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Big Decision: Iranians Vote Tomorrow

Iranians will head to polls in presidential elections whose results some analysts believe will be determined in a run-off



A poster at Tehran's Vali Asr Square featuring a hadith from Imam Ali (PBUH) that urges presidential candidates not to make impossible promises.

Israel starving Palestinians, Arab states lining their pockets

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Extreme hunger and severe malnutrition have become increasingly widespread in the Gaza Strip as Israel continues to impose restrictions on the entry of food and other essentials to the Palestinian territory against the backdrop of the genocidal war that it has launched on the coastal strip since October 7.

The dire humanitarian situation in Gaza has worsened since the regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu carried out a ground offensive in the territory's southern-most city of Rafah.

The onslaught, which was launched on May 6, further disrupted deliveries of humanitarian aid and forced over a million people to flee Rafah. Prior to the offensive, more than half of Gaza's population had sought refuge in the city amid Israel's strikes in other parts of the Gaza Strip. ▶ Page 5

"62,000" Israeli soldiers injured

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Despite attempts by Tel Aviv to conceal its military losses, the Hebrew newspaper Israel Hayom has reported on statistics confirmed by Israel's National Insurance that 62,000 soldiers have been physically and psychologically affected.

According to Israel Hayom, 740 million shekels have been paid in the form of compensation to those affected by the ongoing war, along with 12 million shekels for rehabilitation efforts and 61 million shekels for families of Israeli captives in Gaza.

The newspaper relied on data from the Israeli National Insurance, which acknowledged 62,000 soldiers are suffering both physically and psychologically, noting that these numbers are steadily increasing.

Critics say the figures expose what the occupation regime has tried to hide about its losses on the battlefield.

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has aimed to maintain morale among the occupation soldiers and on the domestic front. Splits over the success of the war on Gaza between Israeli generals and Netanyahu along with his family and inner circle have played out into the open.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian resistance movement in the blockaded enclave continues its operations against the occupation forces, inflicting significant losses alongside escalated military action by Lebanon's Hezbollah in solidarity with Gaza.

Adding pressure on the Netanyahu government is the military fronts that have opened over the past months in Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. ▶ Page 5

Instagram restricts access to accounts of Iranian news agencies ahead of presidential elections

TEHRAN – Instagram has taken action to limit user access to the accounts of Iranian news agencies and journalists, a move that seems to be aimed at influencing the outcome of Iran's upcoming June 28 election.

Last week, Tasnim news agency, a leading media outlet in Iran, revealed that its Instagram account was suspended abruptly and without any prior warnings or explanations. The agency noted that a similar action was taken by Meta in 2021, when Tasnim's Instagram account was suspended two weeks before the presidential elections. Tasnim regained access to its account only after the election results were announced, as stated on the agency's telegram channel.

Other Iranian media sources and journalists have reported that their followers have informed them that their posts are no longer showing up in their feeds, even though they are still following these outlets and individuals. ▶ Page 3

Iran's electoral mechanisms explained

By Xavier Villar

MADRID- The presidential elections in Iran will take place on June 28th, moved up following the tragic death of President Raisi in a helicopter accident on May 19th, while he was in his third year in office.

Article 6 of the Iranian constitution underscores the importance of public participation in the political affairs of the Islamic Republic, stating that "the affairs of the state shall be managed by relying on public opinion through elections such as those for the president, representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, members of local councils, as well as through referendums." The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, enacted in 1979 and amended in 1989, together with five electoral laws, provide the legal framework for elections.

Articles 114-120 of the constitution define the electoral system for the presidency, candidate requirements, the maximum period between elections, and terms of re-election. According to these provisions, voters elect 270 deputies for a 4-year term, reserving five seats for recognized religious minorities (Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians). ▶ Page 2

Candidates make final push for votes ahead of election silence

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN - With the clock ticking down to the Iranian presidential election on June 28, candidates intensified their efforts to secure voter support on Tuesday and Wednesday before the imminent campaign ban set to take effect in the early hours of Thursday.

Apart from appearing on national TV for their final personal 15 minutes with the Iranian populace, contenders embarked on journeys to various provinces to appeal for support.

Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian traveled to Kerman and Yazd on his final campaigning days, making various promises to the people and vowing not to betray their trust. "We eliminate societal deprivation and work towards a proud Iran alongside the people," he said while speaking at a gathering of Kermani residents on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Saeed Jalili addressed the issue of economic inequality during his visit to Kerman a day earlier, emphasizing the need for fair wages in the province's mines. ▶ Page 3

A new vision for Iran's culture and art: what to expect from the upcoming election

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- In the aftermath of President Raisi's sudden and tragic passing in a helicopter crash 40 days ago, Iran is gearing up for a presidential election that promises to shape the country's future.

The sudden turn of events has sent shockwaves throughout the nation, with six candidates vying for the top spot, each bringing their own unique political perspectives to the table.

The presidential election will undoubtedly have a significant impact on Iran's cultural and artistic landscape. With a new president at the helm, ▶ Page 8



© ISNA / Neghin Hemmatizade

Foreign ambassadors meet with Iran's judiciary chief

TEHRAN – On the morning of Wednesday, a significant meeting took place between foreign ambassadors residing in Iran and Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, the head of Iran's judiciary.

The event was held at the headquarters of the General Inspection Organization of Iran.

This meeting occurred on the eve of Judiciary Week, an important period in Iran dedicated to recognizing and discussing the role and accomplishments of the judiciary. The session provided an opportunity for diplomatic representatives from various countries to engage directly with Iran's top judicial official.

The gathering of foreign ambassadors and the judiciary chief is seen as a move to foster greater understanding and cooperation between Iran and other nations.

Rail transit via Iran up 89% in 2.5 years

TEHRAN – Iran's minister of roads and urban development revealed an 89 percent growth in the transit of goods via rail during the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi compared to the previous administration.

Mehrdad Bazrpash referred to the statistics in the field of transit during the administration of the late president and said good agreements were inked with the regional countries in this field and the road transit volume rose from 9.3 tons to 14.7 tons last year.

It is hoped that the volume of the road transit will exceed 20 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (to end March 20, 2025), he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Bazrpash pointed to the two macro projects namely "Iran Rah" and "Housing of People" and expounded on the positive measures taken in these two fields. ▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

The action of the Europeans
will not go unanswered

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

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the UN Security Council meeting to discuss the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 regarding Iran and said: England, France, and Germany again issued a joint statement against Iran. After this meeting and the review of the 17th report of Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN, regarding the implementation of this resolution and the Iran nuclear agreement, the European troika did not point out their disloyalties in their obligations towards this agreement in a statement. They have claimed that recent reports by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency show that Iran is moving in the wrong direction by continuing to escalate its nuclear activities far beyond the limits of the Iran nuclear deal. What is obvious is that these countries ignored the main root of the current situation, the first and most important of which is the unilateral and illegal withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. Iran's nuclear activities, including enrichment at various levels, are for peaceful purposes, and this action by the Europeans will not go unanswered by Iran.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: The main priority of the new president

In a conversation with Mohammad Bagher Nobakht, the former head of the Planning and Budget Organization, Donya-e-Eqtasad dealt with the most important priority of the next president of Iran. It wrote: Emphasizing the destructive role of sanctions on the national and household economy, Nobakht said that the most important priority of the 14th government is to use the power of diplomacy to reduce the heavy pressure of sanctions. The destructive effect of sanctions on people's livelihood is so serious that it cannot be denied. American extremists, provoked by Israel and some rival countries, used Trump's opportunity to disturb the stability and development of Iran. The bitter experience of the return of sanctions and its effects on people's lives once again tells the truth that whether we accept or deny sanctions, unfortunately, they have a destructive effect on the national economy and the household. The new government can be expected to remove the heavy pressure of sanctions on people and the country by using the power of diplomacy and active presence in international arenas in a situation where the country's defense and

deterrence power is strong.

Arman-e-Melli: The path of negotiation should be toward the lifting of sanctions

Arman-e-Melli talked with Hassan Beheshtipour, an international relations analyst, about the position of the 14th government in foreign policy. The paper said: It is not true to say that sanctions are a blessing and that sanctions make the economy flourish. Iran should move in a direction where a clear model of growth is presented. Four important solutions to overcome the existing challenges can be put on the agenda. First, increasing the economic power through interacting with different countries as much as possible. Second, increasing the nuclear power of the country, which fortunately has the foundations. Third, increasing the power of public diplomacy of the country, and fourth adopting strong foreign policy. All these necessities are aimed at ending the economic sanctions. One of the important things that can be implemented is the dialogue with the United States. Today, Iran and America communicate their views through the Omani side. For this reason, it is necessary to continue the talks with the American side in order to realize the national interests. The future president of Iran should start and continue negotiations with the European and American parties with the aim of ending sanctions.

Hamshahri: New American sanctions

In an analysis, Hamshahri discussed the new sanctions against 50 individuals and entities by the United States and said: Claiming that these individuals and institutions constitute numerous branches of a vast secret banking network, the United States imposed sanctions under the pretext of connection with the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Iranian Armed Forces. America unilaterally and illegally withdrew from the JCPOA and implemented the most severe sanctions against Iran. The Biden administration has also sanctioned the Islamic Republic of Iran by continuing these sanctions under various pretexts and in line with the dual approach of diplomacy and pressure. The Biden administration, which claimed to have a diplomatic approach towards Iran and to try to return to the JCPOA, has not only failed to return to the JCPOA, but with successive sanctions have moved in line with the failed policies of maximum pressure of the Donald Trump administration.

Acting FM says Raisi's administration laid groundwork for talks on terminating sanctions

TEHRAN – Iran's acting Foreign Minister has announced that the late President Ebrahim Raisi's administration laid the groundwork for resuming negotiations aimed at terminating anti-Iran sanctions and neutralizing bans against Iran.

Ali Baqeri Kani made these remarks on Wednesday on the sidelines of the Iranian government's weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran.

He stated, "The late Raisi's administration advanced foreign policy in such a way that it encountered no opposition domestically or internationally, particularly in its regional and neighborliness policies."

Highlighting the efforts to remove Western-led sanctions on Tehran, Baqeri Kani added, "From the start of the 13th government, the late Raisi emphasized both negotiating and neutralizing sanctions. Serious negotiations were pursued, despite some interruptions."

Baqeri Kani asserted that Iran followed a "right and logical path" and is currently on a promising trajectory. He suggested that the next administration could continue this smooth path with renewed vigor in both lifting sanctions and consolidating nuclear rights.

Additionally, he praised late President Raisi's good neighborliness policy, which fostered mutual political trust and improved Iran's relations with neighboring countries.

"Since Raisi's inauguration and subsequent meetings with foreign representatives, there has been a noticeable increase in political mutual trust, which must be followed by economic interactions to achieve regional stability and

progress," Baqeri Kani said.

The former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018, imposing severe economic sanctions on Tehran despite Iran's compliance with the agreement.

In response, Tehran reduced its commitments to the JCPOA after witnessing the failure of other parties to uphold their obligations.

Joe Biden, who succeeded Trump, did not fulfill his campaign promises to rejoin the JCPOA and instead imposed new sanctions on Tehran, hindering the deal's revival.

ACD meeting focused on sending immediate aid to Palestine: Baqeri Kani

Baqeri Kani also noted the productive discussion with members of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Tehran, focusing on the urgent need for quick and unconditional aid to the oppressed Palestinian people.

