



Election fever on gradual rise as presidential debates kick off

Unpacking the First Presidential Debate

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Iran acting FM calls for ending violence in Gaza in message to Azerbaijani counterpart

TEHRAN – In a heartfelt message on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Ali Baqeri Kani, reached out to his Azerbaijani counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov, expressing hopes for peace and unity within the Islamic community.

Baqeri Kani's message, sent on Monday, extended warm congratulations to the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan. The Iranian diplomat underscored the importance of this significant holiday as a time for reflection and collective action within the Muslim world.

Baqeri Kani articulated his hope that "with the blessings of this great and auspicious Eid, and by utilizing divine teachings and mutual efforts, the Islamic community will witness an end to war crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip, and see strengthened unity and increasing solidarity." ▶ Page 2

Iran rebukes France's deportation of Iranian national over Palestine support

TEHRAN – Iran's top human rights official has slammed as "illegal" a French court's decision to deport an Iranian national over his public solidarity with Palestinians.

In a post on X, Kazem Gharibabadi, Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, also raised concerns over the legality of Bashir Biazar's detention, highlighting that there is no legal restriction preventing his departure from France.

"Given that Bashir Biazar's return ticket is ready and there is no legal ban on his departure, why is France continuing the arbitrary detention of this Iranian citizen? We strongly condemn this course of action," he said.

Biazar is an Iranian journalist, maestro, and filmmaker known for his social media coverage of the recent Israeli war on Gaza. Two weeks ago, he was summoned by police, arrested upon arrival, and transported to a detention facility three hours from his home.

Biazar's reporting, which included videos of anti-Israeli demonstrations in France and awareness-raising about the plight of Palestinians, gained significant attention on social media. However, shortly after the start of the latest Israeli war in Gaza, his initial X account was removed without warning. He subsequently opened a new account, continuing to share his perspectives.

A French court accused Biazar of "supporting terrorism" and "causing discord in the community," ordering him to leave the country within 28 days. Despite this order, French police have not released him, providing no explanation for the continued detention.

The arrest is the latest in a series of actions by Western governments aimed at muzzling criticism of Israel.

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Hezbollah "humiliates Israel"

Lebanon's Hezbollah released Tuesday footage showing its reconnaissance drones flying over swathes of occupied Palestinian land, including Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, Safad, Karmiel, Afula, all the way to Haifa and its port.

Titled "This is what the Hoopoe came back with," the nine-minute-and-a-half video captured footage and exposed sensitive Israeli sites, Al Mayadeen reported.

Hezbollah indicated that the video was only the first episode of more yet to come, highlighting that the drones bypassed Israeli air defenses and returned to Lebanese airspace without being detected.

The published footage included intelligence information about Israeli sites inside occupied Palestine and clearly showed that the drone arrived at the port of Haifa, undetected. Hezbollah's drones brought back footage and information about sensitive sites they captured over Haifa starting with the port itself to oil refineries and military factories, not to mention the locations of military battleships and important economic hubs in the port.

In detail, the video first shows Hezbollah's drones flying over a military-industrial complex belonging to Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, which includes numerous factories, warehouses,

Israeli army commits more massacres

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) has committed new massacres in the central region of Gaza and intensified its bombardment on Rafah in the southern part of the Strip.

The attacks are coinciding with IOF's attempts to expand its military incursions into Rafah.

According to reporters on the ground in Gaza, two more children succumbed to their injuries following an Israeli drone strike on the western part of Nuseirat, raising the death toll to 19 as of early Tuesday morning.

Palestinian media reported that 17 people, including children, were killed in Israeli attacks targeting civilians in several areas of the central governorate. The casualty count is expected to rise as Israeli airstrikes are reported to be ongoing in the area.

Many perished as a result of Israeli bombs dropped on a family home in the Nuseirat camp, and the bombardment also hit warehouses sheltering displaced persons from a separate family.

Smoke and mirrors

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The United States' substantial appetite to deliver weapons to Israel shows no sign of abating despite expressing concern over high civilian deaths caused by the regime's war of genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli and German media say Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their meeting in Jerusalem (al-Quds) on June 10 that the US would remove all restrictions on weapons transfers to Israel.

The reports suggested that Netanyahu has demanded Washington fully restore the frequency of arms shipments to Tel Aviv to the level after the eruption of the Gaza onslaught.

Lip services

On May 8, President Joe Biden threatened that his administration would not provide Israel with offensive weapons if it launched an operation in populated parts of Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah. At that time, the Biden administration delayed a shipment of 2,000-pound bombs to Israel over concerns that its army could use them in Rafah. The city was the last refuge of more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population who had fled other parts of the territory amid Israel's deadly strikes.

Tehran, Beijing explore paths to enhance environmental co-op

TEHRAN – A delegation headed by Wan Gang, the Chinese Minister of Science and Technology, met in Tehran on Monday with Ali Salajeqeh, the head of the Department of Environment, to foster collaboration under the 25-year cooperation agreement which was signed in March 2021.

During the meeting, the two sides announced readiness to implement joint environmental projects that aim to combat sand and dust storms, desertification, air pollution, as well as climate change, the DOE website reported.

Other issues will involve waste management, wildlife protection, and sea-oriented development.

"Climate change is one of the major issues that concerns the whole world, Iran and China can address this global challenge through joint cooperation," DOE website quoted Salajeqeh as saying. ▶ Page 7



Paytakht Orchestra performs at Vahdat Hall

TEHRAN – Paytakht Orchestra led by Shahram Tavakoli held a concert at Vahdat Hall in Tehran on Monday night.

The orchestra performed well-known pieces by German composers and pianists Ludwig van Beethoven and Johannes Brahms, Austrian composer Franz Schubert, French composer Jules Massenet, and Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, IRNA reported.

The repertoire included "Egmont" by Beethoven, first movement of Schubert's "Eighth Symphony," "Hungarian Dance No. 4, 6, and 7" by Brahms, "Meditation" by Massenet, and Tchaikovsky's "Marche Slave" and "Elegy".

The violin soloist Alireza Chehrehghani accompanied the orchestra in the performance that was organized by Paytakht Orchestra School.

Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan up 41% in 2 months

TEHRAN – The commercial attaché of Iran in Afghanistan said Iran's non-oil export to the neighboring country registered a 41 percent growth in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024) compared to the same period last year.

Iran's export of non-oil goods to Afghanistan increased by \$102 million in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, showing a 41 percent hike compared to last year's corresponding period, Hossein Roustaei said.

He added that Afghanistan is Iran's sixth export target market and that Afghanistan is one of the export target countries with the highest positive balance of trade with Iran. ▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

Nuclear strategy, a permanent guarantee of national security

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

In its note, Siasat-e-Rooz evaluated the world's attitude towards Iran's nuclear capabilities and wrote: The pressure on Iran, which is very clear in the words and literature of European countries, can be evaluated in line with Iran's nuclear power. This means intensifying global pressures against Iran's nuclear program, blocking the development of defense technologies and nuclear capabilities, and widening nuclear threats against Iran's national security.

We know that a large part of the changes is emerging with the analytical view and accurate evaluations of the Westerners on the developments in West Asia, the ultimate fate of Israel, and the position of Iran soon of this region. We must know that the most important move to get rid of the agency's constant harassment is to remove the set of constant threats and pressures and enter the phase of getting rid of the stopping point and achieving a permanent stage of nuclear deterrence. Undoubtedly, passing this stage, which has become inevitable, will change the level of threats and power variables in the region and the world, and Iran will reach stable security.

Sobh-e-No: Another defeat for the opposition

In a commentary, Sobh-e-No dealt with the release of Hamid Nouri from Swedish prison and said: Hamid Nouri's release was the result of the Islamic Republic's strategy, which resulted in consecutive political victories for the country, following the operation "True Promise", the isolation of MKO in Albania and France, and the cleansing of the west of the country from separatists.

This incident made the MKO and the foreign opposition shock, and now they see their only achievement of several years of activity against the Islamic Republic lost. The only success of the opposition was Hamid Nouri's prison sentence, which was overturned by Iran's successful diplomacy. The release provoked the anger of Persian-language anti-Iranian networks. Diplomacy of honor means that when the enemy attacked Iran's soil, a decisive response was given to the Zionist regime immediately with the unique operation of True promise and when an Iranian was illegally captured by human rights advocates, his rights should be decisively defended until the day of freedom, and surely and certainly martyr Amir Abdollahian played an important role in this direction.

Iran: A discourse that was stabilized

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper paid

attention to martyred Raisi's skill in coordination and synergy in the field and diplomacy and wrote: The last 3 years can be called the years of power of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in dealing with foreign enemies and opposition groups. In May 1402 (2023), a few days after Macron's phone call with Ayatollah Raisi, France abandoned Iran's opposition, and at the same time, the Albanian police arrested several terrorists in an operation against the headquarters of the MKO.

Also, the operation of the True Promise, the issuance of the Canadian court verdict related to the Ukrainian plane case, and the French police raid on the headquarters of the MKO in Paris and the arrest of several of them derive from honorable diplomacy that was put on the agenda when the 13th government took office. The measures taken to produce power and authority showed that the countries of the world and the opposition only understand the language of power. In simpler words, the discourse of honor and authority was a brand that the martyred Raisi government established as an important pillar of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Arman-e-Melli: Grossi's pulses from Iran-U.S. negotiations

In an article, Arman-e-Melli discussed Iran's nuclear issue and the negotiations with the United States and wrote: In his recent conversation, Grossi pointed out the negotiations between Iran and the United States, and then expressed ignorance about these negotiations. Therefore, it can be concluded that Iran and the United States have had negotiations, but these negotiations have not reached Tehran's desired results, and Iran has increased the level of enrichment instead. Of course, the Americans always demand more cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

All these cases show that no matter how much the Europeans try to deal with Iran, they will not achieve anything, because it is Iran and the United States that must reach an agreement with each other. If the Westerners want to practically create obstacles for Iran with the trigger mechanism, it is not unlikely that Tehran will make decisions regarding the NPT that are not in the interest of the Americans in any way. But it seems that Iran and America will play on the current ground until the results of the presidential elections of the two countries become clear.

protocols, Amir Abdollahian transcended these norms by integrating the principles of the Islamic Revolution into his political endeavors.

Salami further elaborated on Amir Abdollahian's approach, stating, "He used the language of authority when negotiating with world powers and the language of support when engaging with the oppressed." This dual strategy underscored his exceptional ability to blend ethics, expertise, and authority in his political dealings.

In addition, Salami highlighted Amir Abdollahian's bravery and commitment, noting his willingness to visit conflict-ridden regions like Lebanon and Syria. He maintained close relations with the Axis of Resistance forces and had a deep connection with late Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

The IRGC chief's tribute underscored Amir Abdollahian's legacy as a senior diplomat who skillfully merged conventional diplomacy with the revolutionary spirit of resistance, marking a significant chapter in Iran's political history.

The helicopter carrying the Iranian officials was on its way to Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan, from a location on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan where the Iranian president had opened a major dam project.

Rescuers found the wreckage of the helicopter early on Monday after hours of extensive search which involved more than 70 teams.

Following the tragic death of Amir Abdollahian, Ali Baqeri Kani was appointed to replace him as the acting Foreign Minister.

Acting FM calls for ending violence in Gaza in talks with Azerbaijani counterpart

From page 1 ▶ The acting Foreign Minister emphasized that Eid al-Adha is not only a period for celebration but also a time for the Muslim community to come together in pursuit of common goals. He stressed that this holiday should serve as a reminder of the shared responsibilities of Islamic countries to promote justice, peace, and solidarity.

