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Serious Warning to 'Gang of Criminals'

Pezeshkian tells Macron war on Lebanon would be a colossal blunder with heavy consequences for Israel

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Foreign dignitaries in Tehran to attend presidential inauguration

TEHRAN – Foreign dignitaries have arrived in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new President, Masoud Pezeshkian, which is set to occur on Tuesday afternoon at the Iranian parliament.

The Iranian Parliament announced a notable list of international attendees, including Pornchai Danvivathana, Secretary-General of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD); Ronald Lamola, South African Minister of Foreign Affairs; Hussein Mohamed Latheef, Vice President of the Maldives; Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament; and Moustadroine Abdou, Speaker of the Comorian Parliament.

Other distinguished guests include Brigi Rafini, Niger's Minister of Defense, accompanied by Bakary Yao Sangaré, Niger's Foreign Minister, and Soumana Boubacar, Niger's Cabinet Minister; an Icelandic MP; Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives; Mullah Abdul Kabir, Deputy Prime Minister of the Acting Government of Afghanistan; and Augustin Andriamanana, Deputy Speaker of Madagascar's National Assembly. ▸ Page **2**

Iran, Gambia restore ties after 14 years

TEHRAN– Iran and Gambia have announced the restoration of diplomatic relations based on mutual respect, after a nearly 14-year hiatus.

In a joint statement released on Monday, both nations confirmed their decision to resume ties, emphasizing their commitment to mutual interests.

This move follows a series of meetings between Iranian and Gambian officials in recent years, culminating in talks on Monday between Gambia's Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara and Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani in Tehran.

Tangara is visiting Tehran to attend the inauguration of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The statement outlined that Tehran and Banjul agreed to foster friendly relations grounded in mutual respect, equality, and shared interests. They also plan to enhance cooperation across political, economic, investment, trade, and cultural sectors to benefit both countries.

To expedite this process, the embassies of both nations in Dakar, Senegal, will serve as the diplomatic channel for necessary measures.

Gambia severed diplomatic and economic ties with Iran on November 23, 2010, ordering Iranian representatives to leave within 48 hours. While Gambia did not provide a reason for the break, Tehran attributed it to pressure from the United States. ▸ Page **3**

Israeli failures and lack of solutions

By Batool Subeiti

BEIRUT- Netanyahu's speech to Congress and the theatrical clapping received each minute can only be categorized as the American establishment is seeking to put a good face to the Israeli occupation entity's failures.

Neither a "victory" for the Israeli military on the ground could be presented nor any solutions for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It reflects how the regime has no direction in the face of existential crisis nor any post-war plan. Netanyahu's speech at Congress displayed inherent weakness. He had nothing to speak of except an alleged "Iranian threat" as he begged for the need to form an "Abraham" alliance to protect the fragmented entity. Rather than fulfilling its functional role, that is protecting Western interests in the strategic West Asia region, it is now seeking protection for itself in the name of fighting Iran.

In contrast with the Israeli occupation entity's weakness, the coordination and unity among the resistance fronts are so strong that America is avoiding escalation or a regional war with them.

Relentless bombing of Khan Younis enters 8th day

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – For more than a week now, the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have carried out bloody massacres against civilians in the central Gaza Strip region of Khan Younis.

As the genocidal war on the enclave is entering 10 months, the Israeli military has been pounding the central Gaza Strip with bombs for eight consecutive days.

Despite having declared victory in Khan Younis earlier this year and withdrawing its forces, the IOF has committed deadly assaults on civilians with graphic images of injured children reaching hospitals that are functioning on basic supplies.

The southern region of Gaza has also not been excluded from the bombardment and war crimes that have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, some on the move once again for the ninth time in ten months. The IOF blew up Rafah's main drinking water tank, according to Israeli media.

Israel digging its own grave

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Israel has intensified war rhetoric against Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement following a deadly rocket attack in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights at the weekend.

The rocket hit a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams on Saturday. Twelve children were killed and 20 others were wounded in the attack.

Israel has accused Hezbollah of firing the rocket. But the resistance movement has dismissed the claim as baseless, saying it was not responsible.

Majdal Shams is located about 12 kilometers south of Lebanon and next to the Syrian border.

Israel captured the Golan, a strategic plateau, from Syria in the 1967 war and annexed it in 1981. The international community considers the area an occupied territory.

Israel has offered the residents of Majdal Shams Israeli citizenship, but the majority have refused it.

They have maintained their ties with Syria and its people. The residents of the town have also accused Israel of politicizing Saturday's rocket attack.

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Colonial expectations for a country's foreign policy

By Zahra Akbari

TEHRAN- On July 19, 2024, the Washington Free Beacon published an article titled "Iran's New President, Praised as a 'Reformist' Seeking 'Social Justice,' Spends First Weeks After Election Pledging Allegiance to Terrorists," which is written by Adam Kredo. I will review parts of the article and discuss its accuracy.

The author begins the article by writing: "Iran's new president, widely touted in Western media outlets as a 'moderate' and 'reformist,' has spent the weeks following his election pledging to arm regional terror groups and assembling an international 'Axis of Resistance' to threaten America". By reading the text, we find that the author accuses the elected president of Iran of pledging to arm regional terror groups. ▸ Page **2**

Druze citizens of Majdal Shams call Netanyahu 'murderer', 'criminal'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced public anger as he visited a soccer field in the occupied Golan Heights, where a rocket attack killed 12 children on Saturday.

Speaking at the site in Majdal Shams, Netanyahu once again blamed Lebanon's Hezbollah for the attack in the Druze community. The resistance group has denied responsibility.

As Netanyahu was smearing Hezbollah, the Druze locals yelled out to him to leave. Clapping their hands they chanted "Out! Out!"

Others held up signs calling Netanyahu a "war criminal" and "murderer".

"He (Netanyahu) is the enemy of all of us," protesters shouted.

IPhO 2024: Iranian students surge to 4th place from 17th last year

TEHRAN –Five Iranian students who attended the 54th International Physics Olympiad managed to win a gold as well as four silver medals, improving the country's ranking from 17th in 2023 to fourth this year.

The 54th edition of the IPhO commenced on July 22 in the city of Isfahan and concluded on July 28.

A total of 200 elite students from 47 countries including Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Mexico, Turkey, and some other countries participated in the nine-day event, IRNA reported.

Hosted by Isfahan University of Technology, the IPhO 2024 consisted of two parts: theoretical and practical exams which were held on Tuesday and Thursday last week. Around eight percent of the participants were expected to grab gold medals. ▸ Page **7**

TEHRAN PAPERS

The JCPOA media hype

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

In an interview with Ghasem Molaei, a senior analyst of international issues, Shargh investigated claims about the readiness of the Biden administration to revive the JCPOA with Iran and said: The Kuwaiti Al-Jarida newspaper claimed that the representatives of the American side informed the Iranians last Tuesday that the Biden government is ready to negotiate for a quick return to the nuclear agreement signed in 2015 after making simple reforms to it. After the withdrawal of Joe Biden from the U.S. presidential election and the entry of Kamala Harris, now the Democrats are trying to make the negotiation with Iran and the temporary agreement with Tehran an achievement for themselves.

On the other hand, the Republican movement and Trump will prevent possible future negotiations and any agreement between the Biden government and Tehran. The solution of the Biden administration under the keyword "understanding or unwritten agreement" can evade all the domestic opponents of the United States to negotiate with Iran and revive the JCPOA. In any case, if the foundation for new negotiations to reach another agreement is on the agenda of the new governments of Tehran and Washington, it will still be based on the negotiations and the text of the 2015 JCPOA agreement.

Farhikhetgan: Critics of the regime on the right side of history

In a note, Farhikhtegan dealt with Netanyahu's trip to America. It wrote: Netanyahu likes controversy and power together. In his opinion, creating controversy can help to continue his power. In his speech to Congress, he brazenly described the American people as idiots for protesting against the war and accused them of receiving financial aid from Iran.

These positions caused John Kirby to say that we know that Iran has tried to interfere and create divisions in some cases, but saying that they were all financed by Iran is unfortunate and does not reflect the reality of the protests, because most of the protests are spontaneous and show the real concern of the people. What can be noticed is the distancing of the U.S. government from Netanyahu's statements. Kirby has distanced himself from Netanyahu without abandoning his government's position of putting pressure on and accusing Tehran.

Jam-e-Jam: Netanyahu's desperate attempt for Iranophobia

In a commentary, Jam-e-Jam addressed Israel's fear of Iran and wrote: The important issue that happened during the presence of the criminal Zionist prime minister in the U.S. Congress was his desperate attempt to eliminate Iran. In his statements, Netanyahu frequently pointed out the two countries of America and Iran, the first being its biggest supporter and the other its biggest enemy, and demanded the elimination of Iran by America.

A large part of Netanyahu's spiteful rhetoric against Iran is rooted in his fear of Islamic Iran. America's actions against Iran have always been doomed to failure. Undoubtedly, the True Promise operation clarified the situation even more for the Zionists and especially for Netanyahu that he is facing a superpower in the region, and to repel Iran's drone attacks, he resorted to Western countries in the region.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Reviving the JCPOA overtime

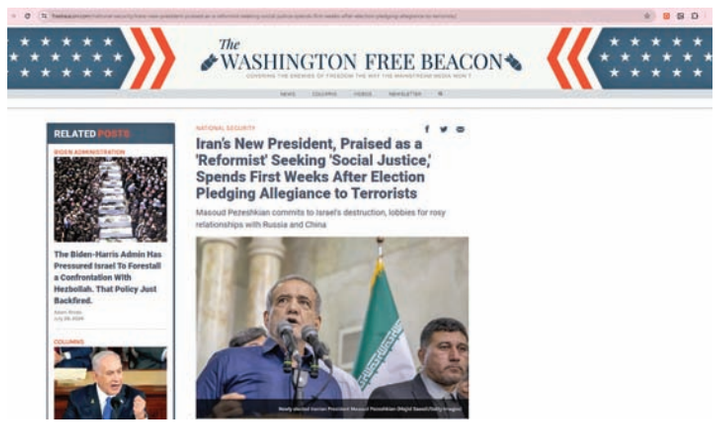
On the internet, it has been said that the Biden administration has sent an important message to Pezeshkian for the quick revival of the JCPOA, and the purpose of this action is to increase the chances of Kamala Harris winning against Donald Trump. In response, it can be said that there is no information about the authenticity of this message, but there is a possibility of sending a message that the Biden government is ready to negotiate with the new government of Iran. If, as it has been said, the revival of the JCPOA can be so effective in the American elections that it increases Harris's chances, first Biden himself and then Harris should have announced the promise of the JCPOA revival in their election activities.

But it seems that the revival of the JCPOA and the lifting of sanctions in this sensitive regional situation have a negative result for the Biden government, and in this situation where Israel is involved in the most important war in its history, the signing of this agreement can become a domestic controversy in the United States. This issue, before the Republicans, a strong protest will follow from a part of the Democrats. In any case, it is unlikely that the negotiations between the United States and Iran will end in an agreement before the American elections.

Colonial expectations for a country's foreign policy

From page 1 ▶ This accusation is based on the president's actions, including writing a letter to the Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon, having a conversation with Ismail Haniyeh, and declaring relations with Beijing and Moscow as important for his foreign policy. In fact, Kredo accuses the president of supporting terrorists, while the United States, as Israel's first-class supporter, has supported the genocide in Gaza with all its might. U.S. support for terrorist groups like ISIS will always be remembered by the world.

