

Iran's presidential election heads to run-off Pezeshkian, Jalili Prepare for Final Showdown



Two dead in terrorist attack targeting election ballot boxes in southeastern Iran

TEHRAN – Unknown terrorists opened fire on a vehicle transporting presidential election ballot boxes in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province on Friday, killing two soldiers and injuring a number of others.

The incident occurred in the Jakigoor rural district of Rask County as the vehicle was carrying the ballot boxes from a polling station. Reports show the terrorists were seeking to steal the ballot boxes. No group has yet taken responsibility for the attack. Iran's interior ministry says it is investigating the matter and will be reporting on the attack with more details.

Iranians headed to the polls on Friday to choose their next president from the pool of four candidates: Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Masoud Pezeshkian, Saeed Jalili, and Mostafa Pourmohammadi. The voting took place at more than 58,000 polling stations, with no other incidents reported throughout June 28.

Iran warns of 'full involvement of all Resistance fronts' if Israel attacks Lebanon

TEHRAN – Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations has issued a stark warning to Israel, stating that a response from all Resistance forces in the region would follow any decision by the regime to launch a war against Lebanon.

"Albeit Iran deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime's propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon, should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an obliterating war will ensue. All options, including the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table," Iran's UN mission posted on X on Friday.

Earlier this month, Israeli officials began talking up a looming military campaign against Lebanon, which some of them said would send the country back to the "stone age."

The regime's saber-rattling gained momentum after Lebanon's Hezbollah movement successfully flew a drone inside the occupied territories and brought it back unscathed. The drone managed to film strategic military sites and bases over the port of Haifa.

"We are very close to the moment of decision to change the rules against Hezbollah and Lebanon. In an all-out war, Hezbollah will be destroyed and Lebanon will be severely hit," the regime's foreign minister said after Hezbollah released some of the footage it had captured. ▶ Page 2

Disturbing videos reveal harassment of Iranian voters in the West

TEHRAN – Iranian citizens heading to designated polls in some Western countries to cast their votes on Friday were subject to verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, reports and footage show.

Iranian voters in at least seven Western countries – Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand – have reported facing harassment and intimidation by anti-Iran thugs waiting outside polling stations.

Some of the attackers have been identified as having ties to terrorist groups like the Mujahedin-e-Khalq terror organization. Others appear to have affiliations with monarchist or separatist outfits.

A prominent media activist in London shared that he received rape threats and threats of physical violence when he visited a polling station north of the city. He reported that other voters were also subject to the abuse. "The majority of the voters were middle-aged women. They were deeply disturbed by the sexual insults they had experienced," he said in a post on X. British police have reportedly arrested some of the predators.

In the United States, an attacker identifying himself as a

supporter of the deposed Shah's son said he managed to prevent a man from voting. "I said I would crush his brains if dared to vote. He left scared like a dog," he boasted on X. Below his post, other monarchists encouraged him to find the man and "teach him a lesson."

Similar instances happened in other Western nations. One video captured in Germany shows an elderly woman getting her hijab snatched by an unknown female while she was trying to cross the street. An elderly man walking

with the help of a walking stick can also be seen getting threatened in the video.

In New Zealand, a separatist filmed himself sexually harassing a female voter by labeling her with derogatory terms. He too boasted about disturbing voters "the entire day" on his social media account.

With Iran's presidential elections heading to a run-off, Iranians residing in Western countries say they are scared to practice their voting rights. Some

of them have expressed shock at Western authorities' inaction, accusing them of purposefully allowing anti-Iran groups to openly harass citizens. A man in his 50s living in France said he had never experienced anything similar to what he had to endure on June 28. "The people attacking us were literal thugs. They were feral as they watched voters enter polling stations. They screamed profanities at the top of their lungs and even followed some female voters threatening to find their locations and rape them. French police just stood by while we had to withstand all of that. These people want Iran in shambles and they would do anything to discourage Iranians from loving their countries," he said on social media.

Middle East will have to prepare for the worst weather

By Dr. Jin Liangxiang,
SIIS Senior Research Fellow

SHANGHAI – The Middle East saw the most turbulent tensions after Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023, through the first half of 2024. The rationales behind the growing tensions are numerous, but the primary one should be Benjamin Netanyahu's crazy unreachable and unreasonable objectives. Judging by Netanyahu's incalculable character, the tensions will continue, and the Middle East should prepare for the worst weather.

Shortly after the breakout of Hamas's attack, Netanyahu and his war cabinet listed out three of the objectives of Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip of Palestine, namely, the rescue of the captured, ▶ Page 5



Defenders of Shrine saved not only Iran but also the region: Leader

TEHRAN – New details have emerged from a meeting the Leader of the Islamic Revolution held with the organizing committee of the 'International Congress of Martyrs of Resistance and Defenders of the Shrine' on June 19.

The congress focused on the lives and endeavors of military advisors who were voluntarily deployed to Syria to help fight Daesh terrorists in the 2010s. These figures are known as the "defenders of the shrine" as the holy tomb of Lady Zeinab (a) is located in Damascus.

During the meeting, which was attended by prominent figures like Commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Brigadier General Esmaeil Qaani, and IRIB Chief Payman Jebeli, ▶ Page 2

Israeli troops killed in Shejaiya

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) are struggling to get a grip on Gaza City's Shejaiya neighborhood as the Palestinian resistance forces continue to engage the invading troops in fierce clashes, killing at least four of them.

Nearly ten other Israeli soldiers have been injured in the neighborhood, east of Gaza City, as the violent exchange of fire is believed to have intensified.

Shejaiya, along with the rest of northern Gaza, has proven difficult for the Israeli military to occupy. The IOF has repeatedly invaded the neighborhood over the past eight months.

In all the invasions, the Palestinians have inflicted deadly blows on the occupation army, forcing them to withdraw. ▶ Page 5

TEHRAN PAPERS

Our elections and their elections!

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

Kayhan devoted its editorial to the Iranian and American elections and said: Simultaneously with the presidential elections in our country, the election debates between the two main candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, have started in the United States as well. According to the Western media's analysis, "lies, financial and moral corruption, inability and incompetence" in the first American election debate are very prominent. The situation is so bad that the Democrats are looking for a replacement for Biden, and if there was another choice, the Republicans would definitely replace Trump with another person. But the debates in our country were held in a much more moral atmosphere. All our election candidates are noble and honorable. Also, our beloved country, Iran, has lost its hard-working president and government. It is in the middle of a war-torn region. It has suffered the most unfair sanctions. It is fighting with the meanest and the most immoral opposition, and it is struggling with economic problems. But according to a Chinese professor of Middle East studies, there is such peace in Iran that it is unimaginable for the world.

Iran: Defense of the republicanism against brutality

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the obscenity of the opposition in the voting process of Iranian citizens abroad and wrote: Simultaneously with the presence of Iranian citizens abroad at the ballot boxes, people affiliated with MKO, monarchist and separatists tried to harass Iranian citizens by using obscenity and causing disturbance to Iranian citizens. They prevented them from participating in the presidential elections. Iran's opposition followed the election boycott project by launching virtual campaigns. However, on Friday, at the same time as inside the country, the voting branches abroad also witnessed the active and enthusiastic presence of Iranian citizens. Many Iranian citizens abroad, after participating in the elections and casting their votes in the boxes, published pictures of their attendance and votes on social networks. Also, in voting branches abroad, Iranian citizens held the flag of Iran in response to the obscenity of the opposition.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Biden and Trump's verbal dispute over Iran

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its headline to the first debate of the 2024 U.S. presidential

election and said: Biden and Trump had a verbal argument with each other in the first election debate on Iran and its power in the region. They accused each other of being unable to confront Iran. Also, in line with the policy of maximum pressure under the pretext of Tehran's nuclear program, the U.S. government sanctioned three companies and 11 ships for allegedly being involved in the transportation of Iranian petroleum and petrochemical products. This is while Iran has repeatedly emphasized that the fundamental policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to reject nuclear weapons, as well as its strong determination to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and its firm commitment is still strong to dialogue and diplomacy without change. As the Leadership clarified, the components of our power are not only material and hardware. People turned dangerous situations into great opportunities. For example, despite the follow-ups at the vice consular office, it was not possible to vote in Canada, and this time they showed another sign of enmity and showed the world that they were not true in their false claims. People once again showed their passion and insight and created very special conditions.

Jam-e-Jam: America supports terrorism

Jam-e-Jam newspaper wrote in an analysis: General Frank McKenzie, as the commander of the U.S. Central Command, oversaw some of the most important and controversial operations in the modern military history of this country. He was directly responsible for the attack on Martyr Qassem Soleimani, among other things.

According to him, in the book "The Melting Point", with a delay of 13 minutes from the attack on General Soleimani, they organized an attack on a house in Yemen where they thought a key commander of the Revolution Guards was there, but this attack was unsuccessful! The Americans also planned to attack the Saviz spy ship, which they decided to cancel because they wanted to see what Iran's response would be at first!

The obvious point of this is that according to McKenzie's confessions, even at a time when Iran-U.S. relations were at the lowest possible tension and the nuclear agreement was reached, the U.S. did not change its approach towards Iran. This is a very important lesson for the present and future officials of the Islamic Republic.

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One of Israel's military leaders also reacted by stating the regime has confirmed plans to attack Lebanon. "As part of the situational assessment, operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated, and decisions were taken on the continuation of increasing the readiness of troops in the field," the military official's statement read.



Hezbollah is believed to possess hundreds of thousands of missiles and drones with a variety of sophisticated capabilities. The Resistance group which has been attacking Israeli positions since October 7 in support of Palestinians has managed to push at least 100,000 settlers away from the north of the occupied territories and destroy critical military and espionage bases in the past 8 months.

Analysts believe Israel would not be able to face off Hezbollah without Washington's backing. The regime, however, insists on engaging in a new war with Lebanon to find an excuse to withdraw from its failed military campaign in the besieged Gaza Strip, which has so far resulted in the death of over 37,000 Palestinians.

The warning issued by Iran's UN mission was not the first of its kind coming from Tehran. The commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force said a week ago that the Resistance front will not remain indifferent and will give a harsh response to the Israeli regime if it starts a new war on Lebanon. Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani has also advised the regime to refrain from plunging itself into a bigger predicament than Gaza.