Previously, Baqeri Kani had sent similar messages to the foreign ministers of various Islamic nations, reiterating his view that Eid al-Adha provides a valuable opportunity to bolster solidarity among Muslim countries. He emphasized the necessity of working together to advance common ideals and achieve global justice and peace.

Israel initiated its current offensive against Gaza on October 7, following a surprise attack by Palestinian Resistance movements, named Operation Al-Aqsa Storm which came as an answer to years of



Israeli wrongdoings in the occupied territories. This offensive has heavily targeted hospitals, homes, and places of worship, leading to widespread destruction.

Alongside the military campaign, Israel has imposed a near-total blockade on the coastal enclave, severely restricting the supply of essential goods such as food, medicine, electricity, and water. This blockade has drastically affected the Palestinian population's ability to

access basic necessities.

The conflict has been devastating, resulting in the deaths of at least 37,337 Palestinians, most of whom are women and children. An additional 85,299 have been injured, and over 1.7 million people have been internally displaced.

Currently, Israeli attacks are concentrated in the central region of Gaza. A month ago, Israeli forces advised Palestinians from Rafah to evacuate to this area, designating

it as a safe zone. As a result, over one million Palestinians relocated to Nuseirat, Deir el-Balah, and other central locations. However, these areas are now also under attack.

The Gaza Government Media Office has issued warnings about the severe lack of aid, including food, nutritional supplements, and vaccines, which puts 3,500 children at risk of dying from malnutrition.

The offensive has severely crippled Gaza's health sector. According to Gaza's Health Ministry, the conflict has reduced the enclave's clinical capacity by 70 percent. Consequently, Gaza is increasingly relying on field hospitals, which often lack basic services, to treat patients who cannot find spots in the remaining hospitals.

This dire situation highlights the urgent need for international intervention to address the humanitarian crisis and bring an end to the violence affecting countless innocent lives.

Nouri release highlights Iran's diplomatic strength: top MP



TEHRAN – Iran's second Deputy Parliament Speaker Ali Nikzad has hailed the release of a former Iranian Judiciary official from Swedish jail as indicative of the country's power and dignity in diplomatic matters.

Nikzad made the remarks at the beginning of a parliament session on Tuesday. "The release of Hamid Nouri signifies Iran's power and the dignity of the country's diplomacy. It was also a major defeat for the hypocrites and Zionists," he said, adding that Nouri's return to Iran also brought "disgrace" to the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group.

Nouri spent over four years in prison after being arrested in November 2019 upon his arrival at Stockholm Airport.

He was sentenced to life in prison on charges of "crime against humanity" for his rulings against MKO terrorists during his time in the

Iranian judiciary. The terror group openly boasts about its killing of over 17,000 Iranian civilians and officials, and says it would do it all over again if it gets the chance. Nouri's trials were mostly based on allegations put forth by the MKO.

Nouri was subject to repeated human rights violations during his detention in Sweden. According to his attorneys, the Iranian national's three and a half years in solidarity confinement smashed world records. He was also denied medical care on multiple occasions and was physically assaulted by Swedish police on at least one occasion.

Sayed Raisi's death was a reflection of how he lived

By Batool Subeiti political analyst

BEIRUT – Sayed Ibrahim Raisi and his companions were killed whilst on active duty – a reflection of how they lived their lives. The president displayed strong energies throughout his life and was not sitting behind closed doors, rather he was in a constant state of service. The million-

man gatherings in many cities across Iran for his funeral service is also a testament to the reverence this man had in the hearts of the masses.

Sayed Raisi was active since the beginning of his youth, which coincided with the revolution. His ascension to presidency did not come out of nothing; it was built on a history of struggle, through which he won the trust of the masses and the Leader too.

Of the most important attributes he displayed was loyalty to his faith and the country, with sincerity in the tasks he carried out, dedication to serving the people. He was firm in his principles yet flexible in dealing with those around him. Sayed Raisi was a man of getting things done and would seek all the possibilities, whilst displaying ambition.

Sayed Raisi's active energies were coupled with a vision that was favorable, creative, and authentic, such as Iran relying on itself and not receiving support from the outside. The internal policies of his presidency focused on fighting corruption, revitalizing the internal

economy through improving income and job creation, fighting poverty and investment in

infrastructure, such as water, electricity, health, and education.

Iran's foreign policy under Sayed Raisi prioritized strengthening the resistance axis as part of confronting the American hegemony. This included the development of more sophisticated weapons at wider ranges, such that they could be renewed in the event of long-term battles.

Iran has worked to guarantee its national security, through strengthening and expanding its defense systems.

For the first time, coordination and unity of the resistance axis fronts materialized under Sayed Raisi's presidency. This is to the extent that America is avoiding escalation and a regional war, due to the difficulty in confronting the resistance axis. Every arena of the resistance axis has operated independently yet come to each other's defense, whilst safeguarding the higher interests. Sayed Raisi's insight was demonstrated in the strategy of reducing regional tension and international escalation, through not getting dragged into an expanded war of destruction. Despite this, Iran still dealt a decisive slap towards the Israeli occupation entity on April 13th.

Sayed Raisi's vision to solve the regional problems was based on dialogue. Iran has shown it has an open hand policy towards all countries of the world, excluding the Israeli occupation entity and America, if the latter continues its arrogant course. Strategic regional cooperation

within common interests was enhanced under Sayed Raisi. This included regional security agreements such as the rapprochement

with Saudi Arabia, aimed at reducing tensions and enhancing stability, whilst weakening external pressures. Iran under Sayed Raisi saw a strengthened relationship with neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Turkey, despite the differing politics.

Through the policy of reducing tension and promoting dialogue within common interests that require international cooperation, Iran sought to keep in check the groups that the West has established in the neighboring countries. These groups commit sabotage acts in Iran, operating from northern Iraq, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Daesh in Syria and Iraq under American auspices. Under Sayed Raisi, Iran responded

quickly and firmly against the Western-linked security threats and its tools, such as striking the Mossad base in Erbil and the Jaish-ul-Adl group in Pakistan's Baluchistan province, early this year.

Iran formally joined BRICs and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization under Sayed Raisi's presidency, expanding its engagement in international organizations that would help form parallel systems to the Western hegemonic organizations. Iran seeks to cooperate with all countries of the world seeking liberation from Western domination in South America, such as Venezuela and Colombia which saw strengthened relations with Iran. In addition, Iran seeks to help countries under Western pressure, particularly countries in Africa such as Eritrea, with all these efforts contributing to ending the unipolar world system.

Iran envoy meets Saudi crown prince in Mina

TEHRAN – Ambassador of Iran to Saudi Arabia Alireza Enayati met with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, in Mina, Saudi Arabia.

On the occasion of Eid al-Adha, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, representing King Salman bin Abdulaziz, hosted a special ceremony to welcome Islamic leaders and the heads of this year's Hajj delegations.

On Monday, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held the annual reception at the Royal Court in the Mina Palace. The event welcomed government officials, Saudi princes, Islamic leaders, guests of the King, guests of government officials, and the heads of this year's Hajj missions and offices.

As reported by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the Crown Prince delivered a speech during the ceremony, extending greetings to the guests and pilgrims of the Holy Kaaba.

"I am very pleased to extend Eid al-Adha greetings on behalf of the King of Saudi Arabia," he said. "We ask God to accept the acts of the pilgrims and help them complete their rituals safely, smoothly, and confidently. We are proud to fulfill this great duty and strive to provide all our efforts and resources to ensure the comfort of God's guests from their arrival until they return home."

In another part of his speech, bin Salman addressed the ongoing violence in Gaza. "Eid al-Adha has arrived while the

most brutal crimes against our brothers in Gaza continue," he said. "We emphasize the need for an immediate end to these aggressions and call on the international community to take all measures to protect the lives of the people of Gaza."

The Crown Prince also reiterated the importance of implementing recent UN Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. "Saudi Arabia once again calls on the international community to recognize an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders," he said, "so the Palestinian brothers can achieve their legitimate rights and comprehensive, just, and lasting peace can be realized."

Concluding his speech, bin

Salman extended Eid al-Adha greetings and wished security and comfort for the Islamic community.

In remarks to the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper on Sunday, the Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia had underscored that Iran will continue to strengthen relations with the Saudi Arabia at the directives of the two countries' leaderships.

Alireza Enayati stressed that the Hajj helps forge relations of friendship between Muslims, adding that Tehran places great importance on its ties with Riyadh.

On Iranian Hajj pilgrims, Enayati said they are organized and have completed their holy rituals smoothly and at ease.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRGC chief lauds late Amir Abdollahian as diplomat of Resistance



TEHRAN – The Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, has extolled the late Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian for his significant contributions to the Resistance Front.

Praising late Amir Abdollahian's profound understanding of the diplomacy of Resistance, Salami highlighted his adeptness at navigating and directing it.

Speaking on Tuesday during a visit to Amir Abdollahian's family in Tehran, Salami commemorated the late foreign minister, who tragically perished in a helicopter crash on May 19, along with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

The general emphasized the late Amir Abdollahian's unique blend of political insight, diplomatic acumen, and distinctive personality.

"Diplomacy is an amalgamation of talent, skill, knowledge, and charisma," Salami remarked, noting that Amir Abdollahian possessed all these essential attributes. He pointed out that while diplomats are generally expected to adhere to international

Unpacking the first presidential debate

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Six presidential candidates participated in their first-ever televised debate on Monday, vying for the votes of viewers who eagerly sought a candidate aligned with their vision for Iran's future.

The debate was the first of five scheduled to take place in the span of nine days. Presidential hopefuls shared their policies and plans for Iran's economy in their first direct face-off before the June 28th vote.

The debate was deemed underwhelming by some viewers, who believed candidates failed to spark voters' interest partly due to the long duration of the televised debate. From the moment the six figures turned up at the IRIB headquarters to the time they finished delivering their points, a good six hours had passed.

Quarrels less pervasive than before, but still there

Televised debates for presidential candidates began airing in 2009. Since then, multiple politicians appearing on TV have been condemned for their lack of ethical conduct and their unfair attacks on opponents.

Despite a relatively calmer tone compared to previous years, Monday's debate still saw some candidates criticized for prioritizing attacks on their opponents over promoting their own agendas. One of these censured individuals was



conservative candidate Alireza Zakani, who spent a significant time trying to undermine reformist Masoud Pezeshkian's positions.

Among the candidates, Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi was praised for his collected and professional demeanor. The hopeful believed to have left the best impression on the viewers is Mostafa Pourmohammadi, a rather unfamiliar face for Iranian citizens.

Pourmohammadi urged authorities to believe in Iranian capabilities while they strive to learn from their past mistakes. His comments on the conduct of Iran's banks, sanctions, and corruption were also received well by the audience.

The perceived front-runners of the elections, Pezeshkian, Saeed Jalili, and Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, were criticized for repeating rudimentary facts and already discussed topics.

New polls reveal that while the three candidates have not

gained significant ground, Pourmohammadi is emerging as a more prominent figure in the race for the presidency, drawing greater attention from voters.

Zarif makes a comeback after lying low for three years

Pezeshkian tried to bolster his campaign for support on Tuesday by taking former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as his advisor to a political roundtable on national TV.

Zarif became a household name in 2015 when Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with the 5+1 group of countries under his tenure as the top diplomat. He gained immense popularity for reaching a relative thaw with Western nations after years of tensions and terminating Iran's sanctions.

However, his popularity was short-lived as former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the pact in 2018 and re-

imposed heavy sanctions against Iran under the "maximum pressure campaign." European signatories to the deal also failed to uphold their commitments. Since the de facto collapse of the JCPOA, Zarif has been criticized for compromising on Iran's nuclear achievements and inking an agreement with the West without reliable guarantees.

