

# Israel's Nightmare

Joy over Haniyeh's assassination has turned into panic with the election of Yahya Sinwar as the Hamas leader



- **Who is Yahya Sinwar, the fluent Hebrew speaker?**
- **A strategic decision**
- **Yahya Sinwar wins applause from regional resistance groups**
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## Contain Israel if you want to avert war: Pezeshkian tells Macron

TEHRAN – If the U.S. and Western countries genuinely wish to prevent war in West Asia, they must immediately halt arms sales and support for Israel, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian told his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron during a Wednesday phone call.

After Macron requested that Iran refrain from retaliation for the assassination of former Hamas Political Chief Ismail Haniyeh to help “de-escalate tensions” and prevent war in the region, Pezeshkian said it is Israel that’s trying to escalate tensions and ignite a conflagration.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently played a crucial role in fostering peace, stability, and security regionally and globally, while also working to prevent conflict and war. However, the Israeli regime, through its criminal and terrorist acts against the vulnerable people of Gaza, including the assassination of martyr Haniya, who was an official guest of Iran, is attempting to ignite conflict in the region,” he said before asking Macron to “pressure the Zionist regime to stop its genocidal actions and assaults on Gaza, and agree to a ceasefire.” ► Page 3

## U.S. obstruction of UN action leaves Iran with no choice but to respond to Israel: acting FM

TEHRAN – Iran’s Acting Foreign Minister has condemned the U.S. for insulating Israel against punitive measures by the Security Council, adding that in the absence of any appropriate action by the UN body, Iran has no option but to exercise its inherent right to legitimate defense against the regime’s aggressions.

Ali Baqeri Kani was speaking in Jeddah during an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The meeting was held at the request of Iran, following the Israeli assassination of the late Hamas Political Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

The acting FM said that Iranian retaliation is “necessary to prevent further encroachments by this regime on the sovereignty, nationals, and territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” and added that it would be executed “at the appropriate time and in a proportionate manner.”

He said that Haniyeh’s killing could not have occurred without “U.S. consent and intelligence support,” and therefore, U.S. responsibility for the attack “should not be ignored.” ► Page 3

### Rare long-tailed nesokia seen in Hour al-Azim wetland

TEHRAN – New images of the long-tailed nesokia (*Nesokia bunnii*), one of the rarest and endangered rodents of the world, were recorded in Hour al-Azim wetland on Tuesday.

Long-tailed nesokia, the same as the Persian yellow deer and the Persian leopard, is listed as a critically endangered species on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. Therefore, it requires special conservation efforts to ensure its survival.

The long-tailed nesokia is endemic to the Mesopotamian Marshes and is restricted to Hour al-Azim, Iran, and parts of the southern wetlands of Iraq.

The first record of the long-tailed nesokia in Mesopotamia was identified by the research team of the protected area in Hour al-Azim in the Iranian year 1400 (2021-2022). ► Page 7

### Tehran, Dushanbe to implement visa-waiver program

TEHRAN – In a move to enhance bilateral relations between Iran and Tajikistan, a visa-waiver program will be implemented between the two nations starting Saturday, August 10.

Based on a recent Memorandum of Understanding inked by the governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, passport holders from both countries can visit each other’s territories without a visa for up to 90 days from the date of first entry, with a maximum stay of 30 days per visit, as reported by Khovar.

Initially, the visa-free initiative will be available exclusively for travelers on Dushanbe-Tehran and Tehran-Dushanbe air services. ► Page 6

### Mirzazadeh wins Iran’s first medal in 2024 Olympics

TEHRAN – Greco-Roman wrestler Amin Mirzazadeh claimed Iran’s first medal in the 2024 Olympic Games Tuesday night.

He defeated Azerbaijan’s Sabah Saleh Shariati 4-0 in the 130kg bronze-medal match.

Shariati, bronze medalist of the 2016 Olympic Games, bade farewell after the match.

In a show of good sportsmanship, Olympic bronze medal winner Mirzazadeh carried his opponent Shariati around the mat on his shoulders, after Shariati lost in his final match before retiring.

Cuban Mijain López beat Yasmani Acosta of Chile 6-0 to win his fifth gold medal in Olympics.

Greco-Roman wrestling has been a blue-ribbon Olympic event ever since the first modern Games were held in Athens in 1896. It became a permanent fixture on the Olympic program in 1908.



## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Overwhelming fear in Israel

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

In an analysis, Kayhan discussed the deadly conditions of Israelis due to the fear of Iran's attack and wrote: The feeling of fear and defeat has surrounded all of Israel, and ballistic missiles and resistance axis are among Iran's powerful weapons that can target Israel.

The stock markets in America and Europe have fallen, and yet no missile has been fired. Israel is desperate against the will of Iran and the resistance front, and faces the image of destruction. Iran's revenge against Israel has become the most important issue in the world.

According to the reporter on Fox News, everyone in Israel is waiting for Iran's attack. Before Iran's possible attacks on Israel, Tel Aviv has started to pay heavy financial expenses and has concentrated these expenses mostly on its missile defense systems.

According to Jackson Hinkle, a political analyst, Iran has not even fired a missile yet but the world is collapsing.

## Donya-e-Eqtasad: America's message to Iran

In a note, Donya-e-Eqtasad discussed the increase in crisis in the region after the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh by Israel. It wrote: Many officials of the Islamic Republic have spoken about revenge operations after this assassination.

There is a concern that with Iran's reaction, the tensions in the region will find a different direction and we will witness a large-scale war. Iranian officials have clearly blamed Israel for this assassination and have declared that they will "punish" this regime.

The spokesperson of the U.S. State Department said that the U.S. has asked other countries through diplomatic channels to tell Iran that escalation of tensions in the Middle East is not in their interest.

Iran is at the head of the Axis of Resistance and supports Hamas and Hezbollah, and it is not yet clear when Iran and Hezbollah will launch an attack against Israel and what the features of such an attack will be.

But Biden and Harris made new decisions about U.S. efforts to support Israel militarily and diplomatic efforts to "de-escalate regional tensions."

## Iran: Fake speculations due to the lack of estimation of Iran's attack

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper dealt with the publication of contradictory news by the

Western media due to the lack of estimation of Iran's attack. The paper said: The assassination of one of the leaders of the Palestinian resistance and the violation of Iran's territorial integrity has caused Tehran to decisively stand on its position and punishment of Israel.

This shows that the behind-the-scenes efforts of America and the West to dissuade Iran from its decision have reached a deadlock.

Israel and America do not have an estimate of Iran's possible attack on the occupied territories, and for this reason, they are seeking to advance the media war against Iran.

Clearly, the most important issue that has caused the Western official media to publish baseless reports and news is the ambiguous situation that has confused Israel and its Western supporters during the past seven days.

The pro-Zionist media are publishing contradictory reports to manage the confused psychological atmosphere that has dominated the occupied territories in recent days, and that is by quoting from unknown sources that most likely do not exist.

## Javan: Tel Aviv-Washington confusion over the method and time of revenge

In an article, Javan discussed the lack of information among the U.S. and Israel about the method and time of Iran's revenge and said: American and Zionist authorities and media claimed that Iran would carry out an operation against the occupied territories by Monday, but Iran disrupted all their equations.

They got upset that no movement from Tehran had been observed so far, to the point where the U.S. government concluded that it could not determine the exact time and type of attacks by Tehran and Hezbollah. The Zionists are unaware and worried and said that Iran and Hezbollah missiles may land on them at any moment.

According to Westerners, the response scenario of Iran and Hezbollah includes two waves of attacks, one by Hezbollah and another by Iran, and several other cases by groups aligned with them. Although Iran and the resistance groups have not commented on the type of reactions to Israel yet, the preparations for this hybrid and multifaceted operation have begun little by little.

Despite Iran's previous attacks on the occupied territories, this time, the element of surprise is probably on the agenda so that it has less opportunity for a possible confrontation.

Day, the ministry emphasized, "The attack on Iran's Consulate General in Mazar-e Sharif and the subsequent killing of Iranian diplomats and a reporter is a clear violation of international law," referencing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267. The ministry further asserted its commitment to seeking justice, stating, "We reserve the right to pursue the various aspects of this painful terrorist act and respond to the noble nation of Iran and the grieving families."

The statement reiterated a call to the Afghan authorities, urging them to "announce the results of their investigations on the perpetrators of this crime and to punish them."

tourism and pilgrimage to the holy shrines in both countries.

The Iraqi official, Alaa Abo Al Hassan Al Alaak, highlighted six key areas for cultural cooperation such as children and adolescents, cinema and theater, visual arts exhibitions, books and publishing, fashion and clothing, and tourism. He expressed Iraq's readiness to collaborate with Iran in these fields.

After the meeting, Alaak announced the Iraqi ministry's willingness to sign the cultural exchange program developed between the two countries.

## Iran-Belarus discuss international threats in high-ranking military meeting

TEHRAN— The chief commander of the Iranian Army, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, held talks with the visiting Commander of Air Force and Air Defense of the Republic of Belarus, Major General Andrey Lukyanovich, in a meeting attended by several other high-ranking generals in Tehran.

The Wednesday meeting highlighted the shared interests and challenges faced by both nations, particularly in light of ongoing sanctions from the United States and NATO expansion, according to IRNA.

Major General Mousavi underscored the common ground between Iran and Belarus, stating, "We have common threats and interests, being under the unjust sanctions of the United States and the West."

He expressed gratitude for Belarus's steadfast position regarding regional issues, particularly referencing the assassination of martyr Ismail Haniya.

"Belarus has a special strategic position and is a strong bulwark against NATO expansion," he emphasized, adding, "We and the countries in the region oppose NATO's expansion as well."

Reflecting on the historical context, Major General Mousavi noted the impact of unilateral sanctions on Iran since the Islamic Revolution.

"We have tried to make the most of this threat and not to



depend on external powers for our defense," he remarked.

He recognized that Belarus faces similar challenges, stating, "The people, government, and army of Belarus are also under sanctions; however, we know that they too have their own initiatives and methods to overcome the current situation."

The Iranian Commander expressed a desire to deepen military cooperation between the two nations.

"The will of the political, military, and defense officials of both countries is to develop and deepen cooperation," he stated.

He referred to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Iran as a pivotal moment that laid the groundwork for enhanced relations.

Major General Lukyanovich echoed this sentiment, describing Iran as a "beautiful

country with a rich history and very hospitable people."

He affirmed Belarus's commitment to expanding military relations with Iran, stating, "We also seek to expand and deepen military relations and benefit from the valuable experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Both leaders emphasized their mutual opposition to American unilateralism and NATO's influence in their regions. General Mousavi highlighted the importance of sharing experiences, particularly from Tehran's historical struggles during the Iran-Iraq war and its recent battles against terrorism. "We know that the Republic of Belarus also possesses invaluable experiences, especially in the Ukraine war," he said, advocating for collaboration that could strengthen both nations.

As discussions concluded,

General Lukanoevich extended an invitation for the Iranian army commander to visit Belarus to observe its military capabilities firsthand.

## Israel to soon receive 'strong, definitive' response for Haniyeh assassination

In a statement released on Wednesday, Major General Mousavi praised the appointment of Yahya Sinwar as the new political leader of Hamas.