Kredo continues to write: "Pezeshkian's quick embrace of the hardline regime's policies stands in stark contrast to his portrayal across Western media, particularly in America, where publications including the New York Times, CNN, the Washington Post, USA Today, and the Financial Times touted his victory as a sea change for Tehran." I have to say that I agree with the author on this. Has the West taken a positive step in relation to Iran? Has the geopolitics of the region changed? Has the arrangement of Western forces against Iran in the region changed? So why are the Western media waiting for a surprising change in Iran's positions? Like other countries, Iran



follows its fundamental policies to pursue its interests and prioritize its security.

In another part, the author says: "But policy in the Islamic Republic has always been dictated solely by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and Pezeshkian could not have even entered the race without his blessing. Regional observers suspect that, like most recent elections in Iran, the outcome was rigged as part of a plot to elevate a supposed moderate who could ease widespread dissatisfaction with Iranian leadership across the country." The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was approved by a majority of the Iranian people, outlines the fundamental principles of the country's foreign policy. These principles are consistently upheld by Iranian authorities. While the approach to implementing these principles may vary due to differing political orientations, the core principles remain unchanged.

Ensuring the nation's security and pursuing its progress are not unusual goals; Iranian authorities shape their foreign policy based on the realities of international politics. In response to the suspicion of regional observers, it is important to note that these unfounded claims hold as much weight as unsupported assertions about the earth's flatness. Iranian elections are conducted with representatives of the candidates present at each polling center, ensuring a clear and transparent process. Unfortunately, the organizers of the Iranian elections seem unaware about that the representatives of the Washington Free Beacon should validate the legitimacy of these elections!

Kredo also wrote: "Meanwhile, U.S. intelligence officials disclosed last week that Iran's regime is running a multi-pronged foreign influence operation that includes paying anti-Israel protesters based in America." In this section, the familiar story is repeated: while demonstrators opposing Iran and its allies are portrayed as civil activists and freedom seekers, the American anti-genocide demonstrators are accused of receiving funding from Iran.

The author has distorted a part of Dr. pezeshkian's note in the Tehran Times newspaper, claiming that he wrote against the Jewish state. There is no mention of the Jewish state or the Jews anywhere in the text of elected president and he wrote against Zionist regime. In fact, despite the interest of Western governments and media to label anti-Zionist demonstrations as anti-Jewish movements, Iranians have always considered Zionism and Judaism to be two separate issues.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

German ban on Islamic centers an act of Islamophobia

By Xavier Villar

MADRID– The German Ministry of the Interior has shut down the Islamic Center Hamburg (ICH) and its affiliated entities following serious accusations against its activities. On Wednesday, the Ministry claimed that the CIH pursues radical Islamist objectives, leading to a ban on its operations and those of its subordinate entities.

According to a Ministry statement, 53 buildings associated with the organization were raided in the early hours of Wednesday under a court order issued in eight states across the country, as reported by Reuters. In addition to the Islamic Center Hamburg, activities of its branches in Frankfurt, Munich, and Berlin were also prohibited. As a result of this measure, the German Ministry of the Interior has announced the closure of four Shia mosques.

The authorities justify their decision not only by the purported "fight against radical Islamism," but also by considering the ICH as a "forward base of the Iranian regime in Germany and a hub of extremism." In the fall, 800 police officers had already raided the center and affiliated associations in several federal states, seizing documents, computers, mobile phones, and large sums of cash.

According to SPIEGEL, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, led by Nancy Faeser (SPD), has banned all activities of the ICH. In a public statement, the Minister said that "after evaluating the evidence, the Ministry's suspicions were confirmed: the center promotes totalitarian Islamist ideas of governance, anti-Semitism, and hostility towards Israel, and supports the terrorist organization Hezbollah, which is allied with the Iranian regime and banned in Germany."

The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has been monitoring the CIH for decades. In its most recent annual report, the Office describes it as a "significant Iranian propaganda center in Europe."

It is crucial to analyze the use of the language of terrorism, radicalism, and extremism, as this language seeks to criminalize movements such as Iran and Hezbollah that articulate their resistance to the Western project through non-secular discourse. This approach is employed by the West—understood as an ideology rather than merely geography—to deny the possibility of an autonomous political identity based on Islam.

In this context, it is important to highlight that Islamism is the discourse aiming to position Islam as the central point of politics within Muslim communities. The identification, as seen with the Islamic Center Hamburg, of Islamism with violence or terrorism is part of a mechanism designed to discipline the Muslim population according to the principles of "Westernism": a set of concepts that grants secularism and liberalism normative power to define what constitutes good politics.

This Orientalist perspective continues to frame the observation of Muslim populations outside the Eurocentric narrative. Orientalism assumes that the Western ideology or paradigm is universal and can be seamlessly applied to understand and explain non-Western phenomena. According to this view, the normative Western perspective holds that Islam cannot be used as a political tool.

Similarly, the language of terrorism, radicalization, and extremism functions as a civilizational language, designed to construct and control the "rebel" population. It operates as a racializing language, with the primary goal of eradicating Muslim identity.

These practices, which represent a type of racism targeting expressions of Muslim identity or the perception of such identity, are known as Islamophobia. The aim of Islamophobia is to prevent Muslims from projecting themselves politically in the future, hindering their ability to build a future as Muslims.

Manifestations of Islamophobia are diverse, and no single essence captures all the phenomena within this category. Instead, we can identify a series of common characteristics that are articulated in various ways and contexts. The different forms in which Islamophobia manifests are conditioned by historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts.

Islamophobia can be evidenced, for example, in various attacks against individuals perceived as Muslim.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Chinese Liberation Army's 97th anniversary celebrated in Tehran

Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu (on tribune), Chinese Defense Attaché Hu Xiao (L), and Iranian Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi (1st R)

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN– The Chinese embassy in Iran celebrated the 97th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army at the place of the embassy in Tehran on Sunday night.

The ceremony was attended by a number of senior officials and diplomats from Iran, China, and some other countries as well as military attachés.

Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu and Defense Attaché Senior Colonel Hu Xiao delivered speeches at the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi, the Iranian Armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff for International Cooperation, congratulated the Chinese people on the occasion of the 97th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, and said, "China has passed a difficult and successful path in the way of progress, and today, due to this successful progress and its rich historical background, it has an important position in the international arena, and the Chinese army has definitely played an important role in this way."

"The relations between the two countries have always been based on mutual interests and respect, and as Mr. Ambassador said, the relations between the two countries are developing," he added.

"And the 25-year comprehensive document between the two countries can be considered a milestone in this field, and we hope that this document will be fully implemented," Brigadier General Ahadi further noted, underlining that Iran's new president has emphasized the development of relations with China.

This year, China's Army Day, which falls on August 1, marks the 97th founding anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

As reported by Xinhua, Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed solid efforts to better serve and support ex-service personnel before the country celebrates its Army Day.

In an instruction on veterans affairs, Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, described ex-service personnel as "a precious treasure" of the Party and the country.

Xi emphasized the importance of making military service an honorable occupation and ensuring that ex-service personnel enjoy respect from the whole society.

Foreign dignitaries in Tehran to attend presidential inauguration

From page 1 ▶ Representatives from Libya, Ghana, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Cuba, Myanmar, Sudan, Gambia, Malta, and Mongolia will also be in attendance. These officials have already arrived in Iran and received formal welcomes.

Alireza Sharifi, head of the inauguration committee, highlighted the participation of representatives from over 70 countries and more than 600 domestic and international journalists. The ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, July 30.

Following the validation of his presidency by the Leader of Islamic Revolution on Sunday, President Pezeshkian will take the oath of office before the Holy Quran, in the presence of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, members of the Guardian Council, and the Chief Justice, as mandated by Article 121 of the Constitution.

Sharifi, who also serves as Deputy Executive of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, detailed the ceremony's arrangements, stating that the speaker of the parliament has issued the necessary instructions to ensure the event's smooth execution.

The inauguration committee was promptly formed following the election results and has been operating at the highest level to prepare for this significant occasion.

IRGC seizes Togo-flagged tanker in Persian Gulf for fuel smuggling

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) detained an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf on Friday, continuing its crackdown on smuggling activities in the region.

According to a statement from IRGC's third naval zone's public relations office, the oil tanker was detained near the Arash gas field and transferred to Imam Khomeini port. The tanker's nine crew members have also been moved to the port.

"On the morning of Friday, July 26, a tanker named "Pearl G," flying the flag of Togo and owned by an Iraqi individual residing in Dubai, was seized under judicial order while it was in the process of loading smuggled fuel from Iranian vessels," the statement said, adding that the tanker was to carry away 700,000 barrels of smuggled oil.

Iran's anti-smuggling operations in the Persian Gulf have increased in recent months. On July 22, the IRGC seized another Togo-flagged oil tanker carrying 1.5 million liters of smuggled oil. The tanker, owned by British company Ambrey, was traveling from Iraq to Sharjah, UAE. A foreign tanker carrying two million liters of smuggled fuel was also confiscated in Iran's southern waters late in January.

Serious warning to 'gang of criminals'

Pezeshkian tells Macron war on Lebanon would be a colossal blunder with heavy consequences for Israel

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – An Israeli war against Lebanon would be a grave mistake with serious consequences, Iran's President warned during a telephone conversation with his French counterpart Emanuel Macron.

Masoud Pezeshkian made the warning as Israel has been threatening to "tear Lebanon apart" in recent days, saying it is preparing a response to a Saturday missile attack on the occupied territories that it attributes to the Hezbollah Resistance movement. It has also claimed that the weapon was Iranian-made.

The missile hit a football field in the occupied Golan Heights resulting in the deaths of 12 people, mostly children. Hezbollah has rejected responsibility for the attack, with eyewitnesses reporting that the incident was caused by a misfired Iron Dome interceptor missile.

The football field was located in the Majdal Shams region, a predominantly Druze town. While Israel's military spokesperson Daniel Hagari initially identified the victims as "Israeli citizens", he was later caught telling the regime's reporters that the dead were not citizens of Israel. Hagari seemed to be oblivious to the fact that the microphone attached to him was capturing his voice.

Some analysts believe Israel was hoping to rile up the large Druze community living in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestinian lands, and pit them against Resistance forces. So far, it seems that the regime's plot has failed.

During the Monday call, Pezeshkian also pointed to the exasperating humanitarian conditions in the besieged Gaza Strip, where almost 40,000 people have been killed by Israeli fire in the past 10 months, with the rest of the population struggling to survive due to the regime's man-made famine and destruction of the enclave's infrastructure.

"Iran will not spare any efforts to help resolve the crisis in Gaza as well as establish peace and stability in the region," the Iranian president added.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said during the official endorsement of Pezeshkian on Sunday that the world must come to its senses and "make a serious decision regarding Israel".

"The Zionist regime is not a government. They're a gang of criminals. They're a gang of murderers. They're a gang of terrorists. In their acts of terrorism, cruelty, and crime, they've reached a new level in their shocking crimes in the history of human criminality in the world," he asserted.

Iran ready to expand relations with France

Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian told Macron that Iran is ready to improve relations with France based on "honesty" and "mutual trust." He also expressed Tehran's readiness to re-engage in talks to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He, however, added that Tehran expects other parties to "live up to all their commitments and to cease pressure and oppressive sanctions against the Iranian nation."

Pezeshkian's remarks come after Ayatollah Khamenei said during the president's Sunday endorsement that while the expansion of ties with Europe is not a priority for Iran, the country is still willing to pursue deeper ties with European states if they rectify their behavior towards Iran.

"If these countries refrain from misbehavior, we will prioritize relations with them as well. However, there are a few countries whose hostile conduct will not be forgotten," the Leader stated.

