rharrit has been joined by nearly a dozen government workers in recent months who have abruptly resigned in protest to the Biden administration's policies toward Israel and the Gaza conflict.

For Rharrit, part of her job at the State Department immediately following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel was to report back to Washington how Arab audiences viewed the conflict. As an Arabic-language spokesperson based in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Rharrit would scour local media outlets and track popular personalities on social me-

dia reporting on the war.

What Arab audiences watched, she said, was mostly traumatizing images of children being killed or severely wounded in Israel's bombing campaign. Young people, freshly orphaned, were everywhere, too -- vowing revenge against Israel and the U.S. for supplying the weapons. There were also images of aid trucks backed up along the border juxtaposed with infants dying of malnutrition.

At the same time, Rharrit said she was given talking points to deliver to those Arab outlets -- carefully crafted phrases approved from State Department headquarters in Washington.

"Israel has a right to defend itself" and "the U.S. stands with Israel" were the oft-repeated phrases that omitted any mention of the heavy death toll of civilians, journalists and aid workers inside Gaza.

Omanis get to know medical tourism capabilities in Iran

TEHRAN – Some Omani tourism professionals have toured Iran's Razavi Hospital, exploring the medical tourism capacities within the infirmary for a possible future collaboration.

"As a result of mutual efforts to bolster cooperation between the neighboring nations, a team of tourism activists hailing from Oman set foot in Mashhad," Razavi.ir reported on Tuesday.

The 60-member team had stopovers at Mashhad's tourist and pilgrimage sites along with exploring the city's residential and medical facilities.

Focused on paving the way of future collaborations between Iranian part including the Razavi Hospital and Sepehran Airlines and their counterparts from Oman, the visit was dedicated to present Mashhad's significant capacities in the medical tourism field.

Meeting with the CEO of Razavi Hospital, Dr. Mohsen Mehvar, Omanis have been familiar with the wide array of services being offered to patients, such as Nuclear Medicine Department, the International Patient Department (IPD), to name a few.



Despite being renowned as a medical tourism hub, Mashhad has witnessed limited numbers of Omanis seeking medical services.

The initiative is believed to enhance cooperations between the two nations in the near future.

It's noteworthy that Razavi Hospital, with its various diagnostic and treatment departments and a skilled team of prominent professors and specialists in different medical fields, is one of the most advanced medical centers in the region.

By attracting the highest number of health tourists in the country, the infirmary has managed to earn numerous awards, including the title of "National Exemplary Exporter in Health Tourism" in the past year.

Minister highlights 'unique diversity' of Iranian handicrafts

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has said the country boasts nearly 300 distinct fields of handicrafts, a diversity unparalleled globally.

Ezzatollah Zarghami made the remarks at a ceremony celebrating World Handicrafts Day at the ministry headquarters, attended by veteran artisans, craftspeople, and media representatives.

"We have around 300 diverse fields of handicrafts, making us unique in the world due to this variety," Zarghami emphasized.

However, he pointed out that packaging remains a significant issue for the country's

handicraft industry. Sharing a personal experience from Lalejin in Hamadan province, Zarghami said, "I bought a handicraft in Lalejin, and the seller wrapped it in paper before handing it to me."

He stressed the importance of developing appropriate packaging for handicraft products, stating, "The packaging must be worthy of the artwork itself." This, he argued, is crucial for enhancing the presentation and value of Iranian handicrafts on the global market.

Currently, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts".

4,000-year-old 'Seahenge' in UK was built to extend summer

A mysterious Bronze Age wooden circle known as "Seahenge" on England's east coast was built more than 4,000 years ago in an effort to bring back warmer weather during an extreme cold spell, a new study suggests.

The theory is a new attempt to explain the buried structure — a rough circle about 25 feet (7.5 meters) across, made from 55 split oak trunks surrounding a "horseshoe" of five larger oak posts around a large inverted oak stump — that was controversially dug up and moved into a museum in 1999.

Other researchers have suggested it was built to commemorate an important individual who had died, or that it was a place for "sky burials," where the dead would be pecked by carrion-eating birds.

But the idea that Seahenge and another circle of buried timbers found beside it were built to "extend summer" fits with what's known about the climate at the time, said David Nance, an archaeologist at the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom and the author of the new study.