"The appointment of Yahya Sinwar as the new political leader of Hamas is a testament to the Palestinian fighters' commitment to resistance," declared the military leader.

"This shows the path they intend to continue treading on, leaving the Zionist regime with no hope for its own future."

He also addressed Israel's assassination of Sinwar's predecessor, Ismail Haniyeh, who was killed in a Tehran guesthouse on July 31.

"The Zionist regime will soon receive a strong and definitive response. There is no doubt about it."

Sinwar, a key architect of Hamas's successful Operation al-Aqsa Storm last October, is seen as a strong and determined leader who will continue the fight against Israeli occupation. His appointment has been met with widespread support from Palestinian resistance groups and their allies across West Asia.

## A strategic decision

The movement's structure is divided into three geographical sections: Gaza, the West Bank, and Palestinian refugees abroad, each with its own political bureau. These sections collectively form a unified organization under a single political bureau.

Mousa Abu Marzook, the first head of Hamas's political bureau, hailed from Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Khaled Mashal, the second head, was born in Silwad, Ramallah (West Bank).

The late Ismail Haniyeh, the third head, originated from the Al-Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. Now, with Yahya Sinwar from Khan Younis in Gaza taking over, the leadership has once again returned to a figure from the Gaza Strip, the current focal point of the Palestinian struggle.

This choice carries substantial weight concerning Hamas's political stance and strategies against Israel.

The unanimous selection of Yahya Sinwar by all members of the Consultative Council, Hamas's highest organizational body, sends a clear and unified message to Israel: if the martyr Ismail Haniyeh, based in Doha

and leading political efforts and ceasefire negotiations, was intolerable, then prepare for Commander Yahya Sinwar, the hero of October 7.

The decision is strategic, timely, and loaded with clear implications. Given the wartime conditions in Gaza and the limitations on Commander Yahya Sinwar's ability to make overt appearances, it is anticipated that another individual, likely from the West Bank or abroad, will be appointed or has already been appointed as deputy head of Hamas's political bureau to represent the movement globally.

This swift decision following the martyrdom of a leader like Ismail Haniyeh underscores an essential reality: Hamas, as a national liberation movement, is not dependent on any single individual.

The spirit of the martyr Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas, and the Palestinian Resistance lives on as long as the Palestinian nation endures.

Hossein Jaber Ansari is the former deputy foreign minister of Iran for Arab and African Affairs.

**By Hossein Jaber Ansari**  
Former deputy FM for Middle East and African Affairs

TEHRAN – Following the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement of Palestine (Hamas), in a terrorist operation by the Zionist regime in Tehran, speculation quickly arose about his successor.

Various top Hamas leaders were mentioned in the media, but eventually, Hamas announced that its Consultative Council had selected Yahya Sinwar as the new head of its political bureau, succeeding the late Haniyeh.

Yahya Sinwar, who leads Hamas's political bureau in the Gaza Strip and is a prominent figure in the Resistance, notably known for the October 7 events in Palestine, brings a multifaceted significance to his new role.

One aspect to consider is the internal political and geographical dynamics within Hamas.

## Iran denounces Israeli actions, pledges decisive response

TEHRAN – Iran's acting foreign minister, Ali Baqeri Kani, has issued a stern warning against Israel's destabilizing activities in the West Asia region, vowing that the Islamic Republic will not permit Israel to manipulate regional stability and security for its own illegitimate objectives.

During a telephone conversation on Tuesday evening with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad, Baqeri Kani condemned Israel's recent assassinations of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political bureau of the Hamas Resistance movement, in Tehran, and Fuad Shukur, a high-ranking Hezbollah military commander, in a southern Beirut airstrike.

"The Zionist regime has become a catalyst for instability and insecurity in West Asia through its criminal actions in Yemen, Tehran, and Beirut," Baqeri Kani declared.

He also accused the United States and certain European nations of contributing to regional instability by supporting

Israel's terrorist activities.

Highlighting Iran's commitment to taking decisive and legitimate action against Israel, Baqeri Kani emphasized, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow the Zionist regime to treat regional stability and security as mere plausibilities for the illegitimate goals of the terrorist ruling gang in Tel Aviv."

Syrian Foreign Minister Mekdad echoed these sentiments, condemning Israel's terrorist acts and reiterating Syria's unwavering support for Iran.

He criticized Israel's escalating aggression across West Asia and condemned the ongoing war crimes and genocide against Palestinians in the occupied territories, asserting that such actions must not go unpunished.

Mekdad also lambasted the West for its complicity in Israeli violations, accusing the United States and its European allies of supporting aggression against Iran, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria.

## 'Global silence against Israeli crimes emboldens criminals'

In a separate conversation with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, Baqeri Kani criticized European countries for their passive response to Israel's recent acts of aggression, including the assassination of Haniyeh and the violation of Iran's national security and regional stability.

He argued that European inaction only emboldens the Tel Aviv regime to continue its destabilizing activities.

"Europeans' obstruction of the diplomatic path will yield no result other than encouraging the Zionist regime to persist in its terrorist activities, creating further instability and insecurity in the region," Baqeri Kani stated. He emphasized that no nation, including Iran, would compromise on its national sovereignty, security, or territorial integrity.

Baqeri Kani also condemned the U.S. and European members of the UN Security Council for preventing the world body from

addressing the root causes of instability in West Asia, holding them accountable for Israel's actions.

Lammy urged Iran to exercise maximum restraint in the aftermath of Haniyeh's assassination, describing the killing as a significant setback in the Gaza ceasefire negotiations.

He warned that the escalating tensions between Israel and Lebanon could lead to disastrous repercussions if self-restraint is not maintained.

Haniyeh was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian and to meet with other leaders of the Axis of Resistance.

Iran has held Israel responsible for the killing of Haniyeh.

Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has vowed a "harsh response" and reiterated Iran's commitment to avenging Haniyeh's death, denouncing the act as a violation of Iran's sovereignty and a threat to regional peace and stability.

## Tehran demands justice for 1998 killing of Iranian reporter and diplomats in Afghanistan

TEHRAN— Iran's Foreign Ministry has urged the Afghan caretaker government to publicly announce the findings of its investigations into the assassination of Iranian diplomats and a reporter in Mazar-e Sharif on August 8, 1998, and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

Iranian reporter Mahmoud Saremi was killed alongside eight diplomats during an ambush on Iran's Consulate General. The attack happened as the military forces of the Taliban captured the strategic northern Afghan city, spurring street battles with Ahmed Shah Massoud-led Northern Alliance.

In a statement issued on National Reporter's

## Iran, Iraq form joint committee to strengthen cultural ties

TEHRAN— Iran's cultural attaché in Iraq and the Iraqi director general of the Department of Cultural Relations have announced the establishment of a joint cultural committee between the two nations.

During a meeting in Baghdad, Gholam Reza Abazari emphasized the importance of implementing existing cultural agreements and expressed gratitude for the efforts made by both sides to ensure a successful Arbaeen Walk this year.

The Iranian envoy also highlighted the necessity for the two countries to sign a memorandum of understanding regarding

# U.S. obstruction of UN action leaves Iran with no choice but to respond to Israel: acting FM

From Page 1 ▶ Baqeri said just how Iran was forced to take matters into its own hands in response to the regime's aggression in April, it is once again left with no choice but to respond to Israel's killing of Haniyeh on its own.

"After the cowardly terrorist attack by the Israeli regime on the diplomatic premises of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus, we immediately informed the Security Council about this regime's illegal actions," Baqeri Kani explained.

"However, not only did the United States not condemn this attack, but it also obstructed the Security Council from taking any action."

The diplomat labeled Israel's assassination of Haniyeh as a clear demonstration of the "terrorist crimes committed by the Israeli regime."

He asserted, "These crimes



once again prove that the foundation and existence of the occupying regime of Quds are based on terror, crime, aggression, and genocide."

Baqeri also talked about the regime's ongoing crimes in Gaza, once again pointing the finger of blame at Washington for its untrammelled support for the Zionists.

"Due to the extensive and unwavering support from certain Western powers, especially the United States, for this regime, the United Nations has also been unable to take any significant action to end this unprecedented massacre and destruction against Palestinian civilians," he said before highlighting Washington's logistical support for Israel.

The U.S. has been arming Israel with the bombs used to kill civilians in Gaza, sending multiple deliveries of weapons to the occupied territories in the past months.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the caretaker foreign minister called on Islamic nations to back Palestinians in the face of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza.

"In the face of the widespread and horrific crimes of the Israeli regime against the Palestinian people, as well as its aggressive attacks on other countries in the region, including Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is now facing a serious test. The organization's actions in response to this situation must be comprehensive, decisive, and commensurate with the increasing expectations of the Islamic Ummah to prevent this dangerous trend against the Palestinian people."

## Sinwar's ties with Iran

*New political leader of Hamas reportedly has intimate relations with Iranians*



TEHRAN – The new strategic, farsighted, and resolute political Leader of Hamas, as described by his close associates and the Palestinian people, is believed to have close and strong ties with Iran.

The first time Yahya Sinwar stepped foot in Iran was in 2012, a year after he was released from Israeli jail in a prison swap after over 2 decades of imprisonment. The late Ismail Haniyeh, whom Sinwar will be succeeding, can be seen introducing Sinwar to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in a video captured during the meeting of a group of Palestinians with the Leader.

"Brother Yahya Sinwar spent 25 years of his life in Israeli prison. He had been sentenced to 430 years in jail," Haniyeh said while pointing

to the alleged architect of Hamas' October 7 Operation sitting on a chair next to the wall. Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei smiles at Sinwar with endearing eyes, before telling the group of Palestinians that they would undoubtedly "emerge victorious" in their fight against the Zionist regime thanks to their strong beliefs and high spirits.

The short footage available of the 2012 meeting shows Sinwar with a calm and collected demeanor. He can be seen listening intently to the conversation between Haniyeh and Ayatollah Khamenei, and nodding slightly when the late Hamas chief introduces him to Iran's Leader.

While it's unclear if Sinwar returned to Iran after 2012, his own speeches confirm that he also met with other Iranian officials during that visit, including the late Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, known for his anti-terror endeavors and the unification of freedom fighters across West Asia under the Axis of Resistance. Sinwar has also talked to the revered commander at least once, according to his own words.

After the U.S. assassinated General Soleimani in a Baghdad drone strike in 2020,

Sinwar remembered the late commander during one of his addresses to the people of Gaza.

The Palestinian fighter informed his people that General Soleimani had contacted him during one of Israel's many fights against the enclave, and promised to stay by the Palestinians' side.

"Qassem Soleimani contacted us and said: 'Iran, Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), and the Quds Force are fully committed to preserving al-Quds as the capital of Palestine alongside you.' This man made no demands and set no conditions [in exchange for help toward Gazans]. That's because he truly loved al-Quds."

The appointment of Sinwar as the new political leader of Hamas has received praise from Iranian authorities, who believe the selection will accelerate the pursuit of freedom for Palestinians.

Analysts believe that with the close state of ties between Sinwar and Iran, the Axis of Resistance and Palestinians will likely manage to take bigger strides against Israeli occupation in the future under the aegis of Tehran.