The state of European ties with Iran in recent years

Relations between Iran and European countries have deteriorated significantly in recent years, largely due to Europe's increasingly hostile stance.

The domino began with the European Trio (Germany, UK, France) failing to compensate for Washington's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018. While the three countries condemned then-President Donald Trump for scrapping the pact and sided with Iran at least in words, they began to escalate tensions with Tehran with the commencement of Joe Biden's administration.

Europe has since then imposed various sanctions against Iran, all based on unfounded or false accusations. These sanctions now encompass a wide range of areas, including banking transactions, transportation, oil sales, technology, academic services, and even investments in Iran's oil and gas sector. This is in addition to individual sanctions imposed by European countries.

Europe must decouple from Washington on Iran affairs

Europeans have a predilection for following in the footsteps of Washington in adjusting ties with not just Iran, but almost any other country in the world. They have put all their eggs in one basket, and seem to actively ignore the fact that a new world order is in the making, which means Europe may have to decouple from Washington, at least in foreign and security policy.

The last major decision Europe made while clinging to the U.S. as its leader, was when it decided to largely dismantle its ties with Russia as a response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Since February of 2022, the EU has given $156 billion in military and financial aid to Kyiv, only to have the majority of its equipment destroyed by Russia before even reaching Ukrainian forces, who have already lost an entire generation of young men on the battlefield. And the EU continues to pour money into Ukraine, driven by U.S. warnings about Russia's plans to invade the rest of Europe. Analysts paint an even bleaker picture for the future of Ukrainian forces, predicting that they will only encounter more setbacks in the face of Russia's military superiority.

Apart from wasting money on the hopeless Ukrainian military, Europe is experiencing more economic difficulties as it has to purchase gas from the U.S. at a price 4 times more expensive than the Russian gas it used to import. It seems that Washington will continue to rake in money this way, as it made sure to blow up the Nord Stream pipeline to prevent any future export of Russian energy products to Europe.

With the air now clearing about the consequences of Europe's blind abidance of Washington's foreign policies, the new Iranian administration's willingness to expand ties with Europe, and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's green light for such move, it seems that an overhaul of policies towards Iran would benefit European states in the future.

Iran, Gambia restore ties after 14 years

From Page 1 ▶ **Tehran, Havana emphasize bilateral cooperation in the face of global challenges**

Iran's interim foreign minister Ali Baqeri Kani and Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister Elio Rodriguez Perdomo underscored the crucial role of enhanced bilateral ties in confronting international challenges during a meeting on Monday.

During the meeting, Baqeri expressed his enthusiasm for the Cuban delegation's presence at the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new president. He remarked, "The extensive potential for bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cuba is undeniable, especially in enhancing our economic relations alongside our political ties."

Baqeri emphasized the importance of both nations pursuing independent policies to confront global threats, stating, "We must work together to seek new mechanisms and processes to strengthen our relations." He underscored the necessity of a proactive approach to enhance cooperation in light of challenges posed by Western unilateralism.

Another critical point of discussion was the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Baqeri described the situation as "the most significant humanitarian matter in the world," highlighting that "the continuation, escalation, and expansion of these crimes pose a threat to peace and security in the region and globally." He called for collective efforts to prevent such atrocities, labeling them as "clear examples of war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Perdomo echoed Baqeri's sentiments regarding the situation in Palestine, affirming Cuba's strong stance. "We support the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and consider confronting Israel's genocide against Palestinians a priority in Cuba's foreign policy," he stated. He also announced Cuba's commitment to joining efforts advocating for accountability for these crimes in international courts.

Looking ahead, Baqeri proposed a joint commission meeting between Iran and Cuba in the second half of this year to further solidify their partnership. Perdomo expressed his country's readiness to cooperate with Iran's new government. He noted that the presence of Cuba's Prime Minister at Masoud Pezeshkian's inauguration ceremony signifies Havana's commitment to deepening relations with Tehran.

Iran, Sudan on the path to strengthen relations

Continuing his diplomatic meetings, Ali Baqeri Kani met with Sudanese foreign minister Hussein Awad in Tehran on Monday.

The meeting aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and explore avenues for increased cooperation between the two nations.

Both ministers emphasized the importance of mutual respect and collaboration in political, economic, and cultural spheres, expressing a shared commitment to advancing common interests. This high-level discussion marks a notable step in fostering closer ties between Iran and Sudan.

Putin to meet Pezeshkian at BRICS summit

TEHRAN – Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing to meet with Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian at a BRICS summit in Kazan in October, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Izvestia."The Iranian side has an invitation and we hope that the new president comes to the summit. We will be happy to see him, and President Putin is getting ready for the upcoming meeting," the Kremlin official said.

Earlier, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told TASS that Russia and Iran had put the finishing touches on a comprehensive cooperation treaty, setting the stage for the signing of the historic document.IRNA also reported that Iran's new president told his Russian counterpart in a phone conversation about his readiness to sign this treaty at the Kazan summit in October.

Iran congratulates Venezuela on successful presidential election

TEHRAN– The Iranian Foreign Ministry has extended its congratulations to Venezuela for the successful execution of its recent presidential election, which saw the re-election of President Nicolas Maduro despite ongoing sanctions against the nation.

In a social media post on the platform X, Nasser Kanaani, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, praised the Venezuelan people, government, and President Maduro for conducting a presidential election under challenging circumstances.

He emphasized the significance of the election, which took place despite threats and severe sanctions, and highlighted the broad participation of Venezuelan citizens and the oversight by hundreds of international observers from various countries and organizations. Kanaani stated that this election demonstrates the deep-rooted democratic process within Venezuela.

Kanaani reiterated Iran's steadfast support for Venezuela in its pursuit of national development and expressed Tehran's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations with Caracas.

Elvis Amoroso, the president of Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE), announced that President Maduro, aged 61, secured a third six-year term by winning 51.2 percent of the vote on Sunday. His main opponent, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, garnered 44.2 percent of the votes.

Maduro, a former bus driver who assumed the presidency after the death of his mentor Hugo Chavez in 2013, was previously re-elected in 2018 despite opposition backed by the United States. Since November 2019, U.S.-led sanctions have driven inflation in Venezuela to exceed 4,000 percent.

Iran maintains strong relations with several Latin American countries, including Venezuela, across various sectors and is keen to deepen these ties further. In June 2022, Iran and Venezuela, both subjected to U.S. sanctions, signed a 20-year cooperation agreement during President Maduro's visit to Tehran. This agreement covers cooperation in the energy sector and other areas.

The continued alliance between Iran and Venezuela underscores both nations' determination to overcome external pressures and sanctions, striving for mutual development and strengthening their international partnerships.

SPORTS

Mountaineer Aziznia proud to represent Iran in the world

TEHRAN - Iranian mountaineer Amin Aziznia has made history by becoming the first Iranian man to conquer the Seven Summits, the highest peaks on each continent. The seasoned climber, who previously scaled Everest in 2023, embarked on a four-year odyssey to achieve this remarkable feat, motivated in part by a desire to challenge stereotypes about Iranian mountaineering prowess.

"This is a major mountaineering challenge that has been accomplished by many men and women around the world, and I am the first Iranian man to achieve it," Aziznia said in his exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"I climbed the highest peaks of each continent: Everest in Asia, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Denali in North America, Aconcagua in South America, Wilhelm in Oceania and Australia, Mont Blanc in Europe, and Vinson in Antarctica, as Antarctica is considered a continent and not just ice. "This project took me four years, starting with Mont Blanc in Europe, followed by Kilimanjaro, and then the remaining five continents within a year," he added.

The Iranian climber revealed a pivotal moment in his decision to pursue the Seven Summits challenge.

"One of the things that motivated me to do this was an incident where, at a high altitude, some Americans asked me if Iranians climb mountains and conquer peaks. This bothered me a bit because Iran has many great mountaineers who have broken numerous records in the Himalayas and opened new routes," he said.

"It was surprising to me that because Iranians don't travel outside of Nepal and Pakistan, they think we don't work in other places. Therefore, it was very important for me to complete this project on other continents to show the world that Iranians can also achieve great things in mountaineering," Amin Aziznia continued.

Despite the immense physical and financial challenges, Aziznia persevered: "The challenge was also very expensive for me and I spent around three to four hundred thousand US dollars for all these expeditions. I hope this will be the beginning for the Iranians to undertake more climbs on different continents."

He also talked about himself and his future plans: "About myself, I studied chemical engineering at Sharif University and went to the University of British Columbia in Canada for my doctorate. I live in Vancouver, Canada, but I have a close connection to Iran and I am proud to have raised the Iranian flag on the highest peaks in the world."

"I started mountaineering in Iran, in the Tochal and Damavand mountains, and fell in love with it and will continue this path. I have targeted several other large mountains in Pakistan, Nepal, and Tibet, as well as some mountains in South America and Central Asia," Aziznia concluded.

Ex-Iran sitting volleyball player Reza Gozali dies

TEHRAN – Former Iran men's sitting volleyball player Reza Gozali passed away on Monday.

He died at the age of 61.

Gozali was a member of the team who won gold medal in the Seoul 1988 Paralympic Games.He also won three gold medals in the 1985, 1986 and 1990 World Para Volleyball Championship.

Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathy to Gozali's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Former Iran football president Safizadeh passes away

TEHRAN – Mohammad Safizadeh, former president of Iran football federation, passed away Monday morning.

He died of hear failure at the age of 73.

Safizadeh headed the football federation from 1993 to 1994.

He also founded Keshavarz football club in Tehran and so many Iranian stars played for the Tehran based club.

Safizadeh was also managing directors of Abrar newspapers (political, sports, economic).

Safizadeh will be laid to rest on Tuesday in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery.

Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathy to Safizadeh's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

Iran advance to 2024 Asian U20 Volleyball Championship final

TEHRAN – Iran defeated hosts Indonesia in straight sets (25-21, 25-14, 25-16) on Monday and advanced to the 2024 Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship final.

Iran have previously defeated China, Chinese Taipei, Qatar, Kazakhstan and South Korea.

Iran are the most decorated team in the competitor, winning the gold seven times.

The 2024 Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship is be the 22nd edition of the Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship, a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Indonesian Volleyball Federation (PBVSI).

The tournament takes place in Surabaya, Indonesia from July 23 to 30.

The topflight championship serves as the Asia's qualification tournament for the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship.

Sardar Azmoun signs for Shabab Al Ahli

TEHRAN – Iranian international striker Sardar Azmoun joined Shabab Al Ahli from Bayer Leverkusen.

The 29-year-old plater has officially left Bayer Leverkusen after three years and joined the Emirati club on a permanent deal.

The German side will receive a fee of €5 million for Azmoun, who signed a long-term deal with the UAE side.

Azmoun returned to Bayer Leverkusen this summer after his season-long loan deal last season with the Giallorossi. He initially participated in the team's pre-season performance tests earlier this month before going AWOL and skipping multiple sessions—angering team executives.

"We need to clarify what happened. You have to do more than just your initial pre-season tests, you have to train.

He was here yesterday, today he wasn't—so we'll see what happens in the coming days," Bayer sporting director Simon Rolfes told Bild.

Sardar Azmoun has played 83 matches for the Iranian national team, scoring 53 goals.

Iran victorious over Philippines in 2024 Asian U18 Volleyball

TEHRAN – Iran defeated the Philippines in straight sets (25-14, 25-20, 27-25) in the 15th Asian Men's U18 Volleyball Championship on Monday.Iran are scheduled to meet China in Pool C on Tuesday.