During his appearance on TV, Zarif defended the signing of the JCPOA, stating that Trump's withdrawal from the pact does not mean the deal was innately erroneous.

"Trump also withdrew from the Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation and the INF deal with Russia. Does that mean that these were bad agreements?" he argued.

While the appointment of the former foreign minister as Pezeshkian's advisor is considered to be a good strategic political maneuver, its impact on the candidate's vote count remains uncertain.

Leader's office warns candidates to refrain from misquoting or misrepresenting his statements

TEHRAN –The office of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution issued a warning on Tuesday, urging presidential candidates to avoid quoting Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei out of context or inaccurately.

"It has been taken into notice that in recent days, some respected candidates, members of their campaign staff, or affiliated figures have made incomplete or incorrect quotations from [the statements of] the Leader of the Islamic Revolution," said the office in a statement.

"Everyone is expected to pay necessary attention to this matter and refrain from repeating it," it added.

The statement did not mention which candidate(s) had misquoted or misrepresented the Leader's remarks. But following the warning from the Leader's office, social media users drew attention to recent comments by Alireza Zakani, a conservative candidate, who claimed on national TV that Ayatollah Khamenei had not been in favor of inking the

JCPOA during a private meeting.

Ayatollah Khamenei has always refrained from favoring presidential candidates throughout the years, only asking them to uphold ethical standards and avoid attacking their opponents unjustly.

During a recent meeting with Iranian prodigies, the Leader urged the youth to vote for someone who is true to the Islamic Revolution and knows how to execute his responsibilities as the president perfectly.

First presidential debate gets off to a good start

By Xavier Villar

MADRID- The first televised debate preceding the Iranian presidential elections, scheduled for June 28th, took place on Monday, the 18th. This event focused on economic issues, presenting various proposals to address the most urgent challenges in this field.

Lasting approximately four hours, the debate was marked by intense exchanges where each candidate expressed their views on combating corruption, economic policies, inflation, Western sanctions, and Iran's role in the global economy.

Mostafa Pourmohammadi, former Minister of Justice in Ahmadinejad's government and the only cleric among the candidates, as well as Secretary General of the Society of Combatant Clerics, criticized the policies of the central bank. He argued that these policies harm the domestic industry by raising interest rates. "We have granted authority and independence to the central bank, but not the tools. They have raised interest rates, which is inflationary in itself."

Many analysts have noted that Pourmohammadi aimed to play a role similar to Hassan Rouhani's in the 2013 elections. During the debate, he repeatedly criticized the "principalist" candidates, a term used in Iran for supporters of a policy aiming to uphold the founding principles of the Islamic Republic. He reproached them for allegedly "exacerbating sanctions through actions such as attacks on embassies." He also lamented that Iran "paid the price of the war in Ukraine but did not benefit from it," emphasizing that "all our trade relations are blocked."

Pourmohammadi emphasized the need for a free market economy, stating: "For the economy to succeed, we must have competition, and the

government should not compete. We should not have a directed economy."

On the other hand, Alireza Zakani, current mayor of Tehran, rejected "pleading diplomacy" and emphasized the need for national self-sufficiency. He argued that Iran must achieve self-sufficiency to earn international respect, though he noted that "sanctions are unjust; we must neutralize them first."

Zakani underscored the importance of economic managers within the government being "honest and capable of combating corruption." During the debate, he had a rhetorical confrontation with Pezeshkian when the latter mentioned the need for Iran to comply with FATF standards to attract investment from China. Zakani responded by saying, "That's not true. I went and signed agreements worth \$13 billion and contracts worth \$2 billion with China."

In the segment dedicated to corruption, the Tehran mayor supported calls for accountability. Tension escalated further when Zakani accused, without naming names, certain individuals within Pezeshkian's campaign of corruption: "Mr. Pezeshkian talks about prosecuting inefficient individuals. Yes, some of those responsible are currently in his campaign."

Saeed Jalili, a prominent figure within the "principalist" camp and former Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, unsurprisingly criticized Rouhani's government for basing its entire policy on pursuing "international agreements" without focusing on the country's capacity development.

Emphatically, Jalili rejected any dependence on agreements with foreign countries, arguing that "the maximum pressure policy executed by the United States against Iran failed in planning, understanding opportunities, and attracting

investments."

However, this does not imply that Jalili is an isolationist. From his perspective, Iranian foreign policy should be based on autonomy and freedom in seeking alliances. He underscored his extensive experience in diplomatic affairs by stating, "I have been involved in foreign policy for 35 years. Today, our opportunities in foreign policy and our extensive interactions with the world are unparalleled."

In this regard, it is noteworthy that there are rumors that Mehdi Safari, former ambassador to China, Russia, and Austria, could be his candidate for the position of Foreign Minister should Jalili win the elections.

Masoud Pezeshkian, considered by many analysts as the underperformer of the evening for failing to meet expectations, is the "reformist" candidate backed by figures such as former President Khatami and former Foreign Minister Javad Zarif from the Rouhani government.

In the segment dedicated to corruption, Pezeshkian highlighted economic inefficiencies and losses caused by sanctions. Pointing to those he believes benefit from the status quo, he stated, "We are buying expensively and selling cheaply. We suffer significant losses in the oil sector. Who is responsible for selling our assets so cheaply?"

He also emphasized the negative impact of sanctions, stating, "Sanctions are a disaster; we evade them, but in this wrong path we are taking, there is a lot of corruption. Where does all this corruption come from?"

Furthermore, he underscored the importance of adhering to global financial standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to attract foreign investment, especially from China.

Regarding inflation, Pezeshkian highlighted budget deficits and "uncontrolled money printing" as crucial issues. "Inflation means emptying people's pockets without them realizing it; they go to sleep at night and wake up finding their purchasing power has disappeared," he emphasized.

Concerning corruption, Pezeshkian insisted on the need to prosecute those who fail to deliver on promises and placed strong emphasis on transparency: "I will place government finances in a room entirely made of glass."

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, current President of the Parliament and a favorite according to recent polls published by Press TV, emphasized the need for a strong government to address the numerous challenges facing Iran.

Qalibaf acknowledged the impact of sanctions and stressed the importance of gradually lifting them through a "step-by-step" approach. He also advocated for concrete diplomatic efforts to achieve this goal, stating, "We have a specific plan that we can follow step by step."

Regarding inflation, he promised to adjust salaries and advocated for greater independence for the central bank. "We have empowered the Central Bank but have not yet granted it full independence," he noted during the debate.

Qalibaf expressed his opinion that government involvement in the economy should be minimized. "The Islamic Revolution granted people the opportunity to govern their own destiny through religious democracy," he highlighted.

He also mentioned the necessity of establishing a "protective shield" to safeguard the population against inflation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran volleyball play for pride in 2024 VNL Week 3

TEHRAN – Iran have no chance of qualifying for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and just play for their pride in the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) Week 3.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Wednesday with a match against the U.S.

Eight of the world's best volleyball countries descend upon the Philippines when the country hosts the third and final week of the VNL starting Tuesday at the Mall of Asia Arena.

All but Iran are still in contention for a place in the final eight set June 27 to 30 in Lodz, Poland.

Iran are dead last at 16th but vowed to give a decent fight.

"We know that Iran have no chance for securing Olympics spot but we want to finish the competition on high. The Olympics is finished for Iran but we are determined to get good results in Week 3," Iran captain Milad Ebadipour said.

"We know that the U.S. are a strong team but we want to beat them in front of the Philippines' spectators. It's important for us to finish the campaign in style," he added.

The VNL Preliminary Phase features three competition weeks per gender, with each of the 16 teams playing 12 matches. The seven best-ranked national teams in the Preliminary Phase will join hosts Poland for the Finals, which will be held in Lodz from June 27 to 30.

Southampton lead the race for Saman Ghoddos

TEHRAN – English Championship side Southampton are allegedly leading the race to sign Iranian international winger Saman Ghoddos on a free transfer.

The 30-year-old's Brentford contract is due to expire at the end of the month, and he is widely expected to leave the Bees, sportsmole.co.uk reported.

A number of clubs have been credited with an interest in the attacker, who has scored three times in 53 caps for Iran.

Southampton are firmly at the head of the queue for his signature, with Saints widely expected to confirm his arrival at the start of next month.

The report claims that Ghoddos is determined to continue his career in English football, and personal terms between the two parties have already been agreed.

Ghoddos featured on 20 occasions for Brentford during the 2023/24 campaign, including 19 appearances in the Premier League, finding the back of the net against Burnley back in October.

Iran to compete at FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup Division B

TEHRAN – Iran basketball team will travel to China on Friday to compete at the FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup 2024 Division B.

The competition will be held in Shenzhen from June 24 to 30.

Iran, headed by Eleni Kapogianni, is scheduled to play Hong Kong in its opening match slated for June 24 (Monday).

The Persians will also play Kyrgyzstan and Samoa in their following matches.

The Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Samoa, and Syria are the teams that will be competing in the event for a chance to secure promotion to Division A.

Michniewicz nominated to lead Persepolis

TEHRAN – Former Poland football team head coach Czesław Michniewicz has been reportedly shortlisted to lead Persepolis.

Brazilian coach Osmar Loss Vieira parted company with the Iranian team last week. He led Persepolis to the title in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) but rejected to extend his deal due to family problems.

The 49-year-old coach had been appointed as Persepolis coach in January as a replacement for Yahya Golmohammadi.

Former Iran football team head coach Dragan Skocic is among the candidates to lead Persepolis as well as Croatia's Petar Segrt and Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovovic.

Michniewicz, 54, has most recently worked as head coach of Saudi Arabian football club Abha Football Club.

Chamanian named Iran U17 football team coach

TEHRAN – Abbas Chamanian was named as head coach of Iran's U17 football team.

He will lead Iran at the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers, where the Persians have been drawn in Group A along with Jordan, Syria, Hong Kong, China and DPR Korea.

The 61-year-old coach has previously worked as head coach of Iran U17 and U20 teams.

"First, we have to prepare for the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers because I think that Iran have been drawn in a tough group," Chamanian said.

"We have to pave the way our young talented players to join the national team, that's why I am here. I think the Asian tournament like this provides an excellent opportunity for the players to show their capabilities," he added.

Iran lose to China in 2024 Junior AHF Cup

TEHRAN – Iran's U-21 hockey team lost to China 10-1 in the Men's Junior AHF Cup 2024 on Tuesday.

Iran had lost to Chinese Taipei 8-0 and Oman 2-1 in their first two matches in Pool B and shared spoils in a goalless draw against Hong Kong.

Iran are scheduled to play Kazakhstan on Wednesday.

Bangladesh, reigning champion in men's Junior AHF Cup, has been placed in Pool A along with Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Singapore.

The four semifinalists will advance to the next edition of the Junior Asia Cup.

Iran to compete at Para Powerlifting World Cup 2024

TEHRAN – Iran has sent seven powerlifters to the Tbilisi 2024 Para Powerlifting World Cup.

The competition will be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, from June 20 to June 26.

Serving as the ultimate battleground before the Paris Paralympics 2024, this event holds immense significance for Para Powerlifters worldwide.

Mohsen Bakhtiar (up to 59kg), Amir Jafari Arangeh (up to 65kg), Rouhollah Rostami (up to 88kg), Hamed Solhipour (up to 97kg), Mahid Sayadi (up to 107kg), Ali Akbar Gharibshahi (up to 107kg) and Ahmad Aminzadeh (over 107kg) will represent Iran in the competition.