## Contain Israel if you want to avert war: Pezeshkian tells Macron

From Page 1 ▶ "Instead of condemning these actions, the United States and Western countries have supported Israel in its crimes, including acts of genocide and terrorism," he added.

Pezeshkian emphasized that as long as the Israeli regime continues its acts of genocide, crime, and terrorism with the backing of political, financial, military, and media support from the U.S. and Western nations, neither the region

nor the world will experience stability, security, or peace.

"The U.S. and its allies, with their contradictory and dual approach, continue to support a Zionist regime that disregards international laws

and has engaged in numerous criminal actions in the region, while ironically urging the victims of these actions to remain silent and exercise restraint," the Iranian president stated.

## Tehran denies involvement in alleged plot to assassinate U.S. politicians

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran has firmly denied any involvement with a Pakistani national, who has reportedly been arrested in the United States and accused of orchestrating a foiled plot to assassinate prominent U.S. politicians.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations refuted the claims following reports by American news outlets about the arrest of an individual named Asif Merchant. These reports alleged that Merchant was apprehended last month and charged with hiring supposed hitmen to execute the assassination plot. Additionally, the outlets cited an affidavit by an FBI agent suggesting that

Merchant may have targeted "current or former high-level officials," including former President Donald Trump.

Responding to these allegations, the Iranian mission stated, "We have not received any reports in connection with this issue from the U.S. government." The mission also addressed accusations that the plot might have been directed at Trump, who in 2020 authorized a drone strike that killed Iran's top anti-terror commander, Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, in Iraq.

"It is clear that this method contradicts the policy that is being led by the Iranian government towards legal prosecution of Martyr Soleimani's

murderer," the mission emphasized.

The controversy intensified following an incident on July 13, when Trump narrowly escaped an assassination attempt while campaigning in Butler, Pennsylvania, suffering only a minor injury to his ear. In the aftermath, various U.S. officials and media reports pointed fingers at Iran, accusing the country of masterminding the plot to kill Trump.

The Iranian government, however, has consistently maintained that its approach is rooted in seeking justice through legal avenues for the killing of General Soleimani, dismissing any suggestions of resorting to extrajudicial actions.

## Iran bolsters air defenses with new radar systems: official

TEHRAN – Iran's air defense system in the eastern region has been upgraded with new radars and missile interceptors, as announced during a ceremony attended by the chief commander of Iran's Army Air Defense Force.

Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard inspected various sites and radar positions of an air defense unit in the east, assessing their combat readiness and operational capabilities. During his visit, Sabahifard addressed commanders and military personnel, emphasizing

the significant role of Iran's Air Defense Force in enhancing the combat power of the country's armed forces.

Sabahifard said that Iran is stronger than ever in the defense sector, adding that "We ensure that we respond decisively to any kind of threat."

Earlier, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, the chief commander of the Iranian Army, stated, "Iran is equipped with very advanced defense systems. In the event of a

war with the Zionist regime, we will defend the country and prevent the enemy from harming our facilities."

The assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31 has escalated tensions between Iran and Israel to their highest point.

Less than 24 hours before Haniyeh's assassination, Israel assassinated Fuad Shukur, a founding member of Hezbollah's armed forces in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

After these assassinations in Tehran and Beirut, Ayatollah Seyyed

Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, warned the Israeli regime of a "harsh response" to Haniyeh's assassination, asserting that Iran must revenge the blood of the Palestinian Resistance leader.

In recent days, many military analysts have acknowledged that the liability of conflict between Iran and Israel is very high if Iran responds militarily to the assassination of Resistance commanders, and Iran must be able to enhance its defensive capabilities to counter the Israeli Air Force.

### Taekwondo athlete Nematzadeh fails to qualify for final

TEHRAN – Iranian taekwondo athlete Mobina Nematzadeh failed to book her place in the finals of the 2024 Olympic Games.

Nematzadeh first defeated Lesotho taekwondo athlete Michelle Tau 2-0 in Round of 16 of the Women's 49kg.

She then beat Tokyo Olympic Silver medalist Adriana Cerezo from Spain 2-0.

Nematzadeh but lost to Chinese rival Guo Qing 2-0 in the semifinals.

The taekwondo competitions at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris are scheduled to run from 7 to 10 August at the Grand Palais strip.

### Iranian striker Azadi joins Al Urooba Club

TEHRAN – Iranian forward Mohammad Reza Azadi has joined Emirati football club Al Urooba.

The 24-year-old player was a member of Iranian club Nassaji last season.

Azadi has penned a two-year deal with Al Urooba.

He had been linked with a move to Iranian teams Esteghlal and Persepolis.

Al Urooba are a club based in the city of Mirbah and Qidfa, Fujairah. The club currently play in the UAE First Division League.

### Preliminary Stage 1: Sepahan fall to Shabab Al Ahli

TEHRAN – Shabab Al Ahli of the UAE came from behind to defeat Iran's Sepahan 4-1 after extra time in their AFC Champions League Elite 2024/25 Preliminary Stage 1 tie at the Naghsh-e-Jahan Stadium on Tuesday.

The win took Shabab Al Ahli within one match of qualifying for the West league stage with the United Arab Emirates side to face Qatar's Al Gharafa on Aug. 13 in the second preliminary stage.

Neither side could make much headway in the opening half, with chances for both at a premium.

Iran's Sepahan, however, found a way past the tight Shabab Al Ahli defense just before the break, with Mohammadmehdi Mohebi opening the scoring with his shot from the center of the box.

Boosted by the goal, 2007 AFC Champions League runners-up Sepahan started the second half on the front foot but it was Shabab Al Ahli who found the back of the net next, drawing level through Sardar Azmoun.

The newly-signed Iran international was on the pitch for mere seconds when he found the target, sending his shot high into the Sepahan net from the center of the box, the-afc.com reported.

Neither side were able to find the target again in the remaining minutes of regulation time but that changed 11 minutes into extra-time with Yahya Al Ghassani putting Shabab Al Ahli ahead.

Yuri Cesar netted Shabab Al Ahli's third in the 109th minute with Al Ghassani scoring his second of the evening just before the final whistle as the UAE side moved within one match of securing a place in the group stage.

### Saeid Daghighi steps down as Malavan coach

TEHRAN – Saeid Daghighi, who was named as Malavan head coach in mid-July, stepped down from his role.

Daghighi led Shams Azar last season and finished in eighth place with the Qazvin-based club in the 2023-24 Iran Professional League

(IPL).

Daghighi had replaced Mehdi Tartar in Malavan. Now, the media reports suggest that Daghighi will likely take charge of Shams Azar once again.

Shams Azar has recently parted ways with former Malavan coach Maziar Zare.

Zare will also return to Bandar Anzali to lead Malavan.

### Shabab Al Ahli coach Paulo Sousa lauds Sardar Azmoun

TEHRAN – Shabab Al Ahli head coach Paulo Sousa lauded Sardar Azmoun following 4-1 win against Iran's Sepahan in their AFC Champions League Elite 2024-25 Preliminary Stage 1 tie on Tuesday.

Second half substitutes Azmoun and Federico Cartabia played pivotal roles in reversing Mohammad Mohebi's opener as the Emirati club's sealed a preliminary stage two tie against Qatar's Al Gharafa next week.

"It was a balanced game. I congratulate my players. There were many challenges, but we were able to move forward with good coordination in defense and attack. The good blocks from our goalkeeper also motivated us," said Sousa.

Mohebi broke the deadlock just before the half-time whistle, but the introduction of Cartabia and Azmoun after the hour mark paid off handsomely for Shabab Al Ahli as the duo went on to spark the comeback.

"We used the flanks and advanced through the center with three defenders. Another key to this win was the use of Azmoun and Cartabia together. It comes down to attitude and mutual understanding and we were able to win as a good team."

"Azmoun was a late addition into the squad and has not played regular games in these two years but his presence is very important for us both on and off the field. He was one of our key players, had a great performance on the field and has a good connection with the young players in terms of having European experience," added the 53-year-old.

Shabab Al Ahli stand one step away from the group stage, facing Al Gharafa on August 13 in what promises to be a challenging encounter with Sasso confident of taking the win.

### Iran come third in CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League

TEHRAN – Iran secured the third-place position in the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League, defeating Sri Lanka in straight sets (25-22, 28-26, 25-17).

Iran had previously defeated Sri Lanka 3-2 in the tournament.

Both Iran and Sri Lanka had previously lost their semi-final matches, with Iran falling to Nepal and Sri Lanka to India.

Host Nepal also claimed the title after battling past India 3-2 in the final.

The event is co-hosted by Nepal and the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA).

### Zahedi scores late goal against Shonan Bellmare

TEHRAN – Avispa Fukuoka drew 1-1 with Shonan Bellmare thanks to a late goal from its Iranian forward Shahab Zahedi.

The match was held at the Lemon Gas Stadium Hiratsuka.

Akito Suzuki was on target for the visiting team, while Zahedi scored in the dying moments of the match. The visitors had climbed out of the relegation zone in the J1 League table with three consecutive victories, while a three-match losing run saw Avispa drops to eighth spot.

## Loading, unloading of goods in Amir-Abad port up 19% in 4 months on year



TEHRAN – The loading and unloading of goods in Amir-Abad port, in the northern Mazandaran province, increased by 19 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a local official announced.

Mohammad-Ali Mousapour Gorji, the director-general of Amir-Abad Ports and Maritime Department, said that 2,034,977 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded in this port during the mentioned four-month period.

Based on the latest data released by the Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), some 76,330,052 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded at the country's ports in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year.

As reported, during the mentioned four months more than 8.949 million tons of oil products and over 17.484 million tons of non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports, while the loading of oil products in ports was reported to be 25.4 million tons, and the loading of non-oil goods was 24.494 million tons.

Totally, more than 26.434 million tons of oil- and non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports in the said four months, and over 49.896 million tons of oil- and non-oil products were loaded.

During the said period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 924,886 TEUs, which was four percent more than the 886,378 TEUs in the first four months of the past year. 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 five years.

Ports and Maritime Organization 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. Last 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)."

## Over 122,000 Iranian businesspersons active in UAE markets: envoy

TEHRAN – The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Tehran has said over 122,000 Iranian business persons are currently working in the UAE, IRNA reported.

"Economic figures show that Iran-UAE business interactions have increased in recent years, and more than 122,000 Iranian businessmen are doing business in the UAE," Saif Mohammed al-Zaabi said in a meeting with Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives Bahman Abdollahi.

Pointing out that the problems of Iranian and Emirati businessmen and economic operators are not political but in the legal field, he admitted: "Cooperation between the two countries in the field of sea and air transport has also increased."

Abdollahi for his part introduced some of the capabilities of the cooperative sector in Iran and said: "Cooperatives have an important and effective position in Iran and a significant part of the production in our country is done by cooperatives."

The value of non-oil trade between Iran and the UAE stood at \$8.064 billion during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced. Iran and the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for expanding economic cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the two countries' 3rd Joint Economic Committee meeting in May 1.

The MOU was signed by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash and UAE's Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, who co-chaired the joint meeting.