Defenders of Shrine saved not only Iran but also the region: Leader

From page 1 ▶ Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei paid tribute to the martyred fighters especially anti-terror icon General Qassem Soleimani. He said that these figures were essentially fighting for the beliefs and aspirations of the family of Prophet Mohammad(pbuh), the Ahl al-Bayt.

"The high ideals of the School of the Ahl al-Bayt (pbuh), such as justice, freedom, fighting against oppressive powers, and making sacrifices on the path of the truth, have always attracted seekers with pure consciences," he stated.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to the solidarity shown by students at American universities with the people of Gaza as an example of the existence of pure consciences throughout the world.

"What is important is that the message of defending the shrine, which is in fact defense of humanity's ideals, is conveyed to the pure consciences around the world," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei identified



another dimension of defending the shrine by emphasizing the global outlook of the Islamic Revolution, noting: "Any movement, any action, and any revolution that only pays attention to its internal environment and neglects foreign developments will certainly suffer a blow."

He recognized the Defenders of the Shrines' presence in countries where the enemy had devised a highly dangerous plot as a manifestation of the global outlook of the Islamic Revolution.

In this regard, Ayatollah Khamenei stated, "The enemy

devised a plot and intended to destroy the Islamic system by dominating the region and simultaneously exerting economic and political, ideological and religious pressures on Iran. However, a group of faithful young people, with the Islamic Republic at its core, neutralized this costly plot of the Arrogant Powers."

Emphasizing this point, he noted that the actions of the Defenders of the Shrine were crucial in saving both Iran and the region.

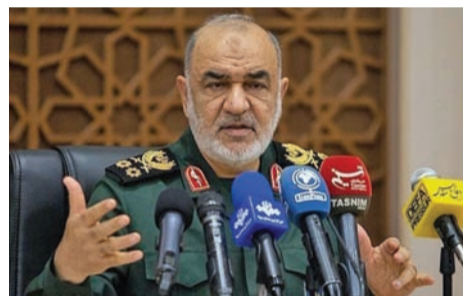
Referring to the brutal, ruthless, and inhumane nature of Daesh

and groups aligned with it which were formed with the support of weapons and propaganda from the U.S. and the West, the Leader emphasized, "The goal of these organizations was to destabilize the region, especially Iran, but the Defenders of the Shrine neutralized this significant threat as well."

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the Islamic Revolution's ability to recreate its inherent fervor and enthusiasm from the early days of victory as another aspect of the Defenders of the Shrine movement.

Pointing to the expectations and analyses of certain individuals with Western ideologies which have predicted that the Islamic Revolution and its principles and ideals are weakening, he emphasized, "The courage, selflessness, sincerity, and deep belief in religious principles of the young Defenders of the Shrine is an incredible and unparalleled phenomenon that has shown the fallacy of Western-oriented analyses."

Resistance will respond to any aggression in region: IRGC



TEHRAN – Major General Hossein Salami, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), declared that Muslims will now determine their own fate, emphasizing that anti-terror Resistance groups will respond proportionally to any acts of aggression in West Asia.

Salami made these remarks on Saturday during the "Defenders of Holy Shrine and Resistance Front" conference in Mashhad, Iran.

He assured that Palestinians would continue to confront the Israeli regime vigorously, supported firmly by all forces within the Axis of Resistance.

"The Defenders of the Holy Shrine and fighters of the Resistance Front exemplify courage, sacrifice, martyrdom, freedom, and dignity," Salami stated. "Islamic history shows that the path to Muslim honor and dignity lies in Jihad and martyrdom."

Salami noted that Westerners understand no power can achieve global prominence without the Muslim world.

He argued that Western powers have sought to dominate the world by controlling Muslims, influencing various sectors from economy to culture for nearly a century, with the creation of Israel in 1947 being a result of such dominance.

"They divide Muslim countries among themselves, leaving Muslims in poverty, helplessness, and backwardness," he said. "The Zionist regime serves as a dangerous hub for Western interests, preventing Muslim unity and sovereignty like a poisoned dagger in the Muslim world's side."

Salami highlighted that the martyrs of the Resistance Front embody trust, resistance, and perseverance, asserting

that Muslims no longer wish to bow to Western hegemony, which he described as worse than death.

He also pointed to growing international support for Gaza and pro-Palestinian rallies in the U.S. and Europe, claiming that Palestine has garnered worldwide sympathy.

Salami concluded by asserting that the Resistance Front is destined for victory, noting the ongoing resilience and successes in Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Syria.

The conflict in Gaza has inflicted devastating losses, with Israeli actions since October 7 leading to the deaths of at least 37,700 Palestinians, primarily women and children, and injuring 86,377 others.

Despite a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, Israel's ongoing crimes in the beleaguered enclave have drawn widespread global condemnation.

Over eight months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine.

Iranian rights chief criticizes U.S. stance on human rights

TEHRAN – Kazem Gharibabadi, Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, has accused the United States of merely pretending to support human rights.

He emphasized that the U.S. engages in crimes on three levels: terrorism, sanctions, and crimes against humanity, affecting not only the Iranian nation but also other countries.

Gharibabadi argued that the U.S. approaches human rights with a political agenda and lacks genuine belief in them. He pointed out that, for instance, the U.S. has not joined the "Convention on the Rights of the Child," citing unrealistic reasons for its refusal.

He further criticized the U.S. for its

indifference to the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza. Despite widespread international condemnation, the U.S. did not issue a single statement condemning the violence. Instead, it provided significant logistical and intelligence support, Gharibabadi noted.

The U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, resulting in millions of deaths, serve as additional evidence of its politicization of human rights, according to Gharibabadi.

He also highlighted the detrimental effects of U.S. economic sanctions, which currently impact 25 countries, arguing that these sanctions violate international humanitarian law, particularly when applied extraterritorially.



Gharibabadi pointed out that economic sanctions in Iraq led to the deaths of 500,000 children, underscoring the severe consequences of such policies. He contrasted this with the United States' tendency to issue statements on minor incidents in other countries, illustrating what he sees as a hypocritical approach to human rights.

New Iranian ambassador presents credentials to Libyan presidential council head

TEHRAN – Einollah Souri, the new Iranian ambassador to Tripoli, officially presented his credentials to Mohamed al-Menfi, the Head of Libya's Presidential Council, during a formal meeting.

This meeting marks a step towards strengthening ties between Iran and Libya.

During the discussion, Ambassador Souri emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation and identified several key areas where both nations could benefit.

These areas include commercial trade, economic collaboration, technical and engineering projects, healthcare advancements, pharmaceutical development, and higher education exchanges. He

stressed that proactive efforts by senior officials in both countries could effectively harness these opportunities.

Souri reiterated Iran's commitment to revitalizing the strong bilateral relations that the two countries have enjoyed in the past. He conveyed Iran's readiness to engage actively and swiftly to rebuild and enhance these ties.

Mohamed al-Menfi, the Head of Libya's Presidential Council, expressed his condolences for the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, as well as other companions in a tragic helicopter crash on May 19.

Al-Menfi affirmed Libya's

eagerness to expand its comprehensive relations with Iran. He also announced Libya's preparedness to exchange high-level delegations with Iran to further diplomatic and economic cooperation.

In a related statement on June 12, 2023, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani highlighted the strategic importance of Libya for Iran. "Libya is an important Islamic and Arab country, and its security and stability are of great importance to us," Kanaani said during a weekly press briefing.

He informed that an appropriate candidate had been chosen for the position of Iranian ambassador to

Libya and that the administrative process for final approval and appointment was nearing completion.

Kanaani expressed optimism that with the new Iranian ambassador arrival in Libya, the Iranian embassy in Tripoli would soon resume its official activities.

Before Souri's appointment, Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheibani, the former Iranian ambassador to Tunisia, had served as the accredited ambassador to Tripoli.

This transition marks a new chapter in Iranian-Libyan relations, promising enhanced diplomatic engagement and cooperation across various sectors.

Pezeshkian, Jalili prepare for final showdown

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iranians are set to return to the polls on Friday as none of the Presidential candidates secured the 50 percent plus one vote required for a clear victory on June 28.

Snap elections were called after President Ebrahim Raisi who took office in August of 2021 lost his life during a helicopter crash on May 19.

Reformist Masoud Pezeshkian won the first round of the presidential elections with 42.5 percent of the vote. He will be competing with conservative Saeed Jalili who came second after getting 38.6 percent. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Mostafa Pourmoahmmadi ranked third and fourth in the presidential race.

Voter turnout saw a 10 percent decrease from the 2021 presidential elections, standing at 40 percent. Pundits have attributed the lower turnout to a lack of enthusiasm among the reformist faction's traditional voters, many of whom are still disillusioned by the perceived shortcomings of President Hassan Rouhani's second term in office.

Masoud Pezeshkian, who garnered



over 10 million votes, appears to have benefited from significant support within the conservative camp, particularly from those who resonated with his more moderate stance on cultural issues.

Conservatives finally push for unity

After the announcement of the results, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf who gained 3.4 million votes put his weight behind Jalili.

"The path is not finished yet and despite personally respecting Dr. Pezeshkian, due to my concerns about some of the people around him, I am calling on all revolutionary forces and my backers to help prevent the

return to power of the movement that caused an important part of our economic and political problems today," he said in a statement released on Saturday.

Qalibaf also expressed satisfaction with his participation in the election, claiming that his candidacy provided a valuable opportunity for the conservative faction to gain momentum in a potential second round of voting.

Other conservative candidates who dropped out of the race before voting began also backed Jalili. The current head of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi said it is a duty of the Revolutionary Front, a term used

by conservatives throughout their campaigns, to rally behind Jalili.

A member of Alireza Zakani's team also announced the Tehran Mayor's support for Jalili by declaring that Zakani's campaigning centers across the country "will work with full capability and capacity for the victory of the candidate of the revolution front."

Analysts had previously warned the four conservative candidates that they risk losing to the sole reformist hopeful if they failed to back one figure unanimously.

The campaign for Iran's presidential elections is set to enter its second round on Sunday. This marks only the second time in the country's history that a presidential election has gone to a run-off. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has yet to confirm whether the two remaining candidates will participate in televised interviews or further debates.

Analysts believe that Pezeshkian, despite his success in the first round, faces a formidable challenge in the second round as winning over traditional reformist voters, will be crucial for his ultimate victory.

Runoff presidential election reflects diversity and dynamism in Iran

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - The elections in Iran will have a runoff on July 5th, after none of the candidates reached the necessary majority (50% plus one of the votes) in the elections on June 28th. This marks the second time in the history of the Islamic Republic that a runoff is required to decide the president.