PGPL: Iran to use VAR next season

TEHRAN – The 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) is set to use Video Assistant Referee (VAR) in the next season.

Iranian football officials had previously announced that several times they would use VAR but failed to live up to their promise.

Now, Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs Kioumars Hashemi has urged the football federation to start the next season with VAR.

The system was used at the 2018 World Cup for the first time.

Iran's private sector eyes co-op with France on non-sanctioned areas



TEHRAN – The Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh has called for cooperation with the Paris Chamber of Commerce in non-sanctioned areas.

He made the remarks in a meeting in the French capital with the vice-president of Paris Chamber of Commerce.

Hassanzadeh noted that the ground is prepared for further cooperation between the chambers of commerce of Iran and Paris, particularly in the scientific and academic fields.

He added that the Iran Chamber of Commerce is ready to grant scholarships to interested Iranian students to study at universities and colleges operating under the Paris Chamber of Commerce.

Noting that some 27 percent of the Iranian national production and economic activities are taking place under the supervision of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Hassanzadeh said that the Iran Chamber of Commerce looks

forward to further cooperation with Paris Chamber of Commerce on non-sanctioned areas.

In the meantime, the French side, elaborated on the activities of Paris Chamber of Commerce, signaling readiness for further engagements with Iran.

In another meeting between the head and deputy head of the ICCIMA with the heads of the Eastern Chambers of France, the strengthening of relations and increasing the level of trade between the two countries was emphasized.

In this meeting, the two sides referred to the long history of business relations between Iran and France and discussed the existing capacities for the development of cooperation and joint investment.

Hassanzadeh stated that the chambers of the two countries are committed to work to improve the social and economic relations between the private sectors of the two countries at the international level.

“Despite the existing limitations, we should think about improving bilateral relations by drawing a road map,” he said.

“In Iran, there are large capacities in the field of oil, renewable energy, industrial machinery, petrochemical, refinery, food, and greenhouse industries, and on the other hand, Iran has significant potential in new oil and petrochemical megaprojects, which can be implemented with joint investment,” he added.

Bank loans to economic sectors rise 36%

TEHRAN – The Iranian banking system has paid 72 quadrillion rials (about \$14.4 billion) of facilities in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 -May 20, 2024), registering a 36.2 percent rise from the figure in the same period of the previous year, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced.

As Mehr News Agency reported, of the total facilities, 5.7 quadrillion rials (about \$11.4 billion) equivalent to 79.3 percent, was paid to the business owners (real and legal), and 1.4 quadrillion rials (about \$2.9 billion) equivalent to 20.7 percent, to the final consumers (households).

Foreign journalists participate in football friendship match at Chaoyang Park

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING– A number of foreign journalists participated in an internal football friendship match at Chaoyang Park in Beijing on Monday.

Besides participation in this match, the journalists also paid a visit to Chaoyang Park located in Chaoyang District.

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

Construction of Chaoyang Park, located on the site of the former Prince's Palace in Beijing's Chaoyang District, began in 1984. It's certainly not Beijing's most historical park but at close to 1.2 square miles, Chaoyang Park is easily the largest within the Third Ring Road, complete with flower gardens, roller coasters, oddly placed baroque architecture, and plenty to see and snack on.

The park is home to many architectural features, both completed and botched. The Beijing Skyview Ferris Wheel provides an interesting and demonstrative example of Chaoyang Park's grand, if unrealized, ambitions.

As an expansive green space with diverse

activities, Chaoyang Park is Beijing's premier urban retreat. Found a stone's throw from the Central Business District and the shopping streets of Sanlitun, this lush oasis offers a running track, amusement park, waterways, an outdoor stage, and varied art installations. Bicycles and boats can be rented at various locations. From taichi practice, casual fishing, badminton games, strolling families, and amateur musical performances, opportunities for people-watching also abound.

As earlier mentioned, the visit to “The Box” 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.

Iran exports medicinal products to 50 countries

TEHRAN – The Iran Food and Drug Administration (IFDA) has said the country exports raw materials and pharmaceutical products to approximately 50 countries around the world.

“Iranian raw materials and pharmaceutical products are exported by nearly 100 companies to about 50 destinations,” Asef Mahdavi, secretary of the IFDA's export policymaking council, announced.

Iranian companies have the capacity of producing medicines several times more than meeting domestic needs, he added.

The medicines developed in Iran are competitive with the European ones in terms of their price and with the Indian ones in terms

of their quality.

Mahdavi also noted that the export of medical equipment grew by 300 percent in the first four months of this year.

Earlier, IFDA Head Heidar Mohammadi said that Iran's pharmaceutical market is worth 106 trillion toman (over \$2 billion), adding that 99 percent of drugs used in the country are produced domestically.

Over the past years, Iran has made great strides in the medical sector despite illegal Western sanctions.

It has become self-reliant in producing medicines and health equipment and increased sales to many countries.

Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan up 41% in 2 months

From page 1 ▶ He put the volume of Iran's export of non-oil goods to Afghanistan from March 19 to May 22, 2024, at \$350 million, showing a 41 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

In this period, Iran exported 181,000 tons of non-oil goods to Afghanistan, Roustaei noted.

Light oils, oil products, oil gases, ingot, iron, steel, compound, polyethylene, light- and heavy hydrocarbons, foodstuff, urea, tomato, tree apples, cement, types of polyethylene, potatoes, fresh fruits and vegetables, orange and infant formula were the main products exported from Iran to the neighboring country, he stated.

Iran imported more than \$7.0 million of products from Afghanistan between March 19 and May 22, 2024, he added.



The Islamic Republic exported over \$1.8 billion of non-oil products to the neighboring country in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), registering a 13.6 percent growth compared to a year earlier.

According to Roustaei, the country exported 3,414 tons of

non-oil products worth \$1.871 billion to Afghanistan in the previous year.

The official noted that Iran's annual non-oil exports to Afghanistan also rose by 28 percent in terms of weight compared to the same period last year.

Increasing the number of

trade and business delegations, facilitating the activities at border crossings, increasing working hours at the customs offices, holding joint economic commission meetings between the two countries in Tehran, holding business conferences in Kabul, Herat, Tehran, and Mashhad, and holding an exhibition of the export potentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Herat were among the most important factors in the rise in the export of non-oil goods from Iran to Afghanistan, he emphasized.

Oil products, iron and steel ingots, natural gas, light and heavy hydrocarbons, iron, steel, foodstuff, types of polyethylene, fresh fruits and vegetables, and cement were among the main products exported from Iran to Afghanistan in this period, Roustaei added.

NDF to deposit \$60m into capital market stabilization fund

TEHRAN – The National Development Fund (NDF) is going to deposit \$60 million into the stabilization fund to support the stock market, a member of the NDF board of directors said.

Alireza Mirmohammad Sadeghi stated that according to the law, the equivalent of \$510 million must be injected from the foreign exchange resources of the National Development Fund into the Stock Market Stabilization Fund of which about \$450 million has been provided and the other \$60 million will also be supplied in three installments.

“Undoubtedly, the stock market is one of the best and most profitable markets for investment, and the National Development Fund, as one of the investors and influential shareholders in the capital market, tries to support this financial market with the

cooperation of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) by injecting resources into the market stabilization fund so that the market can return to the profitable path,” Sadeghi said.

The allocation of financial resources from NDF to the Capital Market Stabilization and Development Fund is one of the measures that the government has been taking since the stock market started a downward trend.

Following the 13th government's new strategies to improve the stock market, the Government Economic Coordination Headquarters convened a meeting on November 2, 2021, chaired by late President Ebrahim Raisi, during which a decision was made to inject new resources from NDF into the Capital Market Development and

Stabilization Fund.

Based on the statute of the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund, the resources of this fund can be provided from three main sources, the first is the government investment which should be foreseen in the national budget bill, and the second is the allocation of one percent of NDF resources for this fund, and the third source would be the allocation of a part of the trades commission received by the SEO.

The Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund's mission is to support the Iranian stock market. The money loaned from NDF should be repaid over a specified period and the maturity can be extended. The Capital Market Stabilization Fund is responsible for paying the principal amount plus interest.

CIPCC holds briefing on Xinjiang visit for foreign journalists

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING– China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC), that is organizing a visit to Xinjiang province for a number of journalists from different countries, held a pre-departure briefing session for the upcoming visit, on Monday (June 17).

Zhang He, the deputy executive producer at China Global Television Network (CGTN) newsgathering, briefed the journalists on details of the Xinjiang trip.

What comes as follow, are the headlines of the briefing.

Xinjiang

- Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (“new frontier”)

- The largest province in China, spanning over 1.6 million km2 (Iran: 1,648,195 km2)

- It takes up about 1/6 of the country's territory

Weather

- Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is inland and far from the ocean

- Surrounded by high mountains, blocking marine air currents

- Distinct temperate continental climate

- Significant temperature variations

The Uyghurs

- The largest ethnic group in Xinjiang

- It takes up 46% of the total population

- Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolia, Tatar and Russianinly

- Mainly located in Kashgar, Hotan, Aksu and others in Urumqi

Kashgar Old City

- The old town houses nearly 20,000

- In 2009, major renovation project that spanned up to 7 years

- In March, a new legislation entered into

Id Kah Mosque

- One of the biggest mosques in China

- Built more than 500 years ago (during the Ming Dynasty)

- Its architectural design is rich in ethnic styles, incorporating elements of Buddhism

- Xinjiang has 24,400 mosques (one mosque for every 530 Muslims)

WESTWARD OPENING UP

- An important corridor linking Asia and Europe

- Xinjiang becomes gateway in China's opening up in the west

- Strengthen economic and trade exchanges between China and neighboring countries

- China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone

- Includes areas in Urumqi, Kashgar, and Khorgas

- China's 22nd pilot free trade zone and the first-ever in the country's northwestern border regions.

- Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone (Kashgar Area)

- Kashgar Area of the China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone

- Leveraging international trade logistics to boost its export-oriented economy

- On-site processing of imported resources & modern service industries like international logistics and cross-border e-commerce.

- Urumqi International Land Port Area

- Urumqi China-Europe Railway Express Hub

- A comprehensive bonded zone.

- A landmark project in the construction of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt

- Kashgar Jianguoguo Agricultural Technology

- Dried fruits, fresh fruits, and nuts from Xinjiang

- “tribal e-commerce + independent platform + farmers” business model

- 20% to 30% increase in farmers' incomes
- Employment opportunities for 3,500 local farmers

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

- About 25 million inhabitants.

- only about 9.7 percent of Xinjiang's land area is fit for human habitation

- China's Xinjiang lifts millions out of poverty

- Relocation of poverty-stricken villagers making efforts to increase income

- Langqiao Shui'an Community, Duolaite Bage Township, Kashgar City

- Development infrastructure—water, electricity, roads, gas, heating, communications, schools, and medical services

- Residents' quality of life has improved.

- Yikang Huayuan Residential Area, Shule Town, Shule County

- 2,296 local shops, 95 enterprises and institutions, and 285 neighboring businesses

- Ensure stable employment for its relocated residents

- Shule County Modern Vegetable Industrial Park

- Employing more than 680 people

- Average monthly wage - over 2,000 yuan

- Shamalebagh Town Health Center, Kashgar City

- Traditional Chinese (Uyghur) medicine

- 283 varieties of traditional herbal medicines

- Most of the staffs are ethnic minorities

- Aksu Prefecture

- Aksu, which literally means “white water” in local language

- The second largest desert in the world- Taklimakan Desert

- High peak of Tianshan Mountain

- 73% are Uyghur, 26% are Han, others belong to other 34 ethnicities.