The Persian are scheduled to meet the Philippines and China in the following days.

The competition started on July 28 and will run until Aug. 4 at the Sport City Main Hall in Isa Town in Bahrain.

Iran are the most decorated team in the competition, having won seven titles out of 13 editions.

Renewables share of electricity generation to reach 15%

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) has said 600 renewable power plants with a total capacity of 13,500 megawatts (MW) are under construction across the country after completion which the share of renewables in the Iran's power generation will reach 15 percent.

"We hope that by implementing these power plants, the share of renewable energies in Iran's electricity production will increase to more than 15 percent in the next two years," IRNA quoted Mahmoud Kamani as saying.

Based on the Energy Ministry data, renewables, currently, account for nearly seven percent of the country's total electricity generation capacity.

Of the country's total renewable capacity, 44 percent is the share of solar power plants while the share of wind farms stands at 40 percent and small-scalded hydropower plants generate 13 percent of the total renewable capacity.

Earlier this month, SATBA reported that the capacity of Iran's renewable power plants has reached 1,199.71 MW.

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has taken serious measures to accelerate the growth and development of renewable energies in the country.

Diversification of financing models for renewable projects, increasing the ceiling of guaranteed electricity purchase, providing the possibility of buying and selling renewable electricity in the green board of the Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) and providing the possibility of exporting renewable electricity have been the most important measures taken for this purpose.

Iranian Energy Ministry has also put it on the agenda to add 10,000 MW to the capacity of the country's renewable power plants by the end of the current government's administration (August 2025).

Considering the fact that the country's renewable power generation capacity stood at about 800 MW when the current government took office in August 2021, the mentioned increase in renewable energy capacity would mean a 13-fold rise.

Back in January 2022, the Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the construction of new renewable power plants across the country.

The electricity generated by renewable sources increased by 28 percent in the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad (ended on June 20) compared to the same month last year.

Renewable sources generated more than 230 million kilowatt hours of electricity, an increase of 21 percent in comparison with a month earlier.

Wind power plants held the lion's share of the rise in the production of electricity by renewable sources.

Point-to-point inflation rate stands at 32.2%

TEHRAN - The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has put the country's point-to-point inflation rate at 32.2 percent in the fourth Iranian calendar month Tir (ended on July 21).

It means that the Iranian families have paid an average of 32.2 percent more for purchasing the same package of commodities and services in that month, compared to the same month in the preceding year.

The point-to-point inflation rate rose 0.3 percent in the fourth month from the previous month.

In mid-June, the SCI announced that Iran's economy grew by 5.7 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), marking the highest growth since 2017.

In its latest report, the SCI said the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the year ending in March 2024 at the constant prices of 2017 is equivalent to 5.7 percent of the total GDP and 3.4 percent of the GDP minus oil.

The field of activities of industries and mines group grew by 6.9 percent, the services group by 5.7 percent, and the agriculture group by 2.2 percent compared to the previous year.

In late February, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported the Iranian economic growth in 2023 to be 5.4 percent.

The head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) said the country's 5.4 percent economic growth in 2023 was the second-highest rate in the world.

IMF also increased its estimate of Iran's economic growth in 2024, citing a higher-than-expected surge in the country's oil production.

The IMF, in its report published on February 22, forecast a 3.7 percent economic growth for Iran in 2024 while the figure in its October prediction was 2.5 percent.

The IMF data showed that Iran's economic growth reached 5.4% in 2023 while the international agency had predicted a three percent growth for the country in the previous year.

Iran's oil and gas industry's development has a direct impact on the country's economic growth, as the effect was felt during the previous administration's term, when the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and reimposition of sanctions reduced Iran's oil production and exports and even led to negative gross domestic product (GDP) for a couple of years.

Meanwhile, the World Bank (WB), in its latest report, predicted that Iran's economy will grow 3.2 percent in 2024 and the inflation rate will decrease to 35.3 percent.

According to the estimate of the international body, Iran's economy experienced a five percent growth and a 40.7 percent inflation in 2023.

The bank has forecast that the growth of Iran's non-oil sector which was 3.8 percent last year will reach 3.0 percent in the current year. Iran's oil sector, which experienced a significant growth of 17.1 percent in the previous year will also grow by 5.0 percent in the current year, Tasnim News Agency reported.

In addition, the World Bank has predicted that Iran's oil production this year will increase by 200,000 barrels compared to the previous year and will reach 3.2 million barrels per day.

It is expected that Iran's agricultural sector will grow only 0.9 percent this year, and the growth of the industry sector will reach 4.9 percent and the service sector will grow 2.6 percent.

Iran's inflation rate which was 40.7 percent in the previous year is also expected to fall to 35.3 percent in the current year.

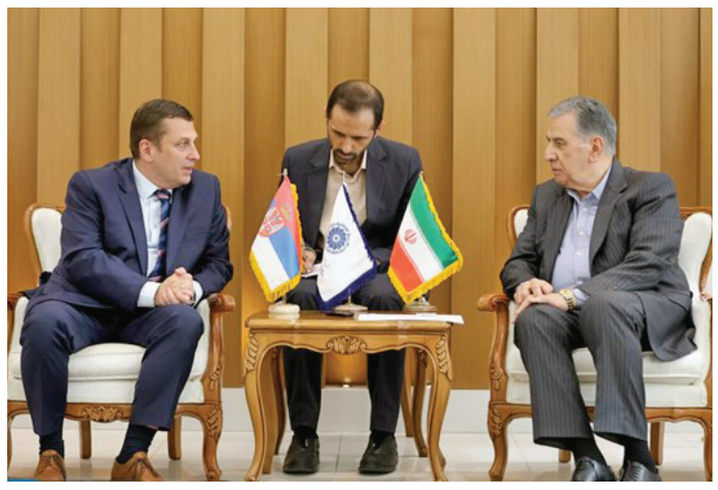
Iranian private sector ready to expand trade ties with Serbia

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh has said that ICCIMA, as the representative of Iran's private sector, is ready to boost trade relations with Serbia.

Hassanzadeh made the remarks in a meeting with Demir Kovacevic, Serbia's new ambassador to Iran, in Tehran on Sunday, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Referring to Serbia as Iran's gateway to Europe, he voiced the readiness of Iran Chamber of Commerce to launch a trade-expo center in the European country.

Hassanzadeh regretted that a 2021 document for establishing a joint economic commission between Iran and Serbia has not yet been put into practice.



ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh (R) meets Serbia's new Ambassador to Iran Demir Kovacevic in Tehran on Sunday.

Noting that Iran's call for signing a free trade agreement with Serbia has not been responded by Belgrade, he called on the Serbian ambassador to put these issues on the agenda.

In the meantime, the Serbian ambassador noted that the visit to Iran Chamber of Commerce was his first visit after he began his mission in Iran, what he said indicated his country's great attention to promotion of trade cooperation with Iran.

He still believed that the two countries have to solve problems on the way of banking and money transfer so as expedite trade ties.

Ambassador Kovacevic highlighted the role of a joint committee of commerce between Iran and Serbia, urging the need for forming a trade council of business people and economic operators of the two sides to share trade potentials.

He vowed that the embassy would do its best to materialize the trade targets of Iran and Serbia, operationalize cooperation agreements already signed and establish a free trade agreement between the two countries.

Russia's VTB to take part in Iran's Finex 2024

TEHRAN - Russia's VTB Bank will participate in the 14th International Exhibition of Exchange, Bank and Insurance (Iran Finex 2024), according to the secretary of the policy-making council of the exhibition.

Saleh Sepasdar said on Saturday that VTB – the second biggest bank of Russia – has an asset as much as $290 billion, IRNA reported.

Noting that VTB is the first Russian bank to participate in this event, he said that this presence is "meaningful and important".

This bank has developed its brokerage relations with the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and other Iranian banks over the past months and is now ready to perform banking operations and services, he said.

With 4 branches outside Russia, VTB Bank seeks to offer services in the CIS countries, Africa, Latin America and Asia, he added.

The 14th edition of Iran Finex is due to be held on August 9-12.

Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexander Novak has said that the volume of trade between Russia and Iran increased by 48 percent in the first three months of 2024 compared to the same period last year.

According to the results of the first quarter of 2024, Russia's exports to Iran have increased by 77 percent and the country's imports from Iran have increased by 13 percent, Novak said in his meeting with Iranian Petroleum Minister Javad Oji in mid-June.

The value of Iran's exports to Russia rose 26 percent in the past Iranian calendar year

(ended on March 19), as compared to the preceding year.

Some 2.185 million tons of products worth $946 million were exported to Russia in the previous Iranian year, while a year earlier the Islamic Republic had exported only 1.436 million tons of goods valued at $751 million to the country.

According to official data, Iran's exports to Russia also increased by 56 percent in terms of weight during the previous year.

Agricultural products, petrochemicals, and oil-based products were the top exported products to Russia in the mentioned year.

The imports also grew by nine percent in terms of value and 27 percent in terms of weight.

In line with the two countries' determination to increase the level of trade exchanges, during a video conference meeting between the deputy transport ministers of Iran and Russia on November 28, 2023, the two sides discussed ways of increasing annual transit through Iran to 10 million tons.

In this virtual meeting, the two sides discussed transportation cooperation between the two countries in all areas including rail, road, and sea.

The two sides have been taking serious steps to boost their mutual trade over the past few years.

In late January, late President Raisi said that the Islamic Republic and Russia have reached an agreement to boost the trade between the two countries up to $10 billion.

"We agreed to remove trade barriers and boost the economic exchanges between the two countries. Currently, the level of mutual trade is not acceptable, so the two countries agreed to increase trade to $10 billion a year," Raisi said on January 21, upon arrival to Tehran after a two-day visit to Moscow.

As major players in the world and West Asia's political and economic scene, Iran and Russia have been expanding political and economic ties for many years, however, the relations between the two countries have entered a whole new level over the past few months.

The imposition of sanctions on both countries has been a major factor in bringing the two sides closer together, making them a strong alliance against U.S. pressures. Over the past few months, senior officials from the two sides have been meeting and visiting each other to consolidate bilateral cooperation in various fields, including energy, oil, gas, and transit, as well as diplomatic and political relations.

PMO plans to attract over $600m of private sector investment in ports

TEHRAN - Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has put it on the agenda to attract 300 trillion rials (about $600 million) of investment from the private sector in the country's ports by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2025).

As reported by the PMO portal, the mentioned investment is going to be used to develop the infrastructure and operational capacity of the country's ports.

Earlier this month, PMO Head Ali-Akbar Safaei said over the past few years the organization has managed to attract nearly $1.7 billion of foreign and domestic investment in the country's ports and maritime sector.

Speaking in a press conference on July 10, Safaei said some 620 trillion rials (about $1.24 billion) of domestic investment and $470 million of foreign investment have been attracted in the mentioned sectors.

"The attraction of this amount of private sector investment is significant compared to the total budget of the government in the sea and port sectors," he said.

According to the official, regarding the foreign investment, PMO has signed contracts with five countries including India which has so far invested $120 million in the port sector and $250 million in the rail, roads and infrastructure sector.

Referring to the growth of maritime trade in the country, Safaei continued: "Maritime trade increased from 215 million tons in [the Iranian calendar year] 1401 (2022-2023) to 237 million tons last year (ended on March 19, 2024)."

"In the first quarter of the current year, 60 million tons of maritime trade was recorded, which shows a 10 percent growth compared to the same period last year, and even a 70 percent growth was recorded in some ports of the Caspian Sea," he added.

Back in November 2023, Safaei said his organization was going to attract 1.0 quadrillion rials (about $2 billion) of investment in the country's ports to develop maritime economy.