In the first round of elections, Masoud Pezeshkian emerged as the winner, securing 10.4 million votes according to data provided by the Ministry of Interior, which accounts for 43.5% of the total votes. In second place, Saeed Jalili garnered 9.4 million votes, representing 37.7% of the total. Mohammed Qalibaf obtained 3.4 million votes, equivalent to

14%, placing third. Mohammed Pourmohammadi received 200,000 votes, accounting for 0.8% of the total.

The voter turnout was 40%. In the last presidential elections held in 2021 and won by the late President Raisi, the turnout reached 48.8%. The legislative elections held in March this year had a turnout of 41%.

Qalibaf's third-place finish is significant, especially because he was viewed as the favorite during parts of the campaign, leading several polls in the early weeks. In recent hours, Qalibaf has issued a statement urging his supporters to back Jalili in the runoff.

"Although I personally respect Dr. Pezeshkian, the journey is not over yet. Due to my concerns about some of the people surrounding him, I call upon all revolutionary forces and my supporters to prevent the return to power of the movement that has significantly contributed to our current economic and political problems."

Qalibaf added that he was glad to have contested the elections, although his "political sense" indicated he should remain in his position as the Speaker of Parliament. He stated that his candidacy "provided an opportunity for the revolutionary movement in the second round of the elections."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Acting FM highlights rising regional tensions, demands action to halt Israeli crimes

TEHRAN – Acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani has raised serious concerns over escalating tensions in the region.

Baqeri Kani emphasized the urgent need for effective international action to halt the crimes committed by the occupying regime in Palestine. He noted that these discussions highlighted significant concerns about the current regional developments and the rise in tensions.

According to Baqeri Kani, the Islamic Republic holds the view that the potentially catastrophic consequences of escalating tensions and conflict in the region stem from the irresponsible actions of the United States and the Western backers of the Zionists.

Baqeri Kani asserted that the readiness of regional nations and the Resistance Front to counter the aggressions of the Zionist regime

is now stronger than ever. He stressed that the responsibility for any ensuing crisis rests squarely with the Western supporters of the regime.

Iran, Russia discuss bilateral cooperation and regional issues

The acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, and Sergey Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, held a telephone conversation on Friday to discuss the latest developments in bilateral cooperation and regional issues.

Baqeri Kani highlighted recent progress in the collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, notably the signing of a memorandum of understanding on the transfer of Russian gas to Iran and a recent phone call between Iran's acting president and Russian President Vladimir Putin. He described the bilateral relations as advancing

steadily and effectively.

The Iranian diplomat expressed optimism that the administrative procedures and legal steps necessary to finalize key documents on bilateral cooperation, including the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty and agreements on gas and transit, would be completed swiftly.

Addressing Lebanon's readiness to counter any potential Zionist aggression, Baqeri stressed the importance of preventing ongoing Zionist crimes and the escalation of tensions to Lebanon, warning of the broader regional and international stability implications.

Baqeri also responded to Russia's initiative to address the issue of Palestine and Zionist crimes during the Gaza conflict at the United Nations Security Council in July, under Russia's rotating presidency. He confirmed Iran's readiness to

participate in these high-level meetings.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in turn, wished for the successful conduct of Iran's presidential election and expressed satisfaction with the progress of bilateral cooperation. He affirmed that Russian leaders are committed to advancing their agenda with Iran.

Lavrov also expressed Russia's shared concern about the potential for escalating conflict and widespread Zionist aggression against Lebanon. He emphasized that Russia aims to prevent such developments and underscored the responsibility of all parties involved.

During the call, Baqeri and Lavrov also discussed various consular matters, exchanging views and addressing mutual concerns.

French police impose travel ban on MKO ringleader amid criminal probe

TEHRAN – The French police have reportedly imposed a travel ban on Maryam Rajavi, the ringleader of the anti-Iran Mojahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group, following the discovery of criminal activities at her residence.

On June 12, French authorities launched a raid on one of the MKO's bases in Paris. During this operation, they uncovered evidence of money laundering, espionage equipment, weapons, and the presence of unauthorized individuals. As a result of these findings, the 70-year-old Rajavi was prohibited from leaving the country while the investigation continues.

The raid led to the detention of three MKO members and the seizure of illegal weapons. The French police's actions are part of a broader international effort to clamp down on the activities of the MKO, a group with a long history of terrorist actions against Iranian civilians and government

officials. Over the decades, MKO's violent activities have resulted in the deaths of nearly 17,000 Iranians.

This recent crackdown has been welcomed by Iran's top human rights official, who declared that "there will be no safe place for terrorists." The MKO, long considered a pariah due to its violent past, has faced increasing scrutiny and legal challenges worldwide.

Historically, the MKO enjoyed the patronage of Saddam Hussein, supporting the Iraqi dictator during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). They also played a significant role in suppressing internal uprisings in Iraq, solidifying their relationship with Saddam's regime. However, during Nouri al-Maliki's administration in Iraq, the group was expelled and subsequently relocated to Albania, which has hosted at least 3,000 MKO members since 2016.

The group's troubles in Albania escalated last

year when police raided their camp due to their involvement in "terror and cyber attacks" against foreign institutions. This raid resulted in the death of one MKO member and injuries to dozens of others. Following this, Albanian authorities banned Maryam Rajavi from re-entering the country. Since then, she has been residing in Paris.

Rajavi's current health condition is reported to be severe. She suffers from multiple ailments, including rheumatism, colorectal cancer, and a nervous disorder. Her condition worsened after a severe panic attack last week, casting further doubt on her ability to lead the group.

This latest development marks a significant step in the international effort to curb the MKO's activities and holds its leadership accountable for their actions. With the travel ban in place and ongoing investigations, the MKO faces increasing pressure and diminishing safe havens.

Esteghlal set sight on Bosnian keeper Kjosevski

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club have set their sight on signing Bosnian goalkeeper Vedran Klosevski.

The 29-year-old goalie plays as a goalkeeper for Macedonian club Struga.

The media reports suggest that the Iranian team has reached an agreement with Klosevski.

Klosevski has played in Bosnian U17, U-19 and U-21 football teams.

Esteghlal goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini has one-year left on his current deal.

Iran fall to Lebanon in FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Lebanon 64-49 on Saturday and failed to qualify for the FIBA U18 Women's Asia Cup Division B final.

Reem El Ghali finished with 22 points and 13 rebounds, while Maygem Naassan supplied a 14-4-6 stat line with 6 steals and 2 blocks as the duo helped the crew arrange a showdown with the Philippines and Zahra Zarei collected 15 points for Iran.

Iran had defeated Chinese Taipei, Kyrgyzstan and Samoa in preliminary round.

The Persians are scheduled to meet Samoa on Sunday in the competition's third-place match, while the Philippines and Lebanon will lock horns in the final.

The winners will qualify for Division A.

The competition is being held in Shenzhen, China.

Iran finish 27th in 2024 IHF Women's Junior World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Uzbekistan 40-31 Friday night to come 27th in the 2024 IHF Women's Junior World Championship.

The Persians had suffered three losses against the Netherlands, Romania and Brazil in Group A of the 2024 IHF Women's Junior World Championship and also lost to Tunisia in the President's Cup and defeated Chile.

Iran lost to Czech Republic 28-17 in the 25th-26th place.

The competition is being held in North Macedonia from June 19 to 30.

Bento wary of Iran's threat in 2026 World Cup Qualifiers

TEHRAN – The UAE head coach Paulo Bento says they have two difficult matches against Iran and Qatar.

The Portuguese wants his side to make full use of the increased number of FIFA World Cup qualification slots when it competes in the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 26.

With Asia's confirmed slots increased to eight compared to just four for the Qatar 2022 edition, Bento believes UAE can end its long wait for a second appearance at the global showpiece, having made its debut in the 1990 edition.

"It'll be tough and difficult for us due to the quality of the opponents," said the 55-year-old tactician.

"Logistically it's not a bad one for us. This is important because sometimes our players are not used to traveling a lot and we don't need any adaptations.

"The target is that (to reach the World Cup). We should think about what we can do to reach the goal and how we can do it," he added.

"I haven't seen the full schedule but the first two games will be very tough - against Qatar

away and Iran at home.

"So, we need to be patient because the first two games are going to be difficult but we will give our best and be as competitive as we can."

Hellas Verona eye Jahanbakhsh: report

TEHRAN – Serie A side Hellas Verona has reportedly set its sight on signing Feyenoord winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh.

Jahanbakhsh will leave Feyenoord in the summer and has previously announced that he would continue his football in a European team.

According to the latest reports from Turkey, Besiktas has also shown interest in signing Jahanbakhsh.

The experienced winger can expect an offer in the short term from the Turkish top club, where Giovanni van Bronckhorst will be at the helm next season.

Para Archery Ranking series: Iranians steal show

TEHRAN – Iranian representatives won medals at the Para Archery Ranking series in Czech Republic.

In the men's compound team final, Alisina Manshaezadeh-Hadi Nouri defeated Indian pair Rakesh Kumar-Shyam Sundar Swami149-156 to win the gold medal.

In the compound mixed team, Iran's Fatemeh Hemmati-Hadi Nouri lost to China 151-148 and snatched a silver medal.

Also, Iran defeated China 5-3 in the recurve mixed team bronze medal match.

The Ranking series started on June 22 in Nové M?sto nad Metuji and will run until June 30.

Women's U20 volleyball team defeat New Zealand

TEHRAN – Iran defeated New Zealand 3-0 (25-18, 25-10, 25-20) as part of preparation for the 22nd Asian Women's U20 Volleyball Championship

The competition will be held at the Jiangmen Sports Center Gymnasium in Jiangmen, China from July 1 to 8.

A total of 12 teams will vie for top honor and four berths at stake for the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Women's U-21 World Championship.

The Iranian team are drawn in Group C along with Thailand and Vietnam.

Iran will meet Vietnam on Tuesday.

Group A consists of China, Kazakhstan and Australia. Japan, India and Hong Kong are in Group B and South Korea, Chinese Taipei and New Zealand are drawn in Group D.

Padideh Bolourzadeh will lead the Iranian team in the tournament.

Emamifar named Manningham United Blues assistant

TEHRAN – Former Iran and Persepolis midfielder Alireza Emamifar has been appointed as assistant coach of Manningham United Blues. The 50-year-old coach will be assisting George Karkaletsis and Linn Chan for the remainder of the season.