During the mentioned committee meeting, the two sides stressed the need for further expansion of economic cooperation between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

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

## Electricity consumption in Iran rises 6,000 MW

TEHRAN – Electricity consumption in Iran has increased by 6,000 megawatts (MW) in the current Iranian year (started on March 20) compared to the previous year, Head of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said.

According to the official, electricity consumption in the country has currently reached about 80,000 MW as a new heatwave has hit the country in the past few days. IRNA reported.

Surveys show that one million new subscribers are added to the country's electricity consumers every year, 80 percent of which are in the household sector and the rest are related to other sectors, Rajabi Mashhadi said.

In late June, Iran Grid Management Company (IGMC) reported that the country's electricity consumption registered a significant year-on-year growth.

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

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

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

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

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

Tavanir has repeatedly announced that the company is implementing a variety of programs for managing the situation and preventing blackouts in the country.

# Export from Golestan province rises 60% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN– The value of non-oil export from Golestan province, in the northeast of Iran, rose 60 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-July 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, a provincial official announced.

Darvish-Ali Hassan-Zadeh, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, said that 277,200 tons of non-oil goods worth \$140.8 million were exported from the province in the four-month period of this year, with a 36-percent growth in weight, year on year.

He said that the non-oil products were exported from the province to 23 countries, and named Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

As the official has previously announced, non-oil commodities valued at \$326.3 million were exported from the province in the past Iranian calendar year.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the country has exported non-oil goods worth \$17.5 billion in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year, registering an 8.0-percent growth, year on year.

Mohammad Rezvaniyar put the total value of the country's non-oil trade in the mentioned four months at \$36 billion.



According to the official, Iran imported \$18.5 billion worth of non-oil products, about 6.0 percent less than the figure for the previous year's corresponding period.

The country's trade balance was \$1.0 billion negative in the mentioned four months, indicating a significant decline compared to the previous year's same period.

In the first four months of the previous Iranian year, the country's export of non-oil goods stood at nearly \$16 billion, while the imports during this period were about \$19.5 billion. The trade balance of the country was negative \$2.5 billion during this period.

As previously announced by IRICA, the value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.178 billion in the last Iranian calendar year.

According to Rezvaniyar, the value of the Islamic Republic's trade

with the partners in the previous year increased by 2.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

The official put the country's non-oil exports, excluding exports of electricity, crude oil, and technical engineering services, at 136.4 million tons worth \$49.33 billion which shows a 9.82 percent rise in terms of tonnage and an 8.87 percent decline in terms of value.

Iran exported \$35.87 billion of crude oil, \$370 million of electricity, and \$1.293 billion of technical engineering services in the mentioned year.

Based on IRICA data, during this period, 48.8 million tons of petrochemical products worth \$19.4 billion were also exported, which shows a decrease of 11.32 percent and 28.59 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

During this period, liquefied natural gas with \$3.9 billion, liquefied

propane with \$3.62 billion, and bitumen-oil with \$2.19 billion were Iran's top exported items.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$13.915 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$9.215 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$6.611 billion, Turkey with \$4.16 billion, and India with \$2.17 billion.

The official put the average customs value of each ton of exported goods at \$362 which has decreased by 17 percent compared to the preceding year.

During this period, 39 million tons of goods worth \$66.28 billion were also imported into the country, which shows an increase of 4.39 percent in terms of weight and 77.9 percent in terms of value, he said.

The country's top five sources of imports in the previous year were the UAE with \$20.782 billion, China with \$18.545 billion, Turkey with \$7.541 billion, Germany with \$2.155 billion, and India with \$1.917 billion worth of imports.

Corn, mobile phones, and gold ingots were the top three imported items followed by soybeans, automobile parts, sunflower seeds, and safflower were the five main items imported by the Islamic Republic.

Rezvaniyar said the average customs value of each ton of imported goods increased by \$5.16 and reached \$1,697.

## Annual transit of goods via Iran hits new record high

TEHRAN – Transit of commodities through Iran reached 16.34 million tons during the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), which is a new record high, according to an official with the country's Transport and Urban Development Ministry.

As stated by Deputy Transport Minister Kamal Hadianfar, of the mentioned figure 14.75 million tons was the share of road transit and the rest was for rail transit, IRNA reported.

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

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

As previously announced by Deputy Transport Minister Shahriar Afandizadeh, 10.8 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20, 2023).

## Iran to cultivate medical herbs in 300,000 hectares of lands

TEHRAN – Based on Iran's seventh National Development Plan (2023-2027) the country plans to develop the cultivation of medical herbs in 300,000 hectares of natural landscapes, an official with Iran's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization said.

According to Tarahom Behzad, the organization had targeted the cultivation of medicinal herbs in 250,000 hectares of lands in the sixth National Development Plan, however, it was able to expand the cultivation of

the mentioned plants to more than 491,000 hectares.

The development of medicinal plant habitats in the form of multi-purpose pasture plans using biological and biomechanical methods and avoiding any interference in the plants' natural environment and change of use in pastures is considered in the seventh National Development Plan.

Back in June, the head of the agricultural commission of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture

(ICCIMA) said some \$550 million of medicinal herbs were exported from the country last year (March 21, 2023 to March 19, 2024).

Speaking on the sidelines of the 31st International Exhibition of Food, Food Technology & Agriculture dubbed "Iran Agrofood 2024", Mohammad Ali Rezaei stated that Iran currently exports medicinal plants to European countries, China, and many Arab countries.

He added that 60 percent of these products are related to the

export of saffron products while the other 40 percent belongs to the export of medicinal herbs.

The official put the value of medicinal plants exported from the country last year at about \$550 million, Mehr news agency reported.

Given the high volume of precipitation witnessed in the current year (started March 21, 2024), it is predicted that more crops with higher quality will be harvested in the country in the current year (started March 21, 2024), he added.

## ICCIMA hosts conference on innovative ways to develop Iran's economy

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted a conference on new economic innovations in Iran's economic sector on Wednesday, the ICCIMA portal reported.

The conference dubbed "Innovation Ecosystem; The Realities of Iran's Economy" was attended by experts, scholars, and business operators active in the field of information technology.

At this conference, the attendees believed that Iran's economy needs innovation and the

use of human capital to overcome today's difficult conditions, and without following this path, it is impossible to get out of the current situation.

Speaking at the event, Ghadir Ghiafeh, the ICCIMA deputy head, put the value of the country's natural and mineral resources at \$27.3 trillion, saying: "Without innovation, such resources will remain buried and we will not be able to use them. To create added value from these natural capitals, we must use human resources in order to boost the country's gross domestic product."

Today, Iran has a very unfavorable situation in terms of gross domestic product, therefore, we have no way to overcome these conditions other than innovation and initiative and using our human capital, he said.

Also speaking at the conference, Mohammad Javad Azari Jahrami, the former Minister of Technology, Communications and Information, said: "An innovative view sees problems as opportunities and creates capital and opportunities in this situation. The innovative business system and space has a special behavior, literature, and mechanism."

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - The election of Yahya Sinwar as the new leader of Hamas' political bureau has shaken Israel and its Western and regional allies to the core and demonstrated a strong sense of unity among Palestinians.

The Hamas leadership has unanimously elected him to lead the resistance movement. Sinwar succeeds Ismail Haniyeh who was assassinated by Israel a week ago.

Israel assassinated Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. He had traveled to Iran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Masoud Pezeshkian.

"The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas announces the selection of Commander Yahya Sinwar as the head of the political bureau of the movement, succeeding the martyr Commander Ismail Haniyeh, may [God] have mercy on him," Hamas said in a statement on Tuesday.

Hamas spokesman Osama Hamdan also said on Tuesday that Sinwar would continue the cease-fire negotiations.

"The problem in negotiations is not the change in Hamas," Hamdan told Al Jazeera. He blamed Israel and its ally the United States for the failure to seal a deal.

The Hamas spokesman said the movement "remains steadfast in the battlefield and in politics."

He added, "The person leading today is the one who led the fighting for more than 305 days and is still steadfast in the field."

Sinwar is believed to be the mastermind behind a surprise military operation carried out by Hamas in southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

More than 1,100 people were killed during the operation called Al-Aqsa Storm and 250 others were taken captive.

Following the operation, Israel launched a war on Gaza. It has slaughtered about 39,700 Pal-



estians in Gaza, including more than 16,000 children since then.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said the onslaught is aimed at releasing the captives and "destroying" Hamas.

More than 100 captives were released following a truce deal with Hamas in November last year. Dozens of the captives have also been killed during Israeli strikes against the Gaza Strip.

Nonetheless, Israel's promise to wipe out Hamas has remained elusive.

The Netanyahu regime has also failed to capture Sinwar over the past 10 months despite destroying much of Gaza.

**Palestinians welcome Sinwar's appointment**

Hani al-Qano, a displaced Palestinian in Deir el-Balah, hailed Sinwar's selection as Hamas' new political chief, saying he could pose a challenge to Israel.

"He may have a positive impact on the negotiations and may be a challenge to Israel, given that Sinwar is living inside the Gaza Strip among the people under siege," he said.

Palestinian residents of the West Bank showed more enthusiasm for Sinwar's appointment.

"Choosing Sinwar to lead the Hamas movement was an excellent decision because Sinwar lives in the heart of the battle, and therefore he knows exactly what

he is negotiating," Farah Qassem, a coffee shop owner in Ramallah, told the AFP.

Emad Abu Fokheidah, a school administrator in the occupied West Bank also doubled down on the importance of resistance in the face of Israel's acts of aggression.

"Choosing Sinwar was a wise decision and a message to the (Israeli) occupation that the political solution, which Israel rejected by assassinating Haniyeh, will only come from the barrel of a gun," Abu Fokheidah said.

**Panic spreads in Israel**

Hamas' decision to name Sinwar as its new political leader, however, spread fears among Israelis.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari threatened to assassinate Sinwar.

Since the start of the Gaza war, Israel has shown that it has no scruples about butchering Palestinians under the pretext of targeting Hamas.

Hagari's threat could be a new excuse for Israel to perpetrate new massacres in a bid to whitewash the failure of its assassination plots.

People in Israel have also voiced concern over Sinwar's appointment.

"Sinwar is really a person with a lot of experience. He was in an Israeli prison, he knows Hebrew, he knows his enemy, which is ac-

tually us," said Sagie Havshosh, an Israeli student in Jerusalem (al-Quds).

**Endless Hamas**

Sinwar, 61, who became the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 2017, has governed the territory over the past years.

Although President Mahmoud Abbas remains an unpopular leader among Palestinians, Sinwar has been a charismatic leader whose popularity has grown since Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza.

Haniyeh's replacement by Sinwar clearly indicates that he will play key role in Hamas' political vision, as he is currently controlling both the military and political wings of the resistance movement.

The Netanyahu regime killed Haniyeh to scuttle efforts to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza. From now on, Sinwar is the top negotiator with whom Israel has to hold talks over a possible ceasefire in Gaza and the release of the remaining captives. This would be a recurring nightmare for the Netanyahu regime.

It is as clear as day that Israel's assassination campaigns have backfired. The regime killed Haniyeh but his successor is more determined to put up resistance against Israel's occupation.