Speaking in a televised interview, the official said 470 trillion rials (about $924 million) of the mentioned figure was going to be invested by the private sector and the rest would be supplied by PMO.

"In order to realize the general development policies of the maritime sector, we need an integrated, coordinated and agile management at the highest level," Safaei said.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in the course of five years.

ICCIMA to hold meeting to explore ways of boosting Iran-Bangladesh trade

TEHRAN – The Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is going to host a meeting to review solutions for developing economic cooperation between Iran and Bangladesh and removing trade barriers in the way of the two countries, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Scheduled to be held on August 10 at the ICCIMA building in Tehran, the meeting will be attended by the Minister of Commerce of Bangladesh and the Ambassador of this country in Tehran.

ICCIMA has invited the Iranian private companies active in various sectors including textile, food products, oil, gas, bitumen and petrochemical sectors as well as shipbuilding and ship parts to partake in this meeting.

Israel digging its own grave

False flag conspiracy in Majdal Shams could lead to Israel's demise

From page 1 ▸ Hence, why should Hezbollah strike a town whose residents have stood up to Israeli occupation?

It seems that Israel has painted a false-flag scenario to advance its war agenda.

Meanwhile, mourners in Majdal Shams lashed out at Israeli ministers who attended the funeral of a dozen children who were killed in the rocket attack.

Footage aired by Israeli media showed mourners protesting the presence of Israeli ministers, including far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

"Get out of here, you criminal. We don't want you in the Golan," one protester shouted at Smotrich, according to Middle East Monitor.

Environment Protection Minister Idit Silman, Economy Minister Nir Barkat and Energy Minister Eli Cohen faced similar protests.

Nonetheless, the attack in Majdal Shams has raised fears of a broader regional war between Israel and the Lebanese resistance movement.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Hezbollah "will pay a heavy price for this attack, one that it has not paid so far." Israel's security cabinet has also authorized him and war minister Yoav Gallant to decide how and when to respond.

Hezbollah has said it does not want to go to direct war with Israel. It, however, has warned the regime against the consequences of its military adventurism.

Earlier this month, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the movement would strike Israeli towns that have not yet been subjected to its rocket and drone attacks if the regime continues to target civilians in Lebanon.

Nasrallah also warned Israel in his mid-July speech, "If your tanks enter Lebanon and its southern regions, you won't have to worry about a shortage of tanks—there will be no tanks left. Our front in Lebanon will remain active as long as the aggression against Gaza, its people, and their resistance continues in all its forms."

> Israel has offered the residents of Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights Israeli citizenship, but the majority have refused it.

The two sides have been exchanging fire since Israel launched war on Gaza on October 7, 2023.

Hezbollah says it won't stop the strikes unless the regime ends its war of genocide in Gaza which has so far killed more than 39,000 Palestinians.

Israel has failed to defeat Hamas more than nine months after waging war on Gaza. Since Hezbollah has far superior firepower than Hamas, Israel will have to brace for widespread repercussions of a potential full-blown conflict with the Lebanese resistance movement.

Israel's demise

A retired Israeli general has told the Maariv newspaper that war with Hezbollah will lead to Israel's destruction.

Major General Itzhak Brik said those who seek revenge after the attack on the occupied Golan Heights may drag Israel further into the war with Hezbollah, with rockets targeting residences, power plants, gas platforms, army bases and factories, according to Al Jazeera.

He added, "As a result, Israel will suffer very heavy losses and the country will be destroyed. We need an immediate end to the war in Gaza, which in no way leads to the end of Hamas."

Hezbollah can make Israel "uninhabitable"

In June, an Israeli official also raised the alarm about the consequences of an all-out war with Hezbollah, warning that the resistance movement can make Israel "uninhabitable in 72 hours".

"We are not in a good situation, and we are not prepared for a real war. We are living in a fantasy," Shaul Goldstein, the head of the company responsible for planning Israel's electrical systems, was cited as saying by Israeli media.

Goldstein added, "We cannot promise electricity if there is a war in the north. After 72 hours without electricity, it will be impossible to live here. We are not prepared for a real war."

Painful truth

Israel declared war on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006. In both conflicts, the Israeli army was met with strong resistance from Hezbollah and had to retreat.

In mid-August 2021, an Israeli inquiry acknowledged the regime's failure to achieve its goal in the 2006 war, describing the conflict as "unsuccessful" and a "missed opportunity".

"Israel initiated a long war, which ended without its clear military victory," the inquiry said.

Hezbollah military power

The number of Hezbollah's missiles in 2006 was about 14,000. But now the resistance movement has up to 150,000 missiles and rockets of various types and ranges.

The Hezbollah leader said in June that the number of Hezbollah operatives who are ready to join the war has exceeded 100,000.

Israel was unable to prolong the 2006 war for more than 34 days. With regard to Hezbollah's current military capabilities, Israel will suffer further humiliation if its threats of military action lead to a wider conflict.

Israeli failures and lack of solutions

From page 1 ▸Washington is aware of the difficulty of confronting the axis of resistance. It is easier to deal with a stable and strong entity than a failure, and the American solution to sideline the axis of resistance has constituted a failure in every measure.

American ships are fleeing Yemeni waters, fearing Ansarallah to target them. It is noteworthy that recently Ansarallah hit the heart of the Israeli occupation entity successfully. This is while the Islamic resistance movement in Lebanon has launched drones across the most sensitive areas inside the occupied territories dubbed the Hudhud operation, which is no less effective than physically striking the regime. Since the start of the Gaza war, the Iraqi resistance movement has also been targeting sensitive American bases, in particular Ain Al-Assad. Despite nine months of war, the occupation entity has been unable to locate and defeat the Gazan resistance forces within an area of 360 km2. Superficially, it should have been a relatively easy task given the technological and intelligence support that it is receiving. That the axis of resistance cannot be overcome implies that the Gazan resistance movement can guarantee its interests.

Given these realities, the West's need for the Israeli occupation regime will naturally and incrementally be reduced over time. The entity will shrink to match its true size. It cannot be given a role greater than what it can perform competently. While the occupation entity under Netanyahu rejects Palestinian control over Gaza and seeks direct control, America and certain Western powers are seeking the two-state solution and are focused on pushing their projects forward. This includes the formation of a new government in Gaza, in hopes of weakening the Gazan resistance and continuing with targeted and limited operations on the ground.

America is less concerned with ending the war. It is primarily focusing on pushing its solutions forward to create the conditions for a political settlement and at the same weakening the Gazan resistance movement as much as possible. America has been pushing for a non-permanent ceasefire in stages, as the political settlement requires the Gazan resistance to be under blackmail through limited and targeted operations against it.

In the same way that the American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan led to failures, the Israeli project, which has been lasting for 7.5 decades, has also proven a failure. Therefore, America must forego the grand strategies it had visualized for West Asia.

The disintegration or disappearance of the entity is happening over the course of time and lobbying efforts for the occupation entity in the West are aimed at protecting the Western interests rather than "Israeli" interests, given that the regime is a Western project.

The entity can only survive if it plays a subservient and functional role to its Western masters, considering it was created to protect Western interests.

Relentless bombing of Khan Younis enters 8th day

"10,000 students and 400 teachers have been killed"

From page 1 ▸ The regular assaults on sites where civilians had sought shelter have raised the number of fatalities and injuries.

Reports on the ground said on Monday that the city of Khan Younis is facing increasingly intense Israeli aggression by land, air, and sea.

Israeli tanks have reportedly targeted the Sheikh Nasser neighborhood in the city, and Israeli artillery bombarded its eastern areas.

Palestinian media reported that in one ground attack alone, five civilians have been killed and several others injured after Israeli artillery shells struck a roundabout east of Khan Younis.

The IOF demolished residential buildings in the town of al-Qarara north of the city on Monday, and artillery shells fell on the towns of Bani Suhaila, Sheikh Nasser, and al-Qarara east of Khan Younis.

Local Palestinian sources said the IOF shelled the minaret of the al-Radwan Mosque in the town of Khaza'a east of Khan Younis, destroying it.

In the central Gaza Strip, reporters noted that Israeli warplanes bombed agricultural land around an intersection south of Deir al-Balah and also shelled the east of the city.

Furthermore, artillery shelling targeted northwest of the al-Nuseirat camp in the central region.

In Gaza City, Palestinian Civil Defense confirmed in a brief statement that Israeli forces and their vehicles are still present in the Tal al-Hawa area southwest of the city, specifically around the Jordanian Hospital, revealing that they are conducting operations that involve the razing of homes and kidnapping and killing residents.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip announced that the Israeli aggression has risen to 39,363 deaths and 90,923 injuries since October 7, 2023.

Medical officials in northern Gaza have warned of a widespread outbreak of skin diseases in the Strip, particularly among children, caused by a skin infection.

Officials have also warned of a new virus causing polio in the central governorate of the Gaza Strip, saying the virus is related to contamination from sewage due to the shelling by the IOF.

The health ministry is working with UNICEF to understand the causes of a possible polio epidemic.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Ministry of Education announced in a statement that 10,000 students and 400 teachers from the Gaza Strip have been killed due to the ongoing Israeli genocide since October last year.

The ministry indicated that "39,000 high school students from the Gaza Strip did not sit for the high school exams this year." It added, "Since October 7, 2023, 630,000 school students and 88,000 university students in the Strip have been unable to exercise their natural right to education".

Critics accuse the world of continuing to stand by and watch the genocide in Gaza.

WORLD HEADLINES

Washington Post: Palestinians recount deadly abuse in Israeli prisons

One Palestinian inmate died with a ruptured spleen and broken ribs after being beaten by Israeli prison guards.

Another met an excruciating end because a chronic condition went untreated.

A third screamed for help for hours before dying.

The details of the prisoners' deaths were recounted by eyewitnesses and corroborated by doctors from Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI), who sat in on autopsies, the findings of which were shared with families and obtained by The Washington Post. The three men are among at least 13 Palestinians from the West Bank and Israel to die in Israeli jails since October 7, according to PHRI. An unknown number of prisoners from the Gaza Strip have also died.

Rights groups say conditions in Israel's jam-packed prisons have deteriorated dangerously since October 7. Former Palestinian prisoners described routine beatings, often carried out on entire cells or sections, usually with batons and sometimes with dogs. They said they were denied sufficient food and medical care and were subjected to psychological as well as physical abuse.

The Washington Post spoke to 11 former prisoners and half a dozen lawyers, examined court records and reviewed autopsy reports, revealing rampant, sometimes deadly violence and deprivation by Israeli prison authorities.

While international attention and condemnation has focused on the plight of Gazan detainees — specifically at the notorious Sde Teiman military site — rights advocates say there is a deeper, systemic crisis in Israel's penal system.

"Violence is pervasive," said Jessica Montell, executive director of the Israeli rights group HaMoked, which has worked for years with Palestinian inmates. "It's very overcrowded. Every prisoner that we've met with has lost 30 pounds."

Turkey compares 'genocidal Netanyahu' to Hitler

The Turkish Foreign Ministry has issued a statement comparing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler.

"Just as the genocidal Hitler met his end, so will the genocidal Netanyahu," the statement said.

"Those who tried to eliminate the Palestinians will be held accountable, just like the genocidal Nazis. Humanity will stand with the Palestinians. You will not be able to eliminate the Palestinians."

The statement comes after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country must be "very strong so that Israel can't do these things to the Palestinians".

He added, "Just as we entered [Nagorno-] Karabakh, just as we entered Libya, we might do the same to them. There is nothing we can't do. We must only be strong."

