

# TEHRAN TIMES

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# Fishing in Troubled Waters

**Unfounded allegations leveled against Iran following assassination attempt on Trump** ▶ Page 3

Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump is rushed offstage during a rally on July 13, 2024 in Butler, Pennsylvania.

## Iranian president-elect engages in phone conversations with world leaders

TEHRAN – Local media reports from Saudi Arabia have indicated that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman extended his congratulations to Iran's president-elect, Masoud Pezeshkian, via a phone call following his victory in the recent Iranian elections on Wednesday.

According to Saudi Arabia's official news agency, the Crown Prince expressed satisfaction with the ongoing development of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia across diverse sectors. He emphasized the importance of further enhancing these ties to their fullest potential.

In response, Iran's president-elect conveyed his appreciation to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the congratulatory message on his electoral success. This exchange underscores a potential thaw in relations between the two regional powers, amidst historical tensions.

Furthermore, beyond Saudi Arabia, other international leaders have also engaged with President-elect Pezeshkian. Reports indicate that Malaysian Prime Minister and Uzbekistan's President have both held discussions with Pezeshkian via phone, discussing bilateral cooperation and regional stability. ▶ Page 2

## Iran committed to multilateralism and international cooperation: acting FM

TEHRAN – On Tuesday, Iran's acting Foreign Minister, Ali Baqeri Kani, delivered a speech at the United Nations Security Council, underscoring the incoming Iranian administration's foreign policy focus on multilateralism.

He stated that President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian has committed to expanding Iran's friendly relations with other nations through dialogue, cooperation, equality, and mutual respect.

Speaking at a session titled "Multilateral Cooperation in the Interest of a More Just, Democratic and Sustainable World Order" Baqeri reiterated that the Iranian government's foreign policy is firmly rooted in the principles of the UN Charter and international law. He highlighted the importance of multilateralism as a cornerstone for addressing global threats and challenges, advocating for a safe, just, and inclusive environment where all nations can thrive.

Baqeri pointed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a prime example of Iran's dedication to multilateral efforts. He lamented the setbacks caused by the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the agreement, calling it a detrimental move that disrupted international cooperation and harmed all parties involved. ▶ Page 3

## Continuity and change in Iran's strategic culture

By Xavier Villar

MADRID- In a column published this Saturday in the Tehran Times titled "My Message to the New World," Massoud Pezeshkian, the newly elected President of Iran, outlined his main points on foreign policy.

The newly elected president began his column by acknowledging the political stability of the Islamic Republic, citing the recent elections as an example of this stability, which he described as "competitive, peaceful, and orderly." Pezeshkian then emphasized the need to foster consensus both nationally and internationally to fulfill the promises made during the electoral campaign.

The president-elect also discussed maintaining the dignity of the Islamic Republic and the influence of its foreign policy throughout his term. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Iran's strategic culture — encompassing shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior derived from common experiences and accepted narratives that shape collective identity and relations with other groups, thereby determining appropriate goals and means to achieve security objectives — is not determined by any one government but is integral to the non-negotiable principles upon which the country is built. ▶ Page 2

## Hezbollah chief warns Israeli occupation regime

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- The Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, said on Tuesday that if the Israeli occupation regime "persists in targeting [Lebanese] civilians it would compel [Hezbollah] to launch rockets and target new settlements not previously targeted".

During a speech marking the tenth of Muharram, the anniversary of Ashura, Seyyed Nasrallah affirmed that "the resistance in its ongoing battle is victorious for all the peoples of the region who have come under attack by the Israeli entity through occupation, massacres, aggression, and threats."

He praised "the brave fighters of Gaza," describing them as "heroes and knights," and also delivered a message to the people of the besieged enclave, whom he branded as "the patient and steadfast, epitomes of perseverance and resilience in our time".

For more than nine months, more than two million in the Gaza Strip have faced a U.S.-backed Israeli genocidal war. Daily massacres have killed more than 38,000 people, the majority of them women and children amid little action by the international community to end the genocide. ▶ Page 5

## Israel turns Gaza "safe zones" into massacre sites

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Israel has ramped up deadly attacks across the Gaza Strip over the past days striking so-called "safe zones" where the Benjamin Netanyahu regime has ordered Palestinians to evacuate to for their safety.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza said on Wednesday that more than 80 Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the last 24 hours. This brings the total death toll from Israel's genocidal war on Gaza that began on October 7 to nearly 38,800.

On Wednesday, the Israeli army and fighter jets hit residential buildings in areas such as the Nuseirat refugee camp which is hosting thousands of Palestinian families.

According to the ministry, about 90,000 Palestinians have also been wounded in the Israeli onslaught which entered its 285th day on Wednesday.

In addition to targeting residential houses, religious sites and hospitals, United Nations-run schools have not been spared from Israeli strikes. ▶ Page 5

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan approve MOU for port development

TEHRAN – Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and the National Investments Agency of Kyrgyzstan approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the development of the southern ports of Iran.

It was approved during an online meeting, Director General of Transit, Logistics and Agreements of the PMO Kazem Salehi said.

In the virtual meeting, the two sides reviewed and approved the contents of the MoU regarding the participation of Kyrgyzstan's private sector in the southern ports of Iran.

The draft of the aforementioned MOU will be signed by the parties during a visit by a Kyrgyz delegation to Tehran in the near future, Salehi added. ▶ Page 4



The photo shows the aftermath of an Israeli strike on Abdullah Azzam Mosque in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza's Deir al-Balah.

## Tehran ready to aid Baghdad in preserving environment

TEHRAN –Ali Salajeqeh, head of the Department of Environment (DOE), has announced the country's readiness to provide Iraq with assistance to preserve the environment.

Salajeqeh met with the Iraqi ambassador to Iran, Naseer Abdul Mohsen Abdullah Al-Kawari, in Tehran on Sunday.

The officials highlighted the significance of enhancing collaborations between the two countries, Mehr news agency reported.

During the meeting, Al-Kawari proposed establishing a critical environmental committee between the two countries and holding regular meetings to address environmental challenges like sand and dust storms. ▶ Page 7

## Registration process for Arbaeen Walk underway

TEHRAN- The chief of the planning office of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization has announced the start of registration of pilgrims participating in the Arbaeen Walk through the Samah system.

Mehran Farshid announced the registration statistics for the Arbaeen Walk, "From July 7th to 17th, 128,492 individuals have registered to take part in the Arbaeen ceremony via the Samah system, out of which 107,027 have confirmed their registration by paying the 1,000,000 Rials insurance fee.

Among the registered pilgrims, approximately 52,000 have opted for buses, around 7,000 for airplanes, 6,000 for taxis, 4,000 for trains, and about 1,000 for minibuses for their departure to the

border."

According to information on the Samah website, the Mehran border is the most popular choice for pilgrims departing to Iraq, followed by Shalamcheh, Khosravi, and other borders.

The Arbaeen Walk is a religious ceremony and congregation carried out by Shiite Muslims along the paths leading to Karbala for pilgrimage and mourning on the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Hussein Ibn Ali, the third Imam of Shiites, in the battle of Karbala.

Registration for this event in recent years has been facilitated through the Samah system and the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization.

## Diplomatic efforts underway to release Iranian pilgrims held in Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN- The director general of the Consular Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has highlighted the ongoing efforts to secure the release of two Iranian pilgrims from Saudi Arabian prisons.

During this year's Hajj pilgrimage, some Iranian pilgrims were detained by Saudi Arabian Intelligence Service and two of them are still held in custody. As reported by Fars News.

Ali Reza Mahmoudi, the director general of the Consular Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated, "This year, six members of the Iranian media team were

arrested by the Saudi Arabian Intelligence Service and deported to Iran.

Despite the diplomatic efforts of Alireza Enayati, the Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and the official request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, two Iranian pilgrims are still detained on charges related to their media stance against the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza."

With the cessation of Saudi flights to Iran, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is endeavoring to secure the freedom and return of these arrestees to Iran via Dubai.

## Jannati re-elected Guardian Council secretary

TEHRAN- The spokesman of the Guardian Council announced the election of the council's presiding board and the retention of the previous members in their positions.

Tahan Nazif stated, "According to the internal regulations of the Guardian Council, the election for the presiding board members occurs every year on the 16th of July, with the secretary, deputy, and spokesman being elected by the members through voting."

Similar to last year, Ayatollah Ahmad

Jannati was reelected as the secretary, Siamak Rahpeyk as the deputy, and Tahan Nazif as the spokesman of the Guardian Council, maintaining their positions until the following year.

As stipulated by Article 93 of the Constitution, the Guardian Council is tasked with scrutinizing all parliamentary decisions for compliance with Islamic and constitutional standards and providing interpretations in case of non-compliance with the Constitution and religious manners.

## Minister of Intelligence holds meeting with Pezeshkian

TEHRAN- The Iranian minister of intelligence presented a report on Iran's security and intelligence situation during a meeting with President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian.

According to IRNA, Seyyed Esmail Khatib discussed security challenges and their solutions with Pezeshkian during a visit to the Presidential Office on Wednesday.

He also addressed the resolution of the current security challenges and discussed the country's security situation in the thirteenth government.

Seyyed Esmail Khatib is the eighth Minister of Intelligence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who received a vote of confidence from the Parliament as the Minister of Intelligence of the thirteenth government in 2021 and assumed the responsibilities of this ministry.

## Iranian president-elect engages in phone conversations with world leaders

From page 1 ► Uzbekistan's President highlighted the historic agreements signed between Iran and Uzbekistan during the presidency of the late President Raisi. He expressed confidence that under the new administration, both nations will work diligently to fully implement these agreements, ensuring mutual cooperation and benefit.

In another notable exchange, President-elect Pezeshkian discussed regional stability and cooperation with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Both leaders underscored the significance of dialogue and accountability as essential elements for expanding collaboration within the region.

Qatar's Emir remarked that the expressed viewpoints by President-elect Pezeshkian carry messages of love

and peace for all countries in the region, emphasizing a commitment to fostering peaceful relations.

These diplomatic communications highlight a significant shift in geopolitical dynamics, as regional leaders seek to foster dialogue and collaboration in an evolving global landscape.

As President-elect Pezeshkian prepares to assume office, these early engagements are crucial indicators of potential diplomatic initiatives in the coming years.

In an op-ed that was published on the Tehran Times, President-elect Pezeshkian has underscored his incoming administration's commitment to constructive engagement on the international stage while insisting on the nation's rights, dignity and deserved role in the region and the world.

# Three new radiation sites established in nuclear plants: official

TEHRAN- The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has announced the launch of three new sites in the field of radiation at Iran's nuclear power plants.

According to IRNA, during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Mohammad Esلمي disclosed the inauguration of three new radiation sites in the nuclear industries over the first three months of the year.

He emphasized the importance of integrating nuclear technology into people's lives and highlighted the significance of radiation. "In the past three months, three radiation sites have been initiated, with

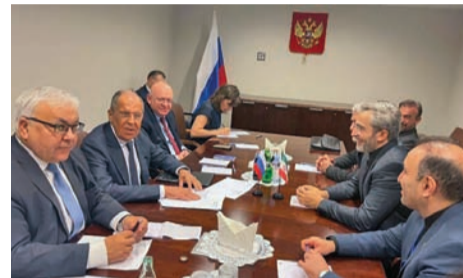


plans to open the remaining sites, at least three more in August," he stated.