Presently, Palestinians in Gaza have the upper hand as Hamas has been able to promote unity between the resistance group's political and military wings.

Meanwhile, Sinwar's selection sends an important message to the world. Hamas will remain in Gaza despite Israel's attempts to eliminate the movement. Sinwar's new position has also further disgraced the regime by spotlighting its military and intelligence failures.

Palestinian prisoners.

Sinwar planned carefully alongside other Hamas leaders.

"We will come to you, God willing, in a roaring storm. We will come to you with endless rockets, we will come to you in a limitless storm of soldiers, we will come to you with millions of our people, like the repeating tide," Sinwar, then President of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, said in an address on December 14, 2022.

After a year of planning, Hamas waged Operation al-Aqsa Storm on October 7, 2023. The operation was a major intelligence and security failure for the Israelis, their military generals and their Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Tel Aviv went on to wage a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip with one of the official goals being a total destruction of Hamas.

However, until today (ten months since the war began), that goal has not been realized.

Despite killing and injuring tens of thousands of people, mostly women and children, there is growing global consensus among military experts that the Israeli occupation forces have been defeated in Gaza and are stuck in a hole that they cannot escape from.

Hamas is far from defeated. And making matters worse for Tel Aviv, the resistance movement has announced Sinwar as the replacement for Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated in Tehran last week.

In a statement late on Tuesday, Hamas said, "After in-depth and extensive consultations and deliberations in our leadership institutions, brother leader Yahya Sinwar was chosen as head of the political bureau".

The statement will be seen as a major blow and another defeat for Netanyahu and his cabinet.

For Sinwar this is just another level in what has been a long journey in his battle and resistance against the Israeli occupation.

## Yahya Sinwar wins applause from regional resistance groups

A lot of political reaction has been pouring in since Hamas selected Yahya Sinwar as the successor of Ismail Haniyeh who was assassinated by Israel a week ago.

Regional resistance groups have hailed Hamas for electing him as its political leader.

**Hezbollah: Hamas decision highlights Israel's failures**



Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement hailed Hamas for appointing Sinwar as its new political chief.

"Selecting the brother Yahya Sinwar from the heart of the besieged Gaza Strip - who is present (in) the frontlines with resistance fighters and between the children of his people, under the rubble, blockade, killings and starvation - reasserts that the goals the enemy is seeking by killing leaders have failed," Hezbollah said in a statement.

**Islamic Jihad: Hamas remains strong**



The Islamic Jihad resistance movement said Sinwar's appointment shows that Hamas remains strong despite Israel's devastating war on Gaza.

"The success of our brothers in Hamas in conducting internal consultations and filling the vacancy in the political bureau leadership after the assassination of the martyr leader Ismail Haniyeh with such a speed, despite the war against them is a strong message to the Zionist enemy that Hamas remains strong and cohesive, and that the enemy has not affected its structure despite the war of extermination," the movement said.

The statement wished Sinwar and Hamas "success in proceeding towards achieving the goals of the Palestinian people in liberation of their land and return of Palestinians to their homeland, and the expulsion of the occupation entity."

**PFLP: Sinwar's selection response to Zionist barbarism**



The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hailed Hamas for naming Sinwar as its political leader.

The PFLP affirmed its confidence in Hamas' ability "to overcome the great ordeal represented by the martyrdom of brother Ismail Haniyeh, and to continue his path and the path of all the martyred leaders."

It said the election of Sinwar is a message of strength that reflects Hamas' cohesion, unity of stance, and the resilience of its institutions.

"It is a scorching message to the Zionist enemy, with connotations affirming that the choice of resistance is the most eloquent response to the Zionist enemy's barbarism, Nazism, and genocidal war against our people," the PFLP said.

**Abortive attempts**



A member of Hamas' political bureau touched upon the failure of Israel's assassination campaigns against resistance leaders.

"You [Israel] chose to assassinate those who negotiate, and we chose those who can oblige you to sign the agreement," Basem Naim told CNN late Tuesday in reaction to the selection of Sinwar to replace Haniyeh.

**Israel in hot water**



A Palestinian inmate who spent many years in Israeli prisons with Sinwar also told the CNN that his new role spells trouble for the regime.

"As far as Israel is concerned, this is not good news

regarding the deal, because it has considered the military wing and Sinwar to be the hardliners. It's Sinwar who holds the captives. Now all decisions are within his authority, the military as well as the political decisions, and the decision [whether to hold] negotiations," Esmat Mansour said.

**Israeli FM's desperation**



Sinwar's appointment infuriated the Israeli foreign minister.

Israel Katz said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that Sinwar's appointment gives the regime more reason to assassinate him and continue its annihilation of Hamas.

In another message on X, he said Sinwar's promotion sends "a clear message to the world that the Palestinian issue is now completely controlled by Iran and Hamas".

It seems as if Katz is in a state of delusion.

First of all, Israel's assassination plots and its Gaza war have failed to help the regime achieve its goals.

Second, Hamas won a landslide victory in Palestinian elections in 2006, securing 76 seats in the 132-member legislature. Fatah, which had held power since the creation of the Palestinian Authority, garnered only 43 seats. The 13 remaining seats went to smaller parties and independents.

Naturally, the resistance group had the right to form a government and run the territory. The Israeli foreign minister's opposition to Hamas's ruling of Gaza amounts to rejecting basic principles of democracy.

His comments against Iran are also aimed at smearing the country. The Islamic Republic has officially announced that it recognizes the Palestinians' rights to determine their fate and called for ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

Iran has time and again reiterated that holding a referendum involving all main inhabitants of Palestine, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, is the most viable solution to bring an end to the decades-long conflict in Palestine.

**Blinken blames Hamas**



The United States, Israel's main ally which has thrown its weight behind the regime's genocidal war on Gaza, tried to distance itself from Israel's harsh rhetoric.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Sinwar "has been and remains the primary decider when it comes to concluding the ceasefire."

He said Sinwar must "decide whether to move forward with a ceasefire that manifestly will help so many Palestinians in desperate need, women, children, men who are caught in a crossfire ... It really is on him."

Hypocritically, Blinken is throwing the ball in the court of Hamas.

The administration of President Joe Biden has provided Israel with huge amounts of weapons since the Gaza war erupted. It has also blocked several resolutions at the UN Security Council aimed at establishing a ceasefire in Gaza. But Blinken is blaming Hamas and stops short of criticizing Tel Aviv for its warmongering approach.

## The Axis of Resistance has the upper hand

By Batool Subeiti

BEIRUT- Though the Israeli occupation entity is seeking to instill weakness and fragility resulting from the major assassinations in the heart of Lebanon and particularly Iran, an independent assessment, placing emotions aside, allows the situation to be evaluated in a different manner.

It is no secret that aspects of the Israeli occu-

pation entity's strong abilities include the capacity to cause destruction and strong intelligence. This takes the form of information gathering about individuals and their locations by using sophisticated tools to reach targets accurately. There is a strong ability to recruit agents and set targets considering the fact that all the American intelligence means are activated at Israel's request.

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

## Who is Yahya Sinwar, the fluent Hebrew speaker?

### From Israeli prison life to al-Aqsa Storm

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Yahya Sinwar is originally from the coastal city of Askalan, in what is current day Ashkelon following the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Like hundreds of thousands of others, his parents were forced to leave their homes to make way for foreign settlers to occupy Palestinians' houses, streets, neighborhoods, towns, and cities.

As a result, Sinwar was born in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

He was a strong political activist in the Palestinian struggle for statehood and national identity in his early years.

Being seen as a thorn in the eyes of Israeli invaders who responded against Palestinian activists with an iron fist, Sinwar was arrested in 1982, serving time behind bars in an Israeli jail at the age of 19.

Following his freedom from his first prison sentence of several months, Sinwar emerged more determined to expand his political activism, which he conducted by enlarging his circle of fellow activists seeking a Palestinian state.

Three years later, Israeli authorities arrested him for a second time in 1985. His second prison sentence also lasted months, but this time he met an influential inmate by the name of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the founder of the Hamas resistance movement.

Later in 1985, upon his release from Israeli jail, Sinwar began his journey in politics and armed resistance by co-founding an organization called al-Majd, which would later merge into Hamas.

Sinwar spent his time with al-Majd seeking out Palestinian agents on the payroll of Tel Aviv in the Gaza Strip and punishing them for their espionage activities for Israel.

This made Gaza safer and more important for the Palestinians.

At the age of 25, the Israelis arrested Sinwar for a third time and on this occasion, in

1988, he was sentenced to life in prison for allegedly orchestrating the abduction of four Palestinians in Gaza, who were essentially traitors working for Tel Aviv.

Israeli authorities also accused Sinwar of being behind a plan for a resistance operation that allegedly left two Israeli soldiers dead.

He was later given four life sentences and spent 22 years in prison.

During his lengthy time in prison, Sinwar closely watched developments in Palestine, the region, and beyond. He spent much of his time studying behind bars.

Among the many fields he studied in jail was the Hebrew language, which he can speak fluently and would later give interviews in Hebrew, something that also helped him better understand the Israeli thinking upon his release from prison in 2011.

Sinwar was freed along with 1,026 other Palestinian political prisoners in a 2011 prisoner exchange deal for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Shalit was taken captive by Hamas in 2006. Upon his release, Sinwar quickly rose in the ranks of Hamas and worked on freeing other Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

By 2017, he was appointed the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

In 2018, Sinwar led the Great March of Return rallies that were held on a weekly basis in the Gaza Strip in a bid to peacefully break the siege on the enclave.

But the Israeli military responded to the rallies with brutal force. Snipers shot at tens of thousands of peaceful protesters, killing many and disabling thousands of others for life.

After the bloody suppression of the Great March of Return, the only remaining possible way for Sinwar was to push for resistance with stronger determination and pursue the same approach that led to his freedom from Israeli jails: Israelis had to be taken captive and released in exchange for the freedom of

## Tehran, Dushanbe to implement visa-waiver program



From Page 1 ▶ Earlier this year, Alireza Haqiqian, the Iranian ambassador to Tajikistan, highlighted the visa-waiver MoU as a significant milestone in fostering bilateral cooperation, particularly in tourism.

In April, Iran's tourism minister, Ezzatollah Zarghami, announced that Iran grants visa-free access to approximately half of the world's population, amounting to around four billion people. "Currently, half of the world's population can travel to Iran without visas," he stated.

"Our initial proposal was to abolish visas for citizens of 60 countries, but the government agreed to abolish visas for citizens of 33 countries.

This allows half of the world's population to travel to Iran without obtaining visas."

The visa-waiver program has been approved for countries including India, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Venezuela, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Belarus, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, and Seychelles.

Additionally, Iran has previously canceled visas with several countries such as Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Oman, China, Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria, through various arrangements including unilateral, bilateral, and group visa cancellations.

Airport visas have been implemented in some cases. A mutual agreement between Tehran and Moscow grants this privilege to tourist groups from Russia. According to data from the tourism ministry, more than six million foreign tourists arrived in Iran by air, road, and sea during the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 19.

This represents a significant increase compared to the previous year (1401), when approximately 4.23 million tourists visited the Islamic Republic.