(Source: Live Science)

Iran in frames



Exquisite Persian carpets are on view at the UNESCO-listed Bazaar of Tabriz.

UN Tourism Council pays homage to martyred Iranian president

TEHRAN – In the opening session of the Executive Council of UN Tourism, the organization's Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, asked the attendees to observe a minute of silence in honor of the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi who was martyred in a helicopter crash last month.

The 121st session of the Executive Council of UN Tourism, on Tuesday, welcomed representatives of 47 countries, including 18 Ministers of Tourism, to advance the Organization's vision for the sector as it achieves full recovery from the impacts of the pandemic, unwto.org reported.

The session, which included the participation of Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, Deputy Minister of Tourism, showcased images and speeches by the martyred Ayatollah Raisi on the importance of the tourism industry.

Moreover, Pololikashvili highlighted his visit to Iran, praising the country's hospitality and di-



verse tourism capabilities.

According to data compiled by the UN body, around 285 million tourists traveled internationally in the first quarter of 2024, 20% more than the same period of last year, while international tourism receipts grew back to US\$1.5 trillion in 2023.

Furthermore, Pololikashvili stressed the need to embrace innovation and grow and direct investment into the sector in order to drive its positive

transformation. "With tourism having bounced back from the biggest crisis in its history, now is the time to channel our energy into building greater resilience against any future shocks," he said. "At the same time, we must ensure tourism's growth benefits people everywhere, above all by expanding access to education and job opportunities and harnessing the power of new technology."

The Secretary-General then

presented his report to members, summarising the Organization's achievements since the Council last met, again with a special emphasis on the shared priorities of investments in tourism, education and accelerating innovation across the sector.

The council discussed the optimistic outlook from the latest UN Tourism Confidence Index survey, which indicated that 67% of tourism experts view the prospects for 2024 as significantly better than 2023.

Pololikashvili also referenced the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) January 2024 report, noting that international route seat capacity is only 4% below 2019 levels, while domestic route capacity is 6% higher than the 2019 average.

He emphasized the global economy's resilience, with the World Economic Outlook forecasting a 3.2% growth in global production for 2024, matching the growth rate of 2023.

Tehran, Beijing discuss collaboration in Global Civilization Initiative

TEHRAN – Iran's tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami and his Chinese counterpart Sun Yeli have discussed ways to expand bilateral cooperation in a recent meeting held in Shanghai.

"During a meeting between Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister and China's Minister of Culture and Tourism" Iranian ambassador to China, on Tuesday posted on X. "Both sides discussed holding 'the Glory of Ancient Persia' exhibition as best as possible."

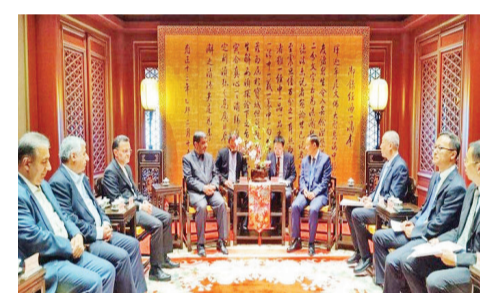
"They highlighted the significance of people-to-people interaction, cooperation in Global Civilization Initiative, the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia, and boosting the

tourism industry," Mohsen Bakhtiar wrote on his page.

Iranian delegation arrived in Shanghai to attend the inauguration ceremony of the loan exhibit of exquisite Persian ruins.

The Glory of Ancient Persia features more than 200 Persian relics, including a delicate Achaemenid golden rhyton, that have been insured for 114,250,000 euros by the Chinese government, committed to their protection and exhibition.

The exhibition initially opened its doors to the public earlier this year in the Chinese capital, Beijing and after months of the display, Iran has approved a six-month extension for



the cultural event in Shanghai following an enthusiastic reception.

Some experts believe the extension marks a significant cultural exchange between the two nations, highlighting Iran's rich historical heritage on the international scene.

Qazvin's rich heritage to be highlighted in national conference

TEHRAN – The ancient city of Qazvin, which was the capital of Persia for over forty years (1555–1598), will be hosting a national conference to highlight its rich cultural heritage.

According to organizers, the National Conference on the History, Culture, and Art of Qazvin is intended to celebrate and help preserve the rich heritage of the ancient city, inviting scholars and enthusiasts to engage in meaningful discussions and explorations of Qazvin's illustrious past and vibrant culture.