- Aksu City

- Aksu Night Market

- Cotton Production

- The economy of Aksu is mostly agricultural

- Cotton is the main product, (long-staple cotton)

- Kumuaoyila Village Cotton Fields

- 100% of cotton planting being mechanized

- Kekeya Green Project

- On the northwestern side of the Taklimakan Desert

- Kekeya green project was launched in 1986

- For over 32 years, four million people, kept on planting trees

- Change the harsh natural conditions in Aksu

E-commerce Entrepreneurship Incubation Base

- Drive the growth of the e-commerce sector in Aksu 3 years of rent-free occupancy

- Free live streaming services for product promotion

- Exemption from water and electricity charges

- Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar

- Combined with cultures of Xinjiang ethnic minorities (Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui)

- 8th China-Eurasia Expo Scheduled to be held from June 26 to 30

- The expo will cover an area of 140,000 square meters

- Four major exhibition zones: investment cooperation, international exhibition, special industries, and

- equipment manufacturing.

Smoke and mirrors

US uses ceasefire plans for Gaza as a smokescreen to deliver more weapons to Israel

From page 1 ▶ Later the White House said it had found “credible and reliable” Israeli assurances that the Netanyahu regime will use American weapons in accordance with international humanitarian law, allowing for the further transfer of US arms to the regime.

Israeli massacres

Nonetheless, Israel carried out brutal massacres in Rafah and forced over one million people to flee the city. American media have admitted that Israel has recently used US-made bombs in strikes on civilian targets in Rafah which have claimed the lives of hundreds of Palestinians and sparked a global outcry.

Israel carried out one of its most heinous atrocities on June 8 when its army butchered more than 270 Palestinians in the Nuseirat refugee camp as part of an operation to free four captives.

US hypocrisy

On Monday, the Washington Post took the lid off another plan to transfer more US weapons to Israel despite growing international calls for halting arms supplies to the regime.

Citing three US officials, it said two key Democrats have thrown their weight behind a major arms sale to Israel that includes 50 F-15 fighter jets worth more than \$18 billion.

According to the Post, Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Ben Cardin, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, signed off on the deal after facing intense pressure from the Biden admin-



istration and pro-Israel advocates to allow the transaction to move forward.

Washington Post: Two key Democrats have agreed to support a major arms sale to Israel that is worth more than \$18bn and includes 50 F-15 fighter jets.

The two Democrats, who had already expressed concern about the possibility of rising civilian deaths in Gaza due to Israel's use of American weapons, are among four lawmakers who can effectively veto a foreign military sale.

The Post's report added that besides the F-15s, which are not scheduled to arrive in Israel for

years, the Biden administration sought sign-off on air-to-air missiles and Joint Direct Attack Munition kits, which retrofit unguided bombs with precision guidance.

The ultimate approval will make the transaction one of the largest arms sales to Israel since the regime launched war on Gaza on October 7, which has so far killed more than 37,000 Palestinians.

As usual, it would be financed by US taxpayer funds.

Bipartisan support for Israel

Both Republicans and Democrats overwhelmingly support military aid to Israel.

But, Democrats in Congress and the Biden administration have made critical remarks about Israel's war on Gaza over the past months.

This is because the Democrats want to appease opposition to Israel's war by Arab American voters and younger generations who can play a key role in helping Biden win reelection in the November presidential vote.

Political ploy

More than a week ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution endorsing a US-backed ceasefire proposal that aims to end Israel's near nine-month assault on Gaza.

But the US announced plans to send more weapons to Israel have raised questions about its true intentions over proposing such resolutions and ceasefire plans.

Blinken has promised Netanyahu that the US will lift restrictions on arms shipments to Israel despite growing calls for halting weapons transfers to the regime.

The White House has devised these schemes as political ploys to shore up support among anti-war voters ahead of the upcoming presidential election.

If the US is sincere in expressing concern for Palestinians in Gaza, it could use its leverage at the Security Council to force Israel to end the onslaught and attach conditions to military aid for the regime; not in words but in action.

Israeli army commits more massacres Occupation forces intensify bombardment across Gaza

From page 1 ▶ Another strike targeted the house of a third family at the Bureij camp in central Gaza east of the Salah al-Din Road in the Deir al-Balah Governorate.

Reports have also cited multiple attacks in al-Maghazi and al-Zahraa towns in Nuseirat, where Israeli forces opened heavy fire.

Additionally, two children were killed by Israeli shelling targeting al-Qarara town east of Khan Younis in the southern part of the Strip.

Israeli artillery also renewed its targeting of the al-Zaytoun neighborhood southeast of Gaza City, and warships fired on the city's coast. Al-Zaytoun neighborhood has been subject to almost non-stop Israeli attacks since October 7.

In Rafah, Israeli forces demolished several buildings in the Tell al-Sultan neighborhood, west of the city with intense shelling, while IOF armored vehicles fired concurrently with artillery.

The Palestinian resistance movement said it confronted the IOF and engaged in fierce clashes with the occupation forces.

The IOF was trapped by a deadly ambush in the same area of Rafah on Saturday that killed at least 8 soldiers.

The death toll from the U.S.-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza is approaching 37,350, as more women and children are killed in the regime's relentless strikes. More than 85,370 have also been injured.

The Ministry of Health stated in its daily statistical report that “several victims remain under the rubble and on the roads, unable to be reached by ambulance and civil defense teams” following the latest Israeli bombardment.

While the IOF is committing one massacre after the other against Palestinian women and children, it has proved incapable of eliminating Hamas from power.

A member of the Hamas political bureau, Sami Abu Zuhri, said the recent deadly operation by the Palestinian resistance movement against the Israeli ground forces in Rafah has proven that the regime is delusional for thinking that it can weaken the group.

Appetite for the war is also waning among the Israeli public as the regime's forces clashed with protesters opposed to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, demanding immediate elections and a ceasefire with Hamas.

Israelis have also held a mass protest out-

side the Knesset to demand the removal of Netanyahu and an immediate prisoner exchange deal with the resistance movement in Gaza.

Critics say Netanyahu's wartime decision-making has been influenced by his desire to remain in power and avoid a prison sentence as well as by like-minded far-right fascists in his government and inner circle.

A former far-right Israeli lawmaker and Netanyahu ally, who referenced Adolf Hitler while discussing the takeover of Gaza and the forced displacement of Palestinians, is set to speak at an event hosted by the Australian Jewish Association this week.

According to the association's website, Moshe Feiglin will speak at an online event titled “Israel 2024 and Beyond” on Wednesday evening.

In a video recently shared on social media, Feiglin stated: “As Hitler said, I cannot live if one Jew is left. We can't live here if one 'Islam-Nazi' remains in Gaza.”

He also expressed the desire to “turn Gaza Hebrew.”

Feiglin was a member of Netanyahu's Likud party from 2013 to 2015 before founding his far-right Zehut party.

manufacturing facilities, control and guidance systems factories, company administrative buildings, and missile testing radars were all filmed in the video.

According to Hezbollah, the area is highly vital and sensitive, occupies an area of around 6.5 km², and is 24 km away from the Lebanese-occupied Palestinian border.

The video also included an overview of Krayot, an Israeli suburb north of occupied Haifa, which includes six occupied cities with a population of 260,000 Israeli settlers. Hezbollah published a complete high-definition view of the urban conglomeration there, with a real-time tour detailing Krayot districts and neighborhoods, including residences of Israeli officials and commercial complexes.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Hezbollah “humiliates Israel”

Lebanese resistance movement releases drone surveillance footage exposing sensitive Israeli sites

Lebanon's Hezbollah released Tuesday footage showing its reconnaissance drones flying over swathes of occupied Palestinian land, including Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, Safad, Karmiel, Afula, all the way to Haifa and its port.

Titled “This is what the Hoopoe came back with,” the nine-minute-and-a-half video captured footage and exposed sensitive Israeli sites, Al Mayadeen reported.

Hezbollah indicated that the video was only the first episode of more yet to come, highlighting that the drones bypassed Israeli air defenses and returned to Lebanese airspace without being detected.

The published footage included intelligence information about Israeli sites inside occupied Palestine and clearly showed that

the drone arrived at the port of Haifa, undetected. Hezbollah's drones brought back footage and information about sensitive sites they captured over Haifa starting with the port itself to oil refineries and military factories, not to mention the locations of military battleships and important economic hubs in the port.

In detail, the video first shows Hezbollah's drones flying over a military-industrial complex belonging to Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, which includes numerous factories, warehouses, and testing fields in which components of air defense systems are manufactured and assembled, especially the Iron Dome and David's Sling.

Iron Dome and David's Sling platforms, rocket engine test tunnel and storage, air defense missile storage, missile component

WORLD HEADLINES

Gaza kids at risk of death from malnutrition

Local authorities in Gaza on Tuesday raised the alarm of over 3,500 children across the Gaza Strip being at risk of hunger amid Israel's ongoing tightened siege and the closure of aid crossings.

In a statement, the Gaza-based Government Media Office said Gaza is “rapidly” heading towards famine amid an “Israeli and US conspiracy to prevent” humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, Anadolu reported.

“3,500 children are threatened by death due to malnutrition and lack of nutritional supplements and vaccines which became part of the prohibited items to enter Gaza,” the statement said, referring to Israeli restrictions.

It added that “the crime of banning entry of food and medicine” exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza.

The media office urged urgent and immediate international intervention to stop Israel's policy of starvation in Gaza, and to open the crossings with Gaza to allow the flow of humanitarian aid into war-battered Gaza.

UN: Situation in West Bank drastically deteriorating

The United Nations human rights chief on Tuesday warned that the rights situation in the West Bank is rapidly deteriorating, while there had been “unconscionable death and suffering” in Gaza.

“The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is dramatically deteriorating,” Volker Turk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the opening session of the UN Human Rights Council.

He said 528 Palestinians, 133 of them children, were killed by Israeli military forces or settlers from the start of the current war on Gaza in October to June 15, “in many cases raising serious concerns of unlawful killings.”

Turk said he was “appalled by the disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law” by parties of the conflict in Gaza.

“Israel's relentless strikes in Gaza are causing immense suffering and widespread destruction, and the arbitrary denial and obstruction of humanitarian aid have continued,” Turk said.

“Israel continues to detain arbitrarily thousands of Palestinians. This must not continue.”

Lapid calls for Netanyahu's ouster

Israel's opposition leader, Yair Lapid, is optimistic that opposition forces can unite to remove Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from power.

“This government should be overthrown, I think it can be overthrown,” Lapid said in comments carried by Israel's 103FM radio.

“Now that Gantz has finally left the government, we have the means. The opposition will work together, we will unite it without ego to bring down the government.”

On June 9, Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot resigned from Israel's war cabinet, in a blow to Netanyahu who has since disbanded the body.

Ansarullah slams US designation of Yemeni strikes as ‘terrorist’

The Ansarullah resistance movement of Yemen has denounced the United States over designating anti-Israeli maritime operations by Yemeni naval units as “terrorist.”

The Yemeni resistance movement said it was all part of attempts to conceal the plight of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

“The primary purpose of the designation is to divert the world public opinion from the full-fledged terrorism that the Israeli regime is exercising in Gaza.

“Yemeni military operations are completely of ethical nature, and aimed at protection of human rights and self-determination. They will stop once the ongoing aggression and all-out siege on Gaza cease,” Ansarullah's political bureau said in a statement released on Tuesday.

The statement further noted that Ansarullah's demands are realistic, reasonable and clear: We will stop our military operations once the invasion of Gaza ends and the tight blockade on its residents is lifted.