## Mashhad medical tourism soars in Q1



TEHRAN – Mashhad has witnessed a substantial boost in medical tourism, welcoming thousands of international patients in the first quarter of this Persian year (started on March 20).

"Over 20,500 health tourists visited licensed medical centers in Mashhad during this period, spending four trillion rials (some seven million dollars)," said a local official in charge of health tourism.

Dr. Davood Khosh-Shekan further explained that out of these health tourists, nearly 10,500 benefited from inpatient services, while 10,000 received outpatient services in Mashhad.

The top 10 countries from which health tourists visited Mashhad include Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Oman, and Turkey, he added.

Khosh-Shekan also added that Mashhad University of Medical Sciences ranked first among other medical universities in the country in terms of health tourism in the first quarter of this year, with Qom and Tehran taking the next positions.

"Currently, 46 hospitals and specialized clinics within the city have licenses to accept health tourists," the official highlighted. "12 medical centers are also in the process of obtaining the license."

140 tourism companies with licenses to operate in the health sector, he underscored, are active in areas under the jurisdiction of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences.

According to available data, the number of medical tourists visiting the Islamic Republic is around one million people per annum.

Experts say that choosing Iran as a destination for medical services offers multifaceted benefits, encompassing economic, quality medical services, and cultural dimensions that make the country a compelling destination for those seeking medical treatment abroad.

Here in Iran, many clinics and hospitals offer comprehensive services that include airport transfers, accommodation arrangements, and post-treatment care, ensuring that international patients feel comfortable and well-cared for throughout their stay.

## Journos to go in for tourism rally



TEHRAN - The Touring and Automobile Club of Iran is set to host a family-friendly tourist rally for journos to celebrate National Journalist Day.

Expressing appreciation for the efforts of journalists in enlightening and informing the public, the spokesperson for TACI stated "Following the successful rally last year and the positive re-

sponse from participants and their families, the club has decided to include this event as a regular and annual fixture on their calendar."

The rally, Shahab Malmir highlighted, is set to honor media martyrs and celebrate journalists, as well as to promote social enthusiasm, safe driving culture, and responsible travel through media people.

He underscored that such rallies are considered tourism events, where the criteria for determining top performers include adherence to proper driving principles, respect for traffic laws, performance in various situations, map reading skills, route navigation, and precise timing for reaching checkpoints.

In his final words, Malmir also mentioned that participants will receive essential guidelines in a briefing session before the event.

## 'A king will die': 4,000-year-old lunar eclipse omen tablets finally deciphered

Scholars have finally deciphered 4,000-year-old cuneiform tablets found more than 100 years ago in what is now Iraq. The tablets describe how some lunar eclipses are omens of death, destruction and pestilence.

The four clay tablets "represent the oldest examples of compendia of lunar-eclipse omens yet discovered" Andrew George, an emeritus professor of Babylonian at the University of London,

and Junko Taniguchi, an independent researcher, wrote in a paper published recently in the Journal of Cuneiform Studies. (Lunar eclipses occur when the moon falls into Earth's shadow.)

The authors of the tablets used the time of night, movement of shadows and the date and duration of eclipses to predict omens.

(Source: Live Science)

# Naqsh-e Jahan: a journey through Isfahan's architectural marvel

TEHRAN – Located in the heart of Isfahan, the ancient city that graces the crossroads of Iran's north-south and east-west routes, Naqsh-e Jahan is jewel of the Safavid era (1501-1736).

Meanings "Image of the World," this UNESCO World Heritage site is one of the largest city squares globally and serves as a breathtaking example of Iranian architecture.

Its vast expanse and harmonious design invite travelers to embark on a journey through history, culture, and art that transcends time.

Constructed under the visionary order of Shah Abbas I in the early 17th century, Naqsh-e Jahan was the heartbeat of the Safavid Empire.

With dimensions of 560 meters in length and 160 meters in width, the square covers nearly nine hectares, making it a colossal centerpiece of the Safavid capital. It was here that culture, religion, economy, and politics intertwined seamlessly, forming the nucleus of Persian socio-cultural life.

The square's design embodies a harmonious urban ensemble, with each side graced by four iconic structures, each telling a story of its own: the Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque on the east side; the Ali Qapu Pavilion on the west; the Portico of Qeyssariyeh to the north; and the Royal Mosque (Masjed-e Shah) to the south.

These magnificent edifices, adorned with enameled ceramic tiles and intricate paintings, create a breathtaking panorama that captivates visitors from the moment they step foot onto the square's sandy esplanade.

### Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque

Originally built as a private mosque for the royal court,



Sheikh Lotfallah Mosque stands as a symbol of elegance and artistic excellence.

The mosque's dome, adorned with delicate arabesques and a kaleidoscope of colors, seems to change hues with the shifting light of day, leaving visitors spellbound.

Inside, the mosque offers a serene atmosphere where sunlight dances through intricately designed windows, casting ethereal patterns on the walls. This tranquil space invites travelers to experience a moment of spiritual reflection and appreciation for the artistry that flourished under the Safavid dynasty.

### Royal Mosque

On the south side of the square, the Royal Mosque, or Masjed-e Shah, rises as a celebrated emblem of Iranian architecture. This iconic structure is angled to face Mecca, a testament to the meticulous planning and spiritual significance embedded in its design. The mosque's grand entrance and towering minarets command attention, while the intricate tilework and calligraphy adorning its surfaces narrate stories of faith and devotion.

period. Standing on the terrace, one can almost hear the echoes of history, where royal decrees were issued and cultural events unfolded.

### Qeyssariyeh Bazaar

To the north, the portico of Qeyssariyeh leads to the bustling Isfahan Bazaar, a vibrant vaulted area of commerce and culture that stretches for two kilometers.

The bazaar's labyrinthine alleys are transported to a world where time seems to stand still. The air is filled with the aroma of exotic spices, the vibrant colors of Persian rugs, and the lively chatter of merchants and shoppers.

Here, artisans continue the age-old traditions of craftsmanship, offering an array of goods ranging from intricate jewelry to handwoven textiles. The bazaar is a testament to Isfahan's enduring legacy as a center of trade and creativity, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of Persian life.

Naqsh-e Jahan Square is more than just an architectural marvel. As visitors wander through its grand arcades and explore its iconic landmarks, they are transported to an era where art, spirituality, and social life converged in perfect harmony.

Whether witnessing a polo match on the vast esplanade or savoring the delicate flavors of Persian cuisine in a nearby café, every moment spent at Naqsh-e Jahan is a journey through time, where the past and present intertwine seamlessly.

Naqsh-e Jahan Square is a place where the heart of Isfahan beats strong, inviting travelers to discover the timeless charm of Iran's cultural gem.

## Ancient Chapar-khaneh undergoes restoration

TEHRAN – A centuries-old Chapar-khaneh, which was once a postal relay station located in Ashkezar county of Yazd province, has undergone restoration.

This remarkable building dates back to the Zand Dynasty era and represents a significant piece of Iran's architectural heritage.

Chapar-khaneh played a crucial role in Iran's communication and transportation networks. These stations served as rest stops where messengers, known as chapars, could refresh themselves and exchange their horses for fresh ones, ensuring swift delivery across vast distances. Situated strategically along major routes, these structures were vital to the efficiency of the communication system, facilitating the rapid transfer of messages and goods.

Yazd Province, historically known as the crossroads of Iran, has been a vital link between the north and south as well as the east and west of the country. This region has witnessed the passage of countless Chapars



and couriers over centuries, making it a key location for Chapar-khanehs.

The Chapar-khaneh boasts four prominent towers at each corner, each with a diameter of 3 meters. While these towers do not contain additional rooms, they add to the building's striking silhouette and were likely intended for defensive purposes.

Within the robust walls of the mud-brick structure, accommodations for animals can also be found, complete with troughs and

hitching posts for the horses and mules that were central to the station's operations. The building itself spans an area of 500 square meters, with dimensions of 20 meters in width and 25 meters in length.

The current restoration project focuses on the structural reinforcement of the Chapar-khaneh, ensuring its stability and preservation for future generations.

Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. It teems with mud-brick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

It is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center.

## Handicrafts exhibit opens in Ardabil featuring 400 stalls and artists from 31 provinces



TEHRAN – A grand exhibition showcasing a stunning array of handicrafts and traditional arts opened in Ardabil on Monday evening, featuring an impressive 400 stalls.

Artists and craftsmen from 31 provinces across Iran have gathered to display their work, highlighting the rich cultural heritage and artistic diversity of the country.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Ardabil's Governor-General Seyyed Hamed

Ameli and a host of esteemed officials and artisans.

In his opening remarks, Ameli emphasized the exceptional potential of Ardabil in producing high-quality handicrafts.

"Ardabil has a remarkable variety of handicraft products that have gained international recognition," Ameli stated. "This exhibition reflects the immense dedication and creativity of those involved in this sector, providing hope for wealth generation and sustainable employment."

He noted that 250 stalls have been dedicated to showcasing the creations of rural artisans, while the remaining 150 stalls are reserved for the work of skilled artists and craftsmen specializing in traditional handi-

crafts.

The governor further elaborated on the strategic importance of both temporary and permanent exhibitions in promoting and selling these unique products. He highlighted the role of such events in boosting exports and moving beyond the decorative appeal of handicrafts to make a meaningful impact on the economy and job creation.

Ameli also acknowledged the significant contributions of rural and nomadic women in producing a wide range of traditional arts and crafts. "Investing in this sector and completing the production chain is vital," he added.

Ardabil is renowned for its authentic handicraft production, with its globally recognized Kilim

and Verneh designs symbolizing the region's rich historical heritage. "Our efforts in this field will undoubtedly yield substantial benefits," Ameli added.

The exhibition features an eclectic mix of crafts, from intricate metal engraving and woodwork to exquisite Verneh, Kilim, and Jajim weaving. The diverse range of artistic expressions on display underscores the depth of Iran's cultural artistry.

Running until August 10, the exhibition provides a unique opportunity for visitors to explore and purchase a wide variety of handcrafted items, each telling a story of tradition, innovation, and cultural identity.

# Health ministry underscores measles vaccination for Arbaeen pilgrims

TEHRAN –The health ministry has highlighted the significance of getting vaccinated for Arbaeen pilgrims, particularly those who are under 15 years of age, to prevent illness or deaths caused by measles.

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads easily when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. It is potentially a deadly disease. Severe complications include pneumonia, diarrhea, blindness, and encephalitis (brain swelling). Measles can affect anyone but is most common in children.

Being vaccinated is the best way to prevent getting sick with measles or spreading it to other people.

Hence, the health ministry has emphasized measles vaccination control in the eastern and western provinces, ISNA quoted Shahnam Arshi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Referring to the outbreak of the measles epidemic in Iraq, the official said: "Measles is not confined to Iraq, the disease has also become epidemic in Pakistan and Afghanistan since last year."

A surge in cases of the disease was reported in Sistan-Baluchestan province. However, the health ministry managed to control measles in the province by taking necessary measures.

**Measles and rubella eliminated in Iran**

In April 2023, the World Health



Organization confirmed that measles and rubella have been eradicated in Iran, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said.