Hamas: Netanyahu keeps stalling truce deal

The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement says Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has added new conditions and demands to a US ceasefire proposal, following the latest round of talks in Rome conducted through mediators.

It said in a statement that the Israeli ceasefire response to the proposal showed that Netanyahu was stalling to avoid reaching an agreement.

"It is clear from what the mediators conveyed that Netanyahu has returned to his strategy of procrastination, evasion, and avoiding reaching an agreement by setting new conditions and demands," Hamas added.

Hamas accused Netanyahu of retreating from a proposal previously presented by the mediators, which it said had already been based on an "Israeli paper".

Top lawyer: UK should stop arming Israel

The UK should stop arming Israel in order to comply with the historic advisory opinion by the UN's top court that member states should not "render aid or assistance" to the occupation of the Palestinian territories, a lawyer who represented Palestine has said.

In a broad and damning ruling published this month, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Israel's settlement policies and occupation of the territories were in breach of international law. It also said UN member states were under an obligation to neither recognize the occupation as lawful nor abet it.

With the UK already under pressure over the sales of arms to Israel during its military offensive in Gaza, which has killed almost 40,000 Palestinians, Prof Philippe Sands KC, a member of Palestine's legal team for the case at the ICJ, said the court's opinion had important ramifications for the UK.

"The most immediate issue is the obligation in the advisory opinion on the states, which includes the United Kingdom, not to aid or assist in the maintenance of the current situation in the occupied territories of the West Bank, including [East] Jerusalem," said Sands.

"That legal obligation precludes sales of military material which could be used directly or indirectly to assist Israel in maintaining its unlawful occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories."

Ministry: Gaza is a 'polio epidemic area'

Gaza's Health Ministry has blamed Israel's military offensive as it has declared a polio epidemic in the besieged and bombarded enclave.

In a statement on Telegram, it stressed the situation "poses a health threat to the residents of Gaza and neighboring countries" and called it a "setback" to the global polio eradication program, Al Jazeera reported.

The ministry called for an "immediate intervention to end the aggression and find radical solutions" to the lack of potable water and personal hygiene, damaged sewage networks and removal of tons of rubbish and solid waste.

On Friday, the World Health Organization said it was sending more than one million polio vaccines to Gaza to be administered over the coming weeks to prevent children from being infected after the virus was detected in sewage samples.

Poliomyelitis, which is spread mainly through the fecal-oral route, is a highly infectious virus that can invade the nervous system and cause paralysis. Cases of polio have declined by 99 percent worldwide since 1988 thanks to mass vaccination campaigns and efforts continue to eradicate it everywhere.

Israel's military, meanwhile, said it would start offering the polio vaccine to soldiers in Gaza.

The UN reported last week that besides detecting the polio virus, there has been a widespread increase in cases of hepatitis A, dysentery and gastroenteritis as sanitary conditions deteriorate in Gaza. Israel's war has damaged and destroyed sewage and water systems, and sewage has spilled into the streets near some camps for displaced people.

Tehran festival to commemorate Arbaeen's heritage

TEHRAN - The first-ever international festival dedicated to Arbaeen's cultural and historical heritage will be held in Tehran on August 4 and 5.

The significant event will be held at the 19th-century Masoudieh Palace to explore and celebrate the profound impact of the occasion, which marks the culmination of 40 days of mourning for the slain Imam Hussain, the third Shia Imam and a grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

Mahdieh Bod, the Scientific Secretary of the event, emphasized the deep-rooted historical and cultural significance of Arbaeen, stating that its heritage has profoundly connected with the hearts of believers and devotees of Imam Hussain over the years. "Such a connection is evident in the annual pilgrimage of millions to the holy city of Karbala."

"Arbaeen is not just a religious event; it is an extraordinary phenomenon with immense heritage and historical importance that draws millions of pilgrims each year," Bod said. "Our aim with this commemoration is to delve into the various dimensions of this event and enhance its understanding globally."

Organized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and under the auspices of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the event will embrace academic discussions, cultural exhibitions, and artistic performances, all aimed at shedding light on Arbaeen's legacy.

Every year, millions of devout Shia Muslims from Iran and beyond embark on an epic journey known as the Arbaeen trek that, according to participants, is not just merely a religious observance but a deeply personal and introspective voyage.

Destined for the holy city of Karbala, where Imam Hussain and his loyal companions were martyred, the gathering is characterized by a remarkable display of unity, as people from diverse backgrounds join together to mourn and commemorate the Imam's martyrdom.

UNESCO listing brings economic boom to Uramanat region

TEHRAN - On the anniversary of the World Heritage inscription of the Cultural Landscape of Uramanat, a local tourism official stated that UNESCO recognition has boosted employment across the rural region.

Some "kulbars" (people who carry heavy loads over the Iran-Iraq border) have transitioned into the tourism sector, mostly working in eco-tourism businesses and creating jobs not only for themselves but also for entire families, ISNA quoted Golan Farzami as saying on Sunday

Referring to the date of the World Heritage inscription of Uramanat, which corresponds to July 27, 2021, the official noted that this listing took place during the 44th session of UNESCO in China and was unanimously approved as Iran's 26th site on the World Heritage list.

In an interview with ISNA, the official reminded that this year marks the third anniversary of the inscription of the Cultural Landscape of Hawraman/Uramanat, which is the most extensive cultural landscape of Iran on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The deputy director of Kordestan's tourism directorate elaborated on the actions taken since the UNESCO inclusion and the impact it has had, explaining that recognition has notably strengthened employment opportunities in this border region.

Farzami added that the villagers in the Uramanat area are gradually realizing the significance of the World Heritage designation and are cooperating with our programs, showing that we have the support of the local communities.

Farzami stated that the World Heritage inscription has increased awareness of tourism prospects among the local people.

The cultural landscape is situated at the heart of the Zagros Mountains in the provinces of Kordestan and Kermanshah along the western border of Iran.

According to the UN cultural body, the Hawraman/Uramanat region is a UNESCO World Heritage site comprised of two main component parts: the Central-Eastern Valley, which includes Zhaverud and Takht in Kordestan province, and the Western Valley, located in Lahun, Kermanshah province. The people in these areas have adapted their way of life over millennia to suit the rugged mountainous environment.

Archaeological findings in the region, including artifacts dating back approximately 40,000 years, caves, rock shelters, ancient paths, and inscriptions, provide evidence of continuous human habitation from the Paleolithic era to the present. Other historical elements, such as cemeteries, mounds, castles, and settlements, also highlight the persistence of the semi-nomadic lifestyle and agropastoral practices that have defined the region's inhabitants for centuries.

Uramanat serves as an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the Hawrami people, a Kurdish tribe residing in the Zagros Mountains for thousands of years. This rich cultural heritage is exemplified by ancestral practices such as transhumance, the seasonal migration between fixed summer and winter pastures known as Havars, and steep-slope terraced agriculture. The region also showcases sophisticated soil and water management techniques and traditional knowledge essential for planning and constructing steeply terraced villages.

Furthermore, the Uramanat region is renowned for its vibrant intangible heritage, reflecting a harmonious coexistence with nature.

Qazvin to promote tourism, crafts capacities in Erbil

TEHRAN - Qazvin province is set to set up a special exhibit in Iraq's Erbil, aiming to boost its international profile.

"Scheduled to run for four days, starting from July 30, in Kurdistan region, the exhibition will feature economic insiders and producers from the province, "said Qazvin's director-general of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts.

The directorate general, Alireza Khazaeli elaborated, will participate with a booth featuring two counters dedicated to handicrafts and tourism, showcasing the capacities in these sectors.

He noted that the exhibition will display works by artists in glass engraving, carpet weaving, woodturning, painting, gilding, traditional jewelry, blown glass, and wood inlay. "Additionally, calligraphy and painting workshops will be held," Khazaeli stated.

The director-general further explained that another section of the booth will highlight the province's tourism capacities, including historical, natural, and religious attractions. Accommodation facilities, and tourism package tours to the province, with participation from travel agencies, eco-tourism operators, professional associations, and experts, will also be presented to the visitors, he added.

Armenian teachers get to know Iran's tourist gems

TEHRAN – A group of Armenian school administrators and Persian language teachers have paid visits to a number of places of interest across Iran.

25 school principals who have launched Persian courses in their educational institutions and the Persian language teachers from Yerevan, toured marvels within Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tehran during their eight-day stay in the country, Mehr reported on Sunday.

The tour intended to inspire and motivate the educators, enhancing their understanding of Iran's rich culture and history. Previous arranged familiarization tours targeted groups of students, professors, and bloggers, who produced content about Iran's tourist attractions for Armenian audience. This tour, however, was the first of its kind specifically designed for teachers, according to the organizers.

Earlier this year, Mohammad Asadi-Movahedi, the Iranian Cultural Attaché in Armenia, highlighted the significant role of cultural diplomacy in transforming international perceptions of the country, outlining that both elites and ordinary people should visit Iran, as traveling is the best way to counteract negative propaganda against the culturally rich nation.

"We've recently facilitated a visit for seven Armenian top bloggers to prominent Iranian cities including Kish, Isfahan, Kashan and Tehran," the cultural attaché explained. "This move was part of our broader duty to engage in tourism advocacy."

Gilan targets foreign handicrafts markets

TEHRAN - In an effort to boost Gilan's handicraft exports, a group of 25 provincial artisans have traveled to Iraq to promote their handiworks, said a local official.

"Exporting is the key solution to sales challenges in the field of handicrafts and traditional arts," Mostafa Khanali-Nejad brought to light, emphasizing the priority of attracting foreign markets.

Following a month of coordination with the country's Trade Promotion Organization and Iran's commercial manager in Najaf, for the first time 25 artists and shop owners from the province have been sent to Iraq, he stated.

According to Khanali-Nejad, artisans traveled to Iraq to market and find potential customers for handicraft products, such as leather, wood carving, pottery, carpets, and woven items.

The strategic goal of this trip, he continued, is to maintain the value chain, boost exports, and increase foreign exchange earnings.

Khanali-Nejad noted that handicrafts and traditional arts are among the high-value-added professions. He explained that significant employment can be generated in this sector with minimal investment, and thus, exporting handicraft products not only brings foreign exchange but also leads to economic transformation for the artists.

He also pointed out that one of the advantages of exporting handicrafts and traditional arts is the transfer of Iran's rich culture and customs to other countries, especially neighboring ones.

Gilan province, located in northern Iran along the Caspian Sea, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse array of handicrafts, as well as its unique geographical features, including lush forests, mountains, and coastal areas.

Gilan's handicrafts reflect the traditions, lifestyle, and natural resources of the area, making them an integral part of the local identity and economy. Among the most notable handicrafts of Gilan are its woven textiles, particularly the "Rashti-Duzi" or Rashti embroidery. This intricate form of needlework involves colorful silk threads creating elaborate floral and geometric patterns on wool or felt. Traditionally used to decorate garments, tablecloths, and curtains, Rashti-Duzi showcases the artistry and precision of Gilani craftspeople.

Another prominent craft is "Chadorshab," a type of traditional silk and cotton fabric known for its fine quality and vibrant designs. This textile is often used for making shawls, scarves, and other garments. The weaving techniques and patterns have been passed down through generations, preserving the cultural heritage of the region.

Woodwork is another significant handicraft in Gilan, with artisans producing a variety of items from local wood, such as furniture, kitchen utensils, and decorative objects. The craftsmanship involves traditional techniques that highlight the natural beauty of the wood and the skill of the maker.