“Yemen will continue its struggle to end the hypocritical approach pursued by the United States and its allies on human rights. We praise pro-Palestine encampments and protests that continue to spread in universities across the United States and Western countries, where participants demand an end to the ongoing genocide in Gaza,” Ansarullah noted.

Moroccan authorities pushed asylum seekers into ‘death trap’

Moroccan authorities took a series of fateful decisions that led to the deaths of dozens of asylum seekers attempting to scale the border fence into the Spanish north African territory of Melilla two years ago, survivors and an investigation by an NGO have claimed.

At least 27 migrants and asylum seekers died when up to 2,000 people tried to climb over the fence on 24 June 2022 – the deadliest day in recent memory along the EU land border with Africa – while 70 others are still missing and unaccounted for, the Guardian reported.

Amnesty International has said the “widespread use of unlawful force” by Moroccan and Spanish authorities contributed to the fatalities and a UN working group of experts described the deaths as evidence of the “racialized exclusion and deadly violence deployed to keep out people of African and Middle Eastern descent.”

The investigation by the Border Forensics NGO, which includes testimonies from survivors and satellite images, has claimed evidence suggests Moroccan authorities pushed the asylum seekers to the border while also increasing its militarization.

Dozens of survivors told Border Forensics that hundreds of people were forced to move to the southern part of Mount Gourougou – around 6km from the Melilla barrier – after a series of attacks by Moroccan law enforcement agents in the days before the deaths at the border.

North Korean soldiers cross border, South Korea fires warning shots

South Korean soldiers on Tuesday fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the rivals' land border for the second time this month, South Korea's military said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said around 20 to 30 North Korean soldiers, while engaging in unspecified construction work on the northern side of the border, briefly crossed the military demarcation line that bisects the countries as of 8:30 a.m. It said the North Korean soldiers retreated after the South broadcasts warnings and fired warning shots and the South's military didn't spot any suspicious activities after that, AP reported.

The South also fired warning shots on June 11 after another group of North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the MDL. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Tuesday's incident occurred in a different area along the central frontline region. It said it doesn't believe the North Korean soldiers intruded the border intentionally and that the North did not return fire.

Mashhad is poised to welcome pilgrims for Eid al-Ghadir

TEHRAN – The holy city of Mashhad where is a main hub for religious tourism in Iran, is all set to host pilgrims in the course of days between Eid al-Adha and Ghadir.

“Boasting more than 220,000 beds in accommodation facilities,” a provincial official in charge of tourism entities said. “the holy city is fully prepared to play host to the tourists.”

Greeting the eids, Seyyed-Mahmoud Madarshahian further emphasized that all measures are in place to secure pilgrims' satisfaction over their stay.

Greater than half the total of accommodation units across the country are located in Khorasan Razavi province, which testifies Mashhad's capacities in tourism sphere, he added.

At the heart of Mashhad is the holy shrine of Imam Reza (the eighth Shia Imam), which marks one of the largest and most revered religious sites in Iran.

Pilgrims from Iran and across the globe visit the shrine to pay their respects, seek spiritual

solace, and perform religious rituals. The shrine is a sprawling architectural marvel, featuring golden domes, intricately designed minarets, vast courtyards, and beautifully decorated prayer halls.

To accommodate the influx of pilgrims, Mashhad has developed extensive infrastructure and facilities. The city boasts a wide range of accommodations, from budget-friendly lodgings to luxury hotels, catering to the diverse needs of visitors. Additionally, numerous restaurants, shopping centers, and transportation services are tailored to serve the pilgrims. The local governmental and religious organizations work collaboratively to ensure the smooth operation of these services, especially during peak pilgrimage seasons.

In summary, religious tourism is an integral part of Mashhad's character. The city's ability to blend spiritual devotion with modern amenities ensures that it remains a vital destination for pilgrims and a key cultural and economic hub in Iran.

Ilam launches handicraft training for conscripts

TEHRAN – Ilam province, situated in western Iran, offers handicraft training to conscripts, enhancing their post-service employment opportunities.

A provincial official in charge of handicrafts revealed the initiative during a meeting on Tuesday with experts and leaders from the province's armed forces.

The training courses, Farzad Sharifi stated, are being held in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the cultural heritage directorate and the armed forces headquarters.

This agreement aims to enhance cooperation and address any implementation challenges, according to the official.

“The goal is to provide skill training in various

handicraft disciplines,” he continued. “to the conscripts during their service period.”

As per the memorandum, conscripts from various branches, will receive handicraft training while on duty, Sharifi further elaborated.

The official emphasized that these courses are designed to equip the conscripts with skills that will help them create viable job opportunities after their service. “Additionally, those who complete the training will receive a certification from the directorate,” he explained. “granting them access to further benefits.”

Sharifi highlighted that the joint efforts of the cultural heritage directorate and the armed forces headquarters will facilitate the organization of these training sessions, thereby preparing interested individuals for entry into the handicraft market.

Governor installs crowd control gate on Mount Fuji to limit tourists

A crowd-control gate has been installed halfway up Mount Fuji before the start of this year's climbing season on 1 July, but the governor of Yamanashi, one of the two prefectures that are home to the mountain, said additional measures were needed to control overcrowding on its lower slopes.

The gate was completed on Monday as part of a set of measures being introduced this year to address growing safety, environmental and overcrowding problems on Japan's highest and best-known mountain.

The gate will be closed between 4pm and 3am to lock out those who have not booked an overnight stay at a hut along the Yoshida trail, which is used by most climbers, mainly to stop “bullet climbing” or rushing to the summit without adequate rest, considered a major

safety risk. A maximum of 4,000 climbers will be allowed to enter the trail every day.

“The restrictions that will take effect this year are measures to address the problems that are putting climbers' lives at risk,” said Kotaro Nagasaki, the governor of Yamanashi. The number of climbers on the trail this year is expected to surpass last year's 137,236, according to Nagasaki.

“Overcrowding near the summit could lead to a major disaster, like people falling in a domino effect,” he said.

Under the new system, climbers must make reservations and choose between a day hike or an overnight stay at one of several huts along the trail.

(Source: The Guardian)

Iran in frames



A foreign traveler, dressed in vibrant traditional attire, poses against the stunning backdrop of Beris Port, perched on the dramatic cliffs overlooking the Oman Sea in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Darougheh House: a unique blend of Iranian, Russian architecture

TEHRAN – Darougheh House offers a captivating glimpse into a transitional period of Iranian architecture, where traditional Persian styles merged with Russian elements.

Situated a few blocks away from the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, the monument was built in the Qajar era (1789 to 1925).

In recognition of its unique architectural heritage and preservation, the Darougheh House was honored with the 2016 Conservation Award from UNESCO.

Additionally, it was registered in the national list of cultural heritage in 2002, ensuring its place among Iran's treasured landmarks.

The Darougheh House, meaning the Sheriff's House in Persian, belonged to Yousef Khan Herati, the last sheriff of Mashhad and the first head of the Nazmiye, which was established as a law enforcement force after the Persian Constitutional Revolution.

Architectural marvels

The Darougheh House is a



showcase of Russian architectural elements, which distinguish it from other luxurious guesthouses in the country. Key features include:

Molded bricks and plaster sculptures: The courtyard facade is adorned with molded bricks and intricate plaster sculptures, depicting motifs like lion heads, human figures, and winged angels.

Seven-color tiles and wooden decorations: These elements add a vibrant and artistic touch to the ceilings, highlighting the blend of

Russian and oriental influences.

Terrace design and two-sided stairs: The elegant terrace design and decorative sash windows exemplify oriental architecture.

Seasonal adaptations

One of the most impressive aspects of the Darougheh House is its clever design catering to both summer and winter needs:

Winter quarters: Equipped with heating devices, wall heaters, and double-glazed windows, the winter section provides warmth and comfort. The first floor houses the

kitchen, and the building features the first fireplace in Mashhad.

Summer quarters: This section includes windbreak rooms, a pool, and maintains a traditional architectural style, utilizing natural forces like water, wind, and sun to meet the building's needs efficiently.

Intricate details

The house boasts several detailed features, including:

Western porch: Decorated with octagonal and oval tiles, inscribed with phrases like “In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate” and “Muhammad (PBUH) the candle of creation,” along with plant motifs.

Northern porch: A beautiful porch with four columns faces symmetrical brickwork, complemented by two steep stairs with delicate metal railings on either side.

The house's location near the Imam Reza Shrine makes it a must-visit for those exploring the cultural and historical depths of Mashhad.

Rosawater distillation festival perfumes centuries-old Chalabi Oghlou

TEHRAN – In the last days of spring, the historical Chalabi Oghlou complex, nestled in Soltaniyeh, northwestern Iran, is playing host to a rosewater distillation (known as Golab-Giri in Persian) festival.

“The rosewater festival is aimed at putting traditional distillation processes on show for enthusiasts,” a local official in charge of tourism noted on Monday.

In an interview with IRNA, Parvane Asgari highlighted that past year's festival received an overwhelming response from both locals and tourists, making the city hold a similar event for the second year.

Holding such events at treasured historical sites, she underscored, is focused on presenting the rich cultural heritage capacities lie within the county.

Arranging vibrant festivals, could lead to drawing tourists to a greater extent, Asgari continued.

“The five-day festival will come to an end on June 24,” the official winded up.

Golab-Giri or rosewater festival, is observed annually during May and June, when the country's lush rose fields bloom and produce an exquisite scent.

During the festival, people come together to witness the rose petals being distilled to create



the fragrant oil.

A Golab-Giri festival begins with a procession of the locals carrying baskets of roses to local distilleries. The flowers are then sorted and placed in large copper pots where they are boiled to produce oil. The pots are made from bricks, stones, and mud.

The festival-goers may watch the process of a time-honored distillation, the steam rising from the pots as the fragrant oil is captured in jars.

Aside from the actual production of rosewater, the attendees may roam through vibrant bazaars where local vendors sell all sorts of rose-infused products, such as perfumes, soaps, and even tea. In fact, rosewater is an essential ingredient in Persian cuisine. Furthermore, there are various musical and cultural events, including folk dances and traditional performances.

The concentration of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories, probably due to the shorter time interval between the harvest and distillation practices.

Rosewater is traditionally produced from a very sweet-smelling kind of flower, best known as Mohammadi roses in the country.

80 liters of water and almost 30 kilograms of rose petals are added to each pot, which is connected to metal pipes to allow steam to pass through to create the hydrosol. Distillation waste can either be fed to animals or composted.

Locals believe that rose oil and rosewater have therapeutic rewards. Some say rose oil calms the mind and relieves depression, grief, stress, and tension. Narratives say that rosewater products help improve skin health, colds, and digestive system issues.

A highlight of the Iranian cultural calendar, Golab-Giri is a reminder of the importance of preserving and appreciating these ancient customs and traditions that have been passed down through generations. However, it is not merely a celebration of the rose harvest, but also a celebration of Iranian hospitality and generosity.

Ardabil's historical bazaar restoration accelerates

TEHRAN – The governor-general of Ardabil province has issued directives to accelerate the restoration and renovation of Ardabil's historical bazaar.

During his recent visit to the site, Seyyed Hamed Ameli emphasized the importance of accelerating the execution of the restoration work.

He acknowledged that there had been some legal issues that caused delays in the project, which commenced a year ago, but confirmed that these issues have now been resolved, and the restoration efforts are progressing.

According to the official, the project is part of a broader effort to preserve Ardabil's rich cultural heritage and boost tourism in the

region.

Available data suggests that the historical bazaar of Ardabil was founded in the 13th century and stands as a testament to the region's vibrant commercial history. This ancient market thrived significantly during the Safavid era, largely due to burgeoning trade relations between Iran and Russia. The prosperity continued through the Afshar and Zand periods, cementing the bazaar's status as a bustling hub of commerce and culture.