This success was achieved for the country in a situation where many European countries have not yet received approval from the World Health Organization regarding the eradication of measles and rubella, but the Islamic Republic of Iran has succeeded in eradicating these two diseases, he added, ISNA reported.

The measles vaccination program in Iran started in 1984 when 34 percent of the population was vaccinated in the first year and 90 to 95 percent of the population after 6 years. Also in 2003, 33 million people were vaccinated with a national program to eradicate measles in the country.

Concerns about the spread of measles in the country are growing

as the Afghan population grows.

On December 31, 2022, the vaccination program for refugees and foreign nationals started with the aim of providing protection against polio and measles.

The program was implemented by 27 medical science universities focused on non-Iranian nationals under the age of 15, he added.

Iran's Primary Health Care (PHC) system is known as a role model in the Health Sector which could be adopted by other countries, both in terms of expanded networking and outreach as well as the successful linkage between the Health Sector and Medical Education institutes, such as Medical Universities, according to UNICEF.

**Measles antibody kits procured by WHO, ECHO**

In May, Iran received a total of 160 measles antibody kits with the help of the World Health Organiza-

tion (WHO) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

The current procurement aims to enhance measles diagnostic capacities in Iran.

The kits are donated to the Iranian National Measles Reference Laboratory to bolster its capacities to diagnose measles, enhancing the country's ability to respond more effectively to outbreaks, the WHO website reported on May 12.

According to the report, WHO, in collaboration with ECHO, procured and provided the kits to the National Influenza Center, which serves as the National Measles reference laboratory for measles, rubella, and some other respiratory infectious diseases.

Syed Jaffar Hussain, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran, said: "The provision of measles antibody kits to the reference laboratory is a crucial step in strengthening the Islamic Republic of Iran's ability to detect and respond to measles outbreaks effectively and maintain measles elimination status.

This collaboration between WHO and ECHO demonstrates our commitment to support countries in their efforts to combat vaccine-preventable diseases."

Measles remains a significant public health concern globally, and timely and accurate diagnosis is crucial for effective outbreak response.

## Expanding medicinal plant cultivation by 2027 on agenda

TEHRAN –The expansion of lands for the cultivation of medicinal plants by 300,000 hectares is one of the set goals in the seventh five-year national development plan (2023 – 2027).

"In the sixth national development plan, the medicinal plants expanded by 491 thousand hectares which exceeded the set goal of 250 thousand hectares," IRIB quoted Tarahom Behzad, an official with the natural resource and watershed management organization, as saying.

The expansion of lands for the cultivation of medicinal plants through implementing multi-purpose pasture management plans using biological and biomechanical methods and preventing any change in the use of pastures is also considered in the seventh national plan, the official added.

Over 1,500 tons of medicinal plants were harvested, and more than 961 tons were exported in the past Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 19), Behzad further noted.

In July the official said 14 natural climates are known in the world, Iran encompasses about 11 of these climate types and the country is the breeding ground of all kinds of medicinal plants.

So far, about 8,600 plant species have been identified in Iran, of which 2,300 species are medicinal and are directly used in the field of medicine, health, and food supplements, the official added.

He said benefitting from a special climate and the area of about six million hectares of medicinal plant habitats is a very suitable opportunity for proper utilization, serious investment in processing, creation, and employment opportunities as well as more specialized exports in the field of processed products, and earning foreign currency.

**Over 300 drugs being produced from medicinal plants**

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

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

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

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

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

**Iran holds some 40% share of market**

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

neighboring countries.

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

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

"Nearly 450 out of 1,400 knowledge-based companies are active in the field of herbal medicines, biotechnology, and food industries."

He went on to say that the National Institute for Medical Research Development aims at expanding exports of medicinal products.

Since most of the raw materials for the production of herbal medicines are native to the country, these products can internationally compete with those of the other countries, he added.

Besides, some 15 to 20 percent of Iran's herbal medicines are unique in the world. Iran has the capacity to introduce new herbal medicines to the world, he highlighted.

Producing and commercializing pharmaceutical plants are the best ways to introduce the rich resources of herbal medicines which, in addition to making foreign currency revenues for the country, will lead to the scientific authority of Iran in this field, he concluded.

## Rare long-tailed nesokia seen in Hour al-Azim wetland

From page 1 ► It was subsequently published in the world's most prestigious mammal magazine, named Mammalia, with the title of 'First record of the elusive and endangered long-tailed Nesokia, Nesokia bunnii, in Iran'. It was then added to the list of mammals of the country.

In the progression of studying the habitat, demographic, and genetic distribution of this world's rare species, a number of long-tailed nesokia killed in road accidents or by dogs have been transferred to the gene banks for the preservation of genetic materials.

Also, camera traps have been installed in 16 points of the wetland as well as its margins, which managed to record significant images of the species in the natural habitat which will contribute to monitoring the population and activity of the species during the day and night, IRNA quoted Ali Sajad Jalali, an official with the department of environment, as saying.

Long-tailed nesokia is one of the rarest and most unknown species of rodents and mammals in the world; these studies and images have tremendous value in zoology, the official added.

Long-tailed nesokia is a large rat completely different from other Nesokia species, namely Nesokia indica (short-tailed Nesokia). It is bigger in size and weighs around 500 grams. The length of the tail is equal to or even longer than the length of the head and body, it has a rufous dorsal pelage, a white belly, and a specific gray facial mask, Jalali added.

Habitat destruction, lack of adequate water supply, road construction, fires, and the existence of dogs are among the threats that can lead to their extinction.

The species depend on small islands in Hour al-Azim wetland so its preservation is essential to ensure the survival of this species in the world.

### Endangered species

There are many threats to endangered wildlife species, including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and birds.

Habitat destruction, fragmentation, and modification caused by human-led activities such as industrial and residential development, logging, crop farming, livestock grazing, mining, road and dam building, and pesticide use have taken an extreme toll on threatened and endangered wildlife populations at an alarming rate.

Currently, about 128 species of animals and vertebrates in the country are at risk of extinction, some of which are not in good condition, and amphibians are the most vulnerable in this area.

Persian zebra, Asiatic cheetah, black bear, and yellow deer are in danger of extinction.

Zebras exist in two habitats in Iran; one is in the Turan protected area in the south of Semnan province, where there are about 250 zebras, and the other is in the Bahramgur protected area in the southeast of Fars province, where 1,200 zebras are kept.

The Persian zebra population is estimated to be around 1,500, although the zebra is con-



sidered an endangered species according to both national and international regulations.

Asiatic cheetah ranks second among Iran's endangered species. Including the cheetahs that have probably not been identified, the population of this species in Iran is estimated to be below 30.

Persian yellow deer is also one of the most important species in the world. According to the list provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, these deer are in the EN category and the red list, which is considered to be in danger of extinction.

The deer have been released in a limited number of habitats in "Ashk" Island, West Azarbaijan province, and "Dez" National Park, Khuzestan province.

They are also kept in reproduction and breeding centers in Ilam, Yazd, Fars, West Azarbaijan, and Mazandaran provinces.

Asian black bear, which is known as the Baluchi black bear, is another endangered species in the country. It lives mainly in forest areas, especially in mountainous areas at altitudes of 500 to 2,700 meters, and is found in Kerman, Hormozgan, and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces in very low quantities.

Paying attention to the biodiversity and wildlife inside the country will not work alone, and it is important to use international capacities to manage the current critical situation and prevent the extinction of endangered species.

### Action plans underway

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

The plans intend to address species such as cheetah, brown bear, leopard, black bear, Persian yellow deer, Persian zebra, and hunting birds from among 86 endangered species.

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

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

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

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Iranian knowledge-based firms in Iraqi medical exhibition

Iranian knowledge-based companies will attend an exhibition of medical, laboratory, pharmaceutical, and dental equipment in Baghdad, Iraq.

The third edition of the four-day exhibition will be held from September 10 to 13, ISNA reported.

On the sidelines of this exhibition, a pavilion of Iranian knowledge-based companies will be set up with the support of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, and these companies will be able to present their products and capabilities.

## حضور شرکت‌های دانش‌بنیان ایرانی در نمایشگاه پزشکی عراق

با حمایت صندوق نوآوری و شکوفایی، پايون اختصاصی شرکت‌های دانش‌بنیان ایرانی در نمایشگاه چهار روزه تجهیزات پزشکی، آزمایشگاهی، دارویی و دندانپزشکی بغداد برپا خواهد شد. به گزارش ایسنا، سومین نمایشگاه چهار روزه تجهیزات پزشکی، آزمایشگاهی، دارویی و دندانپزشکی بغداد از روز ۱۰ تا ۱۳ شهریور ماه ۱۴۰۱ برگزار می‌شود.

در حاشیه این نمایشگاه، پايون شرکت‌های دانش‌بنیان ایرانی با حمایت صندوق نوآوری و شکوفایی برپا می‌شود و این شرکت‌ها با حضور در این نمایشگاه می‌توانند محصولات و توانمندی‌های خود در حوزه‌های مرتبط را ارائه دهند.



## Wildfire in oak forests contained

A massive fire in the oak forests of Marivan, west of the country, was extinguished after 48 hours of continuous efforts by the environmental protection forces and local people.

Oak trees play a vital role in preserving biodiversity and are an important habitat for various animal species.



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

Turning away from knowledge is the excuse of the negligent.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:27 Dawn: 3:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:19 (tomorrow)

## “The Girl with the Louding Voice” at Iranian bookstores

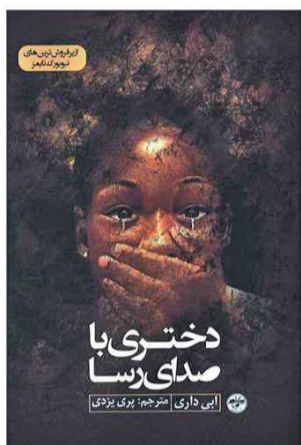
TEHRAN-A Persian translation of Nigerian author Abi Daré's book “The Girl with the Louding Voice” has recently been published by Anapana Publications in Tehran.

Pari Yazdi is the translator of the book first released in 2020.

“The Girl with the Louding Voice” marks the debut of Nigerian author Abi Daré. This coming-of-age novel centers around a teenage girl named Adunni, who grapples with a myriad of challenges including limited education, pervasive poverty, and a profound struggle to assert her own voice. Her journey is a poignant reflection of the struggles faced by many girls in Nigeria and beyond.

Abi Daré conceived the idea for “The Girl with the Louding Voice” after reading a news article about a young house help who suffered at the hands of her employer. Influenced by her own experiences living in rural Nigeria and inspired by her daughters, Daré spent three years crafting this powerful narrative. In her writing, she chose to employ non-standard English and incorporate elements of Pidgin English to reflect the authenticity of her characters' voices. Daré firmly believes that proficiency in standard English does not equate to intelligence, a theme that resonates throughout the novel.