He had worked as Persepolis, Iran U-23 football team and Naft Tehran.

Emamifar has played and coached professionally in Iran, most notably as a player with Persepolis in Tehran and a member of the Iranian National team.

Manningham United Blues Football Club are an Australian soccer club from Templestowe, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria. The club were formed in 1999 by local residents and was known as Manningham Juniors Soccer Club.

Acting president inaugurates 42 water, energy projects



TEHRAN – Iranian Acting President Mohammad Mokhber inaugurated 42 water and electricity projects in four different provinces via a video conference session on Thursday, IRNA reported.

At the inauguration ceremony of the mentioned projects, in which 380 trillion rials (about \$750 million) have been invested, Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian was also present.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mehrabian stated that Iran ranks seventh in the world and third in Asia in terms of electricity generation capacity.

"Currently, several power plant units with a total capacity of 22,000 megawatts are under construction across the country and only 8,000 MW of capacity is needed to achieve the goals of the seventh development plan in the field of electricity production," he said.

Official 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 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.

The nominal capacity of Iran's power plants currently stands at about 92,841 MW, according to the latest data released by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC).

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 fishery projects to be implemented in Makran Coasts

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Fisheries Organization (IFO) has said 14 major fishery related projects are going to be implemented in Makran Coasts, southeastern Iran, IRNA reported.

Referring to the establishment of the Makran Coast Development Secretariat by the Agricultural Ministry with the aim of unit management and comprehensive planning, Hossein Hosseini said: "These projects are implemented in a land area of 65,000 hectares."

According to Hosseini, seven of the mentioned projects are related to establishing fishing ports.

Makran is a historical region in Iran that runs from mountains west of Jask all the way to parts of Pakistan's Baluchistan province in the southwest along the Sea of Oman.

Iran has recently constructed significant nautical and commercial infrastructure in a number of Makran districts, particularly



at Chabahar port, which serves as a vital trade route between the Indian Ocean and landlocked nations in Central Asia.

Back in August 2023, Secretary of Makran Coast Development Council said developing the cost line requires three years of work and nine billion dollars of investment.

Speaking to Fars, Hossein Dehghan said developing the

mentioned cost line came under the spotlight nearly 15 years ago when stressed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei. "Over the past 15 years, important measures have been taken in this regard, however, it has not been enough," Dehghan noted.

According to the official, distance from the center and lack of infrastructure have been the two main obstacles in the way

of attracting investment in the mentioned region.

Earlier in June that year, the head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced a plan for attracting over \$390 million of domestic investment in the Makran Coast.

Ali-Akbar Safaei said that so far, the private sector has invested more than \$215 million in the mentioned region and the country's small ports. He also noted that good measures have been taken in the foreign investment sector, which will hopefully bear results soon.

Back in November 2022, late President Ebrahim Raisi called for a quick development of the south and southeastern shores of Iran, namely the Makran coastline.

Raisi stated that plans for the development of the Makran coasts by the government and the private sector might assist the comparatively underdeveloped region.

Iran-Afghanistan trade could be increased to \$5b: official



TEHRAN – the head of Iran's Birjand Chamber of Commerce has said Iran and Afghanistan have the capacity to boost trade exchanges to \$5.0 billion, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported.

"Considering the stabilization of political conditions in Afghanistan, there is no risk in trade with this country, and by participating in the country's construction projects, it is possible to develop bilateral exchanges up to five billion dollars," Alireza Khameh-Zar said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iran imported more than \$70 million of products from Afghanistan between March 19 and May 22, 2024, he added.

The Islamic Republic exported over \$1.8 billion of non-oil products to the neighboring country

in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), registering a 13.6 percent growth compared to a year earlier.

According to Roustaei, the country exported 3,414 tons of non-oil products worth \$1.871 billion to Afghanistan in the previous year.

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

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

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

Foreign journalists visit Kashgar area of Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone

By Mahnaz Abdi

XINJIANG– Some journalists from Asia, Africa, and Europe visited Kashgar (city) area of Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone as a part of their one-week trip to Xinjiang province, in the northwest of China.

The trip was arranged by the China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC), and sponsored by China Global Television Network (CGTN) in a program named "China Up Close" initiated by the CGTN.

The China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ), the first in China's northwestern border regions, officially started operations in last November.

An unveiling ceremony for the FTZ was held in Urumqi, the regional capital city. Erkin Tuniyaz, chairman

of the regional government, issued licenses for the three areas of the FTZ, encompassing areas in Urumqi, Horgos and Kashgar.

The China (Xinjiang) Pilot Free Trade Zone is expected to play an important role in expanding economic ties between China and the rest of the world. The regional government expects to make the FTZ a hub for reform and opening-up, where major projects and leading companies are introduced, and innovative measures taken in facilitating investment and trade, according to Erkin Tuniyaz, the chairman of the regional government.

Xinjiang borders eight countries including Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan, and has the longest borders and most land ports in China.

The FTZ, established on November 1 last year and covering almost 180 square kilometers, has become a driving force to boost China's opening-up to Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia.

Since the unveiling of the Kashgar subzone on November 11, a total of 86 companies have registered with an investment of more than 12.59 billion yuan (\$1.75 billion), according to Dong Youhua, deputy director of the development and reform commission of Kashgar prefecture, who is also a deputy to the congress. Xinjiang's first one-stop exported vehicle industrial park opened in Kashgar on January 3. An industrial park built for Kyrgyzstani companies was established in Kashgar. The prefecture also opened cargo flights to Moscow, according to

Dong. As previously mentioned, visiting Xinjiang was organized by China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC).

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

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

In 2024 edition of the program, started on February 26 and supposed to end on July 1, over 100 journalists from more than 90 countries are participating.

and exotic architectural style.

Id Kah has a history of more than 500 years. After it was listed as a key national cultural relics unit in 2001, the Chinese government has several times allocated special funds to carry out major renovations for the mosque.

The mosque covers an area of 16,800 square meters, has a south-north-length of 140 meters and east-west-width of 120 meters. The entire building complex is composed of seven parts – gate, minaret, worship arch, courtyard, lecture hall, external pray hall and main pray hall.

The architecture was built in fresh colors and plain decorations instead of magnificent styles, which perfectly present typical Arab building features and devout, humble, simple and stable of Muslims.

Daily electricity consumption rises by 2GW: IGMC

TEHRAN – Iran's electricity consumption has registered a significant year-on-year growth, according to a report by Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC)

The IGMC report said that as much as 69.091 GW of electricity was consumed in Iran at peak hours of Friday which was more than 2.0 GW above that of the same day of last year.

The country's electricity consumption on the same day last year stood at 67.648 GW, the IGMC data showed.

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

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

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

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

America's West Asia nightmare

Why direct war between Hezbollah and Israel spells disaster for Washington

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The United States is gripped by fear of a potential full-scale conflict between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

American officials are deeply concerned that how Washington will be able to defend Israel if the regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Lebanese resistance movement go to direct war.

Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging fire since the regime declared war on Gaza on October 7. Hezbollah has stressed that it won't stop its attacks unless Israel ends the genocidal war on Gaza.

Nonetheless, fears over a full-blown war grew after Netanyahu issued a threat against Lebanon earlier this month. The Israeli premier said Tel Aviv is preparing for "a very tense operation" on the border with Lebanon.

Since then, Israeli officials have intensified rhetoric against Hezbollah.

The US, Israel's main ally, fears that the direct war between Israel and Hezbollah will lead to a wider regional conflict.

US media say White House officials are making diplomatic efforts to avert such a war.

US nightmare

The New York Times has explained the motive behind such efforts.

"The nightmare scenario for U.S. officials would be an escalation in which, for a second time, Iran and Israel directly exchange blows. In another such round, the United States might not be able to control the escalatory tit-for-tat as it did in April," the American daily newspaper based in New York City said on Friday.



The report said American officials are haunted by fears that Israel's war on Hezbollah could pit the US and Iran against each other.

The United States considers itself a global superpower and Israel claims to be the biggest military power in West Asia. So, why is the US concerned about Iran's possible military intervention if a regional war breaks out?

A glance at Iran's military operation against Israel that was carried out more than two months ago can shed light on such fears.

In mid-April, Iran launched a salvo of more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel. The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) dubbed the operation "True Promise".

It came after several Iranian military advisors including a top commander were assassinated after an Israeli strike demolished Iran's consulate in the Syrian capital, Damascus, on April 1st.

Following Iran's retaliatory strike, multiple American officials said the Israelis had badly miscalculated, thinking that Tehran would not react strongly, the New York Times reported at that time.

Former veteran American diplomat Chas Freeman, who served as the U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1989-92), also said in April that Iran's attacks showed Israel could not defend itself without the support of the US and its allies.

"Iran succeeded in panicking the Israeli population...it can overwhelm Israel's defenses if it chooses to do so and Israel cannot defend itself without the active participation of the United States, the UK, France and in this case Jordan," he noted following Operation True Promise.

Former Israeli air defense commander Brigadier General Zvika Haimovich also acknowledged in April that Iran is a "superpower in tactical ballistic missiles and UAVs."

Similar comments were made by former US Central Command chief Kenneth McKenzie in an April 2021 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, saying the US is "operating without complete air superiority" for the first time since the Korean War because of Iran's drone capabilities.

Hence, the US is worried about a large-scale confrontation

in West Asia because of Iran's growing military capabilities.

Hezbollah capabilities

Likewise, the military might of Hezbollah is a matter of concern for the US and Israel.

Citing the World Factbook of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Reuters reported earlier this month that Hezbollah's military strength is underpinned by upwards of 150,000 missiles and rockets of various types and ranges.

Hezbollah Secretary General Seyed Hassan Nasrallah has also said that the number of fighters who are ready to join a possible war against Israel has exceeded 100,000.

According to Politico, a full-on war between Israel and Hezbollah could break out in the next several weeks if the Netanyahu regime fails to reach a ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Presently, Israel can initiate a war with Hezbollah but it won't be able to end it.

The Israeli minister of religious affairs warned over a week ago that the Israeli death toll could significantly increase in the event of a full-scale war with Hezbollah.

Michael Malchieli said Israel is bracing for the possibility of "mass burials" if the regime goes to war with the Lebanese resistance group.

Malchieli touched upon the possibility of "mass burials" for Israeli soldiers. The US should also brace itself for such a gloomy fate if it makes miscalculations.