"This event is organized in honor of Qazvin Day, celebrated on August 30 (9th of Shahrivar in the Iranian calendar)," Qazvin province's tourism chief said on Tuesday.

Alireza Khazaeli highlighted the main objectives of the conference, which include providing an academic platform for researchers to present their studies and identifying and introducing the latest research findings in the fields of history, civilization, culture, and art of the Qazvin province.

Khazaeli outlined the various themes of the conference, which encompass a wide range

of topics that include history and geography before and after (the advent of) Islam (in the region) and the contemporary era; archaeology; architecture and urban planning from past to present museums, historical artifacts, arts and literature.

Local dialects, linguistics, and folk literature and anthropology, local customs, traditions, and ceremonies, tourism and its potential with a special focus on the Safavid-era traditions will be other pillars of the conference, the official explained.

According to the official, the conference is scheduled to take place on August 28 (7th of Shahrivar), two days before the official Qazvin Day.

Khazaeli mentioned that this event is part of a series of academic and cultural sessions related to the city of Qazvin. "We hope that holding this conference will be an effective step in appropriately introducing and preserving the valuable historical and cultural assets of this ancient city," he added.

Situated some 150 km northwest of Tehran,

Qazvin was the capital of the Safavid Empire for over forty years (1555–1598) and is now-days known as the calligraphy capital of Iran.

The city has sometimes been of central importance at major moments in Iranian history. It was initially founded by Shapur I (r.240–270), the second ruler of the Sasanian Empire. It was refounded by Shapur II (r.309–379), who established a coin mint there. Under the Sasanians, Qazvin functioned as a frontier town against the neighboring Daylamites, who made incursions into the area.

It was captured by invading Arabs around 644 CE and destroyed by Hulagu Khan in the 13th century. In 1555, after the Ottoman capture of Tabriz, Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576) made Qazvin the capital of the Safavid Empire, a status that Qazvin retained for half a century until Abbas the Great moved the capital to Isfahan in 1598. Today, it is a provincial capital that has been an important cultural center throughout its history.

Davatgari: an ancient craft still thriving in modern Iran

TEHRAN – Cold forging, known as Davatgari in Iran, is considered one of humanity's earliest professions, dating back thousands of years.

The ancient craft involves making utensils and tools from metals such as copper, brass, silver, gold, and nickel silver through hammer-working.

In this process, skilled smiths first bend a metal plate with precise and measured hammer strikes, then add parts such as handles or bottoms.

According to Visit Iran, these parts are consolidated by soldering or welding to create the complete tools. A key indicator of the creator's skill is that the finished product should be free of holes,

with uniform metal thickness throughout.

Today, there are three methods of making utensils that incorporate modern technology: one-piece or seamless, multi-piece or with seams, and a method using a metal bending machine.

One-piece method

In this method, the metal plate is cut into circles with a radius at least equal to the height of the intended object. The center of the plate is placed on an anvil, and repetitive, close hammer strikes from the center outward from the plate into a bowl.

The plate is then turned over, and the edges are struck to reduce the opening, transforming

the bowl into a vase or similar objects.

Multi-piece method

The metal is first cut into rectangular forms, with dimensions appropriate to the maximum height and circumference of the intended object.

The edges of two adjacent pieces are then thinned to half their thickness by hammering.

Machinery method

In this method, a machine called "Seh Nezam" or Three Jaw Lathe Chuck is used. Similar to the one-piece method, a circular plate is cut and placed into the machine along with a cast iron mold in the shape of the intended product.

As the machine operates, the

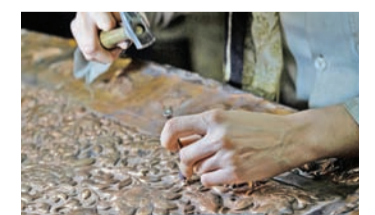


plate and mold rotate together, while metal bars, each about fifty centimeters long, push the plate onto the mold, forming it into the desired shape. This method is used to create trays, large plates, bowls, mirrors, and candle holders.

The art-craft of Davatgari was once practiced across almost all parts of Iran, but today it is mainly found in cities such as Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Arak.