The plot follows Adunni, a 14-year-old girl from a struggling family in a small town near Lagos. Despite her dreams of pursuing an education, financial constraints hold her back. Her life takes a dark turn when her father arranges for her to marry Morufu, her third husband, to relieve the family's financial burdens. This ill-fated union subjects her to repeated rape, forcing her to flee to Lagos. Here, she finds work with Big Madam, who exploits her labor and subjects her to further abuse. Nevertheless, Adunni's



unwavering determination to receive an education fuels her resolve, as she understands that knowledge is her key to liberation from oppression.

“The Girl with the Louding Voice” tackles critical themes such as the empowerment of women, the quest for personal agency, and the pursuit of dreams despite societal and familial barriers. Adunni's struggles highlight the harsh realities of sexism, poverty, child labor, and child marriage in Nigeria. The narrative serves as a stark reminder of the systemic challenges women face in their pursuit of education and self-advocacy.

The novel garnered widespread acclaim, quickly ascending to the New York Times Bestseller list and earning its place as a ‘Read with Jenna’ pick and a BBC Radio 4 Book at Bedtime selection. It has been lauded by multiple media outlets, including The New York Times and Vogue, for its compelling storytelling and heartfelt message. With positive reviews from literary critics, Book Marks rates it based on several reviews, noting a strong reception overall. Furthermore, it received a 3.89 rating from Books in the Media, based on aggregated critic assessments.

Published by Sceptre, an imprint of Hodder, “The Girl with the Louding Voice” was shortlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize, recognizing the promise of its debut author. Kirkus Reviews awarded it a starred review, describing it as “heartbreaking and inspiring.” Through Adunni's story, Abi Daré sheds light on the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of education, making a significant contribution to contemporary literature and discourse surrounding women's rights.

## Cartoon of Day



GAZA!  
 Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

# Iranian short film “Abraham” competes in 20th HollyShorts Film Festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film “Abraham” co-directed by Elnaz Ghaderpour and Reza Gamini is present at the 20th HollyShorts Film Festival which kicks off on August 8 in California, the U.S.

A 2023 production, the 14-minute fiction is about a teenage boy named Abraham who was murdered and burned in a cave out of a small village. Police are after his father who prays in a small mosque every day.

The cast includes Sajad Afsharian, Safoura Khoshtinat, Hasti Moraveji, Hamid Pourazari, and Hadi Sheikholeslami, Mehr reported.

The police thriller takes a tentative look at a certain crime. Not all the questions are uttered out loud, but the context is clear. Abraham disappears.

Only a piece of burnt clothes is left behind. Two policemen are looking for the boy and his father.

Reza Gamini has previously directed five short films including “Endorphin” which won a special mention of the jury at the 66th Locarno Film Festival.

Elnaz Ghaderpour holds a BA in film directing and an MA in editing from Tehran Art University.

For 12 years she has worked as an editor. “Abraham” is her debut film as a director.

The HollyShorts Film Festival is an Oscar-Qualifying short film festival based in Los Angeles. Since its establishment in 2005, it has grown into a premier platform for independent filmmakers worldwide.

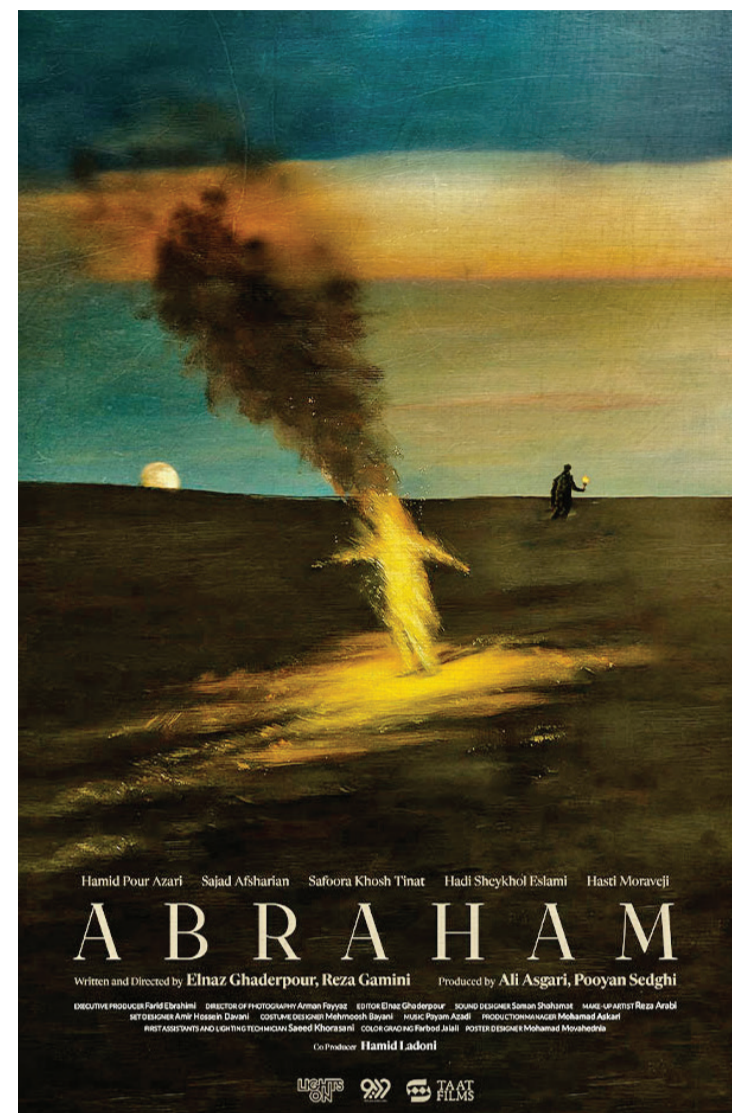
As an Academy Awards-qualifying festival in four categories, HollyShorts presents a diverse selection of innovative short films across various genres.

HollyShorts has evolved into an international symbol of excellence and influence within the film industry.

Over the past two decades, the festival has attracted renowned filmmakers, actors, and industry professionals from around the world, fostering a community built on collaboration, inspiration, and mutual respect.

Recognized by MovieMaker magazine as one of the Top 50 Film Festivals Worth The Entry Fee, HollyShorts remains dedicated to championing emerging talents and pushing the boundaries of cinematic innovation.

This year's edition of the festival will conclude on August 18.



## Adaptation of “Bluebeard” on stage at Tehran theater



TEHRAN-A loose adaptation of Belgian novelist Amélie Nothomb's novel “Bluebeard” is currently on stage at Book Garden Theater in Tehran.

Arvand Dashtaray is the director of the play, which has been rendered into Persian by Vida Samei.

Kazem Sayyahi, Setareh Pesiani, Khosro Pesiani, and Parisa Shahvalian are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until August 21.

“Bluebeard” follows the story of Saturnine, a young woman seeking a more stable living

situation after crashing on her friend's small couch. When she discovers an enticing offer for a room in a great neighborhood at an incredibly low rent, she jumps at the opportunity.

However, she soon realizes that she is not the only one interested in the room.

Other potential candidates seem more fascinated by the mysterious man who has already had eight previous roommates mysteriously vanish.

Saturnine becomes the chosen one by Don Elemirio Nibal y Milcar, the enigmatic landlord, to become his ninth roommate.

Described as peculiar, he speaks in a literary manner, rarely leaves his home, and, reminiscent of the infamous Bluebeard, grants her access to every part of his residence except for one forbidden room.

As the story unfolds, the suspense thickens. Saturnine wrestles with the curiosity about the fate of the previous eight

roommates and the unsettling nature of her new living arrangement.

With tension rising from the very beginning, “Bluebeard” explores themes of mystery, forbidden knowledge, and the potential dangers that come with uncovering hidden truths.

“Bluebeard” is a classic French folktale.

The story revolves around a wealthy man notorious for murdering his wives and details the efforts of his current wife to escape the grim fate that befell her predecessors.

Since her first novel, “Hygiene and the Assassin”, published in 1992, Amélie Nothomb has released a book annually, achieving significant literary success with translations in multiple languages.

Her satirical novel “Fear and Trembling”, about corporate life in Japan, won the Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française in 1999.

## Palestinian artist Mohammad Sabaaneh wins prestigious political cartoonist award

Palestinian Political cartoonist of the Middle East Monitor Mohammad Sabaaneh has won this year's EWK Award.

Speaking upon hearing the news, Sabaaneh said: “For generations, Palestinian art has been a form of resistance, a way to assert identity, document history, and inspire hope.

My work exemplifies this tradition, using satire and poignant imagery to challenge oppression and advocate for peace and equality,” Middle East Monitor reported.

“This Prize is not for me, it is for all Palestinians in Palestine where they are facing the atrocity that also impacts art, culture, and narrative,” he added.

“This award, renowned for recognizing excellence in political cartooning serves as a powerful testament to the global recognition of Palestinian art and its profound role in resistance and cultural expression.”

Born in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin in 1979, Sabaaneh has been working as a satire cartoonist since 2002. His pictures have primarily been aimed at the Israeli occupation, but he has also scrutinized Palestinian issues.

He has also published “Palestine in Black and White” which brings together 100 of his works, including cartoons that portray the experience of Palestinian prisoners, drawn while Sabaaneh himself was detained in an Israeli prison.

His other graphic novel “Power Born of Dreams: My Story in Palestine” was awarded the 2022 Palestine Book Award.

Highlighting why Sabaaneh was chosen as this year's winner, EWK jury Chairman, Torbjorn Osterholm, said the Palestinian artist “has been mentioned as a prospect in our discussions for a long time.

Now his name has become especially relevant, when the eyes of the world are turned on Palestine, Israel and Hamas, and the atrocities that are committed there.”

Sabaaneh, the jury explained, “makes it possible for people to understand and form an opinion about the world around them, without having to read extensive texts.”

The artist will receive the EWK Award at Fullersta Gard in Huddinge, Sweden, in November.

The EWK Award is named after the famous Swedish political cartoonist Ewert Karlsson who

went by the name EWK.

Israel's war on Gaza, now in its 306th day, has killed at least 39,677 Palestinians — mostly women and children — and wounded over 91,645 others, with 10,000+ estimated to be buried under debris of bombed buildings.

“This Prize is not for me, it is for all Palestinians in Palestine where they are facing the atrocity that also impacts art, culture, and narrative”

Nowhere is safe in Gaza. Ground incursions and heavy fighting persist with 86% of Gaza's areas under forced evacuation.

The humanitarian “safe zone” is under repeated attacks and evacuations, severely limiting humanitarian operations and forcing food distribution points and kitchens to close and

evacuate.

Over 6% of the entire population of the Strip has been either killed, injured or is missing. The indiscriminate bombing of hospitals, schools, UN and INGO facilities, and residential buildings have caused massive destruction.

More than 60% of residential buildings and 80% of commercial facilities have been damaged or destroyed, including 57% of cropland, limiting the functionality of the food system. 88% of all schools sustained damages and 650,000 students are impeded to attend classes.

Out of 36 hospitals, only 16 are partially functioning, of which 11 are partially accessible due to insecurity or physical barriers, such as damage to entrances and surrounding roads.

Very heavy restrictions on humanitarian access, lack of adequate medical care and prevention measures have entailed the spread of diseases, including Hepatitis A, especially among children in overcrowded shelters.

Polio has been detected in water in some areas of Gaza, which raises fears of an outbreak.