The radiation systems in the nuclear industries have been established to expand and develop

peaceful atomic technologies in various areas, including health, medicine, agriculture, environment, security, and scientific research. Some key applications of radiation in the nuclear industries include radiotherapy, the production of diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals in the medical field; sterilization of medical equipment, pest control in agriculture, and enhancing the shelf life of food in the health and hygiene sector; improving the properties of polymers, ion implantation, and the production of industrial radioisotopes in the industry.

## Tehran praises Moscow's efforts towards Palestinian issue during UNSC presidency



TEHRAN – Iran's acting Foreign Minister has commended Russia's efforts on the Palestinian issue during its presidency of the UN Security Council.

Ali Baqeri Kani emphasized the urgency of halting Israeli aggression in Gaza in a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday.

This meeting took place on the sidelines of a United Nations Security Council session.

The two sides discussed the bilateral relations between their countries and reviewed the latest international developments.

Baqeri Kani praised the recent advancements in Iran-Russia cooperation and expressed optimism that the legal processes for finalizing critical bilateral documents, including a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement, would soon be completed.

Lavrov congratulated Iran on the successful conclusion of its presidential elections in June and expressed satisfaction with the progress in bilateral cooperation. He voiced Russia's concern about the potential for the conflict in Gaza to expand and affirmed his country's commitment to preventing such an outcome.

**Iran, Kuwait call for strengthening all-out ties**

Iran's acting Foreign Minister and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali al-Yahya met in New York, advocating for the enhancement of comprehensive ties between their nations.

Baqeri Kani highlighted the cultural commonalities and close relations between Iran and Kuwait, stressing the importance of cooperation for regional stability. He emphasized the priority of late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's administration in fostering strong relations with neighboring countries, noting the necessity of building mutual trust and enhancing economic ties to strengthen relations with Kuwait.

Abdullah Ali al-Yahya acknowledged the historical and cultural connections between Iran and Kuwait and expressed his government's readiness for comprehensive development of relations. Both diplomats underscored the need to strengthen bilateral relations mechanisms,

including the Joint Economic Commission and political and consular committees.

**Iran-Hungary relations to be expanded: Baqeri Kani**

In another meeting, Baqeri Kani and Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó discussed bilateral relations and regional issues.

Baqeri Kani congratulated Hungary on assuming the rotating presidency of the European Union and highlighted the positive trajectory of Iran-Hungary relations. He emphasized the need for regional stability and warned that any new provocations would harm those instigating conflict.

Szjijártó underscored the importance of diplomacy in bilateral and international relations and welcomed the strengthening of ties with Iran. He expressed hope for more robust dialogues during Hungary's EU presidency.

The two ministers also reviewed areas of cooperation and exchanged views on regional and global developments, including the situation in Gaza and the war in Ukraine. Baqeri stressed the immediate need to cease attacks on Gaza and restore peace to the region, warning that continued aggression, including attacks on Lebanon, would not go unanswered.

## Continuity and change in Iran's strategic culture

From page 1 ► In general terms, two principles directly related to Islamic identity can be highlighted as foundational, with the rest built upon them:

1. Achieving unity within Islam through the known "Ummatic mandate." This involves adhering to the idea of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, and seeking reconciliation between Sunni and Shia.

In essence, it assumes Islam as a common language enabling Muslims to interact and debate within the boundaries of this language. Technically, this unity within Islam is known as the "post-Mazhabi vision" (mazhab or madhhab meaning legal school in Arabic).

2. Building a just society: This is an ethical-political aspiration serving as an ever-present yet never fully attainable horizon. This horizon compels Muslims to tirelessly combat oppression in its various forms and manifestations.

Thus, it can be said that the focal point around which the entire Iranian discourse is articulated is "Islamic, revolutionary, and anti-Western identity." From this point, one can comprehend all aspects of Iran's foreign and defensive policies. This pivotal point integrates several signifiers such as independence, resistance, Islamic unity, and responsibility towards the Ummah to shape the Islamic discourse and simultaneously differentiate it from others.

One unique principle in Iranian foreign policy is its responsibility towards the Muslim world.

This transnational responsibility views Iranian actions beyond its borders as an "ideological duty." Within this framework lies the anti-Zionist policy and support for Islamic resistance movements in the region, known as the "Axis of Resistance."

In this context, the President committed in the column to urging neighboring Arab countries to "collaborate and utilize all political and diplomatic influences to prioritize achieving a permanent ceasefire in Gaza aimed at halting the massacre and preventing escalation of the conflict."

Iran's regional policy cannot be understood solely through instrumental rationality and cost-benefit logic without considering the logic of responsibility based on political Islam. Another principle underpinning Iran's strategic culture is its anti-hegemonic vocation and will of resistance. Grounded in the idea that Islam

should prevail and not be dominated by others, the Islamic Republic understands it cannot be influenced by other countries when designing and implementing its foreign policy. This anti-imperialist identity is rooted in Iran's history and the numerous attempts by Western powers to control the country.

To achieve its counter-hegemonic goal, Iran seeks intentional cooperation, coalitions, and alliances among anti-hegemonic forces at individual, state, and non-governmental levels. To this end, Iran has extended efforts to forge fronts against imperialism in the Third World, the Islamic world, and the Asian continent. In line with its "anti-hegemonic" and "resistance" discourses, Iran implements two main strategies: the "Look to the East" policy and South-South alliances.

Another essential principle in understanding Iran's strategic culture is discernment. This principle became crucial in Iranian foreign policy since the second decade of the Islamic Revolution. Based on Shia political jurisprudence, it seeks to combine anti-arrogance and anti-hegemonic vision with prudence in foreign policy.

In fact, the principle of discernment elevates the survival of the Islamic Republic to a supreme value. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has avoided serious involvement in international disputes and conflicts to preserve its survival and vital interests.

In this sense, there are several cases showing that Iran has adopted a pragmatic and opportunity-oriented approach to reduce risks and costs in its foreign policy. The doctrine of discernment is also known as the doctrine of strategic patience.

Following the events of April 1st, when Israel attacked Iran's consulate in Damascus, and the subsequent response by the Islamic Republic framed within "Operation True Promise," Iranian authorities have entered a new strategic phase known as active deterrence (or offensive defense), wherein any Israeli action will be directly responded to by Iran.

Two other fundamental principles within Iran's strategic culture are self-sufficiency and independence.

Since the Iranian Revolution, the pursuit of indigenous capabilities, technology, and knowledge, especially regarding the nuclear fuel cycle, has become a matter of national

pride. In this way, Iran aims to eliminate its dependence on foreign powers. Iran's Supreme Leader argues that there is a causal relationship between scientific advancement, self-sufficiency, and independence.

Ayatollah Khamenei maintains that U.S. and European sanctions against Iran are not only ineffective in changing Iran's foreign policy but are actually constructive because they compel Iran to become more self-sufficient.

The defense of these principles is not subject to the will of any specific government, whether reformist or principalist. They are necessary principles for the political existence of the Islamic Republic itself. However, this does not imply that there is no ample room within which these same objectives can be achieved, even though there may not always be agreement on how to achieve them.

Specifically, President-elect Pezeshkian addressed in his opinion column the priority of strengthening relations with neighboring countries. "We will defend the establishment of a 'strong region' rather than one where a single country seeks hegemony and dominance over others," he pointed out. "I firmly believe that neighboring and brotherly nations should not squander their valuable resources on erosive competitions, arms races, or unjustified containment among themselves," he added.

This political vision shares objectives with the "good neighborliness" policy implemented by the late President Raisi's government, which also prioritized friendly relations among neighboring countries. It is worth noting that in their first meeting, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei advised President-elect Pezeshkian to continue President Raisi's political legacy.

Furthermore, from a pragmatic standpoint, a policy based on horizontal relations, free from oppressions and pressures, would facilitate the construction of an autonomous region where the military presence of Western countries, mainly the United States, would have no justification.

In this regard, there appears to be continuity between the "good neighborliness" policy and Pezeshkian's policy of "leveraging our normative influence to play a crucial role in the emerging multipolar global order by promoting peace, creating a conducive environment for sustainable development, fostering dialogue, and dispelling Islamophobia."

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Fishing in troubled waters

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Former U.S. President Donald Trump narrowly escaped an assassination attempt on Saturday during a rally in Pennsylvania, just days before he was expected to secure the Republican nomination for the third time.

According to Trump's campaign, the former president is "fine" after the shooting, which left him with a minor injury to his right ear.

This incident is the most serious attempt on a president or presidential candidate since Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981. It has reignited concerns about political violence in the deeply polarized United States, especially with the presidential election less than four months away.

In the wake of the attack, U.S. officials quickly pointed fingers at Iran, suggesting that the assassination attempt was part of a broader plot orchestrated by Iranian operatives.

An initial report from CNN claimed that U.S. authorities had recently learned of an Iranian threat against Trump's life, leading to increased security for the former president. However, the report noted that the Iranian threat was not connected to the shooting in Pennsylvania, which was allegedly carried out by a lone 20-year-old gunman.



However, Iranian officials have vehemently denied these accusations. Nasser Kanaani, the spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry, labeled the claims as politically motivated and baseless. He emphasized Iran's commitment to legal avenues in holding former President Trump accountable for the 2020 assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

Kanaani reiterated that Iran seeks justice for General Soleimani through international legal frameworks, underscoring the need for Trump to be held accountable for the drone strike that killed the Iranian general.

Ali Baqeri Kani, Iran's Acting Foreign Minister, confirmed that the assassination of General Soleimani is being actively pursued in Iranian courts. Baqeri Kani stated that Iran remains steadfast in its legal efforts to address what

they consider a criminal act by Trump.

In a statement to Reuters, Iran's mission to the United Nations in New York also said "these accusations are unsubstantiated and malicious."

"From the perspective of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Trump is a criminal who must be prosecuted and punished in a court of law for ordering the assassination of General Soleimani. Iran has chosen the legal path to bring him to justice," Iran's statement said.

Soleimani, who led the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were killed in a U.S. drone strike near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020. The strike, authorized by Trump, has been a significant point of contention

between the U.S. and Iran.

General Soleimani was celebrated in West Asia for his role in combating the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq and Syria.

The attempted assassination has also highlighted significant security concerns within the United States. The Secret Service has come under scrutiny for allowing a gunman to fire at Trump from an exposed rooftop 150 meters away. This incident has raised questions about the agency's preparedness and response to potential threats.

In response, U.S. President Joe Biden has ordered an independent review of the Secret Service's handling of the incident. Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi stated that the agency continuously adjusts resources based on new threat information but did not comment on specific threats.

While U.S. officials seem to be willing to suggest Iranian involvement, the incident has exposed vulnerabilities in domestic security that require enhanced security measures within the United States.

As the investigations continue, Iran has proved to be persistent with its legal pursuit of General Soleimani's assassination, showing the country's determination to seek justice through international channels.

JULY 18, 2024

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

3

## SPORTS

### Paracanoer Behrouzi Rad optimistic about Paris 2024



TEHRAN - Iranian Paracanoer athlete Shahla Behrouzi Rad is optimistic about her performance in the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Behrouzi Rad, who started her career as a discus thrower, has represented Iran at the 2016 and 2020 Paralympic Games in Paracanoer.

Now, the Iranian female athlete is going to register a better record in Paris.

She advanced to Final A of the Women's KL3 in Tokyo and finished in seventh place with a time of 52.789.

"I am so happy to compete in the Paralympics for the third successive time.

It's a great honor to participate at the prestigious event like the Paralympics," Behrouzi Rad said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"I have a difficult task ahead because athletes from Britain, France and Germany are favorites to win the medal but I will do my best to register a better record compared to my previous editions," she said.

"I have trained well and I think I will be well-prepared until the Games. I would like to thank all who supported me over the past years," the 38-year-old canoer stated.

"As a woman, it will be a great honor to represent Iran in the Paralympic Games.

I know that winning a medal in the sport is very hard but I just want to be myself in Paris," Behrouzi Rad concluded.

Paracanoering at the 2024 Summer Paralympics in Paris will take place at Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium, it will also be the same venue that will host rowing.

This is the third appearance of the paracanoer in the Summer Paralympics. There will be five canoe sprint events for both men and women, three in kayak and two in va'a in each category.

### Azmoun left out of Bayer Leverkusen squad



TEHRAN – Sardar Azmoun has reportedly been excluded from Bayer Leverkusen's squad.

Having returned from his loan to Roma, in fact, the Iranian striker's new adventure in Leverkusen did not start in the best of ways.

According to Bild, the former Giallorossi player missed a training session, justifying his absence only after the end of the session.

This angered Xabi Alonso, who immediately decided to take him out of the squad. In the next few days, therefore, Azmoun will train individually.

In an interview, Simon Rolfes, Leverkusen sporting director, commented on the incident: "We need to clarify what happened. It's not enough to do performance analysis, you also need to train."

Yesterday it was there, today it wasn't. We'll see in the next few days."

### Ayoub El Amloud signs for Persepolis

TEHRAN – Moroccan right back Ayoub El Amloud joined Iran's Persepolis football club on Tuesday.

El Amloud has most recently played for the Moroccan club Wydad AC.

Persepolis has signed El Amloud as a replacement for Danial Esmaeilifar.

The Iran league title holders will be led by Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido in the new season.

Persepolis will participate in the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Elite.

### Persepolis target Abedzadeh reaches agreement with Castellón

TEHRAN – CD Castellón club have agreed to sign Iranian goalkeeper Amir Abedzadeh

The Segunda División side have completed the Persian Cat on free transfer.

Abedzadeh, 31, has most recently played for Portuguese club Maritimo.

He has represented Iran national football team in the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups.

Abedzadeh had been also linked with a move to Iranian club Persepolis.

### Alireza Beiranvand joins Tractor

TEHRAN – Iranian football team Tractor completed the signing of Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

Beiranvand canceled his contract with Persepolis shortly after winning the title with the team in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League (IPL).

Persepolis midfielder Mehdi Torabi and right winger Danial Esmaeilifar had previously joined Tractor.

Persepolis have described Beiranvand's deal with Tractor as illegal.

### Iran beat Kuwait in Asian Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran beat Kuwait 25-23 in the 18th Asian Men Junior Handball Championship.

Iran had already defeated China 30-26 in Group B on Monday.

The 18th Asian Men's Junior (U21) Handball Championship will run until July 27 in Amman, Jordan.

The championship serves as a qualifying event for the 25th IHF Men's Junior (U-21) Handball World Championship in Poland, slated for June and July 2025.

The top four teams in the ongoing competition will secure qualification spots for the World Championship.

### Tractor complete signing of Mohanad Ali

TEHRAN – Mohanad Ali Kadhim Al-Shammari, commonly known in Iraq as Mimi, joined Tractor football team.

Ali is known for his positioning, shooting, heading, close ball control and dribbling.

The 24-year-old forward has most recently played for Iraqi team Al-Shorta.

He is a member of Iraq national team and has scored 20 goals in 48 matches for the Lions of Mesopotamia.

## Iran committed to multilateralism and international cooperation: acting FM

Highlighting Iran's neighborhood policy, Baqeri emphasized the importance of regional dialogue and cooperation to foster development and stability. He stated that strengthening partnerships and collaborative efforts for collective security and sustainable development in the region is a guiding principle of Iran's foreign policy.

Baqeri condemned the use of unilateral sanctions, describing them as extreme and inhumane measures that inflict suffering on targeted nations, including Iran. He called for accountability from the U.S. and its Western allies for the destruction and hardship caused by these sanctions.

In his concluding remarks, Baqeri reiterated President-elect Pezeshkian's vision of opening new horizons and fostering comprehensive friendly relations with other countries based on mutual respect and equality.

He echoed the UN Secretary-General's sentiments that global challenges require adherence to international law, global commitments, and robust frameworks for multilateral governance.

Baqeri affirmed Iran's readiness to support any initiative that enhances multilateralism and respect for international law, believing it is the key to achieving sustainable growth and peace for all nations.

### 'Lebanon will be an irreversible hell for Zionists'

During a press briefing on Tuesday, Iran's acting Foreign Minister stated that Lebanon will become "a hell for the Zionists" if they initiate a full-scale war against the Arab nation.

Addressing reporters, Baqeri Kani emphasized that Israel's efforts to compensate for its failures in Gaza by escalating conflicts in other regional areas will only plunge it into deeper peril.

"The Zionists cannot make up for their failures in Gaza by expanding their war-mongering in other areas in the region; rather, they are drowning themselves in the swamp of much more serious risks," he asserted. He reiterated, "Lebanon will definitely be hell for the Zionists."

Baqeri Kani referred to past conflicts, highlighting the significant defeats suffered by Israel at the hands of Hezbollah in 2000 and 2006.

He stated, "Lebanon is the resuscitator of historical defeats for the Zionists. Therefore, Lebanon will definitely be hell for the Zionists." He pointed out that Israel's current desperation stems from its inability to overcome its setbacks in Gaza.

Baqeri Kani has traveled to the UN headquarters to attend Security Council meetings on Palestine and multilateralism being held under the chairmanship of Lavrov whose country is currently the president of the 15-member council.

The ongoing exchange of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli military along Lebanon's southern border, which has been occurring almost daily since Israel launched its offensive in Gaza in October, has heightened fears of a broader conflict.

These concerns were amplified last month when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced preparations for "a very



tense operation" on the Lebanese border.

Netanyahu's threat prompted widespread regional and international condemnation, with warnings that a full-scale war could have disastrous consequences for Israel.

Israel initiated its current offensive against Gaza on October 7, following a surprise attack by Palestinian Resistance movements, named Operation Al-Aqsa Storm which came as an answer to years of Israeli wrongdoings in the occupied territories. This offensive has heavily targeted hospitals, homes, and places of worship, leading to widespread destruction.

Alongside the military campaign, Israel has imposed a near-total blockade on the coastal enclave, severely restricting the supply of essential goods such as food, medicine, electricity, and water.

This blockade has drastically affected the Palestinian population's ability to access basic necessities.

The conflict has been devastating, resulting in the deaths of at least 38,713 Palestinians, most of whom are women and children. An additional 89,166 have been injured, and over 1.7 million people have been internally displaced.

## Iranian Parliament speaker condemns Israeli bombing of Gaza school

TEHRAN – The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament has condemned the recent bombing of a school in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza by Israeli forces, expressing confidence that Palestinians will ultimately reclaim their homeland.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf took to his X account on Wednesday to denounce the bombing, which he described as a stark example of the "endless cruelty" exhibited by the Zionist regime and its American allies. The attack, which targeted a school, underscores the extreme measures being employed against the Palestinian population.

"The bombing of schools and homes is evidence of the endless cruelty of the Zionists and their American supporters," Qalibaf wrote. His statement reflects a

broader sentiment of outrage within the Iranian government and among its supporters.

Qalibaf further emphasized that the current situation is unsustainable and that justice will eventually prevail. "These days will pass; Israel will face the consequences of its actions; Palestinians will reclaim their land, and disgrace will remain for the governments that supported these crimes," he added.

On Tuesday, Israeli airstrikes targeted the UN's al-Razi school in the central Nuseirat refugee camp and a bustling main street in the southern al-Mawasi area, where thousands of displaced Palestinians had sought refuge.

According to Gaza's Government Media Office, at least 25 people

were killed at al-Razi, while 17 lost their lives in al-Mawasi. The attacks also left more than 70 individuals wounded.

Additionally, a third Israeli strike in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, claimed the lives of five more Palestinians, officials reported.

The bombing of al-Razi marks the sixth attack on UN-affiliated schools by Israeli forces in the past ten days. Among the victims was local journalist Mohammad Meshmesh, bringing the total number of journalists killed in the conflict to 160, according to Gaza's Government Media Office.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) reported that nearly 70 percent of its schools in Gaza have been hit since the conflict began last October. "Over 95% of

## 'Iran ready to meet BRICS energy demands'



TEHRAN - A senior Iranian lawmaker has said the Islamic Republic is prepared to supply BRICS member states with oil and gas to meet their growing energy demands, IRNA reported.

Rouhollah Mousavi, the member of the Iranian Parliament's Internal Affairs and Councils Commission, who visited Russia to attend a BRICS parliamentary forum, told IRNA in an interview that Iran is capable of selling oil and gas to BRICS countries in exchange for banking and trade services.

Mousavi said that during the two-day visit to Russia led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the Iranian parliamentary delegation held meetings with delegations of other BRICS countries.

In those meetings, the MP added, the Iranian delegation called for the expansion of banking and trade exchanges within BRICS, while also stressing the need for the de-dollarization of economic transactions.

Mousavi stated that Iran's membership in BRICS is mutually beneficial for both Iran and the other emerging economies in the alliance.

He explained that Iran, given its abundant resources, can provide oil and gas to the BRICS countries to meet their energy needs, and in return, other member states can take steps to meet Iran's needs in various banking and trade exchange sectors.

BRICS countries are influential in the global economy as they account for 40 percent of the world's population, 30 percent of global GDP, and 17 percent of world exports, the Iranian parliamentarian asserted.

In late June, Iran's Deputy Minister of Agriculture Alireza Mohajer has also voiced the country's readiness to cooperate with BRICS member countries on agricultural sector.

Mohajer made the remarks addressing the 14th meeting of the BRICS ministers of agriculture in Russia.

He referred to Iran's exemplary geographical position, being situated in the intersection of the North-South and East-West transit corridors, noting that the country can help expand regional and international trade networks in the area of agriculture.

The deputy minister highlighted that Iran is an effective partner in bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Iran will make efforts to remove the obstacles on the way of enhancement of agricultural cooperation among BRICS members and expects other member countries to help open new chapters in agricultural economy and trade, the official said.

## Iran's unemployment rate declines 0.5%

TEHRAN - The latest figures by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) puts the country's jobless rate at 7.7 percent in the first three months of the current calendar year to late June.

The data showed that 7.7 percent of the Iranian people aged 15 or older were jobless which is 0.5 percent lower than that of last year's corresponding period.

The SCI data also suggests that 41.2 percent of the country's above-15 population were economically active which refers to the population either employed or seeking a job.

Iran's economic participation rate has remained unchanged compared to figures from the same period of last year, according to the report.

## Water storage in Iranian dams rises 7%

TEHRAN - Over 33.97 billion cubic meters of water is stored behind the dams across Iran, indicating that 61 percent of the capacity of the country's dams is full, according to the Iranian Energy Ministry data.

Based on the Energy Ministry data, the total capacity of the country's dam reservoirs currently stands at 50.5 billion cubic meters.

Since the beginning of the current water year (late September 2023) up to late July 13, the total volume of water inflow to the reservoirs of the country's dams stood at 39.05 billion cubic meters, seven percent more than the figure for the last year's same period.

Water inflow to the country's dams was 36.64 billion cubic meters in the previous water year's same period.

According to the mentioned data, compared to the figures for the previous water year, the volume of water outflow from the country's dams has also increased by seven percent to

stand at 29.06 billion cubic meters.

Back in April, the Water Resources Management Company reported that the water inflow to Iran's dams decreased by 10 percent since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2023) up to April 13, 2024, compared to the same period last year.

According to the said report, during the mentioned period, 22.89 billion cubic meters of water entered the country's dam reserves, while the figure stood at 25.57 billion last year.

Despite the recent perspirations across the country, the total volume of water in dam reservoirs has not changed significantly compared to the previous year.

Recent rains have led to the melting of snow cover, increasing the level of water behind dams. However, the water level of dams is still not high in comparison to last year.

# Iran, Kyrgyzstan approve MOU for port development

From page 1 ▶ By signing this MOU, the two countries will participate in the establishment of joint logistics centers in Iran's port hinterland, which will boost the trade relations between two countries.

Salehi said that facilitation and promotion of regional transit through multi-modal transport is necessary and the PMO welcomes the presence of neighboring countries, especially Central Asian countries, in the infrastructure projects of Iran's ports, the website of Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development (MRUD) reported.

The National Investments Agency is a governmental agency in Kyrgyzstan for promoting foreign investments and assisting international companies in finding business opportunities.

Also, in late June, Iranian Minister of Energy Ali-Akbar



Mehraban and his Kyrgyz counterpart Taalaibek Ibrayev voiced readiness to cooperate in the field of energy and implementation of hydroelectric projects.

The two ministers met on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization (SCO) member countries.

Speaking during the meeting, the Iranian minister said that the future of relations between Iran and Kyrgyzstan is bright, noting that Tehran is ready for any cooperation with Bishkek.

Mehraban referred to Iran's

huge energy potential and said that the country generates some 360 terawatt/h of electricity annually.

The Kyrgyz minister, for his part, appreciated Iran's capacities in the production and supply of oil and oil products, while adding that his country has good experience in constructing hydroelectric and small-scale power plants.

In the meeting, Mehraban voiced the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to export technical and engineering services, as well as supply equipment in the energy sector.

The Iranian energy minister pointed out that connecting the electricity grid of Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan and then Iran will enable the exchange of electricity for the countries of the region, especially during the peak consumption period of summer and winter.

## Oji praises Iran-Russia gas transfer agreement



TEHRAN - Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji says signing the agreement for transferring Russian gas to Iran is the masterpiece of the 13th administration's energy diplomacy which can pave the way for an economic revolution and ensure the region's energy security through Iran.

Speaking on the sidelines of the weekly ministerial meeting of the cabinet on Wednesday, the minister told reporters that less than one month ago, some documents were signed by Iran and Russia under which part of Russian gas would be transferred to Iran to be used for consumption, export and ensuring the neighboring countries energy security.

"I can tell you confidently that the Russian Gas Transfer to Iran Document can pave the way for an economic revolution, ensuring the energy security of the neighboring countries through Iran," Oji continued.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that fuel delivery to power plants and gas stations is stable without any problems adding as much as 265 million liters of liquid fuel is being distributed across the country each day, worth 67 billion dollars annually.

Iran and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the transfer of Russian gas to Iran in late June.

The MOU is a big step towards turning Iran into a regional gas hub and fulfilling the promise of the late President Ebrahim Raisi in this regard.

In the last days of the 13th government, the Ministry of Oil managed to sign an MOU with Russia to make Iran the gas hub of the region; an action that is in line with the fulfillment of the promise of the late president.

### Iran and Russia signed an MOU for transfer of Russian gas to Iran in late June

According to this report, another MOU was signed in Tehran on Thursday between the special representative of the Russian Federation and Iran's oil minister with the aim of developing and strengthening the cooperation of the two countries in the field of gas, according to which the export of Russian gas to Iran is to be carried out.

Meantime, Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber emphasized that the signing of the strategic MOU for the transfer of gas from Russia to Iran is very important for the two countries and the region, and said

that Tehran-Moscow's firm determination in line with the improvement of relations has an important message for the world and the path of gas cooperation has begun between the two countries will lead to greater understandings and contracts.

During a meeting with Alexey Miller, CEO of Gazprom and special representative of the President of the Russian Federation, on Thursday, Mokhber stated that the signing of the MOU on the export of Russian gas to Iran is very important for improving the security and economy of the region.

He emphasized the need for accelerating the completion of the north-south corridor and the Rasht-Bandar Abbas railway line to connect the countries of the region to this corridor.

The principal framework for gas transfer from Russia to Iran has been on the agenda since a long time ago and the late president insisted on its finalization.

According to Oji, there is the potential for changing the MOU into a contract in a short time, which will be a turning point for both countries.

"With this agreement, Iran's share of trade will rise causing changes in international balances. This agreement will act as a revolution in the energy and industry scene of the region," Oji said.

This MOU between the holders of 60 percent of the global gas reserves, as clean energy, has been signed based on mutual interests in the international frameworks and will soon enter the contract and implementation stage, the minister added.

## CBI provides over \$20b in subsidized foreign currency for imports

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has provided \$20 billion in foreign currency for importing basic goods and commodities, medicines, and commercial goods since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024) up to July 14, IRNA reported.

Based on the CBI data, the country's foreign currency earnings reached \$25.5 billion dollars in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20).

During this period, the country's trade balance has increased by 51.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

In the first three months of this year, the oil and non-oil exports of the country reached \$25.5 billion, 18.6 percent more than the \$21.5 billion in the same period last year.

Back in March, Iran's Expediency Discernment Council authorized the government and the state management apparatuses, including the CBI, to spend 13.6 billion euros at a preferential exchange rate for the import of basic items such as agricultural products, medicine, and its raw materials as well as medical equipment.

Council members took the decision on the import fund allocation while meeting under the chairmanship of Ayatollah Amoli Larijani to discuss and review the budget for the current financial year.

They stressed that the government would offer preferential rates for clearing or exchanging foreign resources resulting from the export of oil, gas, and gas condensates for the import of "only basic agricultural goods

and medicine", the list of which was approved by the Council of Ministers at the end of April.

The imports are overseen by a working group consisting of the first vice president, the head of the central bank, the head of the country's planning and budget organization, the minister of economic affairs and finance, the minister of agriculture as well as the minister of industry, mining, and trade.

The Minister of Health along with other relevant bodies are also required to implement and monitor the allocation, distribution, and use of currency for medicine and equipment.

In addition, the central bank is obliged to prepare monthly reports on the implementation of Clause 4(A) of the Budget Law.

## TEDPIX gains 1,500 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 1,545 points to 2,202,679 on Wednesday, which is the fifth day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one.

The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

In late January, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) stressed the need for diverse financing tools in the country, noting that such tools are currently being provided by the stock market.

"To reduce the speculative and profit-seeking activities of dealers in the country, financing tools should be diversified," Mohammad Shirijian said.

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production

in an efficient manner. Now, to accelerate the process of resource transfer and high productivity, the financing should be directed to the enterprises," the official explained.

Iranian Capital market with a history of over 50 years is one of the oldest markets in the world and the oldest in the region.

The Securities and Exchange Organization of Iran (SEO) is the sole regulatory and supervisory authority to the capital market in Iran.

Iran's capital market has companies from a wide range of industries, including automotive, telecommunications, agriculture, petrochemical, mining, steel iron, copper, banking and insurance, and others.

The Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) is Iran's largest stock exchange, which first opened in 1967.

The TSE is based in Tehran. TSE, which is a founding member of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock

Exchanges, has been one of the world's best performing stock exchanges in the years 2002 through 2013. TSE is an emerging or "frontier" market.

Since 1995, TSE has been a full member of the World Federation of Exchanges. Since July 2010 the TSE is a member of the International Options Market Association.

The SEO has been, ever since it was established, trying to create a safe, secure, fair, and transparent market for the entire participants

and investors.

This market is enjoying diversity, integrity, depth, and width, among other attributes, to stand as one of the high-yielding markets in the world.

Also, Iran is blessed with high diversity of natural resources, while allocating them to the producers efficiently.

Thanks to all these inimitable features, this capital market, industries, and businesses will flourish even more and more.

# Israel turns Gaza “safe zones” into massacre sites

WORLD HEADLINES

## Calls for Paris 2024 to sanction Israel's participation at Olympics

Protesters have gathered across the street from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games headquarters in Saint-Denis, just outside France's capital, waving flags and banging pots and pans.

Some wore T-shirts that read “Boycott Israel” as they called for the organizers to ban Israeli athletes from the Games starting next week or apply similar sanctions to those Russian and Belarusian athletes are facing due to the war in Ukraine.

Members of the pro-Palestinian group Europalestine said there was a double standard, with Russian athletes banned from participating under their national flag, while no such measures have been introduced regarding Israeli athletes since the start of the war on Gaza.

## Jewish peace group: US actively assisting Israel's genocide in Gaza

The US activist group Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) has accused the Biden administration of “actively assisting” Israel in committing genocide in Gaza.

“The Israeli government's genocide is accelerating with full support from the US,” JVP stated in a series of social media posts, urging supporters to contact their political representatives and take action against Israel, Middle East Eye reported.

JVP highlighted Washington's clear intent by noting the resumption of transferring 500-pound bombs to Israel's military.

“The US isn't just allowing the Israeli government to commit genocide; it's actively assisting it. It's well past time for a weapons embargo,” the group added.

## Palestinians released from detention recount torture, humiliation

The Palestinian Red Crescent said its teams have treated 13 detainees including an elderly woman who was released by the

## As Gaza's doctors struggle to save lives, many lose their own in Israeli airstrikes

Dr. Hassan Hamdan was one of the few trained plastic surgeons in Gaza, a specialist in wound reconstruction. His skills were vitally needed as Israel's military onslaught filled hospitals with patients torn by blasts and shrapnel, so the 65-year-old came out of retirement to help, according to AP.

Earlier this month, an Israeli airstrike killed him along with his wife, son, two daughters, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law, six grandchildren and one other person, as his family sheltered in their home in an Israeli-declared “safe zone.”

Israel's 9-month-old war in Gaza has decimated the territory's medical system. It has not only wreaked physical destruction on hospitals and health facilities, it has devastated Gaza's medical personnel. More than 500 health care workers have been killed since October, according to the UN.

Among them were many specialists like Hamdan.

Dr. Ahmed al-Maqadma, also a reconstructive surgeon and a former fellow at UK Royal College, was found shot to death alongside his mother, a general practitioner, on a street

Israeli army at the Kissufim checkpoint in central Gaza.

Upon arrival at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir el-Balah, one of the prisoners – who declined to be named – said that a number of inmates inside Israeli prisons had lost their senses as a result of the torture and electric shocks they were subjected to, according to Al Jazeera.

Released prisoner Mustafa Fayyad recounted the difficult conditions of his detention due to lack of sleep and food, and being tortured more than once.

Nader Alsalhiya, who is blind, spoke about the conditions of his detention, saying, “They treated us inhumanely inside prisons and called us dogs. We were subjected to all kinds of torture, hunger and humiliation.”

Earlier this month Israel freed dozens of Palestinians detained during its war in Gaza, including the director of al-Shifa Hospital, one of the enclave's main hospitals.

## UNICEF slams Israeli killing of children in Lebanon

The United Nations Children's Fund has described the killing of three children by an Israeli air strike reportedly while they were playing in front of their home in south Lebanon, as “horrific”, in a post on social media.

“Children must be protected under international humanitarian law,” the UN children's agency added.

Five Syrians were killed in two separate Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon on Tuesday, according to Lebanon's National News Agency.

## Drones hit airbase housing U.S. forces in Iraq

Two drones attacked the Ayn al-Asad Airbase in Iraq's western Anbar province on Tuesday, where U.S. troops are stationed, an Iraqi army officer said.

The drones caused no casualties as they hit the airbase perimeter, the officer told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

U.S. helicopters were seen flying over the airbase and surrounding areas, and Iraqi forces raised their alert level, according to the officer.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has carried out more than 175 rocket and drone attacks against US-led troops in Iraq and Syria in recent months.

By Shahrokh Saei  
TEHRAN- Israel has ramped up deadly attacks across the Gaza Strip over the past days striking so-called “safe zones” where the Benjamin Netanyahu regime has ordered Palestinians to evacuate to for their safety.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza said on Wednesday that more than 80 Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the last 24 hours.

This brings the total death toll from Israel's genocidal war on Gaza that began on October 7 to nearly 38,800.

On Wednesday, the Israeli army and fighter jets hit residential buildings in areas such as the Nuseirat refugee camp which is hosting thousands of Palestinian families.

According to the ministry, about 90,000 Palestinians have also been wounded in the Israeli onslaught which entered its 285th day on Wednesday.

In addition to targeting residential houses, religious sites and hospitals, United Nations-run schools have not been spared from Israeli strikes.

More than two dozen people were killed on Tuesday when Israel bombed the al-Razi school, which is run by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in the central Nuseirat refugee camp.

At least 17 others lost their lives in the same day during Israeli attacks in al-Mawasi area west of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israel also pounded al-Mawasi on Saturday killing at least 90 Palestinians.

According to US-based defense think tanks, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP), Israel dropped eight 2,000-pound bombs in its attack on the al-Mawasi area on Saturday.

The regime has repeatedly struck al-Mawasi despite designating it a “safe-zone” and



An injured Palestinian child is taken to a hospital to receive medical treatment after Israeli fighter jets bombed a UNRWA school in the Nuseirat refugee camp on July 16 [Ali Jadallah/Anadolu Images]

instructing Palestinians fleeing ground assaults to take refuge there.

## UNRWA chief says Israeli attacks on schools in the Gaza Strip have become “an almost daily occurrence”

### Schools are not a target!

UNRWA's commissioner has taken a jab at Israel for bombing schools in Gaza.

“An almost daily occurrence. At least eight schools hit in the last 10 days, including six @UNRWA schools,” Philippe Lazzarini said on X, formerly known as Twitter, on Wednesday.

He added, “Schools must never be used for fighting or military purposes by any party to the conflict. Schools are not a target.”

The blatant & constant disregard of international humanitarian law continues unabated. All rules of war have been broken in #Gaza. Losing our common humanity must not become the

new norm.”

UNRWA also said on Tuesday that Israel has hit nearly 70 percent of its schools in Gaza since October 7.

## Israel has slaughtered more than 2,500 Palestinians every month since the ICJ ordered the regime in late January to prevent acts of genocide.

“Over 95% of these schools were used as shelters when hit. 539 people sheltering in UNRWA facilities have been killed. Nowhere is safe. The blatant disregard for @UN premises and humanitarian law must stop,” the UN agency wrote on X.

UNRWA has accused Israel of blatant disregard for international humanitarian law.

Other UN bodies have leveled similar accusations against the

Israeli regime.

The International Criminal Court has requested arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his war minister Yoav Gallant for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Israel also stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice.

### Slap in the face to intl. law

In a historic decision on January 26, the ICJ ordered Israel to “take all measures within its power” to prevent acts that fall within the scope of the genocide convention.

It also said the regime must ensure “with immediate effect” that its forces do not commit any of the acts covered by the convention.

Israel has not only refused to comply with the ruling of the UN's top court but also perpetrated cold-blooded massacres in Gaza including in al-Mawasi.

When the ICJ ordered Israel to stop acts of genocide in late January, the death toll in Gaza was about 26,100.

A comparison with the current death toll shows that Israel has killed more than 2,500 Palestinians every month since the ICJ issued its order.

This indicates that the Netanyahu regime has no scruples about flouting international law. The continuation of Israeli massacres in Gaza also amounts to a slap in the face to international organizations.

Such flagrant disregard for UN bodies is rooted in the unwavering support provided to Israel by Western countries, particularly the United States.

Israel is slaughtering Palestinians with impunity as the West remains reluctant to take action to stop the regime's killing machine.

## Hezbollah chief warns Israeli occupation regime

### “If your tanks cross into Lebanon, you will have no tanks left”

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- The Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, said on Tuesday that if the Israeli occupation regime “persists in targeting [Lebanese] civilians it would compel [Hezbollah] to launch rockets and target new settlements not previously targeted”.

During a speech marking the tenth of Muharram, the anniversary of Ashura, Seyyed Nasrallah affirmed that “the resistance in its ongoing battle is victorious for all the peoples of the region who have come under attack by the Israeli entity through occupation, massacres, aggression, and threats.”

He praised “the brave fighters of Gaza,” describing them as “heroes and knights,” and also delivered a message to the people of the besieged enclave, whom he branded as “the patient and steadfast, epitomes of perseverance and resilience in our time”.

For more than nine months, more than two million in the Gaza Strip have faced a U.S.-backed Israeli genocidal war.

Daily massacres have killed more than 38,000 people, the majority of them women and children amid little action by the international community to end the genocide.

Nasrallah saluted Yemen's support for the Gaza front, saying, “Yemen managed to block ships linked to the aggression from crossing the Red Sea to occupied Palestine and imposed a blockade on Eilat port, which has gone bankrupt, according to Zionist officials.”

“The essence of Ashura is to triumph for the oppressed,” he underlined.

The Hezbollah chief added, “We are here to ensure that Palestine triumphs, we are here for the oppressed Gaza Strip, for the West Bank, and for the people of Lebanon,” em-

phasizing that “Lebanon has entered a new chapter in its history since October 8, when it opened a military front in solidarity with people and resistance in Gaza”.

He said this front was opened because it is a battle for the entire people of Lebanon. “We stand firm in addition to the supportive fronts for Gaza in Yemen, Iraq, alongside our allies Syria and Iran”.

He underscored that there are three Arab countries still suffering directly from occupation, aggression, terrorism, and Israel: Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.

The leader of the Lebanese resistance movement pointed out that “the Israeli occupation army admitted for the first time that it suffers from a shortage of tanks due to their damage in the battle fronts in Gaza and the north.”

Nasrallah threatened the Israeli occupation army, warning, “If your tanks cross into Lebanon and southern Lebanon, you will not suffer from a shortage of tanks because you will not have any tanks left.”

During his speech, Nasrallah reiterated that if the Israeli military persists in killing Lebanese civilians it will only compel Hezbollah to launch more rockets and target new settlements that have not been targeted so far.

Nasrallah stressed, “The Lebanon front will not stop as long as the aggression on Gaza continues.”

He added, “For ten months, the threat of [a full-scale] war did not deter us even when Israel was not suffering from any shortages.”

He added that “all the rumors about an agreement ready to be implemented on the southern Lebanese border are untrue,” confirming that “the future of what happens in the south will be decided based on the results of the war on Gaza.”

Nasrallah commended the resilient and

vigilant environment upon which the resistance movement in Lebanon relies, affirming that “the villages at the front line will be rebuilt as they were and even more beautifully because they are symbols of our steadfastness and resistance.”

He pointed that “the Israeli entity is experiencing its worst conditions and days on all levels for the first time,” as its political and military leaders confess.

“For the first time the occupation leaders and elites are speaking about the collapse and the demise [of the occupation regime].”

He added, “Despite Israel's aggression for ten months, it has been unable to achieve any of its goals and it is covering these failures with heinous massacres against civilians in Gaza.”

“For the first time, Israel is suffering in every aspect, in its army, reliable systems, government, parties, society, security, and economy, all of which is the result of fighting and resilience in Gaza, the West Bank, and various fronts that have stood in solidarity with Palestine.”

Nasrallah continued, “All attempts by the entity to conceal its human and material losses, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or southern Lebanon, have begun to appear,” noting that “9,254 people, including officers and soldiers, were wounded, including 3,000 who had limbs amputated, 650 paralyzed cases, and 185 who were completely blinded, with several thousand suffering from severe psychological trauma.”

At the end of his speech, Seyyed Nasrallah held the United States fully responsible for the massacres committed by the occupation regime due to the regular shipments of weapons to Israel.

## Saudi diplomat visits Mashhad museum

TEHRAN - Ali Madawi, the chief of the Protocol Department at the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Mashhad, has paid a visit to the Great Museum of Khorasan.

He explored several exhibitions such as the ones showcasing ancient pottery and prehistoric rhythms, the museum's director said on Wednesday.

Ali Safarnejad said the visit was part of an initiative to welcome the presence of Saudi Arabian pilgrims in Mashhad, CHTN reported.

Safarnejad expressed the museum's readiness to host joint exhibitions and cultural programs with other Muslim countries, highlighting the Khorasan Great Museum's status as one of the largest museums in West Asia.

Commenting on the museum's signifi-



cance, Madawi emphasized the importance of cultural collaborations between the cultural sectors of the two countries, particularly between their museums.

Mashhad is a traditional destination for travelers and pilgrims to visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

## Qazvin literary heritage: a new frontier in tourism

TEHRAN - Qazvin, renowned for its literary luminaries like Ubayd Zakani and Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, is launching a literary tourism department aimed at harnessing the rich cultural tapestry.

Pinpointing the diverse tourism potential of literary attractions in Qazvin, a local official in charge of tourism announced that a new department will be organized focusing on satirical literature.

"Literary tourism, evolving beyond mere visits to tombs and homes of literary figures," said Nader Mohammadi on Wednesday. "Now encompasses various creative branches based on the popularity of literary works, poets, and writers among the public."

Qazvin, renowned for eminent figures in poetry and literature, especially in satire literature such as Ubayd Zakani, Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, and Nasim-e Shomal, holds significant potential, he noted adding that, "Leveraging these rich cultural and artistic treasures, we aim to foster and promote a new generation of tourism industry in the province."

The department, he underscored, will be formed in collaboration with the Faculty of Literature at Imam Khomeini University in Qazvin.

Conducting relevant studies and research in the field, examining global experiences in literary tourism destinations, and involving local creative artists, poets, and writers are among the topics to be addressed in the literary tourism department, according to Mohammadi.

He further elaborated that understanding

the needs and barriers to developing literary tourism and exploring strategies to transform Qazvin into a destination for satire literature tourism in the country will also be key topics.

Literary tourism is a niche form of cultural tourism that revolves around visiting places associated with literature, authors, and literary events.

It has gained popularity worldwide as travelers seek deeper connections with the cultural heritage and artistic expressions of destinations.

This form of tourism typically includes visits to authors' homes, literary landmarks such as libraries and museums, settings of famous literary works, and participation in literary festivals and events.

The appeal of literary tourism lies in its ability to immerse travelers in the literary landscapes that have inspired great works of literature.

It allows visitors to explore the historical and cultural contexts that shaped the authors and their creations, offering insights into local traditions and values.

Literary tourism not only promotes cultural understanding and preservation but also contributes to local economies by attracting tourists interested in literature, art, and history.

Overall, literary tourism serves as a bridge between literature and travel, offering enthusiasts a profound way to experience the literary legacy of a place while enjoying its cultural and natural attractions.

## 8 million visits to Golestan attractions registered

TEHRAN - In a remarkable boost for local tourism, Golestan province recorded over eight million visits to its diverse attractions in the first quarter of the current Persian year (started on March 20), a local official brought to light.

"The province's tourist attractions saw over eight million and 193 thousand visits in the course of the spring," said Yaser Qandehari, adding that the reported figure features visits to historical sites, recreational areas, museums, handicraft centers, and natural, man-made, and religious attractions.

The most visited attractions, he outlined, were the natural sites, which received four million and 15 thousand visits.

Additionally, the province's tourism infrastructure registered one million and 134 thousand visits, and historical sites saw one million and eight thousand visits, according to Qandehari.

The official further elaborated that recreational areas in Golestan recorded one million and 503 thousand visits, while handicraft centers attracted 121,068 visits.

"Religious sites were visited 409,633 times, and the province's museums had 2,981 visits," Qandehari wended up.

Golestan province, located in northern Iran, boasts a diverse array of tourism attractions,



making it a prime destination for both sightseers and nature lovers.

The provincial capital, Gorgan, features a rich historical fabric, including the well-preserved Esterabad district, which is renowned for its ancient houses, Tekyehs, madrasas, and mosques.

Beyond its historical significance, Golestan offers breathtaking natural landscapes, such as the lush Alangdareh and Naharkhoran forest parks, which provide visitors with opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and wildlife observation.

Golestan's coastal areas along the Caspian Sea add to its allure, featuring pristine beaches and scenic views.

The province is also home to several cultural and recreational festivals that celebrate its rich heritage and vibrant community.

# Muharram rituals in Yazd captivate intl. visitors

TEHRAN - The number of international travelers observing religious rituals in Yazd during the first ten days of Muharram has doubled, according to a local official.

"Since the beginning of the Muharram, more than 400 foreign tourists attended mourning ceremonies across Yazd," Seyyed-Hasan Hosseini told IRNA on Wednesday, highlighting that the number demonstrates twofold rise compared to the corresponding period of a year earlier.

The official further elaborated that the tourists hailing from different nations such as Türkiye, Philippines, China, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Spain, attended the Tasoua and Ashura ceremonies, participating in the preparation and distribution of Nazri (religious food offerings), getting to know the nationally registered mourning rituals and intangible heritage.



Large number of the attendees, Hosseini brought to light, were from Sunni Turkish community, accounting for 80% of the overseas tourists.

Arranging specially organized tours for international tourists, was a result of synergy between local active members of religious and spiritual tourism sectors, according to the official.

"Ardakan, Ashkezar, Taft, and Mehriz counties, played hostess to the religious tourists, attending Nakhli Gardani historical ritual," he noted.

Earlier this month, provincial officials revealed that Yazd is set to welcome international tourists to its renowned Muharram mourning ceremonies through specially organized tours.

This initiative began in Yazd more than ten years ago and has been well-received by foreign tourists over the years.

Every Muharram, hundreds of foreign nationals flock to Iran to experience its profound mourning traditions firsthand despite the language barrier.

Throughout the first ten days of the lunar month, numerous mourning rituals pay tribute to Imam Hussain (AS) and his loyal companions, martyred in the tragic Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

Commemorated with exceptional grandeur, these rituals hold a revered place in the hearts of the Iranian people. Each unique ritual conveys profound messages of sacrifice, justice, and devotion.

The zenith of Muharram observances is Ashura, the tenth day of the lunar month, marked by large gatherings at mosques and religious centers.

## Zanjan's Muharram rituals attract foreign nationals

TEHRAN - Zanjan province has welcomed tourists and photographers from nine countries to participate in the annual Tasu'a and Ashura mourning ceremonies, a significant religious event commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS).

On Wednesday, Davoud Abyan, the deputy director of Zanjan's tourism directorate, announced the international presence, noting the province's tradition of hosting foreign visitors during these solemn occasions.

This year, foreign nationals joined tours that included events such as reciting elegies (rouzeh), chest-beating rituals (sineh-zani), cooking and distributing ceremonial



food (nazri), carrying palm structures (nakhli-bardari), and performing traditional passion plays (ta'zieh), Abyan explained.

He said that the visitors came from the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Pakistan, Ye-

men, India, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Bahrain and Afghanistan.

"Additionally, Zanjan hosted domestic tourists from 18 provinces."

Abyan emphasized that the foreign tourists, after experiencing the Tasu'a and Ashura ceremonies, gained a profound understanding of the tragic events of Karbala and the purpose of Imam Hussain's uprising. He expressed that these visitors have now become potential ambassadors for the culture of Tasu'a and Ashura, helping to spread awareness about the significance of these events globally.

## Systematic archaeological survey begins at Paleolithic site in western Iran

TEHRAN - Kermanshah's cultural heritage department has commenced a systematic archaeological survey to determine the boundaries and propose a preservation area for a vast open-air Paleolithic site that is located in the western Iranian province.

Dariush Farmani, the director of the department, on Wednesday, announced that the open-air Paleolithic site, which is an ancient stone mine, covering over 300 hectares, represents the largest area used by various hominins from the Middle to Late Pleistocene era in the Zagros Mountains, CHTN reported.

Farmani explained that the project to define the boundaries and propose the preservation area for the site began in July this year. Due to the site's significant archaeological importance and increasing damage, this initiative has been prioritized by the Cultural Heritage Department.

Archaeologist Naemat Hariri, the head of the research program, stated that the site was discovered in 2021 by the renowned Iranian archaeologist Saman Heydari-Guran, who subsequently requested a thorough examination of the area by the provincial Cultural Heritage Department and the National Ar-

chaeological Research Institute.

Following initial assessments, both institutions approved the survey. The preliminary findings indicated that the site, rich in radiolarite raw stone resources, was extensively utilized by human communities throughout different historical periods.

Hariri highlighted the presence of bifacial stone tools, scientifically known as Acheulean culture artifacts, including hand axes, cleavers, and large flakes, as clear evidence of early human occupation. Comparative dating of similar sites in the Middle East suggests these tools date 300,000 to one million

years.

Furthermore, the abundance of side scrapers, stone spearheads, and core tools typical of the Middle Paleolithic period underscores the site's extensive use by human communities of that era, the report said.

Hariri expressed hope that through the boundary determination and preservation proposal project, along with detailed research using the latest scientific methods, a clearer understanding of one of Iran's oldest human settlements will emerge, helping to prevent further degradation of this invaluable site.

## Stork habitat in Kordestan province gains national label

TEHRAN - A habitat of migratory storks in Kordestan province has been officially registered on Iran's national list of natural sites to help protect its serene atmosphere.

The site, located in the village of Darreh Tefi near Marivan, has been assigned the registration number 1236 after undergoing the necessary legal procedures, ILNA reported.

The announcement was made by Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali Darabi to the province's governor-general, emphasizing that the site, while respecting private ownership rights, will be under the supervision and protection of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

The ministry will be responsible for establishing protective regulations and defining the boundaries of the site. Any alterations or actions that could damage or alter the site's authenticity are strictly prohibited, parts of the announcement reads.

Every year, the lands surrounding Lake Zaribar in Marivan become a temporary home to numerous migratory birds, including storks. These storks are seen as symbols of the vitality of Zaribar and have been long-time neighbors to the villagers in the surrounding areas. The white storks undertake a long migration, flying thousands of kilometers to settle in the warm nests prepared by the residents of Darreh Tefi, about 15 kilometers from Marivan. They stay until late autumn, adding life and beauty to the region.

The return of the storks at the onset of spring is celebrated with festivals and joyous gatherings by the villagers. These celebrations mark the end of

winter's cold and the arrival of spring, symbolizing the ongoing life of the lake.

The close relationship and coexistence between the locals and the storks have created a unique opportunity to develop the region's tourism industry, the report said.

Visitors to Marivan often venture to the villages around Lake Zaribar to witness this natural spectacle. The presence of the storks adds to the lake's allure, drawing both domestic and international tourists.

Historically, the village had only one pair of storks nesting on an electric pole. To prevent electrocution, the villagers constructed a handmade nest atop an iron pole, an initiative that gradually increased the number of migratory storks. Inspired by this success, local youths have continued to create suitable nesting sites, enhancing the stork population each year.

Lake Zaribar, situated at an altitude of about 1,285 meters above sea level, is one of the world's most unique freshwater lakes, characterized by its lack of incoming rivers and water supplied by springs at

the lake's bottom and melting snow from the surrounding mountains. The lake, which freezes over in winter except at around 60 spring points, is a rare ecological and aquatic ecosystem in Kordestan, surrounded by forested mountains. It hosts a diverse array of fish, birds, and plant species, contributing significantly to local agriculture and recreation.

Tourist facilities around the lake include the Bashmaq border market, handicraft exhibitions, parking areas, the Zarivar four-star hotel, and the Nowruz four-star hotel in Marivan. The region boasts a temperate and cool climate in spring and summer, with cold and dry conditions in fall and winter.

The national registration of the stork habitat in Kordestan province helps preserve its natural heritage, fostering a harmonious relationship between nature and local communities, and enhancing tourism potential in the region.

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# Five wetlands in Qom on natural heritage sites list

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has registered five wetlands in Qom province in the list of national natural heritage sites.

These wetlands are namely Salt Lake, Hoz-e Sultan, Morreh, Ghadir Asb, and Behesht-e Masoumeh wetlands.

These wetlands have contributed to the survival of numerous plants and wildlife species, IRIB quoted Mohammad-Hossein Bazgir, an official with DOE, as saying.

Located between Qom, Semnan, and Isfahan provinces, the large Salt Lake wetland, stretches to more than 200,000 hectares.

“Contrary to the opinion of some who consider the deserts to be lifeless and barren, they are precious ecosystems. In Qom province, the large Salt Lake has led to the creation of suitable vegetation and wildlife habitats in the desert plain,” Bazgir said.

Hoz-e Sultan wetland resembles a beautiful huge mirror. Situated some 40 kilometers northward of Qom, the lake is adjacent to the Qom – Tehran highway.

Morreh Wetland, which is located in the central desert of Iran and about 65 km from the city of Qom on the Qom-Garmsar highway, has an area of more than 33,000 hectares.

Currently, the wetland is the habitat of some 170 species of migratory birds.

Ghadir Asb and Behesht-e Ma-



soumeh wetlands are the two other wetlands in Qom province, which play a crucial role in mitigating sand and dust storms.

## Preservation of wetlands with an ecosystem approach

The ecosystem approach for the protection and management of 46 wetlands across the country is being used.

The approach is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization, which encompass the essential structure, processes, functions, and interactions among organisms and their environment.

It was launched in the Iranian calendar year 1384 (March 2005-March 2006) in Parishan and Shadegan wetlands as well as Lake Urmia, ISNA reported.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines the ecosys-

tem approach as “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”.

It goes beyond examining single issues, species, or ecosystem functions in isolation. Instead, it recognizes ecological systems for what they are: rich mixes of elements that interact with each other continuously. This understanding is particularly important for coasts and seas, where the nature of water keeps systems and functions connected.

The Approach is also a way of making decisions in order to manage human activities sustainably. It recognizes that human activities both affect the ecosystem and depend on it. Thus, it aims to improve the way human activities are managed for the protection of the marine environment.

In 2015, the DOE initiated an ef-

fort with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) aiming to preserve and revive the country's wetlands.

In the next phase in 2017, the government of Japan supported the project focusing on the sustainable management of water and soil resources around Urmia Lake as well as Shadegan and Bakhtegan wetlands.

It is a five-year plan, voluntarily supported by Japan, to take advantage of both their financial and technical assistance, ISNA quoted Mojtaba Zoljoodi, an official with the Department of Environment, as saying. Three years have passed since the implementation of the project, he added.

“To implement the program in the remaining two years, we are consulting with the government of Japan and other governments that are willing to cooperate with Iran to be able to implement the project properly.

The plan to conserve Iran's wetlands is one of the good practical projects that, if continues, can help not only the wetlands of Iran but also the wetlands of other countries.”

The results of the implementation of the project in 200 villages concerning water consumption have shown that a good amount of water in the agriculture sector has been saved. In addition, productivity, quality of the products, and the economic income of the family have increased.

## Penalties increased to curb wildlife crimes

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has increased penalties for wildlife crimes to deter offenses and strengthen conservation measures.

Penalties for hunting and capturing wild animals and destroying vegetation have increased from 20.4 million rials (about 34 dollars) to 102 million rials (about 170 dollars).

The penalties for hunting and fishing during prohibited seasons and hours, hunting and fishing using unauthorized equipment and methods, and destroying sources of water like fountains for animals in protected areas, have increased from 153 million rials (255 dollars) to 306 million Rials (510 dollars).

The fines for hunting and fishing protected wild animals, particularly in protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries without a permit; polluting the water of rivers; lakes, and protected wetlands; hunting rare and endangered wild animals; hunting in national parks; and hunting or killing wild animals using poisons and explosives; taking actions that pollute the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Sea of Oman with non-oil substances, has raised from 204 million rials (340 dollars) to 340 million rials (about 507 dollars) and 408 million rials (680 dollars) to 578 million rials (around 963 dollars), respectively.

On April 15, Gholam-Reza Ebdali, an official with the Department of Environment said, “According to experts, the current penalties do not provide a significant deterrent effect for wildlife crimes, so it has been decided to triple them.”

Offenses involve the illegal killing of wildlife, fishing, or hunting without permits. The penalties for these offenses vary based on the biological value of each species, the population crisis, and endangered status, whether or not the species is in danger of extinction, ILNA quoted Ebdali as saying.

Endangered species such as the Asiatic cheetah, which is also considered one of the main protected species, will attract the highest penalties, he noted.

The fine rate for offenses against other animal species, such as leopard, yellow deer, Persian zebra, black bear, brown bear, great bustard, falcon, and saker falcon, will increase this year, the official stressed.

The initial proposal was to raise the penalties by 10 times the current rate to tackle the increase in wildlife crimes. However, it was not approved in the preliminary meetings of the Supreme Council for Environment Protection leading to triple penalties for wildlife crimes, which will be finalized in the next meeting of the council.

Ebdali went on to say that road accidents are the other source of threat to animals which cannot be traced to penalize the killers due to lack of cameras on the roads.

To reduce wildlife species' deaths due to road accidents further actions need to be taken.

The least expensive measure to tackle the problem is to secure roads next to animal habitats; increase the number of warning signs, and

install enough electric light poles as well as fencing to help species survive.

## conservation efforts

More than 8,000, 2,000, and 25,000 species of plants, vertebrates, and invertebrates, respectively, show Iran's rich biodiversity and the importance of its preservation.

Wildlife conservation, which includes protecting all living things on the planet, plant and animal species, and microorganisms, means preserving the components of a large network. A network wherein all the components are interconnected and depend on each other in different ways.

In the last few years, protecting animal species in their original habitat has been considered one of the main tasks of the Department of Environment (DOE).

The DOE has formed four ad hoc committees for the preservation of imperiled animal species.

Several meetings and consultations have been held with some other countries to benefit from their scientific and experimental capacities in the preservation of species such as the Asiatic cheetah, the great bustard, the leopard, and houbara bustard.

Holding several workshops and training courses on getting to know reptiles and amphibians, leopards, aquatic animals, and existing challenges, as well as diagnosing their diseases and ways to prevent them, are among other important measures that have been taken.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Philanthropists support 28,000 orphans, deprived children

Iranian benefactors have made cash and kind contributions from the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan (starting on May 6) to help 28,000 children who are either orphaned or whose parents are financially struggling, deputy director of Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation has announced. There are currently 600,000 philanthropists who support orphaned children as well as children living in families in financial distress, IRNA quoted Alireza Asgarian as saying on Wednesday.

The foundation also intends to build housing units for families who cannot afford to rent houses, he added.

## مردم ۲۸ هزار کودک بی سرپرست را تحت حمایت قرار دادند

معاون توسعه مشارکت‌های مردمی کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) گفت: خیرین و نیکوکاران کشور از ابتدای ماه مبارک رمضان تاکنون ۲۸ هزار کودک بی‌سرپرست را تحت حمایت های مالی و غیرمالی خود قرار دادند.

علیرضا عسگریان روز چهارشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار اجتماعی ایرنا افزود: ۶۰۰ هزار حامی در سطح کشور در یاری رسانی به ایتمام و فرزندان محسنین با کمیته امداد همکاری دارند.

عسگریان اظهار داشت: ساخت مسکن برای خانواده های تحت پوشش کمیته امداد از دیگر برنامه‌های اجرایی و دارای اولویت کاری این نهاد در سال جاری است.

## Tehran ready to aid Baghdad in preserving environment

From page 1 ▶ “Water scarcity and desertification are critical issues that worsen with the passage of time; soon European countries will face the same challenges. Therefore, global cooperation is essential for addressing these issues,” the Iraqi official stated.

Salajeqeh, for his part, stressed that one of the basic strategies of Iran's diplomacy is boosting cooperation with Iraq in various fields such as environment, economy, social, and tourism.

Referring to previously agreed pilot plans, he said, “We are optimistic that environmental issues, particularly sand and dust storms, reach field work.”

The official said that Iran is also willing to jointly create green spaces and implement waste management projects during the Arbāeen pilgrimage in the holy city of Karbala.

Educating individuals and raising public awareness play a pivotal role in preventing many problems. However, it requires both countries' cooperation, Salajeqeh further noted.

## Combating SDSs

In August 2023, Iran and Iraq signed an agreement to implement joint pilot plans to deal with sand and dust storms in four provinces of Iraq and two provinces of Iran.

On his trip to Baghdad, Ali-Mohammad Tahmasbi, the secretary of the national policymaking headquarters for dealing with sand and dust storms, met with Mithaq Abdul-Hussein Obaid, the technical undersecretary of Iraq's Ministry of Agriculture, agreed on jointly implementing the plans in the four Iraqi provinces of Dhi Qar, Al-Muthanna, Wasit, and Maysan, as well as the two Iranian provinces of Ilam and Khuzestan within the next two months.

The two sides also discussed different possible ways to deal with desertification, reduce the impacts of climate change, remove barriers to food security, and manage sand and dust storms, IRIB reported.

Tahmasbi emphasized the need to boost



cooperation in this regard, announcing Iran's readiness to study cases of desertification in border areas.

Obaid, for his part, said that solving the problem of sand and dust storms in the region requires the cooperation of West Asian countries, including Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran.

On August 1, a delegation led by the secretary of the national policymaking headquarters for dealing with sand and dust storms started a four-day visit to Iraq to follow up on previous agreements in this regard.

The visit aimed to implement the sub-regional action plan to deal with sand and dust storms, form a regional technical working group, and carry out joint projects to curb hotspots of sand and dust storms, IRNA reported.

Tahmasbi said bilateral and multilateral memorandums of understanding have been signed with Iraq, but unfortunately have not yet been implemented.

The SDS phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces.

According to studies, eight large sand and dust storm hotspots stretching to 270 million hectares in neighboring and Persian Gulf countries are affecting Iran.

Regional maps show that Saudi Arabia produces the highest level of particulate matter, followed by Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and the UAE, respectively.

## Over 20 new measures adopted for women's development in Raisi administration

TEHRAN –The vice president for women and family affairs has said that the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi adopted more than 20 new measures toward women's development.

Women's participation in decision-making councils of ministries, insurance coverage for rural women, mothers with three or more children, and pregnant women are some of the great measures taken by the administration, ISNA quoted Ensieh Khazali as saying.

The empowerment programs of the late President Raisi's administration have resulted in the self-sufficiency of more than 126,000 women heads of household.

In June, IRNA quoted Khazali as saying that female entrepreneurs have expanded their business, resulting in the creation of sustainable employment for women, as well as the support for job-creating skills.

The empowerment programs covered women with abusive husbands, women breadwinners, single girls aged over 45, women suffering from social harm, and women who are heads of household.

Also, the national sustainable family-oriented business plan, with the assistance of women entrepreneurs managed to empower women seeking employment.

In this project, women entrepreneurs support the employment of women for four years from the raw material preparation stage to the end product sales stage to ensure their sustainable employment.

In addition, the late president's administration for the first time established an entrepreneurship fund for supporting women heads of household.

Providing online sales platforms, and establishing sales markets across the country were among other empowerment programs

for women heads of households which led to the self-sufficiency of many Iranian women.

Also, over the past year, positive measures have been taken to empower women in both social and economic arenas.

Paying attention to the managerial position of women was another important and effective program last year, so 25.2 percent of managerial positions at the high, middle, and executive levels of government institutions were allocated to women.

Setting up 4,200 credit funds for rural women and employing 2,390 women as members of the board of directors of knowledge-based companies were other measures in this regard.

Improving the social security insurance coverage for women heads of households, reducing women's unemployment rate to 13.7 percent, developing sustainable businesses, and implementing a national plan to empower rural and nomadic women were also conducted in the past year.

And last but not least, the national budget bill increased women's share of the budget by 50 percent.

Concerning the fact that population is one of the important and key points in the 7th national development plan (2023-2027), multiple measures are forecast to be implemented in the plan to strengthen the pillars of family and remove obstacles to the growth and prosperity of women.

According to the Iranian Statistics Center, the fertility rate in urban areas is usually higher than in rural areas. Therefore, free insurance coverage and social support for rural mothers with three children and more was put on the agenda.



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JULY 18, 2024

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do not waste water even if you were at a running stream.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:39 Dawn: 3:21 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:03 (tomorrow)

## IAF cinemathèque to host “Yannick”



TEHRAN- The Cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen French filmmaker Quentin Dupieux's 2023 black comedy movie “Yannick” on July 24.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian film critic Ramtin Shahbazi.

“Yannick” is a thought-provoking and humorous exploration of creativity, power dynamics, and the human need for entertainment. The film tells the story of Yannick, a parking attendant who takes a Parisian theatre hostage and rewrites a mediocre play under his own direction.

The film opens with a lackluster performance of the boulevard comedy “Le Cocu” at the Bouffes Parisiens theatre. The three actors, Sophie Denis, Paul Rivière, and William Keller, are struggling to engage the audience's attention in a half-empty room.

However, their performance is suddenly disrupted by Yannick, a disgruntled audience member who has traveled from Melun to see the play. Yannick is unimpressed by the production and decides to take matters into his own hands.

With a revolver in hand, Yannick demands that the actors stop performing and begins rewriting the play under his direction. Despite their initial resistance, the actors eventually agree to comply with Yannick's demands. As they learn the new script, Yannick takes the opportunity to connect with the audience, who are initially shocked but eventually won over by his charm.

As the play progresses, Yannick's creative vision is put on full display. He injects humor

and wit into the script, turning what was once a mundane production into a hilarious and entertaining spectacle. The audience is won over by Yannick's talent and enthusiasm, and even the actors begin to enjoy themselves.

However, not everyone is pleased with Yannick's takeover. Paul, one of the actors, becomes increasingly frustrated with Yannick's antics and decides to take matters into his own hands.

He manages to disarm Yannick and takes control of the situation, but not before Yannick has already written a new script that he is convinced will be a hit.

The film ends with Yannick's play coming to an end, and the B.R.I. arriving to take him into custody. But despite the chaos and disruption he caused, Yannick's creative energy has brought people together and created an unforgettable experience.

Throughout the film, Dupieux explores themes of creativity, power dynamics, and the human need for entertainment.

He also pokes fun at the conventions of traditional theatre and challenges the notion of what constitutes “good” art. With its witty dialogue and clever plot twists, “Yannick” is a hilarious and thought-provoking film that will leave audiences laughing and reflecting on their own creative impulses.

The cast delivers standout performances, particularly Raphaël Quenard as Yannick. His charisma and energy bring depth and humor to the character, making him both relatable and infuriating in equal measure.

The supporting cast is also excellent, particularly Sophie Denis and Paul Rivière as they navigate their roles as actors under Yannick's direction.

Visually, the film is stunning, with clever camera work and production design that brings the world of theatre to life. The use of music is also noteworthy, adding to the film's energy and humor.

# 6 Iranian short films to compete in Spain's RIURAU Film Festival

TEHRAN-Six short films from Iran will compete in the 13th RIURAU Film Festival, to be held in the Marina Alta region in Alicante (Spain) in August.

For this year's edition of the RIURAU Film Festival, there have been nearly 2,400 short films, coming from 80 countries. Twelve selectors have undertaken the extensive and delicate task of reviewing and rating the films until the screening time objective has been achieved with the final nomination of 43 shorts for seven screening blocks.

The festival has highlighted two groups of high-quality films: that of Iranian short films, a cinema committed to the social reality and the situation of women in the country, and that of Spanish short films, which reflect the growing interest and commitment of Spanish filmmakers to this format, capable of telling consistent stories in a maximum of 20 minutes, as required by the bases.

The Iranian short flicks selected for the event include “Sampo” by Marziyeh Riahi, “Suitcase” by Saman Hosseinpour and Ako Zandkarimi, “Spider-Zan” by Maryam Khodabakhsh, “Beyond the Alleys” by Navid Zare, “Close Your Eyes” by Barbod Ataei, and “The Station” by Ahmad Noormohamadi and Hamidreza Arjomandi.

A production of 2023, “Sampo,” 13 minutes, shows a girl and her mother, a single worker, who reside in a low-income area of Tehran. The girl constantly wishes that her mother would get a job at the memorial service, where the employees are treated kindlier.

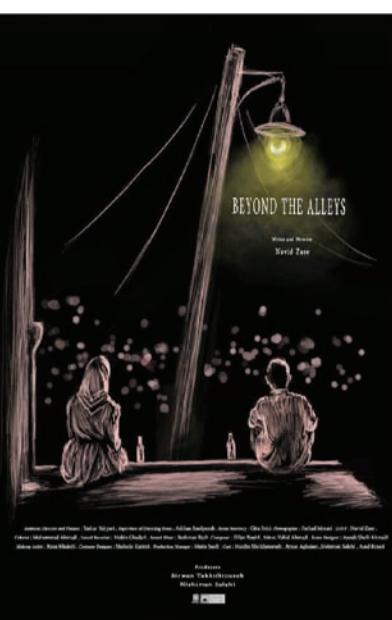


Linda Kiani, Maryam Boubani, Hilda Kordbacheh, and Hannan Azizi comprise the cast of “Sampo,” which has so far, been screened at several film festivals in Canada, the US, Australia, Sri Lanka, and Bulgaria, and won the Biznaga de Plata Award for Best Fiction in the Affirming Women's Rights section of the 27th Malaga Film Festival in Malaga, Spain, in March.

A 2023 production, “Suitcase” is about a Kurdish refugee who lives in his suitcase far from his own homeland. In it he carries memories of his family. When someone steals the suitcase in the tumult of the foreign city center, he loses his home a second time.

Meysam Damanzeh, Rezvan Khodami, Elena Sahami and Ava Moslem-Khani are in the cast of the short work.

The 15-minute flick won several awards last year including the best script award at the 11th Parma



International Music Film Festival in Italy, the Audience Award at Kobani International Film Festival in Germany, and the Silver Yusr for Best Short Film at the 3rd Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Made in 2023, “Spider-Zan,” 13 minutes, depicts Negar, a young woman with a conspicuous scar on her cheek, who confronts a dilemma as she prepares for her marriage proposal ceremony. She must find a way to conceal her scar, navigating the complexities of societal expectations and personal identity.

The cast includes Zahra Aghapour, Roza Hashemi, and Narges Mohtashami.

A 2024 production, “Beyond the Alleys” is a 14-minute film about Mardin who finds himself in a critical situation and thinks of revenge.



Mardin Sheikh Moradi and Aynaz Aghajani are in the cast.

In “Close Your Eyes,” a single 6-year-old girl enters a house with her mother and while she is playing, she gets involved in her mother's work interactions with her employer.

Parham Shirijian, Hana Nasrabadi, Reza Amanlou, and Sanaz Roshani play in the film.

“The Station” is the story of an introverted man who is attracted to a young girl at a taxi station.

Hamed Mansourian, Fatemeh Daripour, Erfan Abdi, Amirreza Akbarian, and Mostafa Shahmoradian are in the cast among others.

The 13th edition of RIURAU Film Festival will be held from August 17 to 28. Three towns, Denia, Xàbia/Jàvea and Jesús Pobre, will host the festival screenings, activities and meetings.

## “Antigone” to go on stage at Tehran theater



*Iranian stage director and actress Nasim Adabi in an undated photo*

TEHRAN- An adaptation of Sophocles' timeless tragedy “Antigone” is set to go on stage at Molavi Theater in Tehran in the near future.

Nasim Adabi and Neda Shahrokhi will co-direct the play, which will be presented in the traditional format of tazieh, Iranian passion play.

“Antigone,” written by the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles, is a timeless tragedy that explores profound ethical and moral dilemmas.

Set in the city-state of Thebes, the play revolves around Antigone, a courageous young woman who defies the tyrannical decree of her uncle, King Creon.

The conflict arises when Antigone's brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, kill each other while leading opposing armies. Creon, now the ruler, honors Eteocles with a proper burial but denies the same to Polynices, deeming him a traitor. Antigone, driven by her strong sense of justice and loyalty, resolves to bury her brother's body against Creon's orders, prompting a clash of values.

As the play progresses, Antigone's actions cause a ripple effect, leading to tragic consequences. Creon, obstinate in upholding the law and preserving his power, sentences Antigone to death.

This decision, however, puts him at odds with his son, Haemon, who is engaged to Antigone. Faced with the choice between familial loyalty and devotion to the state, Haemon fights to reason with his father but fails to change his mind.

In the end, the play reaches a devastating climax as Antigone takes her own life, revealing the devastating consequences of blind adherence to power and rigid laws. Touched by profound grief, Creon's wife, Eurydice, also takes her life, leaving a shattered and remorseful Creon behind.

“Antigone” is a powerfully resonant work that delves into the enduring themes of moral duty, the conflict between personal beliefs and societal expectations, and the limits of power.

Sophocles' masterful storytelling and exploration of complex human emotions have made this tragedy an enduring classic, maintaining its relevance even in contemporary times.

The Iranian passion play tazieh was registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010.

Tazieh represents religious events, historical and mythical stories and folk tales. Each performance has the four components of poetry, music, song and motion.

## Cartoon of Day



There's No Safe Place in Gaza  
Cartoonist: Osama Hajjaj from Jordan

## Palestinian director Rashid Masharawi on producing 22 short films in Gaza during war

At the Taormina Film Festival, underway in Italy from July 13 to 19, Palestinian director Rashid Masharawi presented “From Ground Zero,” a compilation of 22 short films, shot by filmmakers inside the Gaza Strip during the current war.

He spoke with Variety about the process of making the film and what it means to face appalling conditions with art.

“I was born and grew up in Gaza. I made many films in Gaza as a director and producer, and this time after I saw all what's going on, I said, ‘No, I am not going to make a film, instead, I'm going to give the chance to the Palestinian filmmakers, and filmmakers who are in Gaza now, sharing what's going on with the people,’” Masharawi said.

“The idea was to focus on untold personal stories, and also to make them artistically, technically well, to train and make these filmmakers become better in order to film their stories so that

they can be placed in festivals, and on television.”

Masharawi worked alongside French production company Coorigine Productions and producer Laura Nikolov, who took care of the coordination between all the groups in Gaza, receiving the material, and supervising the post-production.

Making the film was a logistical nightmare, as was getting footage out of Gaza. “It was one of our main problems to get out the material from Gaza and also to have contact all the time with the filmmakers.

Even if we talk through internet, through social media, Facebook, WhatsApp, all these things. But once you have no electricity to charge your mobile, you have nothing,” he said. “Sometimes we were working and awake for 24 hours a day because in this area, there is electricity, there is internet that we can bring our best there to upload material to France. Our last film arrived two

weeks ago.”

Incorporating 22 films into one work was a huge editing challenge, because “no one shoots with the same camera, with the same setup; the sound is different,” he said.

One of the shorts, “Sorry Cinema,” specifically talks about the limits of creating cinema in such difficult conditions.

“This is one of the films I have a special relation with, because you spend your life thinking that cinema is your priority in life. And suddenly, no, it's not. You need to eat; save your family. Humans are more important than cinema,” he said.

“We make films to make life better, to make life easier, to make it more understood. To make humans feel better. This film describes this element very well because the director is in a situation that he needs to choose between life and cinema, and he chose life.”

So, what is the role of cinema? “Cinema is very important to me.

I started to make cinema inside the Palestinian occupied territories more than 30 years ago,” he said. “I need to protect cinema from the Israeli occupation.

Cinema must be not only a reaction; it should be an action. Palestinians, we are a nation. We have history, language, we have music, colors, food: we have many things which belong to us. All these things can be a strong ground to make cinema.”

At least 39,000 people have been killed and 89,000 wounded in Israel's war on Gaza since October 7. According to the assessment, over 137,000 buildings had been damaged in Gaza, more than half of the total.

The ongoing war has caused displacement of almost 2 million Palestinians and mass destruction of civilian property and infrastructure in the occupied Gaza Strip.