BEHTAB aims to make Iranian hospitals more resilient to natural hazards

TEHRAN –The UN-Habitat in Iran has successfully implemented the second phase of a project, dubbed BEHTAB, with the goal of enhancing Iranian hospitals' resilience against natural hazards.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the project, mainly known as 'Emergency Support for Safer Hospitals and Settlements', focused on evaluating, designing, and implementing retrofitting measures in hospitals throughout Iran, the UN website announced in a press release on June 11.

This initiative aimed to assist the Iranian government in mitigating seismic risks associated with public buildings and bolstering their capacity to withstand future earthquakes.

The BEHTAB phase-II project aligns with the UN's commitment to reducing disaster risks as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The project achieved significant milestones, including seismic vulnerability assessment and retrofitting design for 11



Stefan Priesner, the UN Resident Coordinator in Iran, delivering a speech at the closing ceremony of the BEHTAB project on May 15.

hospitals with 4000 beds and 380,000 square meters and constructing retrofit role models of the non-structural components in two selected hospitals within these facilities.

Additionally, it fostered institutional and personnel capacity development for long-term project sustainability.

The closing ceremony of the project which was held at the Iranian National Library on 15 May was a major milestone, bringing

together key stakeholders, including the UN Resident Coordinator in Iran, Stefan Priesner; Deputy Minister, Ali Nabian; Ambassador of Japan, Tamaki Tsukada; Director General, Gholamhossein Darzi from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Advisor to the Minister and Secretary of the National Habitat Committee, Arman Khorsand, and other participants in the project.

Expressing gratitude for the successful partnership, Priesner stated that the 'BEHTAB phase-

II project, initiated in 2021 with generous financial support from the Government and people of Japan, and with the partnership and cooperation of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was successfully implemented. It has yielded notable outcomes, a source of pride today.'

By assessing vulnerabilities and implementing retrofitting measures in selected hospitals, the project provides instructions for improving the facilities to ensure that these critical facilities remain operational during times of crisis.

This effort together with the development of national guidelines and knowledge sharing with stakeholders and expert communities, not only enhances the safety and capacity of healthcare infrastructure but also strengthens disaster preparedness across the country, benefiting local communities by improving emergency response and overall resilience with a shared commitment to building resilient communities.

Let's thank blood donors for life-saving gifts

Blood donation in Iran

The average blood donation rate in Iran is 26 per thousand people which places the country in a good situation among other countries.

According to the World Health Organization, the median blood donation rate in high-income countries is 31.5 donations per 1000 people. This compares with 16.4 donations per 1000 people in upper-middle-income countries, 6.6 donations per 1000 people in lower-middle-income countries, and 5.0 donations per 1000 people in low-income countries.

Of the 118.5 million blood donations collected globally, 40 percent of these are collected in high-income countries, home to 16 percent of the world's population.

In low-income countries, up to 54 percent of blood transfusions are given to children under 5 years of age; whereas in high-income countries, the most frequently transfused patient group is over 60 years of age, accounting for up to 76 percent of all transfusions.

sions.

Based on samples of 1000 people, the blood donation rate is 31.5 donations in high-income countries, 16.4 donations in upper-middle-income countries, 6.6 donations in lower-middle-income countries, and 5.0 donations in low-income countries.

World Blood Donor Day, June 14, raises awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products.

In the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 19, some 2.223 million blood donations were registered across the country, an increase of 9.3 percent compared to the year before.

Last year, the blood donation rate reached



27 per thousand people. The highest rate was recorded in Mazandaran province with over 40,000 people donating blood. Semnan province, over 39,000, and Yazd province ranked second and third.

Women's share of blood donation was equal to four percent. A total of 102,907 women donated blood which had increased compared to the previous year. However, women are expected to get more involved in blood donation.

The overall blood donation rate was over 54 percent in the country last year with Semnan (69 percent), Yazd (64 percent), and Qom (63 percent) provinces ranking the highest.

Motamed Cancer Institute gets EBMT membership

TEHRAN – The European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT) granted membership to Motamed Cancer Institute on March 11.

The EBMT is a non-profit medical and scientific organization established in 1974 that hosts a unique patient registry providing a pool of data to perform studies and assess new trends.

It aims to be the connection between patients, researchers, and other stakeholders to anticipate the future of cellular and stem cell-based therapies.