Pottery and ceramics are also prevalent in Gilan, where artisans create functional and decorative items using locally sourced clay. The designs often reflect the natural environment and cultural motifs of the region. Additionally, Gilan's handicrafts include basket weaving, with artisans using reeds and other natural materials to create baskets, mats, and other woven products. These items are both practical and decorative.

Overall, the handicrafts of Gilan province are a testament to the region's rich cultural history and the creativity of its people.

'A point of no return:' Why Europe has become an epicenter for anti-tourism protests this summer

Anti-tourism protests have been sweeping across Europe this summer, with demonstrations taking place in the Netherlands, Greece, and of course, Spain.

In early July, protesters marched through popular tourist areas in the Spanish city of Barcelona spraying unsuspecting visitors with water pistols while chanting "tourists go home."

And most recently, thousands protested in the Spanish island of Mallorca, with organizers claiming the island's tourism model "impoverishes workers and enriches only a few."

At the center of the protests lies the growing issue of rising rents and house prices, which has made home ownership almost impossible for some residents.

Carlos Ramirez, a school teacher in Barcelona, northeast Spain, has been saving for his first house for years and earns a "decent" state salary, he says.

But prices in the Catalan capital are skyrocketing and Ramirez, 26, fears he will be driven out.

"Everyone I know lives here," he told CNN. "But the only way you can afford to live right now in Barcelona is sharing with two, three, four people."

"It's becoming more and more difficult for locals, especially younger people, to have their own place," he said. "As the years have gone by, more and more tourists have come."

In Barcelona, rents have increased by 68% over the past decade, according to the city's mayor Jaume Collboni – a pattern that is mirrored across other European cities.

Many residents have had enough. Some have taken extreme measures to make their voices heard, with locals demonstrating against excessive tourism in the Spanish Canary Islands calling for a hunger strike back in April.

When anti-tourism protesters started to fire water pistols at visitors in the Barcelona city center on July 6, a moment that gained international attention, Ramirez said he could "feel the resentment" in the air.

He says he was pleased to see so many residents join the demonstration, which some 2,800 people attended according to Barcelona's City Council.

Antje Martins, an expert in sustainable tourism from the University of Queensland, said the reputational impact of such protests could influence where tourists decide to travel.

"Barcelona now has a really bad reputation for other tourists who don't want to visit because they're scared," she said.

But Eduardo Santander, CEO of the European Travel Commission, a nonprofit association responsible for the promotion of Europe as a travel destination, suggests that incidents like the protests in Barcelona are "isolated" and do not "reflect the complete reality of Spain or Europe."

Generally, Martins believes that this isn't a clash between tourists and residents.

"For me, they're a broader reflection of tourism that is not sustainably managed," she said.

(Source: CNN)

TSC revised for Iranian handicrafts

TEHRAN – The director of the commercialization department at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has announced a revision of the Tariff Specification Codes for handicraft export from Iran.

Farzad Ojani stated on Monday that the need for accurate export statistics has prompted a re-evaluation of the Tariff Specification Codes for handicraft products after nearly a decade.

The official added that this revision was carried out with the help of experts and practitioners from both the public and private sectors.

The tariffs for 37 products, including various types of kilims, traditional textiles, leatherwork, and wooden products have been revised in the first phase.

"Such a revision will continue for other types of Iranian handicrafts in the near future."

The TSC is an identification code designated to determine the value of exported and imported goods. In the TLC System, the valuation of goods is conducted based on categorized tariffs, allowing individuals and specialized export companies to ascertain the true value of items.

Iran's handicraft exports, excluding jewelry and suitcase exports, reached $450 million in the past Persian year (ended on March 19), according to data collected by the ministry of cultural heritage and handicrafts.

Currently, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in the country have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as global hubs of handicrafts.

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Closing the gap: breastfeeding for all

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –The World Breastfeeding Week will be observed in the first week of August. This year, it will be celebrated under the theme of 'Closing the gap: Breastfeeding for all'.

The day highlights the significance of breastfeeding in improving children's health and lowering their mortality rate.

Supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and many Ministries of Health and civil society partners, the World Breastfeeding Week as a global campaign underscores that breastfeeding is essential for child survival and health.

Breast milk is a safe, natural, nutritious, and sustainable food for babies. Breast milk contains antibodies that help protect against many common childhood illnesses, such as diarrhea and respiratory diseases.

This year, the campaign will celebrate breastfeeding mums in all their diversity, throughout their breastfeeding journeys, while showcasing the ways families, societies, communities, and health workers can have the back of every breastfeeding mum.

The days of the week are named as follows.

Wednesday, August 1, the role of policymakers in promoting breastfeeding.

The World Breastfeeding Week as a global campaign underscores that breastfeeding is essential for child survival and health.

Thursday, August 2, the role of fathers in successful breastfeeding.

Friday, August 3, the role of clergies and religious groups in promoting breastfeeding.

Saturday, August 4, the role of family support law in supporting mothers and infants.

Sunday, August 5, the role of media in raising families and mothers' awareness and skills.

Monday, August 6, the role of NGOs in promoting breastfeeding.

Tuesday, August 7, the role of managers and employers in promoting breastfeeding.

UNICEF commends Iran

In August 2023, Robin Nandy, the representative of UNICEF in Iran, said that granting 9 months of maternity leave to mothers in Iran is admirable, praising the country for promoting breastfeeding.

Nandy made the remarks at the ceremony of "World Breastfeeding Week" held at Razi International Conference Hall.

During the coronavirus pandemic, breastfeeding infants has ensured food security, improved nutrition in communities, and reduced inequalities, he highlighted.

Pointing out that every dollar invested in breastfeeding has a return of $35, he noted that in addition to preventing many diseases in children and mothers, breast milk is one of the smartest investments to improve human capital and accelerate economic growth in societies.

Stating that only 44 percent of babies in the world are exclusively breastfed in the first 6 months of life, he said that breastmilk acts like a child's first vaccine.

Breastfeeding rates in societies with deep gaps between income groups are lower, he further stated.

Appreciating Iran for promoting breast milk, he said that it is necessary to implement family-oriented policies in countries with at least 18 weeks of leave after childbirth to promote and strengthen breastfeeding.

Iran's decision to grant 9 months of maternity leave to mothers is admirable and UNICEF supports these policies, he highlighted.

Border control, healthcare curb dengue spread

TEHRAN – Thanks to effective border control measures and quality healthcare, the number of people entering the country having dengue fever has significantly decreased compared to the previous months.

However, decrease in temperature accompanied by the rains in autumn can contribute to the resurgence of the mosquito density, particularly in the affected areas.

"The most important factor that contributes to dengue transmission worldwide is climate change; increase and change in temperature has led to the outbreak of various infectious diseases including dengue fever," IRNA quoted Hossein Farshidi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Transmitted by Aedes mosquitos, the disease was placed among the top ten life-threatening diseases by the World Health Organization (WHO) transmitted by local carriers in 2019.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) report, dengue fever cases in 2023 surged twofold globally, and the number of deaths caused by the disease also increased by the same factor.

Fortunately, since the outbreak of the disease, there has been no report of acute cases in Iran, and there is no reason to concern about the spread of the disease in the country, the official noted.

So far, Bandar Lengeh, southern Hormozgan province, has had the highest level of dengue-infected cases.

Luckily, the number of dengue cases has not increased in the area thanks to warm weather which is associated with a reduction in the Aedes density, Farshidi added.

The health ministry has implemented measures to address the probable increase in infected cases in autumn.

Transmitted by Aedes mosquitos, the disease was placed among the top ten life-threatening diseases by the World Health Organization.

The ministry is also planning to develop a training package to inform individuals, particularly passengers, medical staff, and journalists of the ways to prevent, or manage dengue fever.

Sharp rise in cases

Cases of dengue fever have been so far identified in 128 countries, a sharp rise compared to 10 countries in 1960, Shahnam Arshi, an official with the health ministry has said.

Up to 400 people are affected with dengue fever each year, he said, adding that only 20 percent of patients have symptoms and 80 percent of dengue infections have mild or no symptoms.

A significant portion of transmission occurs through individuals with asymptomatic infections.

About half of the world's population is at risk, and this number is increasing annually due to global warming, climate change, and the rise in international travel.

About 70 to 75 percent of the cases are reported in Southeast Asia.

Over the past years, the disease has spread to Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Singapore, and Thailand.

Aedes aegypti is a more invasive mosquito that is more common in Iran.

Due to the physiology of this mosquito, people in contaminated areas are told to wear clothes that cover most parts of their bodies in the first two hours of the morning and two hours before the evening, Arshi noted.

Transmission occurs two days before showing symptoms and two days after the fever.

The disease can spread from mosquitos to humans, from humans to mosquitos, and from humans to humans through blood transfusion, organ transplant, and mother to child in pregnancy.

IPhO 2024: Iranian students surge to 4th place from 17th last year

From page 1 ▸ Moreover, Oman and Morocco participated in the competition as observers to become familiar with the Olympiad.

China, Russia, and Romania ranked first to third respectively.

According to Mahmoud Bahmanabadi, the chairman of the IPhO 2024 Organizing Committee, 17 percent of participants grabbed silver medals, and 25 percent of them won Bronze medals.

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

"Science diplomacy is one of the strategic policies of the country.

Holding this competition will contribute to the development of science diplomacy since it serves as a platform to meet future physicists and promote constructive interaction in physics and other science and technology fields," IRNA quoted Bahmanabadi as saying.

The history of the IPhO dates back to 1967, when the first edition was held in Warsaw Poland with the participation of only five countries.

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

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

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

The IPhO 2023 was held from July 10-17 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo, ISNA reported.

Mehdi Shirin-Bayan, Mohammad-Mehdi Mousavi, Ali Qanbari, and Sina Fat'h won the silver medals and Shayan Feiz-Oskouei won the bronze medal.

Intl. Olympiad achievements

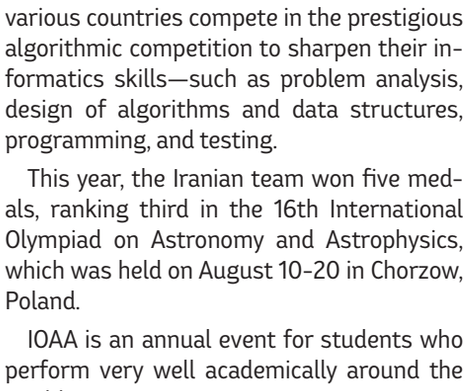
The outstanding achievements of Iranian students in international Olympiads have placed the country among the top five nations in the world.

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

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

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

Russia hosted the tournament at the Sirius Educational Center from November 14 to 22, 2023, IRNA reported. The participants attended the event both in person and remotely.



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

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

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

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

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

IOAA is an annual event for students who perform very well academically around the world.

Established in Thailand in the year 2006, it was an initiative by five countries including Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, China, and Poland.

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

IMO is the World Championship Mathematics Competition for high school students, which is held each year in a different country.

The Iranian students who participated in the 53rd International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) succeeded in winning four silver medals and one bronze medal which placed the country 11th among 111 participating countries, ISNA reported.

The IPhO 2023 was held from July 10-17 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo, ISNA reported.

In the 34th International Biology Olympiad (IBO), held in the United Arab Emirates from July 3-11. The IBO 2023 hosted 293 students from 76 countries.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries

Some 105 medical equipment produced by 23 Iranian companies are exported to 55 countries across the world, Reza Masaeli, an advisor to the health minister has said.

"Currently, a total of 280,000 medical equipment is produced in the country. In recent years, the production of medical equipment in Iran has increased by 9 percent," he added.