Central to the bazaar is the Qeisariyeh Chaharsuq, a pivotal intersection where two main passages meet. This small square, spanning 13 meters in width, serves as the heart of the marketplace,

pulsating with activity and trade. Surrounding this central node are various pathways and Timchehs, specialized clusters of shops each dedicated to specific types of goods.

The Bazaar of Ardabil encompasses a diverse array of markets. Within its confines, one can find specialized sections for groceries, butchers, woodturners, leather makers, knife sellers, hatmakers, shoemakers, gold shops, and cotton shops. Additionally, blacksmiths and various other craftsmen set up their stalls here. Notable markets within the bazaar include those of Pir Abd-ol Malek, Golshan, Vakil, Zanjirlu, Haj Ahmad, Haj Shekar, Majidiyeh, Emam Jom'eh, and Dogachi.

Aside from its commercial significance, the bazaar also houses essential community structures such as bathhouses and mosques, reflecting its role as a social and cultural center. The intricate network of pathways and the array of specialized markets highlight the bazaar's complex and well-organized structure, which has served the needs of Ardabil's residents and visitors for centuries.

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

Revival of Chador-Shab weaving brings new hope

TEHRAN – The traditional craft of Chador-Shab weaving, once a fading memory in a village in Gilan province, has been given new life through a comprehensive training program.

This initiative saw seven women from the Amlesh region participating in an advanced course in Chador-Shab weaving and beginning to practice this time-honored art.

The training was funded by local benefactors in the village of Mosa Kalayeh as part of broader efforts to preserve and revive the province's rich artisanal heritage, CHTN re-



ported.

Chador-Shab is a vibrant, geometrically patterned fabric traditionally used as an outer garment by women in northern Iran. This

colorful checkered cloth is wrapped around the waist during farming and working, serving as a practical and cultural garment.

It also doubles as a baby carrier, with women using it to secure their infants to their backs. In some villages, Chador-Shab is also utilized to wrap mattresses as coverlets, showcasing its versatility and importance in daily rural life.

The revival of Chador-Shab weaving is a significant cultural and economic milestone for rural communities.

Precipitations close to normal after four years

TEHRAN –After four years of consecutive low precipitations, the amount of average rainfall is getting close to normal long-term figures, the head of Metrological Organization has said.

“Currently, the country is witnessing less than one millimeter, about 0.3 percent, short of long-term rainfall,” IRIB quoted Sahar Tajbakhsh as saying.

According to available statistics, South Khorasan, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Yazd provinces have so far received more than 30 percent of the long-term rainfall in the current water year that began on September 23, 2023, she added.

Other provinces like Ardabil, Isfahan, Ilam, North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, Zanjan, Semnan, Fars, Qazvin, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Markazi, and Hormozgan provinces have received between 2 up to 29 percent more than normal rains.

However, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Alborz, Bushehr, Tehran, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Khorasan Razavi, Zanjan, Semnan, Fars, Qazvin, Kerman, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Gilan, Markazi, and Hormozgan provinces have received between 1 and 30 percent less rainfall than normal.

Tehran, Semnan, and Qazvin provinces have received the lowest amount of precipitation.

The long-term average recorded last year was equal to 141 mm, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management, said on March 11.



Fars, Hormozgan, Kerman, Semnan, Khorasan Razavi, Qazvin, Alborz, Tehran, Lorestan, and Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad provinces have had low rainfall.

Kerman, Qazvin, Tehran, and Alborz provinces received 50, 39, 33, and 34 percent less rainfall than the long-term average, he added.

Vazifeh went on to say that the average temperature of the country has been 13.3 °C since the beginning of fall, September 23, which compared to the three-year period figure, 11.3 °C, shows the temperature has increased by 2 °C over time.

Since the beginning of winter, the temperature has been 9.1 degrees, while it had been 7.1 degrees in long-term average. The last two months of the fall this year were the hottest months on record in the past 50 years, Vazifeh added.

El Niño-driven floods

El Niño was the primary driver of extreme rainfall in April and May that caused widespread flash flooding across Iran, as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan, doubling the chance of extreme rainfall, a new World Weather Attribution study found.

Throughout April and May, West Asia was hit by several storms. Flash floods killed at least 500 people in Afghanistan, 124 in Pakistan, and 18 in Iran, destroyed thousands of homes, and wiped out crops, worsening food shortages and threatening agricultural livelihoods.

WMO reports on Iran

On April 23, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released a report on extreme events such as floods, drought, dust storms, and strong winds that affected the country, ISNA reported.

According to the report, below-normal rainfall in most re-

gions of Iran for the third consecutive year in 2023 has led to widespread drought in the country.

The eastern half experienced severe rainfall shortage within the year. Decreased rain and severe drought in the region along with above-normal temperatures have resulted in the drying up of the main inland lakebed, the Hamoun Lake.

In Iran, autumn 2023 was much warmer than normal with severe shortages of rainfall throughout the country, the report added.

Severe dust storms hit most parts of Asia. In mid-September, a dust storm affected Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan causing serious health problems.

High winds in the southeast of the country from September 18 to 25, caused severe dust storms resulting in severe injuries and hospitalization.

Levar wind along with the dust from dried Hamoun wetland affected the region, causing adverse health effects, closure of schools, transportation hazards, and damage to crops.

According to the report, the flood that struck Astara city from September 17 to 19 significantly affected 300 households. The flood resulted from intense and prolonged rainfall in Astara on September 18. Within a span of 12 hours, 220 mm of rain was recorded causing profound damage.

Iran, Namibia to cooperate in nanotech research, education

TEHRAN – The secretary of the headquarters for the Nanotechnology Initiative Council, Emad Ahmadvand, and the special advisor to the Namibian president have discussed avenues to enhance cooperation between the two countries in nanotechnology.

During a meeting on Saturday, June 15, the Namibian official lauded Iran's capabilities and potential in nanotechnology; and expressed willingness to utilize these potentials for enhancing cooperation between the two countries.

Moreover, potential areas for cooperation were discussed and three areas were identified for collaboration.

The Nanotechnology Development Headquarters offered to assist Namibians in making policies for the development of nanotechnology and to transfer Iran's expertise to the country.

Referring to Iran's experience in education, both at school and higher education levels, as well as post-graduate education and short-term training of professors, Ahmadvand suggested cooperation in the field of education.

Establishing a nano-tech research center, using Iranian-made nano-laboratory equipment, was another issue proposed for cooperation between Iran and Namibia.

Iran a global leader in nano-tech

Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are

noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide.

According to StatNano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

This ranking proves the country's remarkable scientific development.

The site considers the number of scientific articles for comparing scientific progress in nanoscience, technology, and industry.

Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter on a near-atomic scale to produce new structures, materials, and devices. The technology promises scientific advancement in many sectors such as medicine, consumer products, energy, materials, and manufacturing. Nanotechnology refers to engineered structures, devices, and systems.

In the past two decades, the world has observed a steady increase in the number of industries producing nano-based products and the number of countries promoting nanotechnology.

More importantly, the ratio of nanotechnol-



ogy to nominal GDP has increased significantly, suggesting that the contribution of nanotechnology to World GDP has increased. Nanotechnology has also played a key role in new job creation, Press TV reported.

The nanotechnology sector is a prime example of success in Iran, an arena consisting of expert and program-oriented human resources with significant goals that shine like a jewel in the innovation and technology ecosystem of the country.

With the support of talented academicians and knowledge-based companies, the nanotechnology sector has indigenized many technologies to solve the main challenges of the country in various areas, including industry.

Policy making and planning for progress in nanotechnology started in 2003 with the formation of a special headquarters for the development of nanotechnology, and accelerated with the approval of the first 10-year document for the development of nanotechnology entitled "Future Strategy Document".

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20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation's head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization's head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday.

As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to breadwinners with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the ex-addicts under the Organization's coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, Qobadi Dana explained.

احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر تفاهم نامه مشترک برای احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان بین بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و سازمان بهزیستی کشور منعقد شد.

تفاهم نامه احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی روستایی با حضور علیرضا تابش رئیس بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و وحید قبادی دانا رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشور روز دوشنبه به امضا رسید.

قبادی دانا گفت: این تفاهم نامه به منظور ساخت ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای معلولین سرپرست خانوار، زنان سرپرست خانوار، و بهبودیافتگان از بلای اعتیاد که در روستاها و شهرهایی با جمعیت کمتر از ۲۵ هزار نفر ساکن و تحت پوشش بهزیستی هستند؛ منعقد می‌شود.

Iran, China explore paths to enhance environmental co-op

From page 1 ▶ “Sand and dust storms severely affect countries in the Middle East, particularly West Asia. China is also quite familiar with this phenomenon,” the official stated.

“Fortunately, in the last three years, we have managed to establish a regional and international convergence in which China has also actively participated.

Moreover, the resolution proposed by Iran on dealing with sand and dust storms was adopted by consensus in the United Nations, and July 12 has been recognized globally as the 'International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms'. The resolution requires all countries to take effective measures to promote international cooperation to combat sand and dust storms,” Salajeqeh further noted.

Referring to the issue of sea-oriented development as another part of cooperation, he said according to the principles of sustainable development, sea-oriented development is on the agenda of Iran.

Sea-oriented development encompasses a wide range of activities including the sustainable use of marine resources, the expansion of transportation lines and shipping capacities, the development of maritime trade, and the establishment of industries on the coasts of the seas and other activities.

DOE intends to preserve the marine ecosystems and habitats of the country in accordance with the environmental rules and enhance development on the northern and southern coasts of the country.

In the end, the official went on to say that Iran is willing to cooperate with China to address other environmental hazards such as wetlands restoration, noise pollution, unpleasant odors, landslides, drought, forest fires, and other issues.

He expressed optimism that the two countries would be able to enhance cooperation in all the above-mentioned environmental sectors, in both the research and implementation fields.

Measures to mitigate climate change

Currently, drought and desertification, as a part of a prevalent phenomenon called climate change, are imposed on the world, including our country, Salajeqeh noted.

He made the remarks on the occasion of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, which is annually observed on June 17.

The official went on to say that human impacts on climate change are limited, however, the way they treat the environment can intensify and hasten the changes.

Stressing that climate change has occurred in different geological periods, Salajeqeh stated, “Currently, the earth is undergoing the consequences of climate change, the two results of which are low precipitation which has resulted in drought; and increasing temperature that has changed seasonal patterns.

To moderate the impacts of climate



change, human lifestyle from home activities to large-scale management needs to consider the current conditions like reduced water resources, raised temperature, extreme or lack of precipitation, and snowfall.

There are several ways to achieve this goal at all levels including policymaking, the presentation of the program, and its implementation.

Water-intensive crops should not be cultivated; clean fuels should be used. Underground water sources should be consumed in such a way that erosion is minimized, and restoration of nature is maximized.

Water and soil resources and fossil fuels should not be used as in normal conditions, there should be a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energies.

This way, threats can be turned into opportunities and a non-wasteful lifestyle will be promoted.

Considering the role of SDSs in aggravating land degradation, the DOE has taken measures at both national and international levels to deal with SDSs.

Sand and dust storms are one of the factors contributing to land destruction and accelerating desertification, as well as other environmental issues such as harm to people's health, well-being, and livelihood; deforestation; loss of land productivity; and decline in biodiversity.

The DOE has so far held a regional conference with the participation of 11 regional countries and a number of international organizations; as well as an international conference with the participation of about 50 countries and 15 international institutions.