Israeli troops killed in Shejaiya

Latest invasion against northern neighborhood quickly backfires

From page 1 ▶ Over the past 48 hours, the Palestinian resistance forces have detonated more than 10 improvised explosive devices, including an exploded Israeli bomb, managing to damage or destroy at least eight Israeli military vehicles while inflicting casualties among troops.

With the exception of killing women and children while forcing thousands of others to flee amid this latest Israeli invasion, the IOF raids in Shejaiya with the aim of eliminating the Palestinian resistance have proven futile.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters on Friday that the intensity of the Israeli attacks had displaced at least 60,000 Palestinians from their homes in Gaza City on Thursday.

Despite IOF soldiers and armored vehicles advancing deep into Shejaiya, the Hamas armed wing, the al-Qassam brigades, declared it was confronting the invading forces at point blank range resulting in casualties that have required helicopter evacuations.

Hamas said its fighters targeted Israeli troops and armored vehicles with mortar shells on Baghdad Street, adding to the intensity of the clashes.

Meanwhile, the al-Quds brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), carried out a sophisticated operation, luring an Israeli unit into a booby-trapped tunnel within a building in the neighborhood.

The al-Quds brigades said its engineers had successfully reactivated an unexploded F-16 missile and detonated the munition in a tunnel under the booby-trapped building, inflicting significant damage to the invading forces.

The PIJ armed wing launched mortar and anti-tank shell attacks on gatherings of IOF units in the neighborhood, further assisting the defensive efforts against the invaders.

Israeli media acknowledged the loss of four soldiers during combat and reported ongoing helicopter evacuations of the injured to hospitals, including Assuta, Soroka, Ichilov, and

Hadassah, highlighting the severity of the confrontations.

The al-Quds brigades also extended their reach beyond Gaza, launching rocket barrages targeting the Sderot settlement and other settlements in the Gaza periphery, leading to reported injuries and widespread alarm.

Meanwhile, another armed Palestinian resistance faction, the al-Aqsa Martyrs brigades, announced their own operations, including the deployment of a vehicle-mounted explosive device that directly hit an Israeli tank and its crew.

The situation in Shejaiya reflects the complex and volatile environment that the IOF is facing across the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian factions have demonstrated resilience and tactical flexibility in their efforts to defend the territory against the Israeli air and ground assault and maintain the complex war of attrition against occupation forces.

solve the so-called Iran threat overnight.

Netanyahu might seriously believe that he can achieve all the objectives, but it is more reasonably believed that he well understands that none of these objectives could be achieved. For instance, Israel can never eliminate Hamas as Hamas is an ideology; Israel cannot weaken Iran's strength in the region either as Iran has grown to be a systemic power in the region.

By laying out the unachievable objectives, Netanyahu really seeks to sustain the conflictual status of the situation, which could drive the conflicts and tensions in the direction of the worst scenario and that could be very detrimental to the security situation in the region.

The coming months could see even worse prospects. Netanyahu has rejected all the ceasefire proposals even by the United States, though they are all apparently in favor of Israel, and has been immune to U.S. persuasion of containing spillovers.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

EU slams Israeli plans to legalize settlement outposts

The European Union has condemned the announcement by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich to legalize five outposts in the occupied West Bank as "another deliberate attempt at undermining peace efforts".

In a statement, an EU spokesperson noted that the bloc's leaders at a meeting this week had condemned the Israeli cabinet's decisions to further expand illegal settlements and urged it to reverse them.

"In line with its longstanding common position and UN Security Council Resolutions, the EU will not recognize changes to the 1967 borders unless agreed by the parties," it said.

The EU said that steps taken by Israel to weaken the Palestinian Authority (PA) must stop and urged it to release withheld tax and customs revenues owed to the PA "and to take the necessary measures to ensure that correspondent banking services between Israeli and Palestinian banks remain in place".

Arab League ceases labeling Hezbollah 'terrorist organization'

The Arab League's assistant secretary-general announced on Saturday that the league has ceased referring to Hezbollah as a "terrorist organization".

In a televised statement on the Egyptian Al-Qahera News Channel the day after he concluded his visit to Beirut, Hossam Zaki said: "In previous Arab League decisions, Hezbollah was designated as a terrorist organization, and this designation was reflected in the resolutions, leading to the severing of communication based on these decisions," Anadolu reported.

"The member states of the League agreed that the label of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization should no longer be employed," Zaki said.

Hezbollah is a famous regional resistance group that has played a key role in the fight against terror groups such as ISIL.

Mikati calls for stopping Israel's attacks on Lebanon

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati urged Israel on Saturday to cease its "repeated attacks" on Lebanon and to end its deadly war on the Gaza Strip.

While touring the southern region, Mikati said, "We consistently advocate for peace, and our preference is to pursue peace and implement UN Resolution 1701," according to the Lebanese National News Agency, Anadolu reported.

On Aug. 11, 2006, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1701, which demanded a full cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel.

"Israel should cease its ongoing attacks on Lebanon, halt the war on Gaza, and all parties should adhere to Resolution No. 2735," Mikati said.

He added, "We stand with our people, the resistance is fulfilling its obligations, the Lebanese government is fulfilling its duties, and our objective is to safeguard the country in every aspect."

Palestinians in northern Gaza eating extract of leaves

Palestinian activist Mansour Shouman told Al Jazeera about the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza as Israel presses ahead with

its war of genocide.

"In the north there is famine right now. I had a friend text me saying, 'We are eating the extract of the leaves of the trees just in order to provide us with nutrients,'" Shouman, who was in Gaza until March, said.

"All they have up north is flour that is coming in through the very little residual aid that has been left off the American pier that is coming through land crossing points in the north."

Shouman called for the land crossings to open as quickly as possible to allow the thousands of trucks full of aid from people who donated to organizations worldwide to enter.

Poll shows 66% of Israelis want Netanyahu to quit

Two-thirds of the Israeli public favors Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu leaving politics and not running for a new term, according to an opinion poll, TRT reported.

The poll was conducted on Friday by the Israeli private Channel 12, which showed that 66 percent of respondents want Netanyahu, 74, to retire and not run for a seventh term as prime minister.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents support him staying in power and running for a new term.

Another poll by the Maariv newspaper suggested Benny Gantz, who heads the National Unity Party, would beat Netanyahu for the prime minister post.

Given Netanyahu's reluctance to hold early elections, there are no imminent prospects of a vote in Israel, which has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal war on besieged Gaza since October.

First Liberal MP calls on Justin Trudeau to step down

A backbench MP has become the first sitting member of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party caucus to call on him to resign, after a disastrous by-election defeat, the BBC reported.

Wayne Long said new leadership was needed "for the future of our party and for the good of our country" in an email to fellow party members that was obtained by Canadian media outlets.

Long, who represents a riding in the province of New Brunswick, wrote "the voters have spoken loud and clear and they want a change".

It follows a catastrophic result for Liberals in a by-election on Monday, when they lost a Toronto seat they had held since 1993.

Long has served as MP since 2015 and previously said he would not be seeking re-election.

President Biden vows to fight on

US President Joe Biden has hit back at criticism over his age, telling supporters in a fiery speech that he will win re-election in November after a poor debate performance fueled concern about his candidacy, BBC reported.

"I know I'm not a young man, to state the obvious," he told a rally in the battleground state of North Carolina on Friday, one day after he struggled in the televised showdown with his Republican rival Donald Trump.

"I don't walk as easy as I used to...? I don't debate as well as I used to," he acknowledged. "But I know what I do know, I know how to tell the truth? [and] I know how to do this job."

Biden, 81, said he believed with his "heart and soul" that he could serve another term, as the cheering crowd in Raleigh chanted "four more years".

Long-lived trees recognized as national heritage

TEHRAN – Aimed at respecting natural beauties, a selection of nine long-lived trees in southern Iran, some dating back to nine centuries ago, have been inscribed in the national heritage list.

Speaking in a meeting on Saturday, Fars province's director-general of cultural heritage outlined that nine trees from four counties of the province have been officially listed as national heritage.

Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi noted that the file for the ancient cypress trees of Tang-e Bidak and Koh Derakhti, estimated to be between 800 and 900 years old, located in Fasa county have been registered.

He mentioned that the cypress trees at the Jameh Mosque of Ij in Estahban county have been also included in the national register through legal procedures.

Further files, Sabet-Eqlidi highlighted, include the approximately 300 to 350-year-old ash tree and the 400 to 450-year-old plane tree, as well as the ancient walnut tree in Eqlid county.

The director-general continued by noting the registration of the 250 to 300-year-



old plane tree of Keshvari and the 450 to 500-year-old cypress tree of Palangan in Neyriz county.

He emphasized that these heritage assets, while respecting ownership rights, are now under the supervision and protection of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

"The ministry is responsible for drafting protective regulations and defining the boundaries of these sites," Sabet-Eqlidi brought to light.

"Any alterations or actions that might damage or change the authenticity of these heritage trees are strictly prohibited."

Parthian clay pot unearthed in southern Iran

TEHRAN – In a cultural preservation effort, a Parthian-era clay pot has been discovered in the Rayen district of Kerman province, southern Iran.

A local official in charge of cultural heritage preservation reported that the artifact was found thanks to a combination of intelligence efforts and engagement initiatives aimed at promoting social participation among local and indigenous communities.

The discovery, Moslem Iranmanesh pinpointed, was made by honorary heritage guardians who subsequently handed the artifact over to the Rayen protection unit.

"The antique artifact is a clay pot adorned with grooved and wavy decorations," he further noted.

Experts have assessed the artifact, determining it to be of historical value and dating back to the Parthian period, according to the official.

Iranmanesh stated that historical artifacts serve as cultural identifiers for each region, reflecting their historical and national identity.

In his final words, he emphasized that preserving these artifacts offers a wide range



of cultural, economic, and social benefits to local communities.

Rayen is a historical town located in the southeastern part of Iran, within Kerman province. Known for its rich cultural heritage, Rayen is home to the impressive Rayen Castle (Arg-e Rayen), one of the best-preserved mudbrick citadels in the world.

The castle dates back to the Sassanian era and resembles the famous Bam Citadel, though it is smaller in scale.

The region around Rayen is known for its historical significance and archaeological wealth, with numerous ancient sites and artifacts that offer insights into Iran's past civilizations.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Mesa Verde National Park

A great concentration of ancestral Pueblo Indian dwellings, built from the 6th to the 12th century, can be found on the Mesa Verde plateau in southwest Colorado at an altitude of more than 2,600 meters.