The community of healthcare professionals is focused on innovation, research, and the advancement of these fields to save and improve the lives of patients with blood-related disorders.

The first bone marrow transplant in Iran

was performed in the Iranian year 1396 (March 2017-2018).

In February, according to an assessment of the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education, Motamed Cancer Institute was ranked first among all research centers in the field of cancer, both clinical and biomedical, throughout the country.

The institute also ranked second among all clinical research centers with independent funding and experience of more than 10 years, regardless of the subject of activity, IRNA reported.

Also, among the total of 833 private and government research centers under the Ministry of Health, the breast cancer research center of the Institute has been evaluated as one of the top 10 centers.

Various indicators such as effectiveness,

patents, interdisciplinary theses, five-year H index, total five-year documents, articles with international cooperation, articles published in the top 25% of publications, and research output have been among the indices of the assessment.

EBMT membership

The EBMT has more than 7,200 members in over 70 countries.

Members contribute to and benefit from the collective knowledge that the EBMT has accumulated within the EBMT Registry.

The EBMT Registry is the backbone of the EBMT's research and educational activities.

The main purpose of the Registry is to provide a pool of data to EBMT members to perform studies and assess new trends in BMT, gene therapy and cellular therapy.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'Only 15% of Tehran's construction waste recycled'

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran's department of environment (DOE) has said.

"A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face," Bazgir said.

The unit is capable of recycling some 3,000 tons of construction waste, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دیو می شود. محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود. ظرفیت این واحد بازیافت حدود ۳۰۰۰ تن است و می تواند این مقدار نخاله و آوار ساختمانی را بازیافت کند.

Iran urges human rights forums to address sanctions on persons with disabilities

TEHRAN – The global community and human rights forums must address the critical question of which principles are consistent with and justify the sanctions imposed on the Iranian community of persons with disabilities, said Ali-Mohammad Qaderi, the head of the State Welfare Organization.

Speaking at the 17th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Qaderi said Iran will make every effort to enhance and expand the necessary services for persons with disabilities in accordance with the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

"This is notwithstanding the fact that the cruel sanctions imposed by the United States and many Western countries on the Islamic Republic of Iran have significantly increased the prime costs of rehabilitation items and specialized services, and affected the economic capabilities of individuals receiving such services," he said.

"Now, the global community and human rights forums must address these critical questions: Which human rights principles are consistent with and justify the sanctions imposed on the Iranian community of persons with disabilities?"

"Respecting persons with disabilities and striving to create equal opportunities for them has always been integral to our religious and national teachings, as well as the programs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. One of the most significant measures we have undertaken to support the rights of persons with disabilities is the enactment of the Law on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reviewed and revised this law in 2017 in order to better implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, the Islamic Republic of Iran mandated that all governmental and non-governmental bodies observe the rights of persons with disabilities, under the supervision of the second highest executive authority in the country, Qaderi highlighted.

He went on to say that one of the Government's most noteworthy achievements has been the establishment of a comprehensive system for screening, diagnosing, and monitoring the incidence and prevalence of various forms of disabilities across all age groups within national programs.

"This collaborative effort involves cooperation with various agencies. Through this system, we can proactively prevent the onset of various forms of disabilities and mitigate their exacerbation, guided by scientific criteria and within the framework of recommendations set forth by the World Health Organization."

In an earnest endeavor to enhance both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of services required by persons with disabilities, particularly in less-privileged areas, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has prioritized the implementation of community-based rehabilitation programs at the national level, Qaderi said, adding, "These initiatives adhere closely to the principles outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Notably, these programs have yielded considerable advancements, particularly in recent years."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official said that the implementation of the microfinance service program in rural areas of the country aims to foster both economic and social empowerment among persons with disabilities and their families. This initiative operates in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and local facilitators. Furthermore, the program emphasizes job skills training, particularly in native and local occupations, leveraging the abundant local resources available to mitigate deprivation within these regions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, with a commitment to further enhancing the empowerment, independence, and social integration of persons with disabilities, has embarked on comprehensive initiatives to ensure accessibility in both



physical environments and cyberspace. To that end, the National Coordination and Follow-up Headquarters for Accessibility Adaptation has been established to oversee the measures undertaken by executive bodies.