Iran exports medical equipment to Russia, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Croatia.

تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی به ۵۵ کشور دنیا صادر می‌شود

مشاور وزیر بهداشت گفت: در حال حاضر ۱۰۵ محصول تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی که توسط ۲۳ شرکت ایرانی تولید می شود، به ۵۵ کشور جهان صادر می شود.
رضا مسائلی، اظهار داشت: در کشور بیش از ۲۸۰ هزار قلم تجهیزات پزشکی در کشور وجود دارد و در سال های اخیر، تولیدات تجهیزات پزشکی در جمهوری اسلامی ایران، ۹ درصد افزایش داشته است.
وی افزود: در حال حاضر تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی به روسیه، آلمان، ایتالیا، بلژیک، هلند و کرواسی صادر می شود.

Mehr / Iman Hamikhah

A cool refuge from hot summer

Intense summer heatwaves drive Iranians to seek refuge in cooler spots next to the Ganjnameh waterfall in Hamedan.

Travelers flock to these cooler havens to find respite from the relentless heat.

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Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The welfare of countries depends on the judgment and management of governments. If governments are honest and wise in judgment, good fortune follows; if not, it will turn away and go.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:30 Dawn: 3:34 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:12 (tomorrow)

Iranian translator Mohammad Taqi Ghiasi passes away

TEHRAN- Mohammad Taqi Ghiasi, a distinguished literary critic and translator of French literature, passed away in France on Sunday. He was 92.

Born in 1932 in northern province of Gilan, Ghiasi completed his primary education in Khomam, secondary education in Rasht, and pursued higher education in French language and literature in Tehran.

At the age of 30, he went to Paris on a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture of the Iranian government, where he earned a doctorate in French literature from the Sorbonne University.

His doctoral thesis was titled "The Influence of Stendhal on Gide."

Upon returning to Iran, he served as a full professor at the University of Tehran until his retirement, and also taught French language and literature for several years in the doctoral

program at the Islamic Azad University.

In addition to his French-Persian dictionaries and numerous educational books published for teaching French, Ghiasi has an extensive portfolio of translations of literary works by French authors.

His translations include notable works such as "The Gods Are Athirst" by Anatole France, "The Share of Hunting Dogs" by Émile Zola, and "Holy Week" by Louis Aragon.

Mobarak Intl. Puppet Festival to be held in December

TEHRAN-The 20th edition of the Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Festival is scheduled to take place in the Iranian capital from December 16 to 23, the organizers have announced.

The festival has issued a call for submissions for its upcoming edition, unveiling new sections and a competitive format, ISNA reported on Monday.

The festival will be organized in collaboration with the Performing Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Iranian Association of Performing Arts.

The event will feature a variety of sections, including stage performances, outdoor shows, international theater, inclusive performances, playwriting, a 100-second (virtual space) segment, along with inventions and technical achievements.

In addition, specialized seminars, educational workshops, experience sharing, and discussion sessions focusing on critique and analysis will be among the festival's offerings.

For the first time, new sections such as the 100-second category dedicated to virtual platforms and the inventions and technical achievements category have been introduced in this edition.

While previous editions of the festival have generally followed a non-competitive format, the 20th edition will include competitive categories for stage performances and outdoor shows, reflecting the format used in the 19th edition.

Cartoon of Day

Gaza 2024
Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

Designing Iranian board games with moral, cultural approaches

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN-A specialized training course on designing tabletop games with a particular emphasis on ethical, and cultural values is underway in Tehran, organized by the Short-Term Specialized Training Center of the Quranic Organization of Academicians of the Country affiliated to the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR) in cooperation with the Center for the Growth of the Quranic Arts Technology Units, also affiliated to the ACECR.

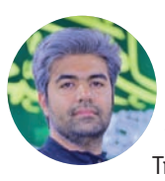
Participants benefit from receiving a valid certificate from the ACECR upon completion of the course. Additionally, three selected projects will be supported by the center for commercialization.

Tabletop games involve pieces and/or accessories such as boards, dice, and cards. They can be played by two or more players. Such games are normally played on a table or any flat surface. Classified according to the general form, or equipment utilized, they include board games, card games, dice games, paper and pencil games, role playing games, strategy games and tile-based games. The term "board game" is used here in this text generally as a tabletop game.

Board games experienced a substantial growth in the 1990s, especially in European countries. After the turn of the millennium, the board game industry registered significant expansion, with companies producing a rising number of new games for a growing global audience. In Iran, however, it is a rather new industry that is growing gradually.

Tehran Times has conducted interviews with the organizer of the course as well as the two instructors who are conducting the classes.

Need to elevate values



Saeed Rasteh Moghadam is the director of the Short-Term Specialized Training Center of the Quranic Organization of Academicians of the Country. "The idea for holding this course stems from the society's need to elevate Islamic, cultural, and ethical values and the Leader's emphasis on the importance of preserving and promoting these values.

Given the potential impact of games in conveying messages and values, it was decided to hold this course," he said.

"These types of games, in addition to providing entertainment, can serve as a tool to enhance the culture and ethical values of Iranian-Islamic society. These games can help showcase distinct Iranian and Islamic values, improve young people's perspectives on the world, and enhance their social and mental skills, he added.

"The target audience for this event is broad, including teenagers and adults interested in designing board games, or enthusiasts of creative thinking. Before the registration for the course began, a one-day workshop on game design was held at this year's International Holy Quran Exhibition in Tehran, which was well-received by the visitors," Rasteh Moghadam told Tehran Times.

In this course, which lasts for six weeks, the participants get theoretical training along with practical experiences to get ready for designing competitive board games in the market.

"Designing and presenting Iranian games come with challenges such as securing financial resources, providing specialized human resources, creating suitable and attractive content, as well as proper marketing and distribution. However, given the importance of the subject, it is planned to introduce the top three teams to the Center for the Growth of the Quranic Arts Technology Units to turn their game design ideas into final products and commercialize them," he further noted.

Magic of games

Speaking to Tehran Times, board game designer Ali Edriszadeh, one of the instructors of the course, mentioned that the course includes topics such as introduction to games and toys, history and types of board games, creativity in game design, and board game mechanics, among others.

"The participants also get familiar with the process of game design, from idea to execution. At the end of the course, they will be divided in groups, each with an assignment to design a game," he noted.

Edriszadeh who is also the manager of Tasino Intellectual Games Club in Parand and secretary of the Iranian Game and Toy Designers Hub (IGTD Hub), explained about the differences between the board games and other kinds of games.

"There is more interaction among players in board games than in other kinds of games such as mobile, console, or PC games. Gathering together and communicating with each other during the game is the major difference.

The vast variety of game types and mechanics can appeal to various tastes. From social deduction/hidden role games to party games and from light card games to heavy strategy games, they can attract all kinds of people in families and friends," he underlined.

"In addition, the games can interest people with different abilities. For instance, a game like "Stogite" can involve people with verbal intelligence while games like "Nox" and "6 nimmt!" can absorb people with mathematical intelligence," he further added.

Referring to the status of board games in the world, he said: "Board games are not just for children and people of all ages can enjoy them.

The fact that such games can involve various senses makes them one of the most fascinating and magical types of media and they can be used for educational, promotional and even advertising and business purposes".

"The board games market and industry have experienced significant growth in the last three decades in the world. In Iran, and especially since the establishment of the IGTD Hub last year, designing local board games have gained momentum. And I hope we can see Iranian-made board games in the international arena in the coming years," the designer stated.

Constructive communication

Board game designer Seyed Ali Tabatabaei Lotfi, another instructor of the course, also spoke with Tehran Times, describing its purposes: "By the end of this course, we hope that participants will have the necessary skills to design the mechanics of board games, and also be somewhat familiar with the concepts of other parts of this ecosystem: concepts such as product design, production management, sales management, serious games, gamification, game research, and so on".

Tabatabaei, who is also the head of Jiro Games and treasurer of the IGTD Hub, said: "In general, various types of games have been created for entertainment, including board games. Each kind of games has some advantages over others and sometimes they share common benefits. If we only want to mention the advantages of board games, two points seem more important to me. The first is creating interaction and constructive communication among different groups of people, especially families. The next point is that many of these games enhance various mental skills, which is why many people call them intellectual games".

Pointing to the importance of games, he said: "There are games that, in addition to entertainment, pursue other goals. Such games are called serious games and they are used for promotional, educational, therapeutic, and many other purposes".

Today, many experts in the education sciences consider the language of children to be play. Various models of learning through play have been developed, and there are schools that conduct all their education through play," he asserted.

A growing phenomenon

Board games have been played, traveled, and evolved in most cultures and societies throughout history. Several important historical sites, artifacts, and documents shed light on early board games such as Jiroft civilization game boards in Iran. "Senet," found in Predynastic and First Dynasty burials of Egypt, 3500 B.C. and 3100 B.C. respectively, is the oldest board game known to have existed.

"Hounds and jackals," another ancient Egyptian board game, appeared around 2000 B.C. "Backgammon" originated in ancient Mesopotamia about 5,000 years ago. "Ashtapada," "chess," "pachisi" and "chaupar" originated in India. "Go" (4th century B.C.) and liubo (1st century B.C.) originated in China.

In recent years, board games have experienced a renaissance worldwide, emerging as significant cultural and educational tools. This resurgence is not just limited to Western countries but is also making waves in regions like the Middle East, including Iran. The evolution of board games from simple pastimes to complex, strategy-based experiences has broadened their appeal across various age groups and demographics.

Globally, the board game industry has seen exponential growth. According to market research, the industry was valued at approximately $11 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach $26 billion by 2030. This growth is driven by several factors.

Modern board games cover a wide range of themes and mechanics, from historical simulations and fantasy adventures to cooperative problem-solving games. This diversity caters to varied interests, making board games appealing to a broader audience.In an increasingly digital world, board games offer a unique opportunity for face-to-face interaction. They foster social connections and create shared experiences, which are particularly valued in an era where digital communication often prevails.

Board games are being recognized for their educational potential. They help develop critical thinking, strategic planning, and teamwork skills. Educational institutions are incorporating board games into their curricula to enhance learning experiences.

In Iran, the board game culture is gradually improving. The country's rich cultural heritage and storytelling tradition provide a fertile ground for the development of board games that resonate with Iranian values and narratives.

Currently, about 20 companies are producing Iranian board games. Among the notable games, there are "Last Spring" designed by Ali Edriszadeh and produced by Jiro Games and 24 Games; "The Last Station" designed by Ashkan Javaheri and published by Dorehami Games; "Fimbulwinter" designed by Armin Masroor and produced by Hamboardi; "Build & Blast" designed by Navid Atapour and produced by Hamboardi; "Varda" designed by Asma Safizadeh and Sadegh Rezania and produced by Land of Beautiful Mind; "Dadaan" designed by Ehsan Abdifar, Farnam Fartoot, and Samad Khatibi and published by Bahamzi; "The Master Potter" designed by Fateme Alaeddin, Vahid Esmaeeli, and Amir Ardeshiri and produced by Houpaa; and "King Thief Minister" designed by Javad Abdian, Reza Agharahimi, Sohrab Mostaghim, and Mohammad Zarei and published by Reality Game.

The future of board games, both globally and in Iran, looks promising. With the increasing recognition of their cultural, educational, and social values, board games are set to become even more integral to our lives.

As the industry continues to grow, the collaboration between designers, educators, and cultural institutions will be key to unlocking the full potential of board games. Whether for education, entertainment, or cultural preservation, board games are poised to play a significant role in shaping the social and cultural landscapes of the future.