The UNESCO-designated property is a remarkably well-preserved prehistoric settlement landscape of the Ancestral Puebloan culture, which lasted for almost nine hundred years from c. 450 to 1300. This plateau in southwest Colorado, which sits at an altitude of more than 2,600 meters, contains a great concentration of spectacular Pueblo Indian dwellings, including well-known cliff dwellings. This rich landscape provides a remarkable archaeological laboratory for enhancing our understanding of the Ancestral Puebloan

people.

Some 600 cliff dwellings built of sandstone and mud mortar have been recorded within Mesa Verde National Park – including the famous multi-story Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Square Tower House – and an additional 4,300 archaeological sites have been discovered. The cliff dwelling sites range in size from small storage structures to large villages of 50 to 200 rooms. Many other archaeological sites, such as pit-house settlements and masonry-walled villages of varying size and complexity, are distributed over the mesas. Non-habitation sites include farming terraces and check dams, field houses,

reservoirs and ditches, shrines and ceremonial features, as well as rock art. Mesa Verde represents a significant and living link between the Puebloan Peoples' past and their present way of life.

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Tehran is looking for a Driver. Iranian nationals having a valid Driving License and 10 years of work experience can apply. The candidate must be fluent in English and be able to communicate (spoken & written) in English and Farsi. Knowledge of automobile engines & parts is desirable. Interested persons having the required qualification may send an application along with C.V. to the Embassy via Fax: +9821-88605445 and emails: bangladoot.tehran@gmail.com and comm.bdm@gmail.com by 06 July 2024. Short-listed candidates will be contacted by the Embassy.

The intricate art of mirror work in Iran's architecture

TEHRAN – Mirror work, an art form that uses small or large pieces of mirror mosaics to create intricate designs, is a prominent feature in the internal decoration of Iranian architectural spaces.

This technique not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of structures but also illuminates interiors by reflecting and multiplying light.

Considered one of Iran's last innovations in architecture and interior decoration, mirror work holds significant cultural symbolism. In Iranian culture, mirrors and water represent purity, fortune, honesty, and light. This symbolism is believed to be a driving force behind the use of mirrors in decoration.

The popularity of mirror work surged in the 19th century. Fine mirror vases produced in Germany were imported to Iran, where they were cut into desired



mosaic forms for use in various architectural projects. Initially, the practice involved installing large, single-piece mirror panels in buildings. One notable example is the Chehel Sotoun (literally "Forty Columns") palace in Isfahan, where a large mirror installed over an entrance vividly reflected the people passing through. Over time, the size of mirror pieces

used in decoration gradually decreased.

By the late 19th century, Iranian craftsmen began using smaller triangular, diamond, and hexagonal mirror pieces. Convex glass pieces were also converted into mirrors and incorporated into designs. During the Qajar dynasty, a new architectural style emerged, influenced by the

trends of the Safavid dynasty but marked by a noticeable decline in overall architectural quality. However, during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah of Qajar, Western art trends began to influence Iranian art. This period saw improvements in architecture and applied arts, including stucco, mirror work, and mosaics. Mirror work became a prominent feature in royal buildings and shrines.

The Qajar era witnessed a flourishing of mirror work, characterized by intricate forms of muqarnas, arabesque designs, and the integration of painting and calligraphy on mirrors. Notable examples of this exquisite craftsmanship include the Mirror Hall of Golestan Palace and Shams-ol-Emarat. Today, the cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, and Tehran are recognized as major centers of mirror work in Iran, preserving and continuing this unique art form.

Exquisite historical carpets put on show in Tabriz

TEHRAN – On Friday, two antique carpets, transferred from London to Tabriz, were put on view in the ancient city where they were woven some two centuries ago.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by East Azarbaijan province's tourism chief, stressing the significance of these historical pieces, ILNA reported.

The first carpet, which dates approximately 180 years, is made of natural wool from sheep and camels. It intricately depicts the story of Farhad and Shirin, a classic Persian love tale.

It stands as a testament to the rich cultural and literary heritage of the region. It contains Turkish poetry from the Divan of Abulhassan Raji.

The second carpet, also woven in Tabriz, is over 200 years old and made from natural



sheep's wool. This piece narrates the story of Sheikh San'an, which is the title of a Persian mystical poem written by the Persian Sufi poet Abu Hamid bin Abu Bakr Ibrahim better known by his pen-name Farid al-din Attar.

The carpet depicts the journey of a devout Sheikh who falls in love with a Christian girl and travels to Rome for her sake. The carpet captures this poignant tale, showcasing the depth and complexity of Persian storytelling

traditions.

The carpets were unveiled at Heshmimehr Carpet Trading House, which is embedded in a historical house which attracts thousands of domestic and international tourists annually.

Tabriz carpets are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship, often incorporating silk, and occasionally golden or silver threads, into their structure and knots.

A distinguishing feature of Tabriz carpets is the prominent star at the center, surrounded by cursive arabesques adorned with paisley motifs, setting them apart from other hand-craft products.

In 2015, the World Crafts Council designated Tabriz as the global hand-woven rug city, recognizing its exceptional contributions to this ancient art form.

Mashhad hotel occupancy rate hits 80%

TEHRAN – In the nine days between Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Ghadir, Mashhad's accommodation occupancy rate soared to an up-lifting 80%.

"The accommodation occupancy rate for Mashhad in the first quarter of this Persian year (started on March 20) was 57%," said a local official in charge of travel services, "Reaching 80% in the celebration days from Eid al-Adha to Eid al-Ghadir."

Regarding planned arrangements for catering to pilgrims and tourists, Seyyed Javad Mousavi elaborated that tens of meetings have been held up to this point aimed at improving their travel experience.

Coinciding with the summer travel wave, he highlighted the city, with its vast wealth of cultural and religious sites, is ready to welcome pilgrims during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, when special mourning ceremonies are held across the holy city.

According to the provincial tourism director-general, approximately 750,000 overnight stays are planned for pilgrims in 4747 locations across three categories: official, temporary, and emergency accommodations.

"Of these, 222,312 are in the official accommodation category, which includes hotels, hotel apartments, and guesthouses,"

Mousavi wended up.

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

Pilgrims from Iran and across the globe visit the shrine to pay their respects, seek spiritual solace, and perform religious rituals. The shrine is a sprawling architectural marvel, featuring golden domes, intricately designed minarets, vast courtyards, and beautifully decorated prayer halls.

To accommodate the influx of pilgrims, Mashhad has developed 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. Additionally, numerous restaurants, shopping centers, and transportation services are tailored to serve the pilgrims. The local government and religious organizations work collaboratively to ensure the smooth operation of these services, especially during peak pilgrimage seasons.

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

Restoration work yields discovery of ancient cellar in Rasht

TEHRAN – A centuries-old cellar and other underground spaces have recently been discovered on the premises of a religious shrine in Rasht.

Alireza Yazdani Sangari, who leads the restoration project, announced that a remarkably well-preserved brick cellar, dating back to the early Islamic eras, was unearthed outside the shrine of Fatemeh Okhra, the sister of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, ILNA reported on Saturday.

"During the restoration of the shrine's western courtyard, workers discovered a brick-constructed tunnel-like structure. Initial observations suggested that the tunnel was ancient, a theory supported by the presence of scattered human bones within the vicinity."

The discovery prompted immediate cessation of construction activities, pending further archaeological investigation, the report said.

The revealed structure comprises a corridor with a vaulted ceiling, constructed from bricks and clay mortar, leading to a two-story

cellar with arched ceilings. Both levels of the cellar contained human skeletal remains.

Yazdani Sangari noted that the rooms measured 280 cm in length, 210 cm in width, and 210 cm in height. Due to rainwater infiltration and high humidity, the bones in the upper room were less preserved compared to those in the lower room, which had been sealed with dry-laid bricks.

Currently, the exact historical context and the events leading to the accumulation of these bones remain unclear.

Yazdani Sangari emphasized that more fieldwork and various tests are necessary to ascertain the full historical significance of the findings. Despite this, he highlighted that the structure is one of the finest examples of early Islamic cellars in Gilan province.

The shrine, situated in the historical neighborhood of Saghari-Sazan in central Rasht, has long been a site of reverence. This area is known for retaining much of its traditional architecture, with old houses, bathhouses, and shops still visible in its narrow alleyways, Yazdani Sangari explained.

Following the discovery, Mustafa Dehpahlavan, head of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, and Vali Jahani, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Gilan, visited the site.

The Gilan region was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

Gilan is known for its tourist attractions and warm-hearted and hospitable people. The people of Gilan from different ethnic groups, including Gilak, Talesh, and Tat, have come together and formed a very rich and diverse culture and customs.

The touristic province offers plenty of activities for tourists. Hiking and trekking in the mountains, birdwatching in the lagoons, camping near the waterfalls and rivers, and sightseeing in the beautiful natural scenery are all popular activities for visitors.

'BRICS has potential to boost coop for environmental protection'

TEHRAN –Attending the tenth meeting of BRICS environment ministers, Ali Salajeqeh, head of the Department of Environment (DOE), highlighted the intergovernmental organization's potential to expand cooperation and develop multilateralism for environmental protection.

The meeting was held under the Chairship of the Russian Federation on June 28, in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.

"Environmental protection is a top priority in Iran's strategic policies and development plans," IRIB quoted Salajeqeh as saying.

"However, the neighboring countries' neglect in addressing the pollution of water resources in the upstream basins and their failure to fulfill bilateral obligations, including the provision of environmental rights has had negative impacts on the ecosystem, and the lives of plant and animal species.

It has also intensified sand and dust storms and other natural phenomena," he added.

The official went on to stress that unilateral, unjust, and illegitimate sanctions against Iran have resulted in environmental degradation and hampered sustainable development.

Emphasizing the common destiny of all countries in preserving the environment, Salajeqeh expressed hope that regardless of political issues, all nations could cooperate and utilize each other's capacities, knowledge, technology, and financial resources to make a healthy, pollution-free environment for the next generation.

Moreover, on the sidelines of the 10th meeting, Salajeqeh held a meeting with Russia's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Alexander Kozlov.



During the meeting, Salajeqeh pointed out that the relationship between Iran and Russia is at a high level.

The two countries have common positions that help to enhance cooperation and strengthen relations and use the capacity to overcome obstacles posed by sanctions, he stated.