One noteworthy action taken by the aforementioned Headquarters is the formulation of national accessibility standards for cyberspace, tailored to address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities, especially those with sensory impairments, such as visual and hearing impairments. These standards have been formally signed off on by all relevant executive bodies.

The utilization of assistive technologies among persons with disabilities has proven highly efficacious in facilitating their attainment of optimal abilities and fostering both professional and social independence. This endeavor holds significant potential to alleviate feelings of isolation and promote active engagement in personal, social, and community development endeavors. Key actions encompass assessing individual needs, identifying requisite equipment, facilitating equipment procurement and provision, and delivering comprehensive training to ensure proficient usage.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in its commitment to fostering employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and upholding the principles of equality and social equity, has implemented measures to reserve 3% of employment quotas in executive bodies for persons with disabilities, as stipulated in the Law on Protecting the Rights of

Sanctions have significantly increased the prime costs of rehabilitation services.

Persons with Disabilities. This provision enables persons with disabilities to pursue employment opportunities across diverse sectors, based on their unique abilities and interests.

Currently, more than 50 rehabilitation and supportive services, offered at non-governmental rates, are covered by health insurance, significantly enhancing the health and quality of life for persons with disabilities. In accordance with the law, affordable transportation and education for persons with disabilities are also provided. Over 1.6 million persons, spanning from infancy to old age and encompassing various types and degrees of disabilities, are covered, and the Islamic Republic of Iran delivers rehabilitation services through a network of educational and rehabilitation centers.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has established daily vocational centers to offer both formal and informal educational and skill training services to persons with disabilities. These centers focus not only on providing fundamental professional training but also on enhancing communication and interpersonal skills, cognitive abilities, and daily living activities. The Law on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ensures support for all persons with disabilities, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, age, or gender.

Support for the employment of persons with disabilities includes reserving at least 3% of employment quotas specifically for them, and ensuring competition occurs among individuals with disabilities rather than against those without disabilities. This achievement is another direct result of the Law on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, specialized training programs have been established to develop sign language interpreters who can assist individuals with hearing disabilities within the judicial system. This also represents another significant advancement.

With the help of God and the active participation of specialized teams and non-governmental organizations for persons with disabilities, the Islamic Republic of Iran will make every effort to enhance and expand the necessary services for persons with disabilities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



He is really wise whose actions reflect his words.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 19:42 Dawn: 3:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

“Art and Revolution” exhibition showcases Brazilian artist João Abídúo Galvão’s works



TEHRAN—A painting exhibition titled “Art and Revolution,” featuring works by Brazilian artist João Abídúo Galvão, was inaugurated at the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense in Tehran on June 11.

Abídúo Galvão’s paintings reflect contemporary global power dynamics, where history repeats itself and revolution

intertwines with art, Honaronline reported.

During the opening ceremony, the artist said: “The world of art differs from the world of capitalism, and art can never be controlled. It is a great honor for me to showcase my art to esteemed friends here.”

The Brazilian artist has created 20 pieces exclusively for the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense. However, only 10 of them are now on display due to space limitations.

His artistic style, characterized as abstract, draws influence from the famous American artist Jackson Pollock.

The artworks on show are mixed-media paintings on canvas, each measuring 300x300 centimeters. The exhibition is scheduled to come to an end on June 25.

32nd Raindance Film Festival to show two Iranian short films

TEHRAN—Two short films from Iran will take part in the 32nd Raindance Film Festival that is to be held in central London from June 19 to 28.

“21 Weeks” (also known as “Twenty-One Weeks Later”) written and directed by Nasrin Mohammadpour and “A Long Walk” by Sonia Sanjari are the Iranian films attending the short program of the event, ILNA reported.

Trauma, body, and geography constitute intricate and intertwined concepts with which contemporary humanity grapples for a modicum of security. The short program includes five short films directed by women, exploring the geographies of Iran, Turkey, Palestine, and Lebanon. In these films, the audience will encounter vivid imagery and creative narratives spoken by the young women of these regions.

Running for 13 minutes, “21 Weeks” is about a young woman decides to have an abortion. While her husband disagrees and threatens her, she has made her decision and illegally aborts her fetus after twenty-one weeks of

pregnancy.

The cast includes Banafsheh Riazi, Leila Riazi, Parisa Asgari, and Soudabeh Bahramnejad.

In its world premiere last October, the movie won the Sonje Award, given to the best Korean and Asian short film, at the 28th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea.

The 15-minute short film “A Long Walk” shows Mona who feels and sees things after losing Saeed on their trip to see fireflies.

Masoumeh Beigi, Javid Qaem Maqami, and Milad Changi are in the cast.

Raindance Film Festival is the largest independent film festival in the UK. It is officially recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences USA, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts and the British Independent Film Awards. Selected shorts will qualify for Oscar® and BAFTA considerations.

Each year, Raindance attracts 16,000 visitors including 500 industry professionals into London.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza Massacre

Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

Iranian film “Okht-o-Reda” to hit silver screens in Baghdad

From Page 1 ► in Khorasan where the eighth Imam of the Shia had resided for years by order from Abbasid caliph Mamun.

Due to his hostility toward Shias, Mamun ordered his men to stop them in Saveh, a city near Qom, home to a large population of Shias.

Mamun’s soldiers killed a large number of the companions of Hazrat Masumeh (SA) in Saveh, where she was taken ill. Consequently, she decided to take refuge in Qom.

Shia Muslims in Qom gave Hazrat Masumeh (SA) and her companions a very warm welcome upon their arrival in the city. However, she was in critical condition and ultimately met her death on November 9, 816 CE, and was buried in Qom.

Earlier in the Fars region, Mamun had killed her brothers, Hazrat Ahmad ibn Musa (AS) and Seyyed Alaeddin Hossein (AS).

Due to the prohibition on the depiction of Islamic saints, the story in “Okht-o-Reda” has been portrayed through the eyes of three characters.



One of the characters is the person who carried out Mamun’s order to transfer Imam Reza (AS) to Khorasan. Hazrat Masumeh’s maid and one of her brothers are the other characters.

“We never created any distortion of the truth and avoided using our

imagination in recounting the story; meanwhile, we did our best to dramatize the historical facts about this historical narrative,” Tabatabai said in an interview.

Most of the scenes have been filmed at the Nurtaban Cinema Town, the

setting for several films on the history of Islam, including “Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God”, director Majid Majidi’s epic about the childhood of the Prophet of Islam (S).

The cast does not include any big-name stars.

Third Intl. film festival on natural disasters to be held after decade-long halt



TEHRAN— After a decade, the third international film festival on natural disasters and accidents is set to be held in the near future.

Organized by Iran’s Natural Disasters Research Institute (NDRI), the festival will accept documentaries and short films focused on natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and others, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

This year’s event will pay special attention to megacities in Iran and around the world and like previous editions, it will provide facilities for accepted films, the report added.

Morteza Atashzamaz, a renowned Iranian filmmaker, has been appointed as the director of this edition of the festival.

The two previous editions of the festival, titled “International Film Festival of Bam”, featured prominent Iranian filmmakers such as Seyyed Reza Mirkarimi, Tahmineh Milani, Ebrahim Hataamikia, Iraj Taqipoor, Kamal Tabrizi, Farhad Varahram, Zaven Ghokasian, and others as jurors.

The Bam earthquake was a devastating earthquake that struck the city of Bam, in southern Iran in 2003. The earthquake had a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter scale and its epicenter was located in the city of Kerman, which

is approximately 95 kilometers east of Bam. The earthquake caused widespread destruction and loss of life, with the official death toll estimated to be around 26,000 people. The city’s ancient citadel, which was a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was completely destroyed, and many other historic buildings and infrastructure were severely damaged.

The aftermath of the earthquake was marked by a massive humanitarian response, with aid pouring in from around the world to help rescue survivors and provide relief to those affected. The Iranian government and international organizations worked together to rebuild the city and provide support to families who had lost loved ones. Despite the devastation caused by the earthquake, the city of Bam has slowly rebuilt and continues to be an important cultural center in Iran.

Tehran theater to host reading performance of “The Memorandum”

TEHRAN— A group of actors will perform a reading of Czech playwright Vaclav Havel’s 1965 play “The Memorandum” at Tehran’s City Theater Complex on June 18.

Reza Momen will be the director of the reading performance, which will be read by a cast composed of Farid Eslamzadeh, Yunes Afarin, Nazi Entezariun and Mobina Yazdanpanah.

“The Memorandum” is a satirical black comedy that pokes fun at bureaucracy and conformity. Written in 1965, the play was an ironic commentary on communist rule and its effects on society. Despite its veiled themes, it was approved by government censors and published.

The story revolves around Josef Gross, a director of an unnamed organization, who receives a

memorandum written in Ptydepe about an audit. As he struggles to understand the language, he becomes increasingly opposed to its use. He eventually finds a reluctant secretary named Maria who can translate the memorandum, but only after obtaining a permit. Meanwhile, Gross’s deputy, Jan Ballas, takes over his job and becomes obsessed with the implementation of Ptydepe.

As the play progresses, Maria gets fired for translating the memorandum, and the last few Ptydepe learners in the organization give up on the language. In a turn of events, Ballas gives his job back to Gross, and Ptydepe is replaced with another language, Chorukor, which is designed to be easier to learn. However, it ultimately becomes clear that the mother language is the best option. The play ends with most of the characters going to lunch, leaving the audience to ponder the absurdity of bureaucracy and the human desire for efficiency.

The play has been translated into

English twice, with Paul Wilson’s 2006 translation being favored by Havel himself. Sam Walters has referred to “The Memorandum” as Havel’s masterpiece, highlighting its thought-provoking exploration of conformity and dissent.

Vaclav Havel was a Czech playwright, dissident, and statesman who played a significant role in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Born in 1936 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Havel began his career as a playwright, writing works that critiqued the communist regime and its effects on society. His plays, such as “The Memorandum” and “Largo Desolato”, were often banned by the authorities, but they gained popularity among Czech audiences and helped to establish Havel as a prominent voice of dissent.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Havel became increasingly involved in the Czech Charter 77 movement, which advocated for human rights and civil liberties. He was arrested and imprisoned several times for his

activism, but he continued to write and speak out against the government. In 1989, Havel’s influence helped to bring about the Velvet Revolution, which led to the collapse of the communist regime and the establishment of democracy in Czechoslovakia. Havel was subsequently elected as the country’s president, serving two terms from 1989 to 1992.

As president, Havel worked to rebuild the country’s economy and institutions, and he played a key role in navigating the complex process of transitioning from a communist to a democratic society. He also continued to write and publish his work, including essays and speeches that explored the nature of democracy, morality, and human freedom. Havel’s presidency was marked by his commitment to moral leadership and his efforts to promote Czech culture and identity. He died in 2011, leaving behind a legacy as a champion of democracy, human rights, and artistic expression.

David W. Deamer’s “Origin of Life” published in Persian

TEHRAN— Qoqnoos Publishing House has published the Persian translation of “Origin of Life” by David W. Deamer.

Eghbal Jasemi has translated the book that was originally published in 2020 by Oxford University Press under the title “Origin of Life: What Everyone Needs to Know,” Mehr reported.

Our knowledge of our solar system has passed the point of no return. Increasingly, it seems possible that scientists will soon discover how life is created on habitable planets like Earth and Mars. Scientists have responded to a renewed public interest in the origin of life with research, but many questions still remain unanswered in the broader conversation. Other questions can be answered by the laws of chemistry and physics, but questions surrounding the origin of life are best answered by reasonable extrapolations of what scientists

know from observing the Earth and its solar system.

“Origin of Life: What Everyone Needs to Know” is a comprehensive scientific guide on the origin of life. David W. Deamer sets out to answer the top 40 questions about the origin of life, including: Where do the atoms of life come from? How old is Earth? What was the Earth like before life originated? Where does water come from? and how did evolution begin?

After he provides the informational answer for each question, there is a follow-up: How do we know? This question expands the horizon of the whole book, and provides scientific reasoning and explanations for hypotheses surrounding the origin of life. How scientists come to their conclusions and why we can trust these answers is an important question, and Deamer provides answers to each big question

surrounding the origin of life, from what it is to why we should be curious.

David Wilson Deamer, 85, is an American biologist and Research Professor of Biomolecular Engineering at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He has made significant contributions to the field of membrane biophysics. His work led to a novel method of DNA sequencing and a more complete understanding of the role of membranes in the origin of life.

He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1985, which supported research at the Australian National University in Canberra to investigate organic compounds in the Murchison meteorite. He served as the president of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life from 2013 to 2014.