Both conferences featured good statements on the establishment of a regional center and a fund to support collaborative efforts at regional and international levels, the implementation of two sub-regional action plans for the west, southwest, east, and northeast of the country.

Moreover, the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) approved a resolution adopted at the international summit on dealing with sand and dust storms which was held in Tehran in September 2023.

Enhancing collaborations among different organizations to manage dust storms produced by internal dust zones effectively; holding bilateral and multilateral meetings with the officials of Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Qatar, and Kuwait, and implementing the agreements concluded with these countries to address the SDSs are among taken actions by the DOE.



Hiking in a pristine nature

As the weather becomes pleasant in the spring, mountaineers embark on hiking to enjoy the pristine nature, fresh air, and serenity.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

JUNE 19, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Whoever wants to be the most powerful of people,
should trust in God.

Imam Reza (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 12:03 Evening: 19:38 Dawn: 3:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:48 (tomorrow)

Ghadir Naqqali Festival to kick off in Tehran with focus on innovation, education



By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The 6th edition of Ghadir Naqqali Festival will be held in Tehran from June 21 to 24, marking the occasion of Eid al-Ghadir, the organizers have announced.

This year's festival will focus on research and education, with a new section dedicated to seminary students, Hossein Taheri, one of the secretaries of the event said during a press conference held in Tehran on Tuesday.

The festival has seen a significant increase in the number of participants, particularly in the children and youth sections, featuring a wide range of ages and genres, showcasing the versatility and creativity of Iran's young artists.

The festival will also feature a scientific section focusing on storytelling and scriptwriting, emphasizing the importance of research to avoid mistakes and errors in this field.

This section will provide a platform for researchers and scholars to share their findings and expertise on the art of naqqali and pardeh-khani, he noted.

Regarding the need for research in this field, Mohammad Javad Jalali, the scientific secretary of the festival, emphasized that research is essential to avoid mistakes and errors. He also stressed the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of Iranian dramatic arts.

In addition to the scientific section, the festival will include four specialized sessions and two workshops with experienced professors. These sessions will cover topics such as the history and evolution of naqqali, scriptwriting techniques, and the role of naqqali in Iranian culture.

The festival will also feature a special section dedicated to traditional performances such

as tazieh and pardeh-khani, which have been neglected in recent years. These performances are an important part of Iran's cultural heritage, and it is essential that they are preserved and promoted for future generations.

"We want to revive these traditional performances and encourage young people to learn about them," said Jalali. "These performances are an important part of our cultural identity, and we need to preserve them."

The festival will also establish an international network of artists and will be held internationally next year. This move is aimed at promoting naqqali and pardeh-khani globally, and providing a platform for artists from around the world to showcase their talents.

Furthermore, the festival plans to encourage students to conduct research and write articles on naqqali and pardeh-khani. This new section will provide a platform for young researchers to share their findings and contribute to the preservation of Iran's cultural heritage.

Iran's Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization will be hosting this edition of the festival.

Naqqali is the oldest form of dramatic performance in Iran and has long played an important role in society, according to the UN cultural body.

The performer or the naqqal recounts stories in verse or prose accompanied by gestures and movements, and sometimes instrumental music and painted scrolls.

Naqqals function both as entertainers and as bearers of Persian literature and culture and need to be acquainted with local cultural expressions, languages and dialects, and traditional music.

Naqqali requires considerable talent, a retentive memory, and the ability to improvise with the skill to captivate an audience.

Naqqali was formerly performed in coffeehouses, tents of nomads, houses, and historical venues such as ancient caravanserais. However, a decline in the popularity of coffeehouses, combined with new forms of entertainment, has resulted in diminishing interest in naqqali performance.

Cinema Museum to commemorate Ezzatolah Entezami

TEHRAN-On the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of the late actor Ezzatolah Entezami (June 21, 1924 - August 17, 2018), a commemoration ceremony will be held at the Cinema Museum in Tehran on June 22.

Organized by Entezami House Museum, Actors Association at House of Cinema, and the Cinema Museum, the ceremony will be attended by a number of cinema and theater artists. According to the program, several directors and actors are to speak about the legendary actor, his character traits, and various roles which he performed, ILNA reported.

At the end of the program, unseen images of Entezami will be projected on the cultural-historical building of Cinema Museum via videomapping.

Known as the Master Actor in Iran cinema for his numerous outstanding roles in various films, plays, and TV series, Entezami started his stage career in 1941. Later he went to Germany and graduated from the theater and cinema school in Hanover in 1958.

He was one of Iran's golden



generation of actors such as Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Davoud Rashidi, Jamshid Mashykehi, and Ali Nasirian who began his career in acting with traditional Iranian performances

at theaters located on Tehran's Lalezar Street, which was considered as Iran's Broadway during 1950s and 1960s.

His debut performance in Darius Mehrjui's acclaimed classic film "The Cow" (1969) received the Golden Hugo in Chicago International Film Festival in 1971.

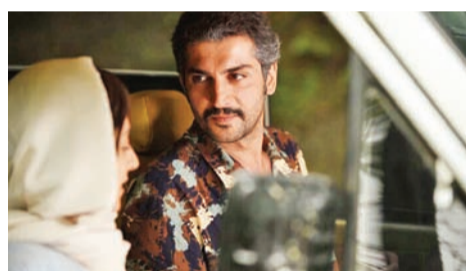
He acted in more than 100 plays, movies and TV series and received many awards including four Crystal Simorghs awards at the Fajr International Film Festival, Iran's most prestigious film event, for his roles in "Grand Cinema", "The Day of the Angel", "A House on Water" and "The Marsh".

In September 2006, UNESCO honored Entezami for his lifetime achievements at its headquarters in Paris, France.

In 2012, he handed over his house to the Tehran Municipality to convert it into a museum, which is now a favorite haunt of theater students, young thespians, and journalists.

The Cinema Museum of Iran is located in Tehran's upscale Bagh-e-Ferdows neighborhood, Valiasr St., near Tajrish Square.

Iranian films line up for Italian film festival



A scene from "The Last Whinny of a Horse that Had Dreamt of Becoming a Butterfly" by Mahdieh Mohammadi

TEHRAN- A lineup of six Iranian films will go on screen in different sections of the 6th edition of AmiCorti International Film Festival, which will be held in the Italian city of Cuneo on June 29.

Iranian shorts "The Last Whinny of a

Horse that Had Dreamt of Becoming a Butterfly" directed by Mahdieh Mohammadi and "The Other" by Negah Sohrabi are among the films.

In "The Last Whinny of a Horse that Had Dreamt of Becoming a Butterfly," Yalda yearns to witness wild horses in their natural habitat before her time runs out.

With unwavering dedication, her husband assists her in fulfilling this poignant final wish.

This beautifully crafted narrative explores the beauty of fleeting moments and the enduring value of cherished memories, serving as a poignant reminder of life's preciousness.

In "The Other," an animated short film, Farhad is given the task of sorting the memoirs of a long-dead woman. While

working, he falls in love with the old lady's supposed niece. During their first date, he notices many new mysterious details.

"The Light" by Alireza Saadi, and "The Last Child" by Serna Amini will also be competing at the festival.

The festival will also screen Iranian feature films "7600" by Behrooz Bagheri and "Dead End" by Saba Kazemi.

AmiCorti IFF is a premier platform for showcasing and discussing new international cinema, highlighting diverse perspectives and artistic trends.

With a focus on emerging cinema, young and independent filmmakers, the festival prioritizes the discovery and promotion of innovative films by up-and-coming directors who push the boundaries of originality and style.

Bachtyar Ali's 2020 novel "Occupation of Darkness" to be reviewed in Tehran

TEHRAN-The House of Humanities Thinkers in Tehran will host a review session for the book "Occupation of Darkness" written by the Kurdish novelist Bachtyar Ali on Wednesday.

The book, also known as "Invasion of Darkness" and "Conquest of Darkness," has been translated by Marwan Halabchei and published by Sales Publication,

Arastou Miraei, Farshid Farahmandfar, and Bahram Parvin Gonabadi will speak at the event, ISNA reported.

The Persian translation of the book has been sold out three months after its first release, leading to the publication of its second edition.

"Occupation of Darkness" was

published in Kurdish in 2020, delving into the recent history of Turkey, touching upon its dark and bloody aspects, and reflecting on the spirit of the oppressors of Kurdistan, along with their dreams and fears.

Set against the political situation of modern Turkey, the narrative unfolds predominantly between 1945 and 1970, encapsulating the post-World War II era to the Kenan Evren military coup.

The author has described the book as a resistance against forgetfulness, an exploration of self through the lens of colonial narratives, and a pursuit to comprehend the occupying other.

Ali, 63, is a novelist, intellectual, literary critic, essayist, and poet. He started out as a poet and

essayist, but has established himself as an influential novelist from the mid-1990s. He has published thirteen novels, and several collections of poetry and essays.

In his academic essays, he has dealt with various subjects, such as the 1988 Saddam-era Anfal genocide campaign, the relationship between the power and intellectuals and other philosophical issues. He often employs western philosophical concepts to interpret an issue in Kurdish society, modifying or adapting them to his context.

Along with several other writers of his generation—most notably Mariwan Wirya Qani, Rebin Hardi, and Sherzad Hasan—Ali started a new intellectual movement in Kurdistan, mainly

through holding seminars. The same group in 1991 started publishing a philosophical journal, Azadi (literally meaning Freedom), of which only five issues were published, and then Rahand (Dimension).

"Occupation of Darkness" stands as the 10th novel penned by Ali and has been translated into the Persian, Arabic, and French languages.

In 2017, he received the Nelly-Sachs-Preis award, which is only given every other year. It was the first time that the prize was awarded to an author publishing in a non-European language.

Bachtyar Ali's works are well-known among Persian-speaking readers, and any new translation is warmly received.

Cartoon of Day



Netanyahu and War Government
Cartoonist: Ahmad Rahma from Turkey

Popstar Dua Lipa defends comments on "Israeli Genocide" amid backlash

The pop star Dua Lipa, who has been one of the vocal voices calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, has said she is willing to risk a backlash over political statements after she recently described military operations in Gaza as "Israeli genocide".

In an interview with the Radio Times, the 28-year-old said she repeatedly checked herself before making a statement, but did so if she felt it was for the "greater good" and worth the risk.

The Grammy award-winner last month reposted to her 88 million Instagram followers a graphic from the group Artists4Ceasefire, along with the hashtag #AllEyesOnRafah, which trended in the days after Israel's bombing of the city in Gaza.

She wrote: "Burning children alive can never

be justified. The whole world is mobilizing to stop the Israeli genocide. Please show your solidarity with Gaza."

Recently, she was referenced in an Israeli drill rap song that called for violence against public figures who have expressed pro-Palestinian views.

Lipa told the Radio Times: "When I speak about things that are political, I double-, triple-check myself to be: 'OK, this is about something that is way bigger than me, and it's necessary - and that's the only reason I'm posting it: That is my only solace in doing that'."

"It's always going to be met with a backlash and other people's opinions, so it's a big decision. I balance it out, because ultimately I feel it's for the greater good, so I'm willing to [take that hit]."

Lipa, who was born in London to Kosovan-Albanian parents, suggested her heritage influenced her overt politics.

"[Speaking up is] a natural inclination for me, given my background and heritage, and that my very existence is somewhat political - it's not something that is out of the ordinary for me to be feeling close to," she said.

Israel's war on Gaza has killed over 37,000 people, about half of them women and children, so far, turned the Palestinian territory into a wasteland of rubble and left most of its 2.3 million people homeless and at the brink of starvation. The offensive began after the Hamas group attacked southern Israel on October 7 last year.