Pointing out that the number of the Caspian seal species is declining, he said, unfortunately, the number of carcasses of this species has increased along the coasts of Iran. "Since Caspian seal is the only mammal species in the Sea, we must take immediate actions to protect this valuable species."

Kozlov, for his part, said: "We have first-class information in this regard, which can be helpful," he added.

Salajeqeh also extended an invitation to Kozlov to participate in the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, known as the Tehran Convention.

Caspian Sea countries address environmental crimes

The second meeting of the representatives of Caspian Sea countries

to deal with environmental crimes was held from April 4-5 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The five littoral states, namely Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, discussed the environmental challenges and harms facing the Caspian Sea.

They also exchanged views on protecting the aquatic resources of the Caspian Sea and upholding national laws related to the environment and the management of natural resources in the Sea.

The officials emphasized the need to enhance and expand judicial cooperation among the five states.

The Iranian delegation led by Gholam-Abbas Toriki, deputy prosecutor general, highlighted the preservation of the Caspian Sea biodiversity, national laws related to the environment, and management of natural resources in the Caspian Sea.

The right to the environment is considered one of the fundamental rights, Toriki said.

"The Caspian Sea is of great economic importance for the littoral states in terms of diverse resources and reserves, distinct ecological features, remarkable genetic richness, and unique biological diversity," he further noted.

"We have gathered to protect the four main components of life in the Sea including water, air, coast, and biodiversity of the Caspian Sea, among which the latter is of significant importance since it involves the preservation of genes and rare species and the ecosystem of the Caspian Sea," Toriki highlighted.

The Iranian delegation discussed the necessity of implementing the "Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea", known as the Tehran Conference, and its additional protocols, which include obligations and legal frameworks for cooperation on prevention, reduction, and control of pollution, protection, maintenance, restoration and logical use of marine living resources and the management of coastal areas which was welcomed by the prosecutors' offices of the five coastal countries.

To deal with environmental crimes in the Caspian Sea, in addition to boosting scientific and educational cooperation between the general prosecutor's offices, it was suggested to create a comprehensive joint information bank to tackle Caspian Sea issues, forecast the compensation system and create special funds to protect and address environmental pollution and money laundering caused by environmental crimes.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Toriki and his Azerbaijani counterpart Kamran Aliyev, held a meeting.

Referring to the good judicial cooperation between the prosecutor general offices of the two countries, Aliyev lauded Iran's effective measures and approaches in solving some judicial challenges. He expressed hope to expand cooperation between the two countries to safeguard the Caspian Sea environment.

Persian Medicine Festival slated for Jan.-Feb. 2025

TEHRAN – The 4th Persian Medicine Festival is scheduled to be held in the 11th Iranian calendar month (January 20-February 18, 2025).

The festival plays a key role in promoting and developing Persian medicine, the health ministry website quoted Nafiseh Hosseini-Yekta, the director of the health ministry's Persian medicine office, as saying.

This festival serves as a platform for researchers to showcase their latest findings and achievements; share their expertise; and benefit from each other's experiences.

It also provides a valuable opportunity for specialists, students, and all those interested in Persian medicine to become more familiar with the capabilities of Persian medicine, she noted.

Persian medicine primarily focuses on preventing diseases and maintaining health. Along with modern medicine, it plays a critical role in promoting the health of society, the official highlighted.

The 3rd Persian Medicine Festival was held in Tehran in January 2023 with the main goal of identifying and supporting top scientists and innovators in the health sector.

The event aimed to create a platform for greater productivity from the research achievements, expansion of knowledge-based markets, and multilateral interaction between educational, research, and therapeutic centers.

"Persian medicine; the path of progress and scientific innovation" was the motto of the festival, in line with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's designation of the Iranian year 1401 (March 2022-March 2023) as "The Year of Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creating".

Persian medicine experts

Around 500 Persian medicine experts are providing health and medical treatment services across the country.

More than 1,000 general practitioners who have passed the Persian medicine courses approved by the health ministry are also offering services, Mehr news agency quoted Hosseini-Yekta as saying.

Currently, nine faculties of Persian medicine enroll students in the country's universities, she added.

Training Persian medicine experts has always been at the top of the Persian medicine office's agenda. Therefore, different skill courses have been developed and held under the supervision of the health ministry.

People highly welcome traditional medicine

On January 7, Hosseini-Yekta said surveys show that more than 80 percent of people in the country intend to benefit from Iranian traditional medicine, ILNA reported.

16 pharmaceutical factories to be established overseas: official

TEHRAN – Iran is planning to establish 16 pharmaceutical factories in foreign countries and is currently finalizing contracts, Faramarz Ekhteraei, the chairman of the Iranian Pharmaceutical Industry Syndicate has said.

However, the official did not provide any further details on the target countries.

"Currently, more than 70 percent of the raw materials required by the country's pharmaceutical factories are domestically produced," Mehr news agency quoted Ekhteraei as saying.

Highlighting the country's capabilities and potential of pharmaceutical factories for exports, the official said that imposed sanctions have posed many obstacles making it difficult to export products.

Once such factories are constructed, the true potential of the country's pharmaceutical industry, which is a step above manufacturing pharmaceutical products, will be demonstrated.

Medicine exports to increase

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is developing a plan to increase pharmaceutical exports by 30 percent in the mid-term, an official with the FDA has said.

"In the past years, medicine exports in Iran accounted for a small share of non-oil exports. However, over the past year, it experienced a growing trend," IRNA quoted Seyyed Ali Maboudi as saying.

Their interest in traditional medicine has never faded, she said, adding that traditional medicine is being taught in universities.

Traditional medicine has its roots in the culture, customs, and traditions of Iranians and has always been of interest to them, the official highlighted.

With over five hundred graduates in the field and numerous research articles that have been published, the country has been able to improve its position by being ranked fourth in the production of science in the field of traditional medicine in the world, following China, India, and the United States.

She went on to say that traditional medicine and conventional medicine are complementary. Each of these medicines has unique capabilities that can be used together.

But it can only be prescribed by someone who has fully mastered both fields.

Unfortunately, extremists threaten people's health by either misusing their interest in traditional medicine or depriving them of the right to use the indigenous medicine of the country along with conventional medicine.

Over 300 drugs made from medicinal plants

More than 300 medicines are made out of 1,200 medicinal plants in the country.

The production of medicines from plants in the country dates back to 1980.

About 4,400 natural products and over 2,000 traditional products are being supplied by domestic companies to the market.

So far, about 30,000 plant species have been identified in the world, with Iran's share of about 8,000 species which is more than the whole of species found in Europe.

The per capita consumption of medicinal plants in Iran is about one kilogram of dried plants, in other words, 83,000 tons of medicinal plants worth 1.2 trillion rials (around \$4 million) are consumed in the country, while in Europe this amount is 900 grams and in the United States is 2.5 kilogram.

In October 2023, an official with the Ministry of Health said that Iran holds some 40 percent share of the market for medicinal plants in the neighboring countries.

"A large volume of pharmaceuticals, supplements, food products, and beverages are exported to Iraq, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, and Afghanistan," IRNA quoted Hamidreza Banafsheh as saying.

Iran is among the leading countries in the field of medicine and health technology, supplying 98 percent of pharmaceutical items to the domestic market, the official noted.

Knowledge-based companies to attend Agro Volga Fair 2024

TEHRAN –A total of 14 Iranian knowledge-based companies are projected to participate in the Agro Volga International Agriculture Industry and Livestock Fair 2024 from July 3 to 5 in Tatarstan-Kazan, the agricultural capital of Russia.

Supported by the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, the Iranian delegation will set up their pavilions in the exhibition.

The exhibition focuses on agriculture and industry; mechanization; livestock and animal husbandry; seeds and inputs; sorting and packaging; farms and agricultural producers, agricultural structures; machinery and equipment.

Recent MOUs

On the first day of the 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran dubbed "Iran Expo 2024", held in Tehran from April 27 to May 1, three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) were signed between Iran's Fars province and Mongolia and Russia.

According to the coordinating manager of Fars Province's Agriculture Department, Masoumeh Moayyedi, two MOUs were inked with Mongolia in the extraterritorial cultivation of agricultural products and cooperation in the farming and red meat industry.



The other MOU was signed with Russia in the field of packaging and exporting fresh fruits and vegetables.

An MOU was also signed with China on the first day of the exhibition.

More than 2,000 foreign traders and merchants from about 100 countries participated in this international event.

Knowledge-based growth

The significant and fast-paced growth in the number of knowledge-based companies with over 200 percent increase in their number just over the past year (March 2023 – March 2024), shows the solid foundation, dynamism, and growth of the country in innovation and technology and the productive atmosphere which have been made available in line with the goal of

boosting domestic production with public participation.

The current administration underscores the quantitative and qualitative development of knowledge-based companies. The number of companies, which was around 5,000 before the current administration took office in August 2021, has now reached 10,000 with a total value of two billion dollars.

Iran's knowledge-based companies exported over 3.6 million tons of products, valued at \$2.506 billion, in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Based on the IRICA data, some 1.158 million tons of goods, valued at \$5.141 billion were also imported by knowledge-based companies into the country from March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024.

About 85 percent of the goods imported by the knowledge-based companies came from China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Germany, and India, IRNA reported.

The domestic knowledge-based companies exported their products to China, Iraq, the UAE, Turkey, and Russia in this period, IRICA said.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Wildfire extinguished in northern forests

Wildfire, erupted in northern forests of Gilan province over the past 2 days, has been fully extinguished, commander of the protection unit of natural resources and watershed management organization of Gilan has stated.

According to the latest statistics, approximately 130 hectares of forests in Gilan province have been burnt in recent days, IRNA quoted Mohammad Qorbani as saying on Sunday.

He went on to say that 99 percent of fires in 13 cities of Gilan province have caused no serious damage to the trees.

آتش سوزی جنگل های گیلان مهار شد

فرمانده یگان حفاظت اداره کل منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری گیلان گفت: آتش سوزی جنگل های استان گیلان پس از ۷۲ ساعت تلاش، کاملاً مهار شد.

سرهنگ محمد قربانی لرد عصر روز شنبه در گفت و گوی اختصاصی با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: بر اساس آخرین آمارها به صورت تقریبی حدود ۱۳۰ هکتار از اراضی جنگلی استان گیلان در چند روز اخیر دچار آتش سوزی شدند.

وی افزود: ۹۹ درصد از آتش سوزی جنگل های ۱۳ شهرستان استان گیلان سطحی بوده و خسارت جدی به درختان وارد نشده است.