"We also had constructive meetings with several foreign ministers and deputy foreign ministers from member countries on the sidelines of the forum to discuss developing bilateral relations," Baqeri Kani added.

He highlighted that the Tehran meeting facilitated significant interaction and drew attention from regional and international media.

"This political mutual trust must be followed by economic interactions to achieve a stable and progressing region," Baqeri Kani emphasized. He noted that basic economic issues and measures to strengthen ties between Asian countries were also considered.

Nasrallah to speak at event honoring late Iranian President

TEHRAN – Secretary General of Hezbollah, Seyed Hassan Nasrallah, is set to deliver a speech on Thursday at a ceremony commemorating the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Iran's Minister of Culture, Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili, announced that commemorative services will be held nationwide in honor of President Raisi.

The ceremony, marking the 40th day since the passing of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, will feature a live



video address by Nasrallah and a speech by Raisi's spouse in Tehran.

Esmaili also mentioned a separate

commemorative service in Mashhad, where President Raisi is buried at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

President Raisi tragically died in a helicopter crash on May 19 while returning from the Khoda Afarin region in East Azarbaijan Province, where he had inaugurated a dam at the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The crash also claimed the lives of Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian, Tabriz's Friday prayers leader Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem, East Azarbaijan Governor Malek Rahmati, the commander of the president's security team, two pilots, and a flight crew member.

Iran's electoral mechanisms explained

From page 1 ► Furthermore, constitutional provisions related to parliamentary elections guarantee the right to direct and secret voting, and extensively establish conditions for the delimitation of electoral districts. Article 99 specifies that "the Guardian Council is responsible for overseeing elections for the Assembly of Experts for Leadership, the presidency, the parliament (Majlis), and referendums."

Alongside the constitution, these five electoral laws constitute the legal framework for the administration and supervision of elections in Iran:

- Presidential Elections Law
- Islamic Consultative Assembly Elections Law
- Law on the Organization, Functions, and Elections of Islamic Councils and Mayors
- Law on the Supervision by the Guardian Council of Presidential Elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Law on the Supervision by the Guardian Council of Elections for the Islamic Consultative Assembly

The Presidential Elections Law establishes provisions regarding the right to vote, organization and administration of elections, electoral system, registration and qualification of candidates, electoral campaign, resolution of electoral disputes, as well as electoral violations and their penalties.

According to Article 1, the presidential term is four years from the moment the Leader approves the president's credentials. Article 10 specifies that the president must be elected by direct and secret popular vote. Presidents are allowed to seek only two consecutive terms, but they have the option to seek re-election after a one-term interval.

The presidential elections in Iran are based on a system of absolute majority competition, where candidates compete to obtain an absolute majority of the votes. According to Article 14 of the law, if an

absolute majority is not achieved in the first round, a runoff election is held on the Friday following the election day between the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

The Islamic Consultative Assembly Elections Law establishes the rules and regulations for legislative elections in Iran. The Majlis, commonly known as the Islamic Consultative Assembly, is a unicameral parliament composed of 290 deputies elected in single-member or multi-member electoral districts. Representatives are elected through a two-round voting system for a four-year term, with no limits on re-election. Candidates who receive at least one-fourth of the votes cast in the first round are elected to the Majlis. If one or more candidates do not reach this threshold in the first round, a second round of voting is conducted.

The Local Councils Elections Law, enacted by the legislature in 1999, comprises five chapters addressing topics such as council organization, conduct of elections, powers and functions of the councils, and procedures for investigating violations related to the councils. According to Article 1, local councils are responsible for "promoting social, economic, development, public health, cultural, and educational programs according to local needs." Additionally, the law stipulates a four-year term for council members and defines population-based conditions for the composition of councils at the village, district, city, and provincial levels.

The laws governing the supervision of the Guardian Council in presidential and parliamentary elections complement Article 99 of the constitution. Enacted in 1985 and 1986, these laws grant the Guardian Council supervisory rights and outline the levels of supervisory committees established for each election. Additionally, they specify the composition, functions, and limitations of power of these committees.

Entities responsible for election management



In Iran, two bodies are responsible for managing activities related to presidential and parliamentary elections: the Guardian Council and the Ministry of Interior. The Guardian Council has autonomy to oversee, monitor, and establish policies for conducting elections, while the Ministry of Interior carries out electoral operations under the authority of the Council. Additionally, elections for municipal and rural councils are overseen by parliament, with the Ministry of Interior responsible for organizing and administering these electoral processes.

The Guardian Council is a body composed of twelve members: six qualified theologians in Islamic jurisprudence and six jurists specialized in various fields of law. The Leader directly appoints the theologians, while the jurists are nominated by the head of the judiciary and elected by plural vote in parliament.

The Guardian Council holds extensive legislative and executive powers. It reviews all legislation passed by parliament and has the authority to approve or reject a bill based on its conformity with Islamic principles and constitutional law. According to Article 4 of the constitution, "All laws and regulations, including civil, penal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, and political, must be based on Islamic principles," and "it shall be decided by the theologians of the Guardian Council whether such laws and regulations comply with this article."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Torture redefined: The horrific 'Engineering Operation'

TEHRAN – On June 26th, the world comes together to observe the International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture, a day dedicated to recognizing the suffering endured by victims of torture and reaffirming our commitment to eradicating such heinous acts. This day is particularly poignant as we delve into the harrowing events surrounding the "Engineering Operation," a brutal and calculated act orchestrated by the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) terrorist group. The MEK is an Iranian terrorist cult which, according to valid international documents, has resorted to torture both against its own members and ordinary people opposing it. The atrocities committed during this operation serve as a stark reminder of the enduring need to support victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

On August 13, 1982, no one could have imagined that the arrest of a car thief would unveil a horrific crime, later known as the "Engineering Operation." Since then, it has been regarded as one of the most barbaric crimes in contemporary Iranian history, perpetrated by members of the MEK. Decades before the birth of ISIS, the MEK perpetrated acts far more savage.

The story began when an individual named Khosrow Zandi, a member of the MEK, was caught by the public while stealing a car intended for use in a terrorist operation. He was handed over to law enforcement. At first, it seemed

like a typical car theft, but during interrogation, Zandi revealed one of the most brutal operations by the MEK. He led the officers to an area in northwest Tehran, known as Bagh Feiz, where they had buried alive three bodies.

This operation, which started on final days of July and lasted till mid-August, resulted in the deaths of three members of the Committee, a shoemaker, a teacher, and an engineer who supported the organization. The fundamental question remains: Why did the MEK commit such atrocities?

Ali Akbar Rastgoo, a former member of the MEK, wrote about the "Engineering Operation" in his memoir Mujahedin-e Khalq in the Mirror of History. He explained: "Following severe blows in early 1982 and the exposure of many of their safe houses, the organization ordered the abduction and torture of any suspicious individuals seen around these safe houses to extract information. This new initiative was named the 'Engineering Operation' by the organization."

Khosrow Zandi, the car thief who was arrested, provided crucial information to the prosecution, leading to the discovery of those involved in the crime. His information revealed a house on Bahar Street in Tehran, which was the main site of the operation and the primary torture chamber. Among those arrested in this house was Mehran Asdaghi (alias Bahram), who for several months

tried to downplay his role by providing false information to interrogators. However, with the confessions of other detainees, it became clear that Asdaghi was, in fact, the chief military commander of the MEK in Tehran and one of the main torturers.

Asdaghi, who was arrested in August 1982, only fully confessed in 1984 after tens of hours of interrogation and the accumulation of undeniable evidence. His statements became the primary documentation of the MEK's incredible and horrific crimes during the "Engineering Operation."

The bodies discovered in the Bagh Feiz area belonged to Mohsen Mirjalili and Taleb Taheri (Committee members), and Abbas Effatavesh (shoemaker). The bodies of Shahrokh Tahmasbi (Committee member), Habib Rousta (a supporter of the organization), and Khosrow Riahi Nazari (a teacher) were found in places like Shohrevardi Street and Abbasabad Hills.

The main safe house used for the "Engineering Operation" belonged to a high-ranking MEK official named Hossein Abrishamchi and was allocated to the special operations unit (terror and torture operations). This house, located in a quiet alley on Bahar Street in Tehran, had two floors, three rooms, a hall, a kitchen, a bathroom, a yard, and a basement.

The relatively large bathroom was soundproofed with several

layers of thick plastic sheets to prevent the screams and cries of the tortured individuals from being heard outside. The tools found in this house included ropes of various sizes and materials, cables of different sizes for whipping, masks, handcuffs, short lead pipes, chains, locks, portable gas stoves and skewers, and cyanide.

Mustafa Madanpisheh and another MEK member, known by the alias Jafar, were assigned by the organization to abduct Abbas Effatavesh from his shop. The organization falsely identified him and his wife as informants for the security forces, a complete fabrication. On August 8, 1982, MEK members, disguised as the Committee officers, went to his shop, handcuffed and blindfolded him in their car, and transported him to the torture chamber on Bahar Street.

According to confessions by Mehran Asdaghi, it became clear within the first hours of torture that Abbas knew nothing and had been abducted without reason. Despite this, since the organization's leadership had ordered his torture and extraction of a confession, the unfortunate shoemaker was subjected to severe torture for several days. Masoud Ghorbani (alias Taghi), the chief torturer of the organization, reportedly told Asdaghi about Effatavesh, "We couldn't get any information, but we took revenge."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Big Decision: Iranians vote tomorrow

Iranians will head to polls in presidential elections whose results some analysts believe will be determined in a run-off

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Iranian cities are buzzing with election fever as posters and placards adorn streets, big screens air presidential debates, and candidates crisscross the country in a bid to sway voters.

Anticipation has swept across Iran and observers wonder whom Iranians will entrust with the presidency and the responsibility of leading the country, 40 days after the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran.

No sign of election boycott despite Western propaganda

Western media outlets, which rejoiced at the decreased voter turnout of around 50% in the 2021 presidential elections, appear poised for disappointment this time around. Estimates indicate that a significantly larger number of individuals will be casting their votes, despite the unprecedented levels of propaganda from Western and Israeli sources urging a boycott of the election.

"Channels such as BBC and International are urging us not to vote. It's puzzling how Iranians living



abroad and receiving payment from Western governments or Zionists have the audacity to dictate our actions. We are concerned about the future of our country and want to elect the most suitable candidate. All these traitors and lackeys of the West can say whatever they want, we don't care about them," a man in his 20s told IRIB during a street interview.

Rather than deciding to boycott the elections, Iranians are preoccupied with whom they should be voting for. "I feel a sense of duty as an Iranian to participate in the election. While I

haven't made a final decision on my vote yet, I know I must make up my mind by Friday morning," shared an Iranian woman with IRIB reporters.

The race is close between two conservative contenders and one reformist candidate. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Saeed Jalili, and Masoud Pezeshkian are currently leading the pack, and experts believe that if both conservative candidates remain in the race, elections could head to a second round.

Reformist politicians have also shown great enthusiasm and hope in supporting the sole reformist

candidate, Pezeshkian, after largely avoiding participation in election processes over the past three years, partly due to bitterness stemming from the significant loss of clout following the end of President Hassan Rouhani's administration.

Rouhani, along with the influential figures Mohammad Khatami and Mohammad Javad Zarif, were among the most notable reformists making a return to the political scene by throwing their support behind Pezeshkian.

While the election outcome remains uncertain, one thing is clear: the June 28 vote will see Iranians rejecting external pressures from the West and Israel. Iranians will demonstrate their resilience and independence, and show up to choose their own path.

In this pursuit of independence, efforts by foreign forces to create politicization, especially in the field of foreign policy will also yield no results. Iranians now understand that every candidate's purpose will be to terminate the sanctions while attempting to neutralize them at the same time.

Candidates make final push for votes ahead of election silence



From Page 1 ▶ He also criticized reformists for "overseeing a stagnation in economic growth" and called for the utilization of all of Kerman's capacities to establish justice.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf highlighted the impact of sanctions on Iran's economy during his visit to East Azerbaijan, pledging to pursue the termination of sanctions if elected. He also warned against a return to a "period of recession" and emphasized his promise to establish a second

economic capital on the coasts of the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean by next year.

Alireza Zakani, another conservative candidate, stressed the importance of people's sovereignty through their demands and oversight of officials during his interaction with students at Tehran University's Faculty of Law and Political Science.

Reformist comeback gains momentum as conservatives struggle to unify

Analysts aligned with the conservative faction are sounding the alarm about the looming prospect of reformist Pezeshkian emerging victorious, as conservative presidential hopefuls have yet to unite behind a single figure.

Analysts have been cautioning since the list of official candidates was announced by the Guardian Council that conservatives may be at risk of losing the June 28 elections in Iran if they fail to consolidate their support behind a single

candidate.

With key reformist figures such as former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and former President Mohammad Khatami deciding to endorse Pezeshkian, recent polls indicate that conservatives are now more likely to face defeat at the hands of reformists, who have governed the country for a combined 32 years since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The concern was echoed by one of the conservative contenders, Amir-Hossein Hashemi Qazizadeh, who warned in a Wednesday post on X that "failure to reach consensus on a single candidate may inadvertently benefit the opposing faction."

Despite Qazizadeh's signal, however, the two leading conservative candidates in the presidential race, Qalibaf and Jalili, have not yet indicated their intention to possibly step aside in support of one another.

Iran condemns terrorist attack in Niger, calls for global cooperation against terrorism

TEHRAN – The spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed profound sorrow over the recent terrorist attack in the Tillaberi region of Niger, which claimed the lives of several military personnel and civilians and left many others injured.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Nasser Kanaani conveyed heartfelt condolences to the government and the Muslim people of Niger.

Special mention was made of the families who lost loved ones in this tragic event. "We extend our deepest sympathies to the victims' families and stand in solidarity with the people of Niger during this

painful time," Kanaani said.

Kanaani also underscored the Iranian government's stance on terrorism. "The Islamic Republic of Iran views terrorism as a significant threat to human society and international security. We believe that it is imperative for the global community to unite and engage in comprehensive efforts to counter this shared menace," he emphasized.

Kanaani highlighted the urgent need for international cooperation in addressing the root causes of terrorism and implementing effective measures to prevent such atrocities. "Terrorism knows no borders and affects all nations.

It is a scourge that requires a coordinated and sustained global response. We urge all countries to collaborate closely to eradicate this threat and ensure the safety and security of all people," he added.

The Iranian official's remarks come in the wake of increasing terrorist activities in various regions, underscoring the need for heightened vigilance and collaborative international efforts. The attack in Tillaberi is a stark reminder of the ongoing challenges posed by terrorism and the necessity for a unified approach to combat it.

In conclusion, Kanaani reiterated Iran's commitment to working with other nations and international

organizations to foster peace and security. "We stand ready to support and engage in any initiatives aimed at eliminating terrorism and promoting stability worldwide," he said.

The attack occurred on Tuesday June 25, in the Tillaberi region, which borders Mali and Burkina Faso.

The Nigerien Defense Ministry announced three days of national mourning, with flags lowered to half-mast, starting from Wednesday in honor of the fallen soldiers.

In a statement on national television, the Ministry expressed the security forces' "unshakable determination" to continue the fight for sovereignty.

IRGC urges high voter turnout for upcoming presidential election

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is focused on ensuring a high voter turnout in the upcoming Iranian presidential election, without endorsing any specific candidate, according to IRGC spokesperson Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif.

In a statement on Wednesday, General Sharif emphasized the election's importance amid current domestic, regional, and international developments. He reiterated the IRGC's stance, aligning with the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's call for maximum voter participation to protect the

Islamic Revolution and its achievements.

General Sharif stressed that IRGC commanders and personnel are prohibited from endorsing any candidate or political faction, as it is both legally and religiously forbidden for the IRGC to engage in partisan activities.

He assured that the IRGC will support and collaborate with the election winner, consistent with its historical approach across various administrations. "The IRGC aims to use its resources to help the government achieve the Islamic Revolution's goals," General Sharif added.

Iran's presidential election is set for Friday, June 28, a year earlier than planned due to the tragic death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash on May 19.

The new administration, the 14th since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, will assume power in late June or early July and will hold office for four years.

On Tuesday, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted that national pride in the elections depends on maximum public participation and electing the most qualified candidate, stating that a high turnout brings honor to the Islamic Republic.

Instagram restricts access to accounts of Iranian news agencies ahead of presidential elections

From Page 1 ▶ Meanwhile, Iranian media outlets based in the West and funded by Israel have been utilizing Instagram to encourage Iranian citizens to abstain from participating in the

Friday polls, branding voters as "supporters of terrorism" and "traitors."

Meta has a history of assisting Israel and Western states in manipulating elections in other

countries.

In March, the Tehran Times reviewed documents that revealed Meta's communication with high-ranking intelligence officials and politicians in the West. One

specific example cited Facebook's involvement in influencing the 2020 election results in Guyana by promoting smear campaigns against a candidate believed to have close ties to China.

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Afshardoust: Iran volleyball needs to plan for future

TEHRAN – Mahmoud Afshardoust, a former player of the national volleyball team, believes that the country's volleyball needs to plan for its future.

The national team finished 15th in the 16-team standing of the 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL). Team Melli suffered 10 losses and just registered two wins in the prestigious event.

"This year, everyone knew that there was a difficult task ahead of us in VNL. We had hired an unknown coach Mauricio Motta Paes and the Brazilian coach didn't have much time to prepare Team Melli. On the other hand, the Iranian players were under pressure to secure their place in the 2024 Olympic Games," the executive member of the Asian Volleyball Confederation said.

"Mr. Paes was involved in club competition in France and, in my opinion, the head coach of the national team should work more on the team's mental and psychological issues than on technical and tactical issues, because he had a short time at his disposal," Afshardoust stated.

"We failed to get good results in week 1, but our problems are not related to today and we have been involved in it for years. We still have problems with the serve receive, side out and stuff block. You saw all this in the first week. In my opinion, these are the infrastructure and basic problems that have arisen for volleyball in our country. The federation should try to fix it.

"After the end of the week 1, we were well aware we cannot go to the Olympics, and I think the team should have played volleyball without pressure in week 2, but Mr. Paes could not bring the team back to normal conditions. He should have tried to bring the team back but the team didn't return to the normal condition. At the same time, I must also say that Mr. Paes did not know the team very well and I think his team's arrangement was wrong. These problems were quite evident.

"Peyman Akbari took charge of the team in week 3 and considering that he has a good knowledge of the national team and has worked as a coach and player in Iran for many years, the national team improved under his leadership. Actually, he made some changes and these changes helped us a lot. In the game against the Netherlands and the U.S., these changes helped the team. In addition, Akbari was able to reduce the pressure. The team mentally improved in week 3 and we saw good fighting from the national team, something we did not see in the initial games. We won the first and second games, but in the third and fourth games, we could not win against France and Germany due to fatigue," said the former coach of Iran volleyball team.

"Anyway, this year is over and we have to plan for the future to maintain our ranking, which unfortunately did not happen in these games. We hope that the federation will be able to consider all aspects very carefully. Not only the players but also the management and technical staff are responsible for this defeat and we have to realistically deal with the problems. And in the end, I must say that we should consider grassroots volleyball very seriously," Afshardoust concluded.

Abdelkarim Hassan linked with Al-Wakrah: report

TEHRAN – Persepolis Qatari defender Abdelkarim Hassan has been reportedly linked with a move to Al-Wakrah. He joined Persepolis in January on an 18-month deal but the media reports suggest that the 30-year-old player will leave the Iranian team.

He helped Persepolis win 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) and his departure could be a big blow to the team. Qatari side Al Wakrah were founded in 1959 and was officially legitimized in 1965 under the name of Al Wakrah Youth Club.

Iran sitting volleyball's fixture at 2024 Paralympics revealed

TEHRAN – Iran sitting volleyball team will start

the 2024 Paralympic Games with a match against Ukraine.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet Ukraine on Aug. 30 in Pool B.

Iran will also meet Brazil and Germany on Sept. 1 and 3.

Pool A consists of France, Kazakhstan, Egypt and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Iran's men's sitting volleyball team are most-decorated team in Paralympic Games, winning the title seven times.

Osmar Loss takes charge of Buriram Utd

TEHRAN – Brazilian coach Osmar Loss has been appointed as Thailand's Buriram United.

The 49-year-old coach, who was named as head coach of Persepolis in January as Yahya Golmohammadi's replacement, led the Iranian giant to 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) title.

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

He had announced that he would leave Persepolis for being along with his family in Brazil but has opted to continue his job in Thailand.

Buriram won the title of the 2023-24 Thai League 1 in late May.

Shahab Zahedi nets against Yokohama F. Marinos

TEHRAN – Iranian forward Shahab Zahedi scored a goal against Yokohama F. Marinos on Wednesday.

Zahedi gave host Avispa Fukuoka a lead in the 20th minute with a header and Wellington Luis de Sousa made it 2-0 in the 70th minute.

With seven minutes remaining, Jun Amano pulled a goal back. Avispa Fukuoka moved up to eighth with 32 points out of 20 matches.

Machida Zelvia lead J1 League table with 40 points.

Pouraliganji extends deal with Persepolis

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team defender Morteza Pouraliganji signed a new one-year contract, keeping him at the club until 2025, the Iranian club announced on Wednesday.

The Iran and Persepolis defender almost missed the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL) season after sustaining anterior cruciate ligament injury in October.

He suffered the injury in the friendly match against Qatar in the 2023 Jordan International Tournament.

Persepolis have reportedly reached an agreement with Vahid Amiri to extend the midfielder's contract.

Iran beat Samoa at FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup Division B

TEHRAN – In an epic final group match, Mahsa Karani stood tall along side her teammates to defeat Samoa 76-73 in overtime at FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup Division B.

Iran have gone through the group stage undefeated after an epic encounter against the Pacific might of Samoa with Mahsa Karani leading the way on the floor at Futian Sports Park, Shenzhen.

Mahsa Karani was an absolute standout, and competed in overtime the same way she competed throughout the entire game to finish with a whopping 26 points, 7 blocks and 6 rebounds.

"It was a really tough game, but a really good game for us and to beat them in overtime was a good result for us," Karani said. "It was a really good game for our body conditioning and training, we just listened to our coach and did what she asked."

Rail transit via Iran up 89% in 2.5 years



TEHRAN - Iran's minister of roads and urban development revealed an 89 percent growth in the transit of goods via rail during the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi compared to the previous administration.

Mehrdad Bazrpash referred to the statistics in the field of transit during the administration of the late president and said good agreements were inked with the regional countries in this field and the road transit volume rose from 9.3 tons to 14.7 tons last year. It is hoped that the volume of the road transit will exceed 20 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (to end March 20, 2025), he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Bazrpash pointed to the two macro projects namely "Iran Rah" and "Housing of People" and expounded on the positive measures taken in these two fields.

The "Iran Rah" Project is a main issue in defining Iran's logistics and transit opportunities and has been put atop the ministry's agenda, he said.

An American initiative was planned to remove Iran from the international corridors and transit routes, so the "Iran Rah" initiative was launched by Iran to confront it, and consequently, considerable transit growth was witnessed in the country, he went on to say, the website of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MRUD) reported.

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

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

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

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

Also, 474,000 mt of the commodities went through Bashmaq customs which connects Iran

to Iraq, coming third in this regard.

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

As previously announced by IRICA, 17.79 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the past Iranian calendar year 1402.

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

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

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

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors. Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

In early June 2023, Deputy Transport Minister Shahriar Afandizadeh announced that the Transport and Urban Development Ministry is preparing a five-year comprehensive plan for increasing transportation and transit relations with Central Asia, as well as the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman countries.

The plan includes the basic strategies and executive roadmap in a step-by-step manner for the next five years and will mark the evolution of the bilateral transport and transit relations with the target countries, including the countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Afandizadeh explained.

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the official noted.

2000s, but developing it further has taken on a new impetus in light of the restrictions facing Moscow. New Delhi has also touted the route as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

"For the first time, two trains with Kuzbass coal headed to India along the International North-South Transport Corridor. The trains set off from the Kemerovo region.

They followed along the eastern branch of the INSTC through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas," Russian Railways said on Monday in its Telegram channel.

The coal will be shipped by sea along the final part of the route from Iran's port of Bandar Abbas to the Indian port of Mumbai, according to the statement.

cubic meters of natural gas and 671 million standard cubic meters of oxygen as feed.

The complex, which has been implemented by Bakhtar Group's investment, creates job for 300 people directly and is estimated to earn 280 million dollars annually.

PSEEZ is home to several petrochemical complexes that receive gas and gas condensate feedstock from the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

The zone is the hub of Iran's exports of major non-oil commodities including gas condensate and petrochemicals.

Russia sends coal to India via Iran by train for 1st time

TEHRAN - Russia has for the first time sent two trains laden with coal to India via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which connects Russia to India via Iran, according to a statement by Russia's national railway company.

According to RT, a multimodal route that includes a railway, roadway network and seaports, the INSTC spans 7,200km (4,500 miles) from St. Petersburg to the port of Mumbai in India.

The corridor is part of Russia's push to find new transport routes in light of Western sanctions, which have forced it to shift trade flows from Europe to Asia and the Middle East.

Construction of the INSTC started in the early

New methanol complex launched at PSEEZ

TEHRAN - Arian Methanol Petrochemical complex with an annual production capacity of 1.650 million tons of products and an investment of 243 million dollars was put into operation in Iran's Pars Special Economic Energy Zone (PSEEZ).

The project was launched on June 24 in the presence of the acting president Mohammad Mokhber and Oil Minister Javad Oji via videoconference.

Spanning seven hectares of land, the complex is located in Pars Special Economic Zone in Assaluyeh, south of Iran.

The complex uses 1531 million standard

Iran's power generation up 13.5% during Raisi's administration

TEHRAN - Statistics indicate that Iran's generation of electricity during the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi registered a 13.5 percent growth, with Iran generating more electricity than industrialized countries like the UK and Italy.

The latest statistics released in a report on "Statistical Review of the Global Energy" show that Iran generated 382.9 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2023, registering a 4.3 percent hike compared to a year earlier.

Iran had generated more than 367.1 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2022.

The growth of Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 was nearly twice that of the average growth of the generation of electricity in the world.

The report put the total generation of electricity worldwide in 2023 at more than 29,924 terawatts/hours, which was 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier.

Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 exceeded that of industrialized countries like the UK, Italy, and Spain as well as Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand, the report added.

According to the latest data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC), the nominal capacity of Iran's power plants



has reached 92,841 megawatts (MW).

The IGMC data indicate that the country's power generation capacity has increased by 2,036 MW over the past two years.

Combined cycled power plants currently account for the biggest share of the country's power generation with 35,795 MW of capacity; the mentioned power plants account for 38.6 percent of the country's total power generation.

Also, heat and gas units with nominal capacities of 15,829 MW and 24,19 MW have a share of 17 percent and 25.9 percent, respectively, in the country's electricity production.

In total, thermal power plants (including heat, gas, and combined cycle units) account for 81.5 percent of the country's nominal electricity generation

capacity with a total of 75,643 MW.

The share of renewable power plants including wind, solar, biomass, and hydropower in the country's nominal power generation capacity is 1.1 percent with a total capacity of 1,136 MW.

Increasing the country's power generation capacity and preventing blackouts during peak consumption periods have been among the Iranian Energy Ministry's top priorities since the current government administration took office in 2021.

In August 2021, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian announced that his ministry was planning to boost the country's power generation capacity by 35,000 MW over the next four years.

The mentioned figure would be achieved through the construction of thermal power

plants with 15,000 MW of capacity, and renewable power plants with a capacity of 10,000 MW by the public and private sectors, as well as the construction of new power plants with 10,000 MW capacity by large industries.

According to Iran Water and Power Resources Development Company (IWPCO), the company is also constructing new hydropower plants with a total capacity of 4,000 MW across the country.

The IWPCO Deputy Head Mashallah Tabe'-Jamaat has said that the company is also conducting preliminary studies for the construction of 1,200 MW of new hydropower plants.

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

In this regard, the Energy Ministry has been following new programs to meet the country's power demand during peak periods and to prevent outages.

Constructing new units in the country's power plants and also building new power plants for major industries are among the mentioned programs that are being pursued seriously by the ministry in collaboration with other related government entities.

Number of National Housing Movement units exceeds 2.6m



TEHRAN - The number of National Housing Movement units has exceeded 2.6 million throughout the country, Abolfazl Norouzi, director general of the Housing Economy Office of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, announced.

In a ceremony on Wednesday, Acting President Mohammad Mokhber and Transport and Urban Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash inaugurated 66,791 housing units of the National Housing Movement across the country.

The National Housing Movement is one of the major policies of the 13th government in the housing sector, and according to this policy, the construction of four million residential units is planned in four years.

It is one of the projects through which the government is trying to help low-income individuals in society become homeowners.

Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Hadi Abbasi-Asl has emphasized the

acceleration in implementing the Housing Construction Leap Law to achieve the goals of the 13th government.

In late September 2023, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples in order to help them build houses.

The National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages.

After the National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated

a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini. The mentioned units were delivered to the applicants in five provinces throughout the country.

The Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to construct 100,000 units under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

According to Norouzi, the headquarters also completed and handed over 2,000 such units back in April, 2023.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the official said construction of the National Housing Movement units is underway by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini in 27 provinces.

Late President Ebrahim Raisi stated that the National Housing Movement is the flagship project of the 13th government to meet the needs of the people, and in addition to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, all relevant organizations are also striving to achieve it.

Railway fleet receives 558 domestically made wagons, locomotives

TEHRAN - The Iranian railway fleet received 558 new domestically-made or renovated wagons and locomotives worth 36.27 trillion rials (about \$72.54 million), in a ceremony on Wednesday.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials including Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Miad Salehi, the portal of the Transport Ministry reported.

The mentioned wagons and locomotives include 516 freight wagons, 12 new locomotives, five renovated locomotives, eight new passenger wagons, and 17 renovated passenger wagons, all manufactured and renovated by domestic companies.

The development of the railway sector has been one of the macro policies of the Iranian government as it has been emphasized by the general policies of the country's national development plans.

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

Last year, a total of 1,660 wagons and locomotives were added to the country's railway fleet in four stages.

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

Water inflow to dam reserves rises 7%

TEHRAN - Water inflow to Iran's dams has increased by seven percent since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2023) up to June 22, 2024, compared to the same period last year, the new report released by the Water Resources Management Company shows.

According to the said report, during the mentioned period, 37.74 billion cubic meters of water entered the country's dam reserves, while the figure stood at 35.42 billion last year, IRNA reported.

Following the recent perspirations across the country, the total volume of water in dam reservoirs has experienced a nine percent increase compared to the

previous year.

The report indicates that the volume of water in the country's dams from the beginning of the current water year up to June 22, has reached 31.21 billion cubic meters, while the figure stood at 32.39 billion cubic meters last year.

The amount of water outflow from the dams in the aforesaid period has also increased by nine percent to reach 25.9 billion cubic meters.

Last year and in the same period, the amount of water outflow was 23.80 billion cubic meters.

The total capacity of the country's dams stands at 50.5 billion cubic meters, showing that only 65 percent of the dams' capacity is full.

Even graveyards are subject to apartheid in Gaza

Palestinian graveyards are left in ruins in Gaza but two British ones are untouched

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN – It is internationally famous that the United Kingdom set the stage for the establishment of Israel on the Palestinian lands during the colonial era through the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

Its founding in 1948 triggered an unending conflict. Despite the passage of 76 years, this time the fires of the conflict are raging badly in the Gaza Strip, a 365-km square km land that is considered the largest open-air prison in the world.

Even this artificial regime that is created on the stolen lands is refusing to integrate with the region. It is because it wants the entire Palestine for itself and that is why it is committing genocide in Gaza.

In this savage war, Israel is not even sparing the Palestinian graveyards. However, the apartheid regime is careful enough not to harm the graveyards of British soldiers in its relentless and indiscriminate bombardments and artillery fires.

In an article published on June 26 on Middle East Eye (MEE), the writer, Abubaker Abed, reveals



that British cemeteries in the coastal enclave are untouched while Palestinian cemeteries have been turned into ruins.

Following is the text of the article titled "Gaza's British cemeteries are the only ones Israel isn't destroying":

In the Gaza Strip there are two cemeteries that contain the remains of British soldiers, most of whom died fighting in World War One, a few of whom died in World War Two.

Owned by the UK-based Commonwealth War Graves Commission, they are known locally as the British graveyards, and are regarded as a major cultural and

archaeological site in the Palestinian enclave.

Adorned by bushes and surrounded by tall cypress trees and a low wall against which various flowers are in bloom in a calm atmosphere, hundreds of Gazans have for years visited them to relax.

The Gaza War Cemetery lies in al-Tuffah neighborhood in the north of Gaza. It has 3,217 graves, of which 781 are unidentified. Second World War burials number 210. There are 30 post-war burials and 234 war graves of other nationalities.

The other is located in the north of Deir al-Balah, in the area

of al-Zwayda. Inside it lie 724 soldiers, all of them British.

Some of the cemetery's earliest burials were made by British soldiers involved in the battle for Gaza with the Ottoman Empire in 1917 and 1918. During the Second World War, British Empire forces – mostly Australian – ran a number of hospitals in Gaza.

Both cemeteries have survived since Israel's war on Gaza began, just as they have survived many conflicts before.

In 2006, the Gaza War Cemetery was partially damaged by an Israeli missile. Israel paid £90,000 as compensation. In addition, about 350 headstones needed repair after Israel's three-week assault on Gaza in 2009.

Few areas of Gaza have been spared the onslaught of Israel's latest military operation. But compared with the scores of Palestinian graveyards left in ruins by the assault, the British cemeteries appear to have been consciously avoided.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel starving Palestinians, Arab states lining their pockets

From page 1 ▶ A UN-backed group of experts said Tuesday that the Rafah onslaught has left more than 500,000 Palestinians on the brink of starvation.

"The fact that the entire population of Gaza is at emergency levels of hunger with over 500,000 people on the brink of starvation is no surprise. The Rafah offensive ground the aid response to a halt, thwarting the ability of humanitarian organizations to mitigate the suffering of 2.15 million people," said Kate Phillips-Barrasso, vice president of global policy and advocacy at Mercy Corps.

Threat of famine

Israel closed the main crossing for aid deliveries after its ground incursion into Rafah.

The latest analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which assesses global food insecurity and malnutrition, shows that Palestinians throughout the Gaza Strip face a "plausible" risk of famine in the coming months.

As soon as launching the Gaza onslaught on October 7, Israel concentrated its military offensive in northern Gaza. The regime's army devastated large parts of that area and ordered Palestinians to flee to southern areas. However, it carried out deadly strikes in southern areas, which had already been designated as safe zones.

The IPC report further warned that southern Gaza could soon see the same "catastrophic levels of hunger" recorded previously in the north.

"A high risk of famine persists as long as conflict continues, and humanitarian access is restricted," the IPC analysis added.

Extreme brutality

In addition to largely restricting aid, Israel

li troops have opened fire on Palestinians waiting for humanitarian relief from a limited number of trucks that have been allowed to enter the Gaza Strip.

Israeli troops have also killed more than 200 humanitarian workers since early October. This includes 193 employees of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

Aid operations under fire

The United Nations has taken a job at Israel for targeting humanitarian workers in Gaza.

"Humanitarian operations have repeatedly been in the crosshairs in Gaza," the spokesman of UN Secretary General António Guterres told reporters Tuesday.

Stéphane Dujarric added "humanitarian workers have been killed [and] shot at," including in areas previously "deconflicted" with the Israeli army.

Deliberate starvation

The UN special rapporteur on the right to food said some four months ago that such Israeli measures are synonymous with war crimes.

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

The Rome statute of the International Criminal Court has also stipulated that intentionally starving civilians by "depriving them

of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies" is a war crime.

Child killers

Israeli has slaughtered more than 37,700 Palestinians in Gaza since October 7 and injured over 86,000 others.

According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, nearly 15,000 children are among those who have been killed over the past 260 days. This includes dozens of children who have succumbed to malnutrition.

The bottom line matters!

The pain and suffering of Palestinians in Gaza is not restricted to the nine-month war. Before the conflict, most Gazans were already reliant on international humanitarian assistance in the wake of the years-long blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt.

Western countries have time and again issued statements condemning Israel for continuing its brutal campaign in Gaza but have failed to take any practical measures in this regard.

Arab countries which claim to be the defenders of Palestinians have also failed to come up with any actions to bring an end to Israel's barbaric crimes against Palestinians.

Earlier this month, a report by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that exports from Egypt, the UAE and Jordan to Israel have increased in 2024 compared with a year earlier.

The report shows that Arab states prioritize trade with Israel over the lives of Palestinians who are grappling with looming famine and starved to death by the Israeli regime.

"62,000" Israeli soldiers injured Hebrew newspaper makes staggering revelation

From page 1 ▶ There has been a notable uptick in operations by Ansarullah in Yemen and the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, both of whom have been recently waging operations in coordination with each other.

The Iraqi resistance bombarded another Israeli military target on Wednesday.

In a statement, it pledged to continue carrying out its operations in the face of the Israeli occupation in support of Gaza's civilians and resistance forces.

The operation, carried out using a kamikaze drone, was staged against a "vital" Israeli target in the southern Palestinian city of Umm al-Rashrash, also known as Eilat.

The estimation of the occupation entity's losses in this genocidal war on Gaza has not been limited to the injuries, disabilities and psychological trauma among the army ranks.

It also includes global isolation and severe economic losses prone to significant decline with each new escalation, especially involving Lebanon.

Shaul Goldstein, the CEO of Israel's Noga Electricity Company, warned of prolonged power outages if the war with Hezbollah escalates, stating that "after 72 hours without electricity in Israel, living there would be impossible."

These losses have been perceived by the Israeli public as a result of poor war management by the Netanyahu government and have driven many to protest repeatedly in various forms, including recent road closures in Tel Aviv demanding early elections.

Israeli media reported that anti-government protesters against closed Highway 4 northbound in the city of Hod Hasharon, set-

ting car tires on fire and chanting "elections now".

Experts say that despite being nowhere close to "absolute victory" in Gaza, which Netanyahu promised more than eight months ago, Tel Aviv has taken its frustration out over the failure to defeat the Palestinian resistance on Palestinian civilians.

265 days of Israeli genocide in Gaza have resulted in more than 37,700 deaths. Nearly 86,400 others have been injured, the majority of them women and children.

In the past 24 hours, the Israeli occupation forces committed four massacres in the enclave, killing 60 Palestinians and injuring 140 others, according to Gaza's health ministry.

The ministry added that there are still victims trapped under the rubble, and ambulances and rescue crews are unable to reach them.

WORLD HEADLINES

Erdogan: West backs Netanyahu's plans to spread war

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey stood in solidarity with Lebanon amid growing tensions with Israel and called on regional countries on Wednesday to also support Beirut, Reuters reported.

Cross-border strains between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah have been escalating in recent weeks, stoking fears of an all-out Israel-Hezbollah war.

In a speech to his AK Party lawmakers in parliament, Erdogan said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu planned to spread the Gaza war to the region.

"It seems that Israel has now turned its eyes on Lebanon after destroying and burning Gaza. We see Western countries giving Israel support behind the scenes," Erdogan said.

"Netanyahu's plans to spread the war to the region will lead to a big catastrophe," he said, adding that the Western support for Israel was "pitiful".

"Turkey stands with the brotherly people and state of Lebanon. I call on other countries in the region to stand in solidarity with Lebanon," he said.

Dutch PM Mark Rutte named NATO chief

Transatlantic military alliance NATO has appointed Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as its next chief, entrusting him with the leadership role during a critical time for European security amid Russia's war in Ukraine.

Rutte's appointment on Wednesday was a formality after his only rival for the post, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, announced last week that he had quit the race, having failed to gain traction, Al Jazeera reported.

Ambassadors from the alliance's 32 members took the decision at a meeting at the NATO headquarters in Brussels.

He will take over from Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on October 1, NATO said in a statement.

Rutte gained early support from key members of the alliance, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, after declaring his interest in the post last year.

He described NATO as a "cornerstone of our collective security", in a post on X.

Netherlands calls in Israeli ambassador over ICC spying claims

Israel's ambassador to the Netherlands was asked to "report" to the Dutch foreign affairs ministry to explain allegations of a secret surveillance and espionage campaign by Israeli spy services against the International Criminal Court, according to the Guardian.

Dutch officials asked to meet the ambassador, Modi Ephraim, to discuss concerns raised by a Guardian investigation that revealed Israeli intelligence agencies attempted over a nine-year period to undermine, influence and allegedly intimidate the ICC chief prosecutor's office.

The meeting was disclosed by officials in response to questions raised in parliament by several Dutch MPs about the revelations, part of a joint investigation with the Israeli-Palestinian publication +972 Magazine and the Hebrew-language outlet Local Call.

On Tuesday, a spokesperson for the minister of foreign affairs said the Israeli ambassador "was requested to report at the [ministry] in connection with allegations made in the articles in the Guardian and +972". They said a conversation was held "in which the concerns of the Netherlands have been expressed".

As the host state of the ICC, which is in The Hague, the Netherlands is obliged under an agreement with the court to protect the safety and security of ICC staff, and must ensure it is "free from interference of any kind".

Whistleblower returns home

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has landed back home in Australia, a free man for the first time in 12 years, after a US judge signed off on his unexpected plea deal on Wednesday morning.

Cheers erupted from supporters gathered at Canberra Airport in the Australian capital as Assange disembarked the aircraft. He waved to the crowds as he walked across the tarmac, CNN reported.

In a stunning turn of events, the 52-year-old Australian was released from a high-security prison in London on Monday afternoon and had already boarded a private jet to leave the United Kingdom before the world even knew of his agreement with the US government.

Assange and his whistleblower website rose to global prominence in 2010 after a string of leaks from former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The website posted a video showing a US military helicopter firing on and killing two journalists and several Iraqi civilians in 2007. Several months later, it disclosed more than 90,000 classified Afghan war documents dating back to 2004.

Kenya's president withdraws tax plan after deadly protest

Kenya's President William Ruto says he will withdraw a finance bill containing controversial tax hikes after deadly protests which saw parliament set ablaze on Tuesday.

In an address to the nation, he said it was clear that Kenyans "want nothing" to do with the bill, the BBC reported.

"I concede," he said, adding that he will not sign the bill into law.

At least 22 people were killed in Tuesday's protests, according to the state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNHRC).

Ruto said he would now enter into dialogue with the young people, who were at the forefront of the biggest protests to hit the country since he was elected in 2022.

"Listening keenly to the people of Kenya who have said loudly that they want nothing to do with this Finance Bill 2024, I concede.

"And therefore, I will not sign the 2024 Finance Bill, and it shall subsequently be withdrawn. The people have spoken," he said in the televised address.

Hezbollah: Israel sinking deeper into swamp of Gaza war

A senior Hezbollah official has cast doubts on the United States' sincerity to stop the Gaza war, stressing that Israel is "sinking deeper and deeper into the swamp" of the war of attrition as it has failed to achieve a single victory after more than 260 days of a bloody onslaught.

"Americans are not looking to stop the war; but rather want the aggression to continue. What should resistance fighters do in such a situation? They have no choice but to fight on. They are capable to do so. We are certain that Israel will sink deeper and deeper into the swamp of this war of attrition and will not achieve any of its goals as it has been the case up until now," Deputy Secretary-General of Hezbollah Sheikh Naim Qassem said on Tuesday, according to Press TV.

Mashhad's air traffic jumps 14%

TEHRAN – Mashhad's international airport, the second most crowded terminal in Iran, has witnessed a 14% rise in influx of domestic and overseas flights in a month.

"In the month of Ordibehesht [April 20 – May 20], 5198 flights landed and took off at Mashhad Airport," said Khorasan Razavi airports' director-general. "Which demonstrates about 14% rise compared to the corresponding time a year earlier."

A total number of 709,615 passengers, Mahmoud Amani-Bani added, were also passed through Mashhad International Hashemi Nejad Airport during the month before last.

Shedding light on a 33% upsurge in terms of inbound and outbound tourists transferring from the airport, he stated that some 155,289 foreign passengers traveled to/from Mashhad from mid-April to mid-May compared to the same period of the previous year.

"Mashhad-Tehran skyway with 925 flights per month was the leading route in the ranking," Amani-Bani wended up. "When it comes to overseas flights, the ranking led by Mashhad-Najaf with 224 flights."

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 address the influx of pilgrims, Mashhad has developed an 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.

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.

West Azarbaijan shines bright with \$37m of handicrafts export

TEHRAN – Iran's West Azarbaijan has exported more than \$37 million worth of handicrafts in less than three years, a local official made public.

"The province has sent 37,300,000 dollars in handicrafts overseas, from August 2021 to March 2024," West Azarbaijan's official in charge of handicrafts, Morteza Safari, noted in a recent interview with ISNA.

More than 2,000 job opportunities were created in the handicrafts sector provincially over the past three years, he highlighted.

Mentioning the achievements in the field, Safari further pinpointed that the provincial artisans attained 25 seals of excellence since August 2021.

"A notable number of training classes across various handicraft disciplines, aimed at enhancing artisanry skills, were conducted within the province," he added.

In his final words, Safari pointed to the arranging of more than 40 handicraft exhibitions as a momentous initiative on the provincial handicrafts' agenda for the past year.

West Azarbaijan province, located in the northwest of Iran, boasts a rich and diverse heritage in handicrafts that reflects its cultural and historical significance.

One of the most prominent handicrafts in



West Azarbaijan is carpet weaving. The province is renowned for its finely woven rugs and carpets, distinguished by intricate designs and high-quality materials.

In addition to carpet weaving, the province is known for its textile production, including kilims (flat-woven rugs) and jajims (hand-woven woolen cloths). The patterns often carry symbolic meanings and are passed down through generations, preserving the cultural heritage of the region.

Overall, the handicrafts of West Azarbaijan province are a testament to the region's rich cultural tapestry and the enduring skills of its artisans, which could also lead to the economic growth of the region.

Private investments to turn new chapter in Khansar's tourism

TEHRAN – The private sector has invested about 40 million dollars in Khansar's tourism in three years, positioning it as a potential tourism hub in western Isfahan, said the tourism minister.

"Khansar undoubtedly has the potential to become a year-round tourist destination in western Isfahan, not just a seasonal attraction," Ezzatollah Zarghami noted during a visit to Khansar on Wednesday morning.

During the half-day trip, the official toured the area's natural landscapes, historical houses of Abhari and Habibi, Baba Sultan Mosque and Bathhouse, and the unique pigeon towers within the city.

"Reports indicate that over the past three years, some significant 40 million dollars have been invested in Khansar's tourism sector," Zarghami brought to light.

The official, however, did not mention specific spheres which witnessed the investments.

Khansar is a picturesque town situated in the western part of Isfahan province, Iran. Nestled among the Zagros mountains, Khansar is renowned for its stunning natural landscapes,

lush gardens, and rich cultural heritage.

The town boasts a mild climate, making it an attractive destination throughout the year.

Historically, Khansar has been a center for honey production, thanks to its abundant wildflowers and favorable environment for beekeeping. This has earned it the nickname "City of Honey."

The town is also home to numerous historical and architectural sites, including traditional Persian houses, ancient mosques, and unique pigeon towers.

Khansar's cultural significance is further enhanced by its traditional handicrafts, particularly carpet weaving, which showcases intricate designs and patterns unique to the region.

The town's annual honey festival and vibrant local bazaars attract visitors from across the country, adding to its reputation as a burgeoning tourism hub.

This blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and modern development positions Khansar as a key destination for tourists seeking an authentic and enriching experience in Iran.

Tough decisions needed to safeguard Isfahan treasures

TEHRAN - The expanse of subsidence in Isfahan province has reached a stage where overcoming it requires decisive, bold, and tough decisions, the province's director general of the Department of Environment has said.

The official emphasized that addressing a looming subsidence crisis here means that existing regulations and limitations imposed on Zayanderud (Zayandeh River) must be resolved, which requires urgent and decisive decisions.

In an interview with IRNA on Wednesday, Ahmadreza Lahijan-zadeh added, "Currently, subsidence is the most significant and foremost challenge facing Isfahan, while time is swiftly passing and there is a limited time for recovery."

He specified that some experts and researchers consider the highest red line for Isfahan regarding subsidence to be the year 1410 (2031), a time when the rate and speed of subsidence will increase from 15 to 50 centimeters per year.

He continued, "This [potential] danger is very serious for the northern part of Isfahan city extending to Shahin Shahr and Borkhar, potentially causing widespread migration and the loss of great national wealth and civilization in the Isfahan region."

"Decisions must be made regarding the extent of agriculture in Isfahan. This way, the current policy of releasing water for agriculture several times a year must be reconsidered."

Concerning what he called a continuous closure of water flow in Zayandehrud, Lahijan-zadeh said: "We cannot keep the river closed for



300 days a year. Based on research findings, subsidence cannot be controlled if Zayanderud does not have a continuous flow of 10 to 15 cubic meters per second passing through the city of Isfahan."

Lahijan-zadeh stressed, "We must pursue a strategy that advocates this flow of water in the river, which necessitates a revision of taking water from Zayanderud, including water used for agriculture."

"We have to calculate the cost-benefit ratio to make a balance," he said. "For example, if wheat production in Isfahan is reduced by half, but the river flows for 150 days a year instead of 60, the rate of subsidence would be reduced."

"We need to assess and compare whether the value of a centuries-old majestic monument in Isfahan is greater or the price of tens of thousands of tons of agricultural products."

Lahijan-zadeh stated, "Zayanderud is the only permanent flowing river in the central plateau of Iran, which

in the best conditions and with good rainfall carries 1.9 billion cubic meters of water annually."

"However, what we are facing is, on one hand, climate change and its consequences on precipitation, and on the other hand, overburdening [in terms of industrial, urban, and agricultural usages] that altogether exceeds the ecological capacity of this region."

According to IRNA, the subsidence rate in Isfahan from June 2021 to June 2022 was approximately 15.5 centimeters per year.

Mismanagement threatening Isfahan's heritage

Earlier in May, Iran Ghazi, a retired university professor and geography researcher, expressed grave concerns over the mismanagement and misuse of water resources from the Zayandehrud river, warning that such practices endanger both human life and the rich cultural heritage of Isfahan.

In a recent interview with ISNA, Ghazi emphasized the deep cultural significance of the Zayandehrud river to Isfahan, saying: "Without knowledge, understanding, and a sense of responsibility, the foundation of Isfahan's cultural identity, which is historically tied to the Zayandehrud, will be weakened."

The expert said that the water scarcity in Zayandehrud is not due to a lack of rainfall or snowfall, which she continuously monitors, but rather due to the poor management of water resources. "There is no shortage of water. The issue is misuse," Ghazi asserted.

Half the world?

Soaked in a rich history, Isfahan was once a crossroad of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons.

The city is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical bridges but also for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility.

Interestingly, the city is nicknamed Nesf-e-Jahan, which is translated into "half the world", meaning seeing it is relevant to see half the world. In its heyday, it was also one of the largest cities in the region, with a population of nearly one million.

Minister announces allocation of funds for 12th-century mosque restoration

TEHRAN - Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami has announced the allocation of necessary funds for the restoration of the 12th-century Jameh Mosque of Golpayegan.

Zarghami made the remarks on Wednesday during his visit to the ancient mosque which is located in the city of Golpayegan in Isfahan province.

The official highlighted the mosque's historical and architectural significance, saying, "Undoubtedly, this magnificent historical mosque, with its more than 900 years of history and its striking similarities to many other ancient mosques across Iran, stands as a clear and obvious symbol of the rich Islamic civilization in western Isfahan province."

Issues caused by moisture infiltration in the mudbrick walls, roofs, and domes should be top on the agenda for the upcoming restoration project, Zarghami underlined.

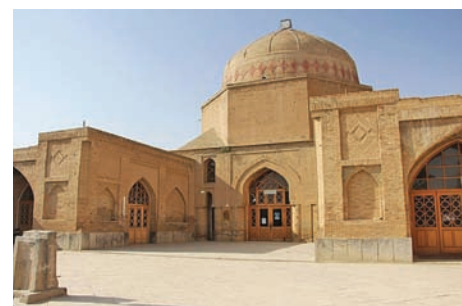
"This year, more than 30 billion rials (some \$50,000) have been allocated for the restoration of this mosque. If necessary, additional funds will be provided, especially to complete the restoration of its grand dome," Zarghami said.

The minister emphasized the importance of creating conditions that would allow people to comfortably perform their prayers in the 900-year-old mosque, just as their ancestors did.

"We will work with our colleagues in the ministry and at the provincial directorate to increase the restoration budget for Golpayegan," Zarghami added.

During his visit to Golpayegan, Zarghami also inspected other historical buildings in the city. He admired Golpayegan's rich history, describing it as one of the main centers of Islamic civil development in western Isfahan province.

According to Arch-net, the mosque is roughly rectangular



in design and consists of vaulted and domed prayer halls enveloping the four sides of a rectangular courtyard. It is oriented northeast-southwest and measures about seventy-three meters by forty-four meters on the exterior.

Measuring twenty-six meters wide and thirty-two meters deep, the courtyard is symmetrically arranged with two grand square iwans to the northeast and southwest, and two small iwans to the northwest and southeast.

A square dome chamber or sanctuary is constructed entirely of brick and is opened on three sides with vaulted archways flanked by embedded columns. The east and north corners of the chamber have thick double columns marking the corner,

flanked by narrow archways cut into the adjoining walls that are topped by arched windows.

Centered on the qibla wall, the three-sided mihrab niche of the Seljuk dome chamber has stucco work, topped by a blind arch carved with inscriptions and an inscription plaque.

The interior surfaces are adorned with brick panels with intricate geometric motifs and geometric compositions in Kufic letters. The exterior of the dome structure is left plain, except for a ring of large diamonds encircling the dome's base.

The single minaret of the mosque is located outside the precinct, behind the qibla wall, and also dates from the Seljuk period. Its octagonal base is joined by a tall cylindrical shaft which is topped by a narrow turret placed off-center.

The terms Jameh Mosque, Masjed-e Jameh, or Friday Mosque are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but only in Iran does it designate this purpose.

Golpayegan is situated some 180 kilometers west of Isfahan.

Public tender announcement (Second Turn)

Shirin Daru Company (public joint stock) intends to purchase 500 (five hundred) tons of dried licorice root with foreign origin from a qualified supplier in order to meet the raw materials needed by its factory.

Therefore, applicants are invited to visit the buyer's website at www.shirindarou.com for 10 days from the date of publication of the advertisement and call 071-37442301 extension 129 for more information. In addition, the type of guarantee for participation in the tender is cash deposit, bank guarantee, promissory note or check and the amount is eight billion Rials.

(Advertising costs are the responsibility of the tender winner)

TEHRAN –Holding the 54th International Physics Olympiads (IPhO) in Isfahan will boost the country's science diplomacy, the chairman of the IPhO 2024 Organizing Committee has said.

The 54th IPhO will be held in Isfahan University of Technology from July 21 to 29.

"The event will bring together more than 400 elite students and 250 physics professors from some 70 to 80 countries," IRNA quoted Mahmoud Bahmanabadi as saying. So taking advantage of this opportunity is of utmost importance, he added.

Science diplomacy is one of the strategic policies of the country. Holding this competition will contribute to the development of science diplomacy since it serves as a platform to meet future physicists and promote constructive interaction in physics and other science and technology fields, Bahmanabadi noted.

In addition to the usual training, Iranian students attended two special programs, including a one-week training camp in Kish Island and the Asian Physics Olympiad (APhO) in Malaysia.

Rajdeep Singh Rawat, the president of the International Physics Olympiad, has traveled to Isfahan to visit the Isfahan University of Technology, the venue for the 54th IPhO 2024.

During this trip, he will assess the facilities for the exam, and evaluate the measures and plans taken to host the participants in the 54th Olympiad.

Considering the growing importance of physics in most fields of technology and the general education of youths, the annual competition is held every year in a country with the aim of increasing international communication.

The history of the IPhO dates back to 1967, when the first edition was held in Warsaw Poland



with the participation of only five countries.

It has been 36 years since the Iranian team started participating in the competition and won many medals so far.

The Iranian team grabbed four silver medals and one bronze medal in the 53rd IPhO that was held in Japan in July 2023.

Iran has so far hosted four international Olympiads of physics (2007), astronomy (2009), computer (2017), and biology (2018).

APhO 2024

The Asian Physics Olympiad (APhO) originated from the International Physics Olympiad (IPhO).

APhO started in the year 2000 in Indonesia with about 10 participating countries, and in 2021, the participating countries grew to 26 countries.

It is an annual Physics competition for high school students from countries across Asia and Oceanic regions.

Iran's Physics Olympiad team participated in the 24th Asian Physics Olympiad (APhO), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The competition commenced on June 3 and concluded on June 10.

The team attended the competition for the first time to foster their scientific drive and improve their readiness for the Interna-

tional Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2024, which is scheduled to be hosted by Iran.

The participants were Pooya Asteraki, Farzin Qolivandan, Mohammad-Amin Haqju, Abolfazl Shiri, Seyyed Mohammad Hoseini, Kasra Sheikhi, Behrad Mohammadian, and Sara Mousaei.

Intl. Olympiad achievements

The outstanding achievements of Iranian students in international Olympiads have placed the country among the top five nations in the world.

"The educational system of other countries is excellent, yet Iran is among the top 5 countries in the world in the international Olympiads, YJC quoted Elham Yavari, the head of the National Organization for the Development of Brilliant Talents (SAMPAD), as saying.

Yavari pointed to a reform-based plan approved by Iran's Ministry of Education in 2011 that defined a 20-year prospect for the elevation of educational standards and improvement of the educational system across the country.

Iranian schoolchildren ranked second and grabbed six gold medals in the Second Open World Astronomy Olympiad (OWAO).

The tournament was hosted by Russia at the Sirius Educational Center from November 14 to 22,

2023, IRNA reported. The participants attended the event both in person and remotely.

Iran grabbed one gold medal and three silver medals at the 35th International Olympiad in Informatics, ranking seventh in the world among 91 countries.

The IOI 2023 was held in Szeged, Hungary, from August 28th to September 4th.

The International Olympiad in Informatics is an annual international informatics competition for high school students from various invited countries, accompanied by social and cultural programs.

It is one of the several international science Olympiads held annually around the world. Exceptional high school students from various countries compete in the prestigious algorithmic competition to sharpen their informatics skills—such as problem analysis, design of algorithms and data structures, programming, and testing.

This year, the Iranian team took five medals, ranking third in the 16th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics held on August 10-20 in Chorzow, Poland.

IOAA is an annual event for students who perform very well academically around the world. Established in Thailand in the year 2006, it was an initiative by five countries including Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, China, and Poland.

Also, Iranian students took six medals, ranking 11th at the 64th International Mathematical Olympiad which was held in Japan on July 2-13, 2023.

IMO is the World Championship Mathematics Competition for High School students and is held each year in a different country.

4th intl. congress on "Health in Arbaeen" slated for July

TEHRAN –The 4th international congress on "Health in Arbaeen" will be held in Tehran from July 3 to 5.

The Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of Shia Muslims, and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Each year, a huge crowd of people flocks to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform mourning rituals.

This year some five million Iranian pilgrims are estimated to attend the Arbaeen trek.

"Providing medical services to improve the health of pilgrims is one of the important concerns of the health sector and this congress," ILNA quoted Abdolreza Pazouki, Iran University of Medical Science President, as saying.

A total of 3,500 national and internation-



al participants will attend the 4th congress. Hosting the event, the Iraqis comprise the majority of foreign attendees to enhance services to pilgrims.

The congress will focus on the following scientific areas including accidents and hazards; artificial intelligence; traditional medicine; professions; environmental health; nursing; relief and rescue.

It will also cover rehabilitation; forensic medicine; mental health; nutrition; cultural issues; pharmaceuticals; medical tools; as

well as mawkibs (voluntary stations to serve the pilgrims).

Moreover, some new topics such as dentistry and oral hygiene will be discussed.

So far, 350 articles in Persian and English have been submitted in the above-mentioned fields. A total of 40 scientific workshops encompassing 200 lectures are scheduled to be held during the congress, along with 35 international speakers from 5 countries – Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and Lebanon – who will deliver talks.

On the sidelines of the congress, a health-related exhibition will be set up to showcase a variety of items ranging from Persian medicine to rehabilitation products.

Pazouki went on to say that the first educational and research magazine with the title of mass gatherings in the world, which is published with the support of a Dutch publisher, will be unveiled during the 4th congress.

ENGLISH IN USE

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20% of areas in Iran at high risk of flood

Twenty percent of areas across Iran are highly prone to flooding, Khosro Shahbazi, head of the Forests, Range, and Watershed Management Organization (FRWMO), has said.

"Precipitation in Iran is one-third of the world's average, as the country is located in a dry and fragile region where we experience 11 millimeters decrease in precipitation each 10 years and an increase in evaporation of more than 50 millimeters every year," he explained, ISNA reported.

Rainfall fluctuations usually lead to flood and devastation, so a comprehensive planning for watershed management and flood control is required, he noted.

بسیست درصد ایران جزو مناطق با خطر سیل خیزی بالاست

سرپرست سازمان جنگلها، مراتع و آبخیزداری می گوید ۲۰ درصد ایران جزو مناطق با خطر سیل خیزی بالاست.

به گزارش روز جمعه ایسنا، خسرو شهبازی افزود: میزان بارش در کشور ما یک سوم متوسط آن در دنیا است و از نظر جغرافیایی در منطقه ای خشک و شکننده واقع شده‌ایم که هر ۱۰ سال با ۱۱ میلیمتر کاهش بارش و بیش از ۵۰ میلیمتر افزایش تبخیر و تعرق مواجه هستیم که همه منجر به این شده که بارش‌ها در منطقه ما سیلابی و ویرانگر باشد، به همین خاطر نیازمند برنامه ریزی جامع برای مدیریت حوضه‌های آبخیز و کنترل سیلاب‌ها هستیم.

Patients benefit from life-saving services of Japan-funded MRI

TEHRAN –Since the successful installation of the state-of-the-art resonance imaging (MRI) machine, funded by Japan, many patients in Hajar Hospital in the city of Shahrekord have benefited from life-saving early diagnosis for various diseases.

Thanks to the MRI machine, cancer has been detected early enough in dozens of patients to allow them to receive less aggressive treatment – ultimately saving their lives, World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO EMRO) website announced in a press release on June 23.

The MRI is used for various diagnostic purposes, including detecting severe cases of new coronavirus infection, early detection of cancer, bleeding from heart attacks and strokes, identifying disabilities caused by accidents and other causes, and monitoring disease progression," the website quoted Tamaki Tsukada, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, as saying.

It is one of 6 state-of-the-art MRI machines generously funded by the Government of Japan and strategically placed in key referral hospitals identified by the Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Representatives of WHO and the Embassy of Japan in the Islamic Republic of Iran visited Hajar Hospital on June 13 to witness the impact the MRI machine has had since its donation in October 2023.

Before, patients in Shahrekord and nearby districts had to travel long distances for diagnostic services.

Now, access to an advanced 1.5 Tesla MRI machine is available at Hajar Hospital and at Kosar Hospital, Semnan; Pasteur Hospital, Bam; 12 Farvardin Hospital, Kahnooj; Imam Ali Hospital, Andimeshk; and Shohada Hospital, Neyriz.

The MRI project was devised at the peak of the COVID-19 emergency – when the Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the hardest hit countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region – to overcome diagnostic limitations in the country.

While the public health emergency phase of the pandemic is over, the coronavirus continues to circulate.

The generously donated MRI machines will continue to address the acute diagnostic needs of COVID-19 patients and strengthen medical imaging capabilities to care for patients with long-term COVID (post-acute sequelae of COVID-19).

The machines can also be used to help diagnose a variety of other diseases and injuries unrelated to COVID-19.

Improved disease prognosis, as seen at

Hajar Hospital, shows the significant progress made in giving underprivileged populations access to the advanced diagnostic capacity of an MRI machine.

It also reflects the commitment of the Iranian health system to enhance the overall quality of patient care, including by building on gains from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The country has great health system capacity, but there are also vulnerabilities, mainly in rural areas.

These are associated with meeting the needs of historically marginalized populations and the continuous influx of Afghan refugees.

"In a world where inequalities continue to hinder the achievement of universal health coverage, we have seen great value derived from the donation of the MRI machines, especially in vulnerable areas of the country, where access to this highly sophisticated technology is vastly improved.

More people now have more timely access to diagnostics, which will ultimately lead to early initiation of treatment.

As a result, their overall medical care can be enhanced," said Dr. Mikiko Senga, WHO Deputy Representative and Health Emergencies Lead of the WHO Country Office in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"We are immensely grateful for the Government of Japan's support in enhancing the resilience of the Iranian health system," emphasized Syeed Jaffar Hussain, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"These MRI machines will significantly improve the Islamic Republic of Iran's diagnostic capabilities, offering more timely and accurate health services to its people.

We believe this joint WHO-Japan project will have a lasting impact on the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in the country, including refugees from Afghanistan who reside in deprived areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"Health and healthcare are fundamental sectors of a country and both Iran and Japan are committed to improving the quality of healthcare services for their citizens.

We hope that this MRI contributes to the improvement of health services," the Japanese official further noted.

The life-saving impact of this collaboration epitomizes a successful international partnership to enhance essential health services, including disease detection, and ultimately work towards universal health coverage.

Action plans underway to conserve 23 species

TEHRAN –The Department of Environment (DOE) has developed action plans for the conservation of 23 endangered species and the plans are being implemented in the country.

The plans intend to address species such as cheetah, brown bear, leopard, black bear, Persian yellow deer, Persian zebra, and hunting birds from among 68 endangered species.

Over the past few decades, different factors such as land use change, drought, agricultural development, climate change, and mining activities have led to the destruction of natural habitats and the reduction in the number of prey which with the passage of time has declined wildlife population and pushed some species to the brink of extinction.

According to the DOE's latest report, 86 species in the country are in danger of dying out.

The Department of Environment is planning to create action plans for 20 more endangered species.

In May, Marzieh Mousavi, an official with the DOE, said that among endangered animal species, bustards and Asiatic cheetahs are in a more critical situation, there are roughly 19



species of bustards and 25 species of cheetahs identified in the country.

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

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

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

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



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Lead such a life, that, when you die, the people may mourn you, and while you are alive, they long for your company.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:07 Evening: 19:45 Dawn: 3:04 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:51 (tomorrow)

A new vision for Iran's culture and art: what to expect from the upcoming election



By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- In the aftermath of President Raisi's sudden and tragic passing in a helicopter crash 40 days ago, Iran is gearing up for a presidential election that promises to shape the country's future.

The sudden turn of events has sent shockwaves throughout the nation, with six candidates vying for the top spot, each bringing their own unique political perspectives to the table.

The presidential election will undoubtedly have a significant impact on Iran's cultural and artistic landscape.

With a new president at the helm, there is a possibility of fresh perspectives and approaches to promoting cultural exchange, supporting local artists, and addressing the challenges facing Iran's creative industries.

The new president must be able to create a space for Iran's cultural sector internationally and attract funding to support its development. Moreover, the president must be able to preserve Islamic, Iranian, and revolutionary values, which are essential for the system.

The president's cultural team should be able to interact with various tastes in this field and direct them towards a better outcome. It is better for a cultural figure to be appointed as the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Each candidate brings their own strengths and weaknesses to the table, with varying degrees of support from different factions within Iranian society.

As the country prepares for this pivotal election, cultural practitioners and artists are eagerly awaiting the new president's approach to issues such as censorship, funding for cultural institutions, and international collaborations.

Some of the key challenges facing the next president include balancing artistic freedom with Islamic values and cultural standards, addressing economic challenges facing Iran's creative industries, including limited funding and restrictive regulations.

Promoting cultural exchange programs that showcase Iran's rich cultural heritage while engaging with global trends and innovations should also be a priority.

As Iran enters this new era under a new president, there is an opportunity for fresh perspectives and approaches to emerge.

The election presents a chance for artists, writers, and musicians to push boundaries, challenge traditional norms, and promote diversity in their work.

The next president will have a significant impact on Iran's cultural landscape, shaping the future of its creative industries and artistic expression.

As Iranians head to the polls on Friday, they will be weighing the pros and cons of each candidate's vision for their country's culture and art scene.

Ultimately, the outcome of this election will depend on how effectively each candidate balances competing interests, priorities, and values. As the world watches with bated breath, one thing is certain: Iran's cultural landscape will be shaped by this pivotal moment in its history.

Iranian filmmaker Bahram Beyzai invited to join Oscar membership

TEHRAN-Renowned Iranian filmmaker Bahram Beyzai is among the 487 members of the global film community who have been invited by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to join the membership ranks of the Oscar organizer.

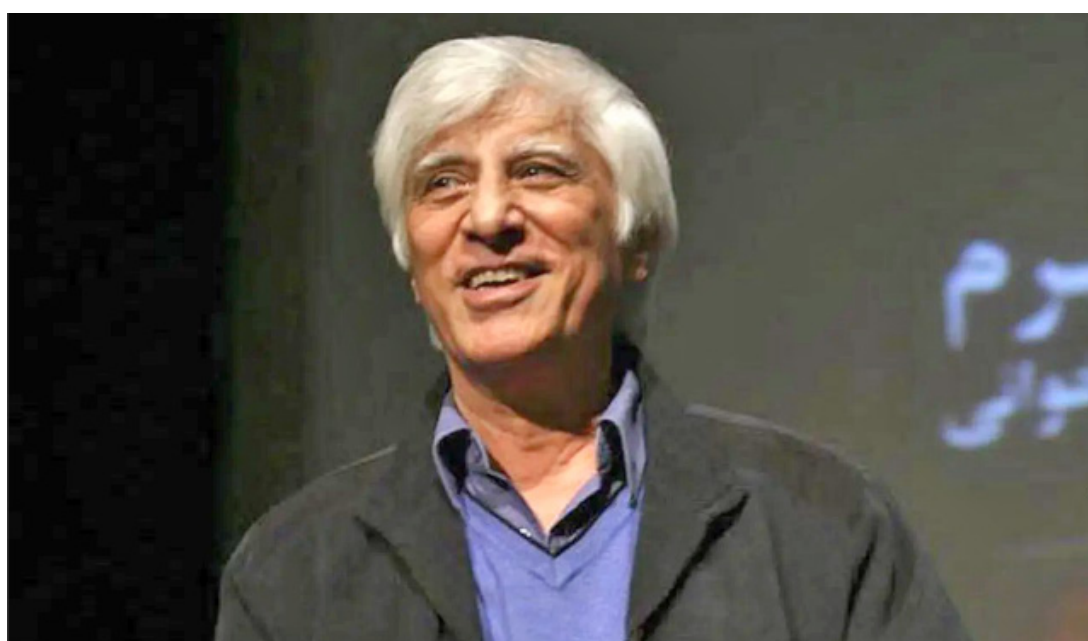
A director and screenwriter, Beyzai has been invited by the directors' and writers' branches of the Academy, ISNA reported.

Invitees who wish to accept, as the vast majority tend to, will join the specific branch of the Academy that invited them.

Beyzai is one of the eight people who were invited by more than one branch. The others include Michael Andrews (film editors and short films/feature animation), Ilker Çatak (directors and writers), Nadim Cheikhrouha (documentary and producers), Cord Jefferson (directors and writers), Celine Song (directors and writers), Justine Triet (directors and writers) and Christine Turner (documentary and short films/feature animation). They have to have to pick one branch to join.

Other notables on this year's list include the actors Jessica Alba, Sandra Hüller, Greta Lee, Lily Gladstone, Kate Mara, and Catherine O'Hara as well as filmmakers Alice Diop, Celine Song, S.S. Rajamouli, Boots Riley, Emma Seligman, and David Yates among many others.

If all accept, it will bring the Academy's total membership to 10,910, of which 9,934 would be voting members. With the addition of the 2024 members, 35 percent of Academy members identify as women, 20 percent are from underrepresented ethnic and racial communities, and 20 percent from



countries or territories outside the U.S.

"We are thrilled to welcome this year's class of new members," Academy CEO Bill Kramer and president Janet Yang said in a joint statement. "These remarkably talented artists and professionals from around the world have made a significant impact on our filmmaking community."

Bahram Beyzai, 85, is part of a generation of filmmakers in the Iranian New Wave, a Persian cinema movement that started in the late 1960s.

The filmmakers share many common techniques including the use of poetic dialog, references to traditional Persian art and culture and allegorical story-telling often dealing with political and philosophical issues.

Already known for his groundbreaking work as a theater director, Beyzai helped catalyze a new era of Iranian cinema.

His debut feature "Downpour," made in 1972, is regarded as one of the most successful Iranian films ever made.

His other films include "Stranger and the Fog" (1974), "Crow" (1976), "Ballad of Tara" (1979), "Bashu, the Little Stranger" (1986), "Maybe Another Time" (1988), "Travelers" (1992), "Killing Mad Dogs" (2001), and "When We are All Asleep" (2009).

Beyzai's stories, plays and screenplays, as well as his studies on various fields, have been published in over seventy books.

He is respected for his style of pure Persian writing and choosing mythical Persian figures and stories.

His research on history of Iran's theater led to the publication of "A Study on Iranian Theater," in 1965. He is the first Iranian scholar to publish books on theater in Japan and China.

Some of his plays have been translated into several languages and shown in many countries.

In addition to Beyzai, Yegane Moghaddam, a young Iranian director, has also been invited to join the Academy members.

She is known as the director of the short animation "Our Uniform" that was one of the nominees in the Animated Short Film category of the 96th Academy Awards.

Moghaddam is an animator and illustrator who has a strong passion for nature, culture, and the reality. In her films, she tries to find a voice for beings who usually don't have a voice.

Her student short animation "On the Cover" (2018) gained global attention. Later, she continued creating films and visuals for ecological events. In addition, she has authored the first ecological comic book series for children, published in Iran, titled "The Little Forester".

Tehran center to host reading performance of Iranian female playwrights

TEHRAN- Tehran's Sahne-ye Abi Theater is set to host a reading performance event featuring the works of Iranian female playwrights.

The event, which will be launched on June 30, will run for five consecutive nights, showcasing 10 diverse and thought-provoking plays.

The program will include "Downtown", penned by Marzieh Gholami and directed by Elaheh Muchani, and "Lili" by Shahrzad Shoja'edin,

directed by Zohreh Sadat Hosseini. Other notable productions include "Tremeh" by Sahar Safai, directed by Ainaz Salmani, and "One Belly of Money" by Farzaneh Delir, who will also take the helm as director.

Additional highlights of the lineup include "Summer Resort Hotel" by Roya Mokhtari, directed by Delaram Asadi, and "My Father, Sophocles" by Sahar Nasuti, directed by Setareh Sedaqati. Rounding out the performances are

"Chocolate City" by Neda Sabeti, directed by Shirin Etefaq, "Mist" by Neda Habibi, directed by Haleh Behbudi, "Winter Sleep" and "Candy Blood" by Leili Aaj, directed by Avishan Sedqi and Sahar Nasuti respectively.

The event promises to be a groundbreaking celebration of Iranian female playwrights and their contributions to the country's vibrant cultural scene.

Spanish performance of Lorca's "Blood Wedding" at Shahrzad Theater

TEHRAN-The play "Blood Wedding," a tragedy by the late Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) is being performed in Spanish at Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran.

Directed by Hossein Zeinali, the 55-minute play has been organized by the Embassy of Spain in Iran. The Persian translation of the dialogues are provided to the audience via surtitles.

The cast includes Negar Asghari, Morteza Safaei Naeini, Ghazaleh Ashoub, Mohammad Seifidel, Reza Jabbari, Neda Mansouri, Mahour Babai, Elham Sayadi, Mina Emadi, Maryam Mohammadmirza, Helia Bashtani, and Ario Bonyadi.

"Blood Wedding" is about a young woman and two men fighting for her love. It follows the story of a bride who is about to enter an arranged marriage but falls in love with her former lover.

Their love affair ignites a family feud that escalates into a tragedy.

Through the story of the bride's struggle with the expectations placed upon her by her family and society, the play delves into the tension between individual desires and traditional expectations.

It is renowned for its vivid and poetic language and its exploration of complex themes that continue to resonate with audiences today.

Using surrealism and Spanish folk culture, some themes present in the work include the cycle of life, the progression of time, choice, deception, fate, and nature. Since it was written in 1932, the play has been staged all over the world and adapted into several film, TV series and radio shows.

"Blood Wedding" will be staged through July 9 at the theater located at No. 74, Neauphle-le-Château St., Hafez St.

Cartoon of Day



The International Law!

Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

Irish artists boycotting a Berlin exhibition over Gaza massacre

At least 13 Irish artists have withdrawn from a photography exhibition being held in Berlin, Germany, in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their supporters who have faced an unprecedented German crackdown on their right to protest against Israel.

"Changing States: Ireland in the 21st Century" traces 100 years of Irish history through the lens of accomplished artists who have chronicled the lives of people in the country of a little over 5 million in different ways. The exhibition runs till August 11.

But after some of the artists withdrew, the Berlin exhibition organizers decided to completely erase any mention of their work. The organizers also did not publicly disclose the reason why the artists refused to participate, TRT World reported.

"There is an irony in terms of how (the action of the exhibition organizers) mimics the response of the German state in terms of silencing, and

erasing what actually happened in the show," says Mark Curran, one of the artists.

Curran draws a comparison between the current political climate of Germany and the situation in the 1930s when Nazi fascism was taking over the country.

"People talk about what they would have done in the 1930s. This is another moment (like that) to step up and take a position."

The artists who have distanced themselves from the Berlin exhibition organized by Photo Museum Ireland, IKS Düsseldorf and Haus am Kleistpark say that the show would have been meaningless without shedding light on the suffering of the Palestinian people.

"As an artist, I feel it would be insincere to exhibit work on political and social themes without acknowledging these atrocities in Gaza," says Ruby Wallis, another artist who has pulled out of the exhibition.

For some participants, Germany's continuing military support for the Israeli military, which has killed more than 37,600 Palestinians, showing their work in Berlin had become a moral issue.

"To show my artwork in a country that is suppressing freedom of speech and supplying weapons to Israel, would be in opposition to the ethics of my practice," says Kate Nolan, an Irish visual artist based in Dublin.

After the artists announced their withdrawal via email, Haus am Kleistpark chose to ignore it. The organizer also did not make public the reason behind the Irish artists' decision.

"This feels like erasure and silencing of our withdrawal," says Nolan, whose work focused on the nature of identity.

While the exhibition is centered around political themes, notions of home, and changing identities since Ireland became a republic, it didn't allow artistic space for opinions on Palestine.