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JUNE 30, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Knowledge creates fear of God.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:08 Evening: 19:45 Dawn: 3:06 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:52 (tomorrow)

Iranian director brings ancient hero to life on Tehran stage

TEHRAN- Iranian director Hamed Mokamei will bring the legendary Ariobarzanes of Persis to life on the stage of Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran on Monday.

The play, which features live music and stage design, has a limited number of performances.

Ainaz Kakavand, Mahyar Havasi, Shabnam Montazeri, Mohammad Mehdi Taqavi, Ahoura Moradi, Fatemeh Eslami and Aram Shahsavari are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on Stage until July 12.

The play has been one of the best-selling shows outside of Tehran, having impressed audiences in Qazvin in April and May. Additionally, it has won the Best Music Award at the 42nd Fajr International Theater Festival and has been nominated for Best National Identity Award in this major artistic event.

Ariobarzanes was an Achaemenid prince and Persian military commander who lived in the 4th century B.C. He was the son of Artabazus, a satrap of Phrygia, and grandson of Pharnabazus.

Ariobarzanes was educated in both Persian and Hellenic culture and spent several years at the court of Philip II of Macedonia, where he developed close ties with the royal family.

Ariobarzanes became the governor of a part of Persis, a region in modern-day Iran, and was responsible for defending it against the encroaching Macedonian army led by Alexander the Great. He was a skilled military commander and strategist, known for his bravery and tactical genius.

At the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 B.C., Ariobarzanes led a significant force of Persian troops against Alexander's army. Although the Persian army was defeated, Ariobarzanes' unit fought valiantly, and he



himself escaped with his life.

After the battle, Ariobarzanes blocked Alexander's path to Persepolis, attempting to deprive him of his battle formation and superior numbers.

He set up a defensive position at the Persian Gate, a narrow mountain pass with steep flanking slopes that controlled the route to Persepolis. The gate was

heavily fortified with a wall and outworks, and Ariobarzanes had prepared his troops to defend it against all comers.

Alexander's army consisted of over 10,000 men, while Ariobarzanes had an estimated 700 men. Despite being outnumbered, Ariobarzanes allowed Alexander to advance 30 stadia before attacking, hoping to lure him into a trap.

However, Alexander's men were unable to engage the Persians or protect themselves from the flanking attacks, and they retreated to their camp.

The next day, Alexander launched a surprise attack on the Persian outposts, catching Ariobarzanes' men off guard. The Persians fought bravely but were ultimately defeated, and many were killed or wounded. Ariobarzanes himself escaped with a few men, fleeing into the hills.

The battle at the Persian Gate was seen as a serious challenge to Alexander's conquest of Iran, but he was able to overcome it through his strategic thinking and bravery.

The battle is often compared to the famous Battle of Thermopylae, where a smaller Greek force led by Leonidas held off a massive Persian army for several days before being defeated.

Like Thermopylae, the battle at the Persian Gate was a heroic last stand by Ariobarzanes and his men against overwhelming odds.

TEHRAN-The feature film "Cold Sigh" written and directed by Nahid Azizi Sedigh represents Iran in the main section of the Ischia Film Festival, which was launched in Ischia, Italy, on June 29.

The movie is competing with seven other films from Italy, Spain, the U.S., India, Germany, and Turkey, IRNA reported.

The 87-minute film is about Baha, a young man from a border town, who learns that his father, Bahram, has been released from prison after 20 years. Bahram killed his wife -- Baha's mother -- having accused her of cheating on him. Baha, who has never coped with this and is still full of anger and resentment decides to go and get his father from prison himself. Bahram and Baha begin their journey while neither of them can find the words.

A production of 2023, the drama has Iman Sedigh, Ali Bagheri, Ahoora Bahrami, Amir Aram, Mohammad Ashkanfar, and Salar Daryamaj in the cast.

Being Azizi Sedigh's first feature film, "Cold Sigh" has won several national and international awards so far.

"Cold Sigh" competing in Italian festival



Recently, it received the Grand Prix of the 17th Cheboksary International Film Festival in Cheboksary, Russia, in May.

Earlier in April, it won three prizes at the 46th Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF) in Russia. The movie won the Best Director Award, the Audience Choice Award for the Best Film, and the NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asia

Pacific Cinema) Special Mention.

Last year, the film won the Special Jury Award for Best Film in the International Competition of the Fajr Film Festival.

The Ischia Film Festival is an international film festival dedicated to film works and features, regardless of the language: fiction, documentary, animation. It aims at

protecting the heritage and unique characteristics of the locations represented on screen, thus the competition is especially addressed to those works that highlight, through the cinematic narration, the landscape and cultural identity of the territories in which the films are shot.

This year's edition of the festival will conclude on July 6.

Royal National Theatre's "Frankenstein" to be screened at IAF

TEHRAN- The Cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen a stage recording of the 2011 London Royal National Theatre production of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" on Wednesday.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian theater critics Abbas Ghafari and Mohammad Najjari.

A thrilling adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic novel, "Frankenstein" is a powerful and moving stage production that explores the consequences of playing God.

Directed by Olivier Award-winning director Danny Boyle, this National Theatre production stars Benedict Cumberbatch as the tormented Victor Frankenstein and Jonny Lee Miller as his creature.

In Mary Shelley's classic novel, "Frankenstein", Victor Frankenstein, a young and ambitious scientist, becomes obsessed with the idea of creating life from death. Through his experiments, he succeeds in bringing a creature to life, but is horrified by its grotesque appearance and rejects it. The creature, feeling abandoned and rejected, sets out to seek revenge against its creator.

As the story unfolds, Frankenstein's creature begins to learn and adapt at an alarming rate, eventually becoming intelligent and articulate. However, its appearance and mannerisms are repulsive to the humans it encounters, leading to a series of tragic events. The

creature's desire for human connection and understanding drives it to seek out its creator, demanding answers about its existence and the reason for its rejection.

Meanwhile, Frankenstein's family is plagued by a series of mysterious deaths, which the creature is accused of committing. As the truth begins to unravel, Frankenstein's loved ones are torn apart by his own guilt and the fear of the monster. The creature's desire for revenge ultimately leads to a catastrophic confrontation between the two, resulting in a devastating loss that changes Frankenstein's life forever.

Throughout the novel, Shelley explores themes of ambition, loneliness, and the dangers of playing God. Frankenstein's creation is a powerful critique of scientific hubris and the consequences of unchecked progress. The novel also raises questions about what it means to be human, as the creature struggles to understand its own identity and place in the world.

The story has captivated readers for centuries with its timeless themes and haunting characters. Frankenstein's tale has been retold and reimagined in countless adaptations, but Shelley's original novel remains a masterpiece of Gothic horror and a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked ambition.

Danny Boyle is a British film, television, and



theatre director known for his eclectic and innovative style. Born in 1956 in Stockport, England, Boyle began his career in the music industry, working as a musician and music video director before transitioning to film. He gained recognition with his debut feature film "Shallow Grave" in 1994, which won several awards at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Since then, Boyle has directed a wide range of films, including "Trainspotting", "28 Days Later", "Sunshine", "Slumdog Millionaire", and "127 Hours", for which he won the Academy Award for Best Director.

Boyle's theatre credits include directing the National Theatre's production of "Frankenstein" in 2011, as well as the stage play "The Coming of the Shoah" in 2012. Throughout his career, Boyle has been known for his ability to blend genres, experiment with new techniques, and push boundaries in storytelling. His distinctive style has made him one of the most respected and admired directors in the industry.

South by Southwest Festival cuts ties to army after Gaza-inspired boycott

The South by Southwest Festival, which dozens of artists withdrew from this year to protest its sponsorship by the U.S. Army and defense contractors in light of their ties to Israel, announced this week that it would no longer accept their support.

"After careful consideration, we are revising our sponsorship model," the festival, which is held each year in Austin, Texas, said in a brief statement on its website. "As a result, the U.S. Army, and companies who engage in weapons manufacturing, will not be sponsors of SXSW 2025."

A group called the Austin for Palestine Coalition said in a social media post in March, at the time of the festival, that more than 80 bands, artists and panelists had declined to attend in solidarity with Palestine, the New York Times reported.

The Army hopes to work with SXSW again some day. "We look forward to a chance to work together in the future," said Lt. Col. Jamie Dobson, the public affairs officer at the Army Futures Command in Austin, which works

on technology and innovation. "A.F.C. loves being here in Austin. It's a great community. And we were very proud of the partnership we had this past year."

She added, "We had a really good experience, especially on the innovation side, connecting with industry partners, technology leaders, everyone that gets pulled in."

Ibrahim Batshon, the chief executive of a digital music licensing platform called BeatStars, participated in the March boycott and said in an interview that he was pleased by the decision from SXSW, which he had attended for nearly 20 years.

"We've always been huge fans and supporters of this multicultural art and music and film festival that has been a staple in artists' lives," he said.

Numerous cultural institutions around the country and the world have faced protests related to Israel and its conduct during the war in Gaza.

Since October 7, 2023, the Israeli genocidal war has resulted in more

than 37,700 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, and over 86,300 injuries in Gaza.

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, has raised alarms over the number of child casualties in Gaza, noting that thousands of children remain buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings in the Palestinian territory.

Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea continues to be reported across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure, particularly in Ash Shuja'iyyeh area of Gaza City and Al Mawasi area of Rafah.

A high risk of famine persists in the Gaza Strip as long as hostilities continue and humanitarian access remains restricted, according to the third update on food insecurity in the Gaza Strip published on June 25 by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership.

The IPC analysis finds that about 96 percent of the population of the Gaza strip are likely to face

crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity between June 16 and September 30, including 33 percent (745,000 people) projected to face emergency levels of acute food insecurity and 22 percent (495,000 people) projected to face catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity.

Moreover, in the southern governorates, the situation has deteriorated following intensified hostilities in Rafah and increased access restrictions since early May; over a million people have been displaced from Rafah to areas with "significantly reduced" essential infrastructure and basic services and "people's ability to cope and access humanitarian assistance" has been eroded.

Across the Gaza Strip, the latest data show that, on a regular basis, more than half of the population does not have any food to eat in the house, and over 20 percent go entire days and nights without eating. To buy food, more than half of the households were forced to exchange their clothes for money and one third resorted to picking up trash to sell.

Cartoon of Day



Starvation in Gaza
 Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey