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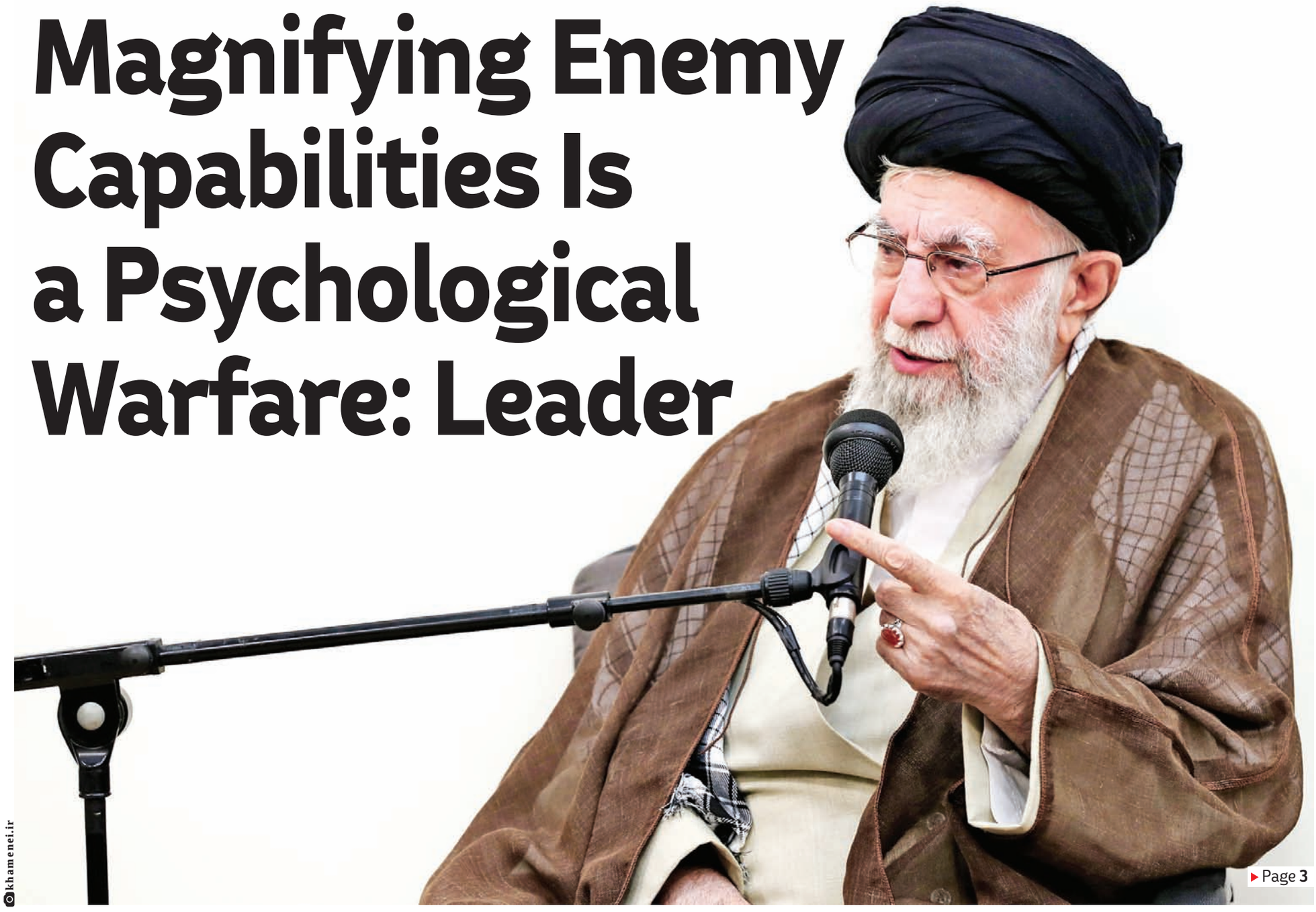
Magnifying Enemy Capabilities Is a Psychological Warfare: Leader



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Iran denies potential participation in Gaza ceasefire talks

TEHRAN – Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations has denied involvement in indirect ceasefire negotiations between Hamas and Israel.

"We have not engaged in the indirect ceasefire negotiations between Hamas and the regime, facilitated by Egypt, Qatar, and the U.S., and hold no intention for involvement in such negotiations," the mission stated on Tuesday.

The statement came in response to press inquiries regarding Iran's potential participation in the talks, which are scheduled to commence on Thursday.

The United States, Qatar, and Egypt called on Palestinians last week to re-engage in ceasefire talks with the Zionist regime. Hamas Resistance group has called on the mediators to pressure Israel to implement what has been agreed upon during previous rounds of talks, instead of scheduling new negotiations.

Israel has been waging an all-out war on the Gaza Strip since October, resulting in the tragic deaths of nearly 40,000 Palestinian civilians. The regime has reduced almost all of the Gaza Strip to the ground, destroying homes, hospitals, schools, universities, mosques, and churches. It has meanwhile imposed a complete siege on the Palestinians it has imprisoned in the enclave, forcing the civilians to grapple with hunger, thirst, and disease on a daily basis. Page 3

U.S. primary propagator of terrorism in region: Iranian envoy

TEHRAN – Amir Saeed Iravani, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, has strongly criticized the United States, accusing it of being the primary "advocate and propagator" of terrorism in West Asia and beyond.

He also dismissed recent U.S. accusations against Iran as unfounded and without merit.

In a letter addressed to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the President of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Michael Imran Kanu, Iravani expressed Iran's rejection of the baseless allegations made by the United States.

The letter, sent on Monday, was a direct response to statements made by the U.S. envoy during a Security Council meeting held four days earlier.

During that meeting, the U.S. representative had accused Iran of supporting terrorist activities in the region, a claim that Iravani condemned as both irresponsible and unfounded.

The following is the full text of the Iranian envoy's letter:

Excellency, Page 3

British far-rightists vilify Muslims to divert attention from failures

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - For over a week, the streets of the United Kingdom have witnessed unprecedented unrest led by far-right extremists. Cars were set ablaze, hotels and refugee shelters attacked, and local mosques became primary targets for the rioters. Now, it seems that calm has partially returned, and the disturbances have been somewhat contained, at least in England.

The chaos erupted following the horrific murder of three girls and the wounding of several others in a knife attack carried out by a 17-year-old during a children's dance class on a quiet residential street in Southport on July 29. Public disturbances spread across the country, from the southwest to the northeast, transforming streets into battlegrounds between far-right extremists, police, immigrants, and local communities opposing the violence.

The attacker was falsely identified on social media by far-right profiles and fake news peddlers as a Muslim asylum seeker who had illegally arrived on a small boat. For some far-right agitators, a tipping point had been reached, Page 5

At least 115 babies in Gaza have been killed in Israeli raids

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- At least 115 babies born after the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza that began on October 7 have now been killed, the Gaza health ministry says.

The announcement comes as Israeli media revelations suggest the Israeli army is using children as human shields in Gaza to go into tunnels and buildings to ensure there are no explosives or traps before the invading troops enter.

On Tuesday a Palestinian father's new-born twins along with their mother and grandmother were killed by an Israeli airstrike.

The four-day twins, born on August 9, were killed by Israeli bombs.

They have been identified as Aysal, a girl, and her brother Aser.

They all "lived short moments before their lives were lost by the bombardment and the aggression", the Gaza health ministry said in a statement.

Their father, Mohamed Qomsan, left their place of shelter in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza, to collect birth certificates for his newborns. Page 5

US greenlight for Israeli genocide

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The administration of US President Joe Biden has provided Israel with another carte blanche to press ahead with its war of genocide in the Gaza Strip.

On Tuesday, Washington approved more than $20 billion in weapons transfers to Israel.

According to US media, the package includes up to 50 F-15 fighter jets, up to 30 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles, tactical vehicles and large numbers of tank cartridges and high explosive mortar cartridges.

The fighter jets could take years to deliver. But other weapons including tank shells and explosive mortar cartridges could arrive in Israel soon.

The State Department announced that Secretary of State Antony Blinken okayed the arms sale.

"The United States is committed to the security of Israel, and it is vital to U.S. national interests to assist Israel to develop and maintain a strong and ready self-defense capability. This proposed sale is consistent with those objectives," it said in a press release on the sale. Page 5

Private sector to build 11,000MW of renewable power plants in Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said private sector contractors have inked deals with the ministry to construct several renewable power plants with a total capacity of 11,000 megawatts (MW) across the country.

Mehrabian said Iran is facing about 5,000 MW increase in electricity demand every year, so the government needs to make the necessary plans to resolve about 15,000 MW imbalance between electricity supply and demand, IRNA reported.

According to the official, in the last three years, more than 10,382 MW have been added to the country's power generation capacity, and power plants with the total capacity of 22,000 MW are also under construction across the country whose progress is between 10 and 95 percent. Page 4

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China ready to cooperate with new Iranian govt: Chinese envoy

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – China is looking to strengthen its comprehensive partnership with Iran during President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, according to the Chinese envoy to Tehran Cong Peiwu who has served in his role for the past three months.

Peiwu made the remarks during an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times while paying a visit to the newspaper's building. The ambassador said he hopes Iran and China will use their old friendship and long-lasting ties to continue support for each other's core interests and deliver benefits to both nations. Page 2

Iran's UN envoy demands strong actions against Israeli regime

TEHRAN- The Iranian ambassador and permanent representative to the UN office in Geneva has issued a strong condemnation of the inhumane actions of the Zionist regime, particularly highlighting the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

In a correspondence addressed to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, and arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz, and Francesca Albanese, the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Ali Bahraini articulated that Iran views Hamas as a liberation organization dedicated to the freedom and independence of Palestine. Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

Neighborhood policy and opening new markets

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

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the plan proposed by Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, the proposed choice of Masoud Pezeshkian for the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and wrote: Continuation of good neighborhood policy is one of the important aspects of the foreign policy of the proposed foreign minister.

According to Araghchi, this policy will not be possible except by benefiting from the capacity of regional organizations such as Shanghai, BRICS, the Eurasian Economic Union, and other similar organizations, and it will be an opportunity for the new government to extend the "field of diplomacy" to Africa, Latin America, and East Asia.

Therefore, it is possible to pass the country through the chain of sanctions and try to open new markets and mechanisms to "reduce sanctions costs". In this context, he also called for the continuation of strong relations with China and Russia and the expansion of cooperation with emerging economies such as India, Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil, facilitating trade and economic relations with neighbors, especially in the border areas.

Shargh: Managing tension with America

In a commentary, Shargh discussed the importance of the American elections for the world and said: Perhaps the elections of no other country are as important as the American elections to the world's media, including Iran.

The American elections have a decisive influence on the global and regional policies of the Middle East. The American elections are very important for Iran. For more than four decades, the governments of Iran and the United States have been in a highly controversial situation, and some believe that coming to office of the Democratic Party, the tension between the countries will decrease and the issue of negotiation and communication with the United States will be facilitated.

But the heads of the Islamic Republic do not believe this and have repeatedly stated that for them there is no difference between the president of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. After the war in Ukraine, many issues are happening inside the U.S. regarding the Middle East, such as the internal developments of the Republican and Democratic parties. We need to analyze these so that we can reach a consensus framework within the government, based on which a group will work in this framework so that this situation does not get worse than it is; secondly, we go towards improving the atmosphere to some extent.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Iran does not ask permission from anyone

In an article, Donya-e-Eqtesad dealt with Iran's possible response to the recent crime of the Zionist regime. The paper said: Iran's response and the concern of regional and extra-regional countries regarding the increase of conflicts and the spread of war, has forced European leaders to try to reduce the possibility of the spread of war while consulting with Iranian authorities.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer asked Iran to show restraint in separate calls. Iran is determined to defend its sovereignty and national security, as well as help to establish stability in the region and create deterrence against the real source of insecurity and terrorism in the region, and it does not ask permission from anyone to use its recognized rights.

Such requests lack political logic, are completely contrary to the principles and rules of international law, and are considered public and practical support for the origin of international crimes and terrorism in the region.

Ham Mihan: Arabs avoiding tension

In an analysis, Ham Mihan discussed the lack of desire by the Arabs to expand the war in the Middle East and said: Israel's action to assassinate Ismail Haniyeh has increased concerns about the expansion of the Gaza war to the entire region and the uncontrollable escalation of tension in the Middle East.

Immediately after this terrorist act, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi came to Tehran and emphasized that he was carrying a message from Israel to Iran on this trip and that his goal was to "prevent the spread of tensions". It is clear that Jordan, like other Arab countries in the region, does not welcome the war between Iran and Israel.

Arab countries with different motives, often to protect their interests, do not want to spread war and conflict in the region. Although Iran and Israel are both considered rival powers for the Arab powers of the region, the conflict between Iran and Israel will affect these countries as well.

Iran, Pakistan expanding bilateral relations: envoy

TEHRAN- During the anniversary ceremony commemorating Pakistan's independence, the Pakistani ambassador in Tehran underscored the optimistic prospects for the relationship between Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The formal observance of Pakistan's seventy-eighth independence anniversary was held on Wednesday at the Pakistan embassy in Tehran. Attendees included members of the Pakistani community residing in Iran and officials from the Pakistan Embassy.

The event commenced with the playing of Pakistan's national anthem, followed by Ahmad Shami, the charge d'affaires of the Pakistan embassy, who raised the national flag.

Subsequently, messages from both the Pakistani president and prime minister were conveyed. In his address, the charge d'affaires highlighted the significance of the day in history and paid tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam as the founder of their nation, Allama Iqbal, the national Pakistani Poet and other prominent leaders who were instrumental in the movement for Pakistan's independence and dedicated their lives to establishing a sovereign nation for Muslims.

Ahmad Shami extended his congratulations to the Pakistani diaspora on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, urging them to contribute to their homeland with unwavering commitment.

During the event, the ambassador of Pakistan emphasized the strong ties between Pakistan and Iran, which are founded on shared historical, cultural, and religious links. The partnership between the two nations is poised for further enhancement, driven by the dedication of their respective leaders.

> Prospects for the relationship between Iran and Pakistan are optimistic'

August 14, 1947, is celebrated as Pakistan's Independence Day, marking the nation's emergence from British colonial rule under the guidance of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, revered as the Quaid-e-Azam. On this significant day, Muslims from both the western and eastern parts of India united to establish Pakistan. The western region was designated as the Federal Republic of Pakistan, while the eastern region became known as East Pakistan, which eventually evolved into Bangladesh.

The formation of Pakistan was intended to create a homeland for Muslims, enabling them to practice their values and Islamic traditions freely.

A significant aspect of the August 14 festivities involves honoring the legacies of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the esteemed poet who played a crucial role in the struggle for independence.

Exclusive

China ready to cooperate with new Iranian govt: Chinese envoy

From page 1 ▸ The ambassador said he hopes Iran and China will use their old friendship and long-lasting ties to continue support for each other's core interests and deliver benefits to both nations.

Below is the full text of the Chinese envoy's remarks to the Tehran Times:

In your opinion, what are the prospects for the development of Iran-China relations in President Masoud Pezeshkian's era?

China and Iran are comprehensive strategic partners, and our current cooperation is in good momentum. China has maintained Iran's largest trading partner for many years. In July this year, the Qom (Iran)-Yiwu (China) all-rail freight train started operation, which will help strengthen Iran-China cargo transportation cooperation. China has opened a "green channel" for Iran's agricultural products entering China. Tangerine, apples, honey, white shrimps, ribbonfish, and many other products from Iran are becoming increasingly popular among Chinese consumers.

There are many highlights in China-Iran cultural exchanges and interactions in various fields such as culture, education, media, and local cooperation, which enhances mutual understanding and cooperation between the two peoples. The people-to-people exchanges between China and Iran are becoming increasingly close.

Our embassy continues to take measures to facilitate visas. At present, Iranian applicants can apply for visas without appointments. The successful visa approval rate has been up to 97.6%.

Not long ago, the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was successfully held in Beijing.

The session sent a strong message to the world about China's steadfast commitment to reform and opening up in the new era and also drew up a blueprint for China to further deepen reform and advance Chinese modernization on all fronts.

In the next stage, China will steadily improve the level of cooperation with countries around the world in trade, investment, industry, and other fields, and continue to share more development opportunities with countries around the world, including Iran.

China stands ready to work with the new Iranian government to continue to firmly support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests, steadily advance practical cooperation in various fields, unswervingly promote the sound development of bilateral relations, deliver more benefits to the two peoples, and constantly add new content to the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership.

Iran is a new member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. What areas of common cooperation do Iran and China have within the SCO framework?

China and Iran are both important developing countries and both adhere to true multilateralism. Since Iran successfully joined the SCO one year ago, it has actively participated in various cooperation under the SCO framework and achieved fruitful results.

Iran's joining the SCO has injected new vitality into it, which is in line with the expectations of the international community and the common interests of emerging market countries and developing countries.

After the Astana summit, China has taken over the rotating presidency of the SCO for 2024-2025.

China stands ready to work with Iran and other SCO partners under the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, enhance solidarity and mutual trust, build consensus on cooperation, expand cooperation across the board, actively participate in global governance, and advance the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative to contribute more SCO strength to the lasting peace and common prosperity of the world.

Iran is welcome to actively participate in the events hosted by China as the rotating chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and strengthen this new type of international organization.

What is China's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

The Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East issue. China never has any selfish interests in the Palestinian question.

China was among the first countries to recognize the PLO and the State of Palestine. China firmly supports the Palestinian people in restoring their legitimate national rights.

We value fairness and advocate for justice.

The more daunting the situation is in the Middle East, the more critical it is for the international community to try to cool down the situation and enable de-escalation.

At present, the Gaza conflict drags on, its spillovers continue to spread, and multiple regional conflicts are interconnected.

What is pressing now is that the international community should join forces and urge all parties to the conflict to earnestly implement relevant Security Council resolutions, to create conditions for the early realization of a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

It is particularly important to point out that Israel must heed the call of the international community, stop the hostilities at once, do everything possible to protect civilians, and avoid further escalation in the region.

Iran marks 33-day war as 'Symbol of Resistance' against Zionist regime

TEHRAN- The Iranian foreign ministry commemorated the anniversary of the thirty-three-day war in Lebanon, describing it as a significant achievement for the Resistance movement opposing the Israeli regime.

Here is the text of the Iran's Foreign Ministry's statement:

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran congratulates the people, government, army, and resistance of Lebanon, especially Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of the Islamic Resistance Movement of Lebanon—Hezbollah—and the broader Resistance front on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the proud victory of the valiant sons of the Islamic Resistance of Lebanon in the 33-day war in 2006, which imposed a historic and disgraceful defeat on the criminal, adventurous, and aggressive Zionist regime.

August 14, the Day of Islamic Resistance, is in the words of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, "A Day when resistance and Hezbollah restored dignity to the Arab and Islamic world" and, with the collapse of the hollow dominance of the Zionist regime, the blessed tree of Resistance against the Zionist occupiers and aggressors grew stronger and more robust.

The brilliant victory of the Islamic Resistance achieved through the internal cohesion and solidarity among the various sects and the unity of the brave and resilient people of Lebanon, has ensured stability and security, bringing honor and pride to the people of Lebanon and the region, particularly the Resistance front against Zionist occupiers.

The 33-day war became a symbol of the steadfastness and power of the resilient people of Lebanon against the Zionist regime and will always remain in the minds of the people of the region as a great victory.

Today, 18 years after that historic resistance and the subsequent events, especially the Al-Aqsa Storm operation and the unprecedented and extensive record of various war crimes and genocides committed against defenseless Palestinians in the Gaza Strip by the Zionist regime, with the full political, and economic, intelligence, and military support of the United States and some other Western countries, the righteousness of the Islamic Republic of Iran's principled stance—namely, the necessity of comprehensive support by countries and nations, especially Islamic and justice-seeking nations, for the resistance and steadfastness of the Palestinian people and the Resistance Front against the Zionist enemy as the only strategic option to reclaim the lost rights of the Palestinian nation and other nations in the region and to liberate Palestine and dear Al-Quds has been proven.

Unfortunately, over the past ten months, the world has witnessed the mass killing of nearly 40,000 Palestinians, the wounding of more than 100,000, the destruction of vital infrastructure, and the displacement of more than two million residents of the Gaza Strip, alongside repeated cross-border assassinations of Resistance leaders in the region, including the martyrdom of the Mujahid Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, under the inaction of responsible international institutions.

This series of crimes has exposed the hateful and malicious nature of the usurping apartheid Zionist regime, and the world's public opinion and awakened human consciences across the globe have risen in demand for justice for the blood of the oppressed and victims of Gaza and to express solidarity and sympathy with them.

Struggle and resistance against occupiers, according to the United Nations Charter, international norms, and regulations, is the legitimate right of the nations under occupation and liberation movements, and the only strategic option for defending and supporting the security, independence, and sovereignty of occupied and aggressed countries, including Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.

These brave and resilient nations will reap the sweet fruits of steadfastness and perseverance against the Zionist occupiers and aggressors.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always stood by the people and government of Lebanon and will continue to do so. On the anniversary of this great epic, Iran reaffirms its determination to strengthen and develop constructive relations between the two friendly and brotherly countries of Iran and Lebanon, in line with the continued comprehensive support of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the government, people, army, and other Resistance Forces of Lebanon."

Magnifying enemy capabilities is a psychological warfare: Leader

TEHRAN – Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, met with a number of the families of martyrs from the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province and the officials of the National Congress for the Commemoration of the Martyrs of the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province on Wednesday.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei identified the exaggeration of the enemies' capabilities as one of the main pillars of psychological warfare against the Iranian nation and Islamic Iran.

He stated, "Since the victory of the Revolution, the enemies have been instilling fear in our nation through various means, suggesting that we should be afraid of the U.S., the UK, and the Zionists."

He emphasized that [Imam Khomeini]'s greatest achievement was dispelling fear from the hearts of the nation and instilling self-belief and confidence among the people. "Our nation realized that by relying on its inherent strength, it could accomplish great feats, and the enemy's power was not as formidable as it seemed," he remarked.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also stated that the enemy's objective in psychological warfare, particularly in the military arena, is to instill fear and force a retreat.

"As the Quran states, a non-tactical retreat in any domain—whether military, political, or economic—will incur divine wrath," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei identified feelings of weakness, isolation, and submission to the enemy's demands as major consequences of exaggerating the enemy's power in the political arena.

He pointed out that governments, whether of large or small nations, which currently capitulate to the demands of the Arrogant Powers, could avoid submission if they relied on their people and capabilities, and recognized the enemy's true power without exaggeration.

Ayatollah Khamenei underscored the significant consequences of amplifying the cultural practices propagated by enemies, warning that such narratives can lead to a sense of passivity, causing individuals to become infatuated with the enemies' cultures while belittling their own.

He stated that this passivity could result in the acceptance of foreign lifestyles and the adoption of foreign expressions and terminology.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also highlighted the crucial role of martyrs and fighters in resisting the enemy's psychological warfare.

"We must appreciate the young people who have stood firm against psychological warfare without fear or being swayed by others," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the importance of creating cultural and artistic works that commemorate the martyrs and the Sacred Defense.

He stated that the sacrifices and martyrdom of a nation's youth are a vital resource for the country's progress, and he urged that these legacies be preserved and protected from distortion or neglect.

Iran denies potential participation in Gaza ceasefire talks

From Page 1 ▶ Analysts believe Benjamin Netanyahu and some of his cabinet members have been the primary obstacles to establishing a ceasefire, accusing the Prime Minister of prolonging the Gaza war and bringing devastation to the Palestinians for his own personal gains.

Western countries have also been condemned by the international community for their untrammeled support for Israel, which includes military, logistical, diplomatic, and political aid.

Iran's UN envoy demands strong actions against Israeli regime

From Page 1 ▶ Bahraini stated, "The assassination of Hamas leaders is intended to undermine the resolve of the Palestinian people in their quest to end the occupation and secure their right to self-determination."

He further asserted that Israel's efforts to eliminate Palestinian leaders are aimed at erasing the political identity of the Palestinian people and their fundamental right to establish an independent state.

Bahraini pointed out, "Following Article 2.1 of the International Convention to Prevent the Financing of Terrorism, the institutions of the Zionist regime should be classified as terrorist entities."

He elaborated that the actions of the Israeli regime against civilians and Palestinians exemplify terrorism. Additionally, he characterized Haniyeh's assassination as a severe breach of international law.

Bahreini remarked that Ismail Haniyeh was martyred in a cowardly assassination by the Zionist regime, noting that the Israeli government under Netanyahu is not interested in a ceasefire.

Ismail Haniyeh was martyred on July 31 while residing in the Iranian capital for President Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony.

Tehran condemns Israeli minister's desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque

TEHRAN – Iran's foreign ministry spokesman has issued a strong condemnation of the deliberate desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by a far-right Israeli minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and Zionist settlers.

Nasser Kanaani asserted that this provocative act reflects the Israeli regime's intentions to escalate tensions in the already volatile region.

In a statement made on Tuesday, Kanaani emphasized that this "evil act" reveals the true motives of the Israeli leadership, who are stoking conflict by deliberately offending the religious sentiments of Muslims in Palestine and across the Islamic world.

According to him, these actions are part of a broader strategy to fuel ongoing hostilities and destabilize the region.

Kanaani further called on the United States and other Western nations to demonstrate their claimed commitment to security and stability in the West Asia by taking immediate action against the "criminal Zionist regime."

He urged these countries to intervene to end the ongoing genocide in Gaza and curb Israel's aggressive policies in Palestine and the wider region.

The Iranian spokesperson had previously expressed his outrage over the incident on his X account, formerly known as Twitter, describing the desecration as a blatant violation of Islamic sanctities and an assault on the rights of Muslims worldwide.

He warned that this act of provocation is designed to increase instability and heighten tensions in the region.

Kanaani's post on X also called for a global response, particularly from Islamic governments and Muslim nations, to condemn and address these illegal actions.

He reiterated that the international community has an urgent responsibility to put a stop to Israel's actions, which he argued violate international law and threaten peace.

The controversy erupted earlier on Tuesday when Itamar Ben-Gvir, a prominent far-right Israeli minister, visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, and made remarks suggesting that Jews should be allowed to pray there, despite existing agreements that restrict such activities to mere visits.

This visit, along with the presence of approximately 2,250 Zionist settlers at the mosque, has sparked widespread condemnation and concern, as it is seen as a direct challenge to the decades-long status quo that governs the site.

U.S. primary propagator of terrorism in region: Iranian envoy

From Page 1 ▶ I am writing to you regarding the UN Security Council's open briefing held on 8 August 2024, under the agenda item "Threat to International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts" (S/PV.9701).

During this meeting, the representative of the United States, while responding to the statement of the representative of the Russian Federation, deviated from the agenda item and made an unwarranted and misleading reference to the Islamic Republic of Iran, falsely accusing Iran of supporting terrorism in the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects and strongly condemns this baseless allegation and irresponsible behavior by the United States representative.

It is unequivocally clear that the United States, not Iran, is the primary advocate and propagator of terrorism, both in the region and globally.

It is both ironic and shameful that the United States accuses Iran while simultaneously, as a staunch supporter, continues to defend the genocidal acts of Israel and provide Israel with an endless cache of weapons to terrorize and massacre the innocent people of Palestine, including children and women, prolonging the bloodshed and horror in the Gaza Strip.

The most recent massacre committed by Israel against the displaced civilians at Al-Tabi'in School in central Gaza City on 10 August 2024 which led to the martyrdom of at least 100 innocent Palestinian people, including children and women, is a result of such ironclad support of the US.

Moreover, the US support of UN-designated terrorist groups such as Al-Nusrah Front (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) in its occupation areas in the Syria Arab Republic in flagrant violation of the UN Charter, international law, and pertinent Security Council resolutions is further evidence of how the United States is the principal sponsor of terrorism in the region. Given such a dark record, the United States has no standing to accuse or lecture other members of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

SPORTS

Iran named flag-bearers for 2024 Paralympics

TEHRAN – Mohammadreza Mirshafiei and Hajar Safarzadeh will be carrying the Iran flag at the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, scheduled at Place de la Concorde on Aug. 28.

Para shooter Mirshafiei, 51, is the most experienced member of Iran delegation in Paris.Female runner Safarzadeh, who became Iran's first female athlete to win a world title, will also carry the flag in the Opening Ceremony.

Iran will send 65 Para athletes to the Games in 10 sports.

The 2024 Paralympic Games will be held in Paris, France from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8.

2024 Paris is the 17th Summer Paralympic Games, an upcoming international multi-sport parasports event governed by the International Paralympic Committee, to be held in Paris.

These games mark the first time Paris will host the Paralympics in its history and the second time that France will host the Paralympic Games, as Tignes and Albertville jointly hosted the 1992 Winter Paralympics.

UWW describes wrestler Yazdani as "Still the Greatest"

TEHRAN – The United World Wrestling (UWW) has described Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani as "still the greatest" despite his silver medal in recent Paris Olympics.

UWW has posted on its Instagram a Video of Hassan Yazdani's wrestling matches, commenting that Your Are "Still the Greatest."

According to the UWW website, Yazdani and his aching shoulder missed out on a second Olympic gold medal and was relegated to a second silver instead at the freestyle 86kg class.

Russian-born Ramazanov outdueled a less-than-100 percent Yazdani in notching a 7-1 victory in the final on Friday at the Paris Olympics, giving Bulgaria its second gold in two nights.

Yazdani, one of the biggest stars of the sport whose many laurels include the 74kg gold from Rio 2016 and a silver at 86kg three years ago in Tokyo, was in obvious discomfort from the get-go of his clash with the 31-year-old Ramazanov.

Almost immediately after the start, the Iranian signaled for a timeout, clutching his upper right arm. While managing to keep the score close, and even tentatively leading at one point, he stopped the match five times for treatment on his shoulder.

Yazdani gave up an activity point in the first period -- just barely failing to complete a takedown in the process -- but got one himself in the second to lead 1-1 on criteria.

Ramazanov put the pressure on and tripped Yazdani for a takedown while trapping the Iranian's foot underneath him at an odd angle, keeping him in a sitting position. That allowed the Bulgarian to use a crossface to tilt Yazdani backward for two exposures and a 7-1 lead.

With 30 seconds left, Yazdani conceded that it was over. He put his hands on his knees as the seconds ticked down to the inevitable. He gave Ramazanov a hug of respect.

Manolopoulos appointed Iran basketball coach

TEHRAN – Sotirios Alex Manolopoulos was appointed as new head coach of Iran basketball team on Tuesday.

The 54-year-old coach most recently worked as head coach of Romanian team Dinamo Bucure?ti.

The Greek coach started his playing career in Papagou Athens B.C. in 1993 and has worked in Panathinaikos, AEK Athens and Peristeri Athens.

Manolopoulos replaced Turkish coach Hakan Demir in Team Melli.

Iran basketball federation had been linked with Marco Ramondino from Italy and Slovenian coach Radovan Trifunovi? but hired the Greek coach at last.

Born in Athens, he played college basketball at Boston University. After graduating, he returned to his native Greece, to play professional basketball. He had served as an assistant coach in several teams in the Greek Basket League, before he was appointed the head coach of Panathinaikos in May 2015.

FIFA authorizes use of VAR in Iran's Pro League

TEHRAN – The International Football Federation (FIFA) has authorized the use of video assistant referee (VAR) systems in the Iranian football league.

An official in the Iranian football federation said on Wednesday that the FIFA had notified Iranian authorities that they will be allowed to use VAR in the next edition of Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League which will start on August 15.

Mohsen Hakim, who leads the VAR project in Iran, said that Tehran's Azadi stadium, Isfahan's Naqsh Jahan stadium and the Imam Khomeini stadium in the central city of Arak have already received permits to use VAR systems during Pro League football matches.

Hakim said other stadiums are in the process of receiving VAR permits.

Iran was forced to delay the launch of VAR systems in its top-flight football matches due to issues related to US sanctions.

2024-25 PGPL to kick off on Thursday

TEHRAN – The 24th edition of Iran Professional League (IPL) will start on Thursday, with defending champion Persepolis will meet Zob Ahan in Arak.

Malavan will also host Gol Gohar and Esteghlal Khuzestan meet Aluminum in Ahvaz.

On Friday, Esteghlal will travel to Qazvin to play Shams Azar, Nassaji host Foolad, Sepahan meet Chadormalu in Isfahan, Mes play Tractor in Kerman, and Havadar host Kheybar in Tehran.

The Persian Gulf Pro League, formerly known as the Iran Premier League, is the top men's professional football division of the Iranian football league system.

It is controlled by the FFIRI and is contested by 16 teams over a 30-matchday period.

Each year, its top team becomes the Iranian football champion, and the two lowest finishers are relegated to Azadegan League.

Since 2013, the league comprises 16 teams. The winner of the Persian Gulf Pro League along with the Hazfi Cup champion automatically qualify for the AFC Champions League Elite group stages. The third of the Persian Gulf Pro League is qualified for the AFC Champions League Elite Play-off round.

The bottom two teams in the league are relegated to Azadegan League. In the past, the format and number of teams were changed for various times.

Loading, unloading of goods in Chabahar port up 62%

TEHRAN – As announced by a provincial official, the loading and unloading of goods in Chabahar port, in the southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, increased by 62 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.

Qasem Askari, the head of Sistan-Baluchestan's Ports and Maritime Department, also announced a 20-percent growth in the export of non-oil products from this port during the mentioned four-month period.

As Iran's only oceanic port on the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar Port holds great significance for the country both politically and economically. The country has taken serious measures to develop this port in order to improve the country's maritime trade.

The port consists of Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti terminals, each of which has five berth facilities. The port is located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan Province and is about 120 kilometers southwest of Pakistan's Baluchistan Province, where the China-funded Gwadar port is situated.

In May 2016, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement for the strategically-located Chabahar port to give New Delhi access to Kabul and Central Asia.

Later, based on a separate deal with Iran, India agreed to install and operate modern loading and unloading equipment including mobile harbor cranes in Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar.

Under the framework of the mentioned agreement, the Indian side has been operating in Shahid Beheshti port in the form of a build–operate–transfer (BOT) contract; this is the first time that such a contract has been implemented in one of the country's ports with 100 percent foreign investment.

The first consignment of Indian equipment for the development of port activities at Chabahar port worth $8.5 million arrived in the southeastern port in January 2021.

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)."

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

South Azadegan field output increases by 2,500 bpd

TEHRAN – With the successful implementation of two new wells at the South Azadegan oil field, which Iran shares with its neighbor Iraq, the field's production capacity has increased by 2,500 barrels per day (bpd).

In December 2023, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) head announced the drilling of 60 new wells in the South Azadegan oil field to boost production capacity.

Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said the South Azadegan field's production capacity has seen a significant increase with the addition of 60 new wells over the past year, reaching a current production level of 120,000 bpd.

He pointed out that development plans have been finalized for all of the country's joint fields, and programs are underway to sign a contract to develop two additional joint fields by March 20.

In July 2020, a consortium of Iranian companies including Petropars signed a deal with NIOC to raise Azadegan field's output capacity to 320,000 bpd from 140,000 bpd within 30 months.

South Azadegan oilfield is located 80 kilometers west of Ahvaz (the capital city of Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province), near the Iraqi border.

The oil reserves in this field are estimated to be around 25.34 billion barrels, and the recoverable oil is estimated to be around 1.7 billion barrels, taking into account the recovery factor of 6.6 percent.

The development process of the South Azadegan oilfield is done in the form of two development phases, and according to the targeting, the production in this field is supposed to reach 600,000 bpd.

South Azadegan is one of the five major oilfields Iran shares with Iraq in the western part of Iran's Karoun region, known as West Karoun fields.

West Karoun holds great importance for the country's oil industry because, according to the latest studies, its in-situ deposit is estimated to be 67 billion barrels containing both light and heavy crude oils, and therefore it could have a big impact on Iran's oil output increases in the future.

Having an estimated 67 billion barrels of in-situ oil, West Karoun fields definitely deserve the spotlight that has been put on them recently.

Through taking some major steps, such as the supply of the main equipment, the development process of South Azadegan oilfield has been accelerated over the past year.

Private sector to build 11,000MW of renewable power plants in Iran

TEHRAN – Iranian Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian said private sector contractors have inked deals with the ministry to construct several renewable power plants with a total capacity of 11,000 megawatts (MW) across the country.

Mehrabian said Iran is facing about 5,000 MW increase in electricity demand every year, so the government needs to make the necessary plans to resolve about 15,000 MW imbalance between electricity supply and demand, IRNA reported.

According to the official, in the last three years, more than 10,382 MW have been added to the country's power generation capacity, and power plants with the total capacity of 22,000 MW are also under construction across the country whose progress is between 10 and 95 percent.

Putting the country's current electricity generation capacity at 93,000 MW, Mehrabian said that based on the seventh National Development Plan, Iran's power generation capacity is expected to be increased to 123,000 MW within the next five years.

"In the last three years, Iran's electricity generation has grown by 45.7 terawatt hours, and this production growth has made Iran

the seventh biggest electricity producer in the world," he noted.

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

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

Earlier this month, Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced that Iranian renewable power plants generated over 923 Kwh of electricity since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19).

In late July, SATBA Head Mahmoud Kamani said 600 renewable power plants with a total capacity of 13,500 MW are under construction across the country and with these power plants going operational the share of renewables in Iran's power generation will reach 15 percent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bank loans to economic sectors rise over 20%

TEHRAN - The Iranian banking system has paid 16.57 quadrillion rials (about $33.14 billion) of facilities in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 -July 21), registering a 20.6 percent rise from the figure in the same period of the previous year, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced.

As IRNA reported, of the total facilities, 13.57 quadrillion rials (about $27.1 billion) equivalent to 78.3 percent, was paid to the business owners (real and legal), and 3.6 quadrillion rials (about $7.3 billion) equivalent to 21.7 percent, to the final consumers (households).

TCCIMA inks co-op MOU with Tehran AGRIENG

TEHRAN – Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Agriculture and Natural Resources Engineering Organization of Tehran Province (AGRIENG), the TCCIMA portal reported.

The MOU was signed in a meeting of the TCCIMA board of directors with the head of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Engineering Organization of Tehran Province on Tuesday.

As reported, the MOU is aimed at facilitating the participation of the private sector operators in the Tehran Province's agricultural projects and invest in the mentioned sector.

Establishing a service desk in the Tehran Chamber for the members of the Chamber to benefit from the services and facilities of the AGRIENG organization, cooperation in certifying agricultural products, efforts to increase the export of agricultural products by the members of the TCCIMA and improving the export of agricultural services, improving the level of knowledge about new technologies in the agricultural sector, implementation of joint research projects and the holding of domestic and international educational events, as well as supporting trade unions and production organizations in the agricultural sector and transformation industries are also among the goals of the cooperation MOU.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the head of the Tehran AGRIENG Morteza Kouchakzadeh said: "According to the cooperation agreement with the Agriculture and Natural Resources Engineering Organization of Tehran Province aims to speed up the investment process in the country's agriculture sector in collaboration with this long-standing private sector institution."

Ataollah Ashrafi Esfahani, head of the TCCIMA Agriculture and Transformation Industries Committee,e also said at the meeting that one of the missions of the committee has been communication with the organizations of the Tehran province, and in this regard the memorandum of understanding has been drawn up and arranged, which is signed between the Tehran Chamber and this organization.

'Banks, holdings, govt. entities to collaborate in supporting stock market'

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Securitas and Exchange Organization (SEO) Majid Eshqi has said the country's banks, major holdings and government organizations are going to collaborate in order to support the stock market.

Referring to the latest decisions made by the Supreme Council of the Stock Market, Eshqi said most of the measures that are going to be taken for supporting the market are focused on providing funding and capital via the Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund (CMDSF), Tasnim News Agency reported.

"Such measures will be taken by holdings and investment companies in order to reassure shareholders about the future of their shares", the official said.

TEDPIX falls 7,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 7,034 points to 1,998,118 on Wednesday, which is the fifth day of the Iranian calendar week.

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

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

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

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

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production in an efficient manner.

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

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

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

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

The Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE) is Iran's largest stock exchange, which first opened in 1967. The TSE is based in Tehran. TSE, which is a founding member of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges, has been one of the world's best performing stock exchanges in the years 2002 through 2013. TSE is an emerging or "frontier" market.

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

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

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

Also, Iran is blessed with high diversity of natural resources, while allocating them to the producers efficiently. Thanks to all these inimitable features, this capital market, industries, and businesses will flourish even more and more.

At least 115 babies in Gaza have been killed in Israeli raids

Israel kills newborn twins

From page 1 ▶ Footage has gone viral of Qomsan holding the birth certificates for Aysal and Aser. Video clips show the father in a state of shock, crying in hysteria and fainting upon his return to the bombed place of shelter when he learns the news of his entire family being killed.

Local media reports indicate the family had fled northern Gaza and sought shelter in Deir al-Balah.

His wife, Joumana, was a pharmacist and helped others in the little medical supplies trickling into the enclave. She had given birth by Cesarean section and announced the twins' arrival on social media.

According to the Associated Press, the couple had followed orders by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) to flee Gaza City in the first weeks of Tel Aviv's genocidal war, seeking shelter in the center of the enclave as the IOF had instructed.

UN experts say there are no safe zones in the Gaza Strip anymore.

The story of the twins has caught the imagination of media outlets because of the twins. Yet critics say more than 115 babies born in Gaza, since October 7 last year, which the

IOF have killed since, also deserve similar Western and regional media coverage.

Analysts argue that, unfortunately, many Palestinians have turned into numbers.

Many of these numbers are children. Tens of thousands have been killed, injured or orphaned. Parents have lost children and children have lost their parents.

An Israeli media outlet has revealed how children are being used as human shields by the IOF.

According to a report by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Palestinians are being forced to wear army uniforms, tied up, and sent into tunnels and buildings.

The Israeli news outlet says the IOF is arresting civilians, including children, and using them to sweep the tunnels and buildings.

After the Palestinians inspect the tunnels and homes, the Israeli troops enter.

The report by Haaretz suggests that among those conscripted as human shields are children and the elderly.

Khan Younis, Gaza's largest southern governorate, is among the regions in the Strip that have been attacked the hardest by the IOF amid weeks of relentless Israeli bombing.

The assault has reduced entire apartment blocks to rubble and residents are struggling to survive amid frequent evacuation orders by the IOF.

Philippe Lazzarini, commissioner-general of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, reported that the latest wave of "evacuation orders", has displaced more than 75,000 people in southwest Gaza.

In a post on social media, Lazzarini highlighted the dire situation, noting that "some are only able to carry their children with them, some carry their whole lives in one small bag.

"They are going to overcrowded places where shelters are already overflowing with families," Lazzarini lamented.

He warned that the people of Gaza "have lost everything and need everything. Unlike other wars, the people of Gaza are trapped and have nowhere to go."

There are around 20,000 orphans in Gaza. Nearly 16,500 children have been killed. Many are still unidentified.

Gaza has more children than almost anywhere else, with 47.3% of its population under 18.

The UN has warned that children in the enclave are also dying due to hunger, and disease. This is while they have lost their homes and their loved ones.

US greenlight for Israeli genocide

From page 1 ▶ The statement has stressed that the weapons are aimed at increasing Israel's "self-defense capability".

Israel has killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians including more than 16,400 children since declaring war on Gaza on October 7. The Israeli army has used American weapons in the strikes that it has carried out across the Gaza Strip.

Nonetheless, in the eyes of US politicians the slaughter of Palestinian civilians amounts to self-defense. In other words, Washinton condones the massacres that Israel continues to perpetrate against Palestinian people.

Since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, the US has given Israel huge amounts of weapons despite growing calls for stopping arms deliveries to the Tel Aviv regime. This is in addition to $3.8 billion in annual military aid to Israel under a 10-year agreement.

US complicity in genocide

A US-based advocacy group has made a map of the more than 70,000 bombs that Israel has dropped on the Gaza Strip since launching the Gaza onslaught.

Jewish Voice for Peace said the Israeli army has bombarded nearly every inch of Gaza with US-made bombs.

"With the US as its collaborator, the Israeli military is carrying out the goal of Zionism: the complete and total ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their land," the group said, according to Al Jazeera.

It added, "The US isn't just allowing the Israeli government to commit a genocide, it's actively assisting it. It's well past time for a weapons embargo. We demand a complete end to US funding, arming, and backing of the state of Israel's oppression of Palestinians."

The US has already turned a blind eye to similar calls for halting arms deliveries to Israel.

The approval of the $20 billion arms package is the second major gift to Israel for its carnage in Gaza in less than a month.

Addressing a joint session of the United States Congress in Washington on July 24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was applauded 79 times, 58 of which were standing ovations. This was a big prize for Netanyahu whose regime does not scruple to kill defenseless Palestinian civilians.

The Congressional applause for Netanyahu, who is butchering Palestinians, and the US military support for his regime's genocidal war on Gaza will undoubtedly go down in history as an appalling tragedy.

British far-rightists vilify Muslims to divert attention from failures

From page 1 ▶ prompting them to take to the streets. Videos and posts from Tommy Robinson, former leader of the now-defunct English Defence League, whose X/Twitter account was reinstated last year by Elon Musk, were viewed an average of 54.3 million times daily between July 30 and August 9, according to the Centre for Countering Digital Hate.

So far, around 1,000 people have been arrested, with nearly 550 charged. Concern in the UK about the future is at an all-time high, with growing fears of what might happen with the expansion of fascism, xenophobia, and far-right extremism.

The ongoing normalization of far-right ideologies culminated in last week's events. Libraries and a Citizens Advice office were torched, properties destroyed, and people of color attacked. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Starmer issued ambiguous warnings, refusing to acknowledge that the riots were intended to terrorize Muslims and other vulnerable communities.

For years, the British Conservative governments have pushed an ultraconservative narrative that promotes policies against vulnerable groups and asylum seekers, marked by Islamophobia and a strong commitment to suppressing dissent. A clear example of this is Suella Braverman, the former Home Secretary, who labeled pro-Palestine protests as "hate marches," thereby criminalizing demonstrators and their support for the Palestinians.

Another key figure in understanding the recent events in the UK is Nigel Farage, the quintessential face of British far-right populism. Farage described "some of the actions" of the far-right rioters as "truly disgusting," but also appeared to justify the rioters, stating that it was "a reaction to fear, discomfort, and unease shared by tens of millions of people."

Furthermore, Elon Musk, whose ties to fascist elements are undeniable, also played a significant role in amplifying the British far-right. Musk shared — and later deleted — a false post from the co-leader of the far-right party Britain First, claiming that the UK was building "detainment camps" for rioters. He even proclaimed that civil war in the country was "inevitable."

However, it's important not to mistake this as solely the work of "ultra-radical" or populist voices. Too many people in positions of power have either denied the existence of Islamophobia for far too long or have actively encouraged it. Islamophobia can be defined as a form of racism that targets expressions of Muslim identity or any public display perceived as such.

In this context, it is crucial to understand that Islamophobia has become a global response to the public presence of Muslims, and as such, it is not exclusively the domain of extremist groups. "Respectable" groups, like the British Conservative Party, have been normalizing anti-Muslim racism for years. The examples of this normalization of hate speech are numerous: from Boris Johnson's comparison of Muslim women to "letterboxes," which led to a 375% increase in hate crimes against Muslim women, to former Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries retweeting messages from Tommy Robinson, a well-known far-right activist.

The negative portrayal of Muslims in British media cannot be ignored either, where stereotypes that contribute to the marginalization of these communities are regularly propagated. This has led to a third of the UK population endorsing prejudices such as "Islam is a religion of violence" or "Muslims will never be as British as other British people."

During the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, British media coverage was much more negative compared to other European countries. Dehumanizing terminology dominated the tabloids, which referred to refugees as an "influx," "flood," "hordes," and "swarms." Moreover, the media stoked fears by using military metaphors and war imagery, with headlines like "send in the army" to stop the "invasion."

As white nationalist mobs targeted Muslim communities this week, these media outlets became their megaphones, amplifying the intolerance. Some even suggested that Muslims should expect such behavior, while others promoted dangerous conspiracy theories about a supposed "Islamification" of society. In doing so, these media platforms normalized views that portray immigrants of color as a threat to British society and British Muslims as a "suspect community" blamed for the country's problems.

British media and politicians have sown the seeds of this violent unrest, spending years vilifying and scapegoating Muslims to divert attention from policy failures and to garner votes and viewers. Unless these hateful narratives against Muslims are actively challenged and reversed, it is inevitable that these violent disturbances will recur.

WORLD HEADLINES

Hamas slams US for new $20bn arms package to Israel

Hamas has condemned the US for approving another $20 billion in weapons transfers to Israel despite concerns that Israeli forces are routinely violating international law in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

In a statement, the Palestinian resistance movement said the move "comes within the framework of [the US's] unlimited support and full adoption of the brutal aggressive behavior of this rogue entity [Israel] from international regulations and laws". Hamas added, "The continuation of the US administration's financial and military support to the Zionist entity confirms once again that it is a full partner in the war of genocide, ethnic cleansing and brutal massacres against our Palestinian people."

Food aid entering south Gaza drops to lowest level since October

A US-based famine monitoring agency said the amount of humanitarian food supplies entering Gaza through crossings in the south were at their lowest levels in July since Israel's war on the enclave began. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) said that only 724 humanitarian trucks with food or mixed items entered through the Karem Abu Salem crossing in July. They carried roughly 5,035 to 5,566 metric tons of supplies, Al Jazeera reported.

Report: Israel pushes to delay ICC arrest warrants against Netanyahu, Gallant

Israel is pushing the International Criminal Court (ICC) to delay the issuance of arrest warrants against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his war minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes in Gaza, according to Israeli media on Wednesday.

Official sources said Tel Aviv is putting diplomatic pressure on The Hague-based court to delay its possible arrest warrants against the two.

"It is hard to predict, however, how these measures will influence the judges' decision," Haaretz newspaper said.

On May 20, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan said that he had requested arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant for crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

Germany issues arrest warrant for Ukrainian over Nord Stream bombing

German prosecutors have obtained a European arrest warrant for a Ukrainian man they believe was involved in the bombing of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, according to media reports Wednesday.

The man, however, was able to escape arrest, German media reported.

Germany's federal prosecutor general is seeking a man identified as Volodymyr Z. for privacy reasons. He is a 44-year-old Ukrainian diving professional who was last seen in Poland and has since disappeared, according to reports by ARD, the Süddeutsche Zeitung and Die Zeit.

The man was identified as Volodymyr Zhuravlov by the Swedish newspaper Expressen — part of the reporting consortium covering the story.

The subsea explosions in September 2022 took out three of the four Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines transporting gas from Russia to Germany and sent geopolitical shockwaves around the world.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has previously denied Kyiv was involved.

Israel is on the path to destruction: Foreign Affairs

"Divisions could inflame to the point of civil war"

TEHRAN – The policy that Israel has adopted is the path to destruction, professors Ilan Z. Baron and Ilai Z. Saltzman say.

"The country is on an increasingly illiberal, violent, and destructive path," Baron, co-director of the Centre for the Study of Jewish Culture and Politics at Durham University, and Saltzman, director of the Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies at the University of Maryland, wrote in Foreign Affairs on August 12.

They say Israel "could fast lose many of the friends it still has and become a pariah." They also say dark futures await Israel after the war in Gaza.

The major section of the article reads as follows:

At Israel's creation, in May 1948, its founders envisioned a country defined by humanist values and one that upheld international law. The Declaration of Independence, Israel's founding document, insisted that the state "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex" and that it would "be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." But from the very beginning, this vision was never fulfilled—after all, for nearly two decades after the signing of the declaration, Palestinians in Israel lived under martial law. Israeli society has never been able to resolve the contradiction between the universalist appeal of the declaration's ideals and the narrower urgency of the founding of Israel as a Jewish state to protect the Jewish people.

Over the decades, this intrinsic contradiction has surfaced again and again, creating political upheavals that have shaped and reshaped Israeli society and politics—without ever resolving the contradiction. But now the war in Gaza and the judicial crisis that preceded it have made it harder than ever to go on this way, pushing Israel to a breaking point.

The country is on an increasingly illiberal, violent, and destructive path. Unless it changes course, the humanist ideals of its founding will disappear altogether as Israel careens into a darker future, one in which illiberal values define both state and society. Israel is on track to become increasingly authoritarian in its treatment not just of Palestinians but of its own citizens. It could fast lose many of the friends it still has and become a pariah. And isolated from the world, it could be consumed by turmoil at home as widening fissures threaten to break up the country itself. Such is the perilous state of affairs in Israel that these futures are not at all outlandish—but neither are they inevitable. Israel still has the capacity to pull itself back from the brink. The cost of not doing so may be too great to bear.

Hamas's bloody October 7 attack hit Israel at a time when it was already facing tremendous domestic instability. The country's electoral system, which relies on proportional representation, had in recent decades allowed the entry of ever more fringe and extreme political parties into the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Since 1996, there have been 11 different governments, an average of a new government every two and a half years—six of them led by the current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. And between 2019 and 2022, Israel had to hold five general elections. Small political parties have played key roles in forming—and toppling—governments, wielding disproportionate influence. After the last election, in November 2022, Netanyahu formed a government with the backing of political parties and leaders from the far right, bringing to power forces in Israeli politics that had long lurked on the margins. *(See full text at tehrantimes.com)*

17th-century caravanserai to be entrusted to private investors for better restoration and upkeep

TEHRAN - Titi Caravanserai, which is one of the oldest historical inns in northern Iran, is set to be temporarily handed over to the private sector aimed to receive better restoration and maintenance.

The decision was announced during a meeting attended by Shahab Talaei, CEO of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places (better known by its Persian acronym Saabta), and Vali Jahani, the director of Gilan's tourism directorate.

The caravanserai, located in the Siahkal region of Gilan province, is part of the "The Persian Caravanserai" collection, which was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2023.

The Titi Caravanserai, dating back to the Safavid era, was once a vital resting place for travelers moving between Siahkal, Deylaman, and Taleqan. Named after Titi Khanum, a Safavid noblewoman who commissioned its construction, the name "Titi" means "blossom" in the local Gilaki language, reflecting the region's cultural heritage. The caravanserai, which is characterized by its two-iwan design, central courtyard, and vaulted ceilings, was constructed using a combination of stone, brick, and traditional mortar.

During the meeting, Talaei highlighted that the Titi Caravanserai is the first of the 54 Persian caravanserais, recently listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites, to undergo restoration through private sector involvement.

He emphasized that while the structure will be temporarily managed by private investors, the ownership will remain with the government.

The aim of this initiative is to ensure higher productivity, better maintenance, and sustainable management of the site without compromising its national and world heritage status, the official explained.

"This transfer to the private sector is part of our broader strategy to accelerate the restoration and upkeep of historical sites," Talaei stated.

"The Titi Caravanserai, like all the historical sites under our care, will remain government property, with only the right to use it temporarily granted to qualified investors. This approach ensures that the site is preserved for future generations while also contributing to local employment and sustainable development."

Vali Jahani, for his part, echoed the Ministry of Cultural Heritage's commitment to preserving the country's valuable historical assets. He noted that the involvement of the private sector in the maintenance of these sites is crucial for their conservation and for boosting local tourism.

The monument is one of the 999 caravanserais constructed across the country upon the order of Shah Abbas the Great, the 5th Safavid king of Iran.

A caravanserai, also known as a caravansary, is a compound word combining "caravan" with "sara"; the former referring to a group of travelers and the latter meaning the building. These structures often boasted massive portals supported by elevated load-bearing walls. Guest rooms were constructed around the courtyard, with stables situated behind them and doors located in the corners of the yard.

The earliest caravanserais in Iran date back to the Achaemenid era (550 - 330 BC). Centuries later, during the reign of Shah Abbas I from 1588 to 1629, a network of caravanserais was commissioned across the country. These roadside inns were strategically positioned along ancient caravan routes in the Muslim world, providing shelter for people, their goods, and animals. The former Silk Road remains the most famous example, dotted with caravanserais that once facilitated trade and travel across vast distances.

Staying at or even just visiting a centuries-old caravanserai can be a memorable experience for many visitors to Iran, allowing them to immerse themselves in the past and travel back in time. Stories abound of merchants bargaining on prices and recounting their arduous journeys to one another, while their camels leisurely chew on hay.

Qeshm Island welcomes over 1.6 million visitors in four months

TEHRAN – Qeshm Island has witnessed a significant rise in tourism, as some 1.6 million visitors flocked to the island during the very first four months of this Persian year (started on March 20), said a local tourism official.

"Qeshm Island has welcomed some 1,660,251 tourists during the first four months of this year," Ebrahim Rostam-Gorani brought to light, adding that these tourists arrived on the island through three main routes: by sea, air, and land.

"This marks a significant increase compared to the same period last year, when 1,499,065 tourists visited Qeshm," he further elaborated.

"The data shows an increase of 161,186 tourists, representing a 10 percent rise in visitor numbers compared to the previous year."

In his final words, the official expressed optimism about the continuation of this upward trend in tourism in the coming months.

Qeshm Island, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, is a jewel of southern Iran known for its stunning natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

Spanning over 1,400 square kilometers, Qeshm is famous for its diverse ecosystems, including vast mangrove forests, salt caves, and unique geological formations.

The island boasts numerous tourist attractions such as the world's longest salt cave, the enchanting Valley of Stars, and pristine beaches.

Qeshm is also home to traditional villages, historic sites, and vibrant local markets, making it a fascinating destination for both nature lovers and cultural enthusiasts.

As a designated UNESCO Global Geopark, Qeshm Island plays a significant role in promoting sustainable tourism in the region.

The island's unique blend of natural and cultural attractions makes it a compelling destination for tourists seeking both adventure and tranquility.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Kasbah of Algiers

The Kasbah is a unique kind of medina or Islamic city. It stands in one of the finest coastal sites on the Mediterranean, overlooking the islands where a Carthaginian trading post was established in the 4th century BC.

According to UNESCO, the Kasbah of Algiers is an outstanding example of a historic Maghreb city having had extensive influence on town planning in the western part of the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa.

Indeed, located on the Mediterranean coast, the site was inhabited at least from the 6th century BC when a Phoenician trading post was established there.

The term Kasbah, which originally designated the highest point of the medina during the Zirid era, today applies to the ensemble of the old town of El Djazair, within the boundaries marked by the ramparts and built at the end of the 16th century, dating back to the Ottoman period.

In this living environment where nearly 50,000 people reside, very interesting traditional houses, palaces, hammams, mosques and various souks are still conserved, the urban form of which bears witness to an effect of stratification of several styles in a complex and original system that has adapted remarkably well to a very hilly and uneven site.

Threads of revival: Persian carpet industry surges in production, exports

TEHRAN – The National Center for Creative Industries and Carpets has reported an increase in handwoven carpet production over the first four months of the current Persian year (started on March 20), accompanied by a rise in exports.

The acting head of the center, Mohammadreza Zare-Borzeshi, announced a six percent increase in the production of handwoven carpets during the first four months of the current year, adding that 1.35 million square meters of handwoven carpets were produced nationwide, reflecting significant growth compared to the same period last year.

Zare-Borzeshi highlighted the steady increase in the production of handwoven carpets over the past three years.

"3.3 million square meters were produced in 1400 [Mar. 21, 2021 till Mar. 20, 2022], 3.5 million square meters in 1401 [Mar. 21, 2022 till Mar. 20, 2023], and 3.9 million square meters in 1402 [Mar. 21, 2023 till March. 19, 2024], marking an 11% growth over this period," he noted.

The official also reported a significant upward trend in carpet exports after two decades of decline.

"According to customs statistics, Iran exported $11.5 million worth of handwoven carpets in the first four months of the past year," he underscored.

"This figure rose to $13 million during the same period this year, marking a 12% increase in exports."

Zare-Borzeshi attributed the rise in exports to several factors, including easing of currency obligations, and resolution of issues related to the temporary passage of handwoven carpets.

Additionally, measures such as implementing a system for certifying handwoven carpets contributed to the industry's growth, according to the official.

Borzeshi also addressed a significant challenge faced by carpet exporters since 2022—the ban on exporting handwoven carpets via postal services.

Ramping up every effort to resolve the issue, he elaborated, individuals are now permitted to export up to 24 square meters of Persian handwoven carpets via postal services once per year, without restrictions on the number of pieces, as long as the total area does not exceed the specified limits.

"These efforts to boost the handwoven carpet sector could play a crucial role in increasing employment and generating foreign exchange for the country," he concluded.

Glimpses of Persian carpet

Persian carpets are sought after internationally, with patterns of Persian garden being arguably the most characteristic feature of them all.

Weavers spend several months in front of a loom, stringing and knotting thousands of threads. Some practice established patterns. Some make their own.

Each Persian carpet is a scene that seems ageless, a procedure that can take as long as a year.

These efforts have long put Iran's carpets among the most complex and labor-intensive handicrafts in the world.

When the weaving is finally done, the carpet is cut, washed, and put out in the sun to dry.

Throughout history, invaders, politicians, and even enemies have left their impact on Iran's carpets.

As mentioned by the Britannica Encyclopedia, little is known about Persian carpet-making before the 15th century, when art was already approaching a peak.

Persian conquest of Lydia: remains of Achaemenid soldiers unearthed in western Türkiye

Defeat of Croesus, the last king of Lydia (reigned c. 560–546), at the Battle of Thymbra, 546 BC

TEHRAN - Recent archaeological discoveries in the ancient Lydian city of Sardis, located in the western Manisa province of Türkiye, have unearthed human remains believed to be linked to a significant historical event: Persian conquest of Lydia.

These findings, which include the skeletal remains of two soldiers, may offer new insights into the military campaigns that shaped the region's ancient history.

The excavation team, led by Nick Cahill, an esteemed art historian from the University of Wisconsin, made this remarkable discovery while exploring the ruins of Sardis, according to a report by Anadolu Agency.

The site, once the capital of the Lydian Empire, played a pivotal role in the history of western Anatolia.

Sardis was the birthplace of gold and silver coinage and was known for its wealth and influence in the ancient world.

However, it also became a battleground during the Persian expansion under Cyrus the Great, marking the end of the Lydian Empire.

Cahill and his team identified the remains as those of two young male soldiers, estimated to have been between 20 and 25 years old at the time of their deaths.

The bones revealed signs of trauma consistent with injuries inflicted by swords or other sharp weapons, suggesting that the soldiers met a violent end.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the discovery was the presence of a small stone clutched in the hand of one of the soldiers, which Cahill speculates could have been part of a slingshot used during the conflict.

"The fact that one of the soldiers was still holding a stone in his hand when we uncovered the bones is quite telling," Cahill remarked.

"It suggests that these men were actively engaged in battle when they were struck down."

The remains were found among the collapsed ruins of a brick city wall, with no evidence of a formal burial.

This led Cahill to hypothesize that the soldiers were likely defeated by Lydian forces and left unburied amid the chaos of the city's fall.

> The Persian invasion of Lydia not only marked the end of the Lydian Empire but also had far-reaching consequences for the wider region.

The discovery of a heavy iron helmet nearby further supports the idea that these soldiers were part of a significant military engagement.

These findings provide tangible evidence of the Persian conquest of Sardis, a turning point in the region's history.

The Battle of Thymbra, which took place in 546 BC, saw the forces of Cyrus the Great clash with those of Lydian King Croesus. Despite Croesus's wealth and military strength, the Lydians were ultimately defeated, leading to the fall of Sardis and the incorporation of Lydia into the rapidly expanding Achaemenid Empire.

The Persian invasion of Lydia not only marked the end of the Lydian Empire but also had far-reaching consequences for the wider region.

Under Persian rule, Western Anatolia underwent significant changes, with the imposition of Persian administrative practices and cultural influences.

The destruction of cities like Sardis, once known for their splendor, underscores the devastating impact of the Persian campaigns on the local populations and their way of life.

Cahill emphasized the historical significance of the discovery, noting that it provides a rare glimpse into the realities of ancient warfare and the human cost of empire-building.

"These bones and the associated artifacts offer a poignant reminder of the battles that shaped the course of history in this region.

The Persian conquest of Lydia was a defining moment, not just for Sardis, but for the entire ancient world."

As the excavation continues, researchers hope to uncover more evidence that will further illuminate the events surrounding the Persian invasion and the eventual fall of Sardis.

Kerman launches astronomy-themed tour for youth

TEHRAN - In a pioneering effort to engage young minds in the wonders of the cosmos, Kerman has introduced the province's first-ever astronomy-themed tour tailored specifically for children and teenagers.

"The one-day tour, attended by over 70 children and teenagers from Kerman, was organized with the aim of promoting tourism culture within families," said a local official in charge of tourism on Wednesday.

The tour, Moein Afzali added, was made possible through collaboration with the private sector, and plans are in place to offer weekly tours tailored for children.

Afzali highlighted that child-focused tourism, which addresses the social and mental development needs of children at different ages through educational and entertaining travel experiences, plays a significant role in helping families teach essential social principles.

He noted that travel and tourism foster creativity and imagination in children, significantly impacting their social and emotional development.

"Moreover, by engaging children and teenagers in tourism activities, the interest in travel and exploration is likely to spread to other family members, boosting overall tourism in the region," he winded up.

Family-oriented tourism is a growing sector within the broader travel industry, focusing on creating travel experiences specifically designed to meet the needs and interests of every family member.

This form of tourism emphasizes educational and recreational activities that foster the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young travelers.

Through carefully curated experiences, such as interactive museum visits, nature exploration, and themed tours, child-focused tourism aims to make learning fun and engaging, encouraging curiosity and creativity.

In addition to benefiting the children, this type of tourism also strengthens family bonds, as parents and guardians are often involved in the activities, creating shared experiences that contribute to the overall enjoyment of the trip.

Iran ranks first in quantum technology among Islamic countries

TEHRAN –According to data released by Web of Science (WoS), Iran's ranking in Quantum Science and Technology publications has improved from 23 in 2014 to 16 in 2023, placing the country top among Islamic nations in all quantum technology fields.

Over the past decade, the country's best ranking in quantum technology is 15, from 2019 to 2021, IRANA reported.

Quantum technologies include three main categories, namely quantum computing, quantum communication, and quantum sensing and measurement.

Quantum computing includes photonic networks, superconducting circuits, spin qubits, neutral (cold) atoms, and trapped ions. Quantum communication involves quantum key distribution, quantum telemetry, quantum repeater, and sensors. Quantum sensing encompasses quantum clocks, quantum imaging, and quantum radars.

Iran's best global ranking is in quantum remote sensing technology. The country is ranked eighth worldwide.

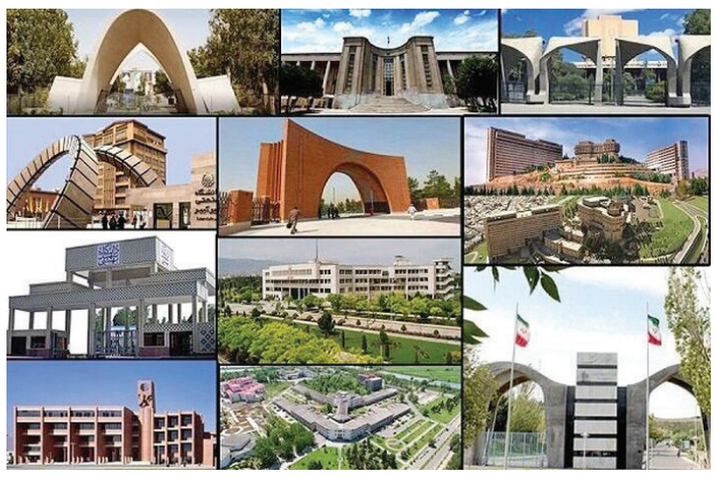
The country's other global ranking include photonic network technologies, 17; superconducting circuits, 18; spin qubit, 16; neutral (cold) atoms, 21; Trapped ions, 19; quantum key distribution, 24; quantum repeater, 26; quantum clock, 12; quantum imaging, 14; and quantum radar, 15.

In quantum remote sensing, Yazd University, University of Tehran, and University of Mohaqeq Ardabili ranked first to third, respectively. Yazd University also ranked first in Quantum repeater.

Shahed University; University of Tehran, and Imam Khomeini International University ranked first respectively in superconducting circuits, spin qubits, and nuclear atoms.

Sharif University of Technology is placed first in photonic networks, trapped ions, as well as quantum key distribution.

In quantum clock, quantum imaging, and quantum radar, University of Mazandaran, Tarbiat Modares University, and Urmia University are placed first.



Intl. Conference on Quantum Technologies

Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran held the International Conference on Quantum Technologies and Industrial Applications (ICQT) 2024.

The two-day conference took place on May 28-29 at the university. Iranian and foreign experts addressed the challenges facing the development of Quantum Technologies.

The Scientific and Executive Secretary of the ICQT, Mohammad Esmail Zibaei, considered the technology to be one of the new criteria for the development of countries and said: Quantum technologies, especially quantum telecommunications, quantum imaging, quantum measurements, and quantum computers, are of great importance in the world, IRIB reported.

"The conference serves as a platform for professors, researchers, scientific managers of the country, and students to learn about the latest research findings and advancements in the field. It also provides opportunities for networking to create domestic and international cooperation," Zibaei added.

During the conference, more than 30 domestic experts and elites in related fields presented their achievements and findings.

Also, international lecturers from Germany, Switzerland, China, the Netherlands, and Italy were scheduled to introduce and explain the latest quantum studies and achievements in the industry.

On the sidelines of the conference, a specialized exhibition of the quantum technology industry was held to showcase the latest technology and products of knowledge-based and technological companies.

Global rankings

The Times Higher Education (THE) has included 33 universities from Iran among the top 1,500 universities pursuing sustainable development goals (SDG) compared to 27 universities in 2023.

THE evaluated 2,152 universities from 125 countries to produce the overall Impact Ranking for 2024.

A total of 29 Iranian universities are mentioned in the overall table including Alzahra University, Iran University of Medical Sciences, and Kerman University of Medical Sciences (ranking 401- 600); Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, and University of Tehran (ranking 601 -800); Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University, Sharif University of Technology, University of Kurdistan, Zanjan University of Medical Sciences (ranking 801-1000), Mehr news agency reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology and Sharif University of Technology achieved the highest ranking in industry innovation and infrastructure, where they are placed 27.

The 21st edition of the QS World University Rankings (2025) placed nine Iranian universities among the world's top institutes, compared with seven universities in 2024.

This year's ranking featured over 1,500 institutions across 105 higher education systems.

Sharif University of Technology (with a rank of 342), University of Tehran (368), Amirkabir University of Technology (403), Iran University of Science and Technology (436), and Isfahan University of Technology (489) were ranked first to fifth, respectively.

Tabriz University (552), Shiraz University (691-700), Shahid Beheshti University (851-900), and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (951- 1000) were other top Iranian universities included in the ranking.

A total of 29 Islamic countries with 270 universities were included in this ranking.

Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey ranked first to third respectively in terms of the number of universities. Iran ranked 11th among Islamic nations in this year's QS ranking.

SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2024 placed 197 Iranian universities among the top institutions in the world compared to 194 universities in 2023.

The SIR is a classification of academic and research-related institutions ranked by a composite indicator that combines three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact measured by their web visibility.

In the latest ranking, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (5) and the University of Tehran (10) were among the top 10 institutions in West Asia. They ranked 6th and 11th, respectively, in the 2023 ranking.

The Research rankings of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran were 175 and 290, respectively, in the world.

VP pledges to pursue joining OIC Women's Development Organization

TEHRAN - Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the newly-appointed vice-president for Women and Family Affairs, has said the administration will follow up on a bill to join the Women's Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), IRNA reported.

In line with regional and international capacity building in the field of women and family, and with the approach of developing interaction and also convergence in the international arena, the bill for joining the organization was submitted to the Majlis (Parliament) on January 23.

Expanding Iranian women's cultural, social, and political relationships with women all over the world, developing women's international activities, strengthening the participation of governmental and non-governmental institutions and increasing their presence in international arenas, and strengthening cooperation between women in Iran and in other countries to support Islamic associations, organizations, and communities are among the highlights of the bill.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.

The Women Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was founded in 2009 and aimed to develop women.

According to its statute, it shall be concerned with everything necessary to meet its objectives, in particular "highlight the role of Islam in preserving the rights of the Muslim woman, especially at the international fora in which the Organization is involved."

It also aims to develop plans, programs, and projects necessary to implement policies, orientations, and decisions of the OIC in the area of women's development, welfare, and empowerment in the Member States.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Shiraz University, Chinese Academy of Sciences sign MOU

Shiraz University and Chinese Research Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences (RCEES) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand cooperation in scientific and research projects, IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Joint research activities through the Silk Road Research Program, joint publication of articles and books, study opportunities for faculty and doctoral students, use of laboratory facilities, experience exchange workshops especially in the field of natural disasters, droughts, floods, medicinal plants, biodiversity, land degradation and international joint research projects were among the mutually agreed programs.

دانشگاه شیراز و موسسه تحقیقات منابع طبیعی چین تفاهم‌نامه امضا کردند

دانشکده کشاورزی به نمایندگی از دانشگاه شیراز با موسسه تحقیقات منابع طبیعی آکادمی علوم چین سند تفاهم نامه همکاری‌های علمی- پژوهشی مشترک امضا کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، زمینه بهره برداری عملیاتی از ظرفیت های تفاهم نامه حاضر به ویژه در زمینه فعالیت های پژوهشی مشترک از طریق برنامه پژوهشی راه ابریشم، نشر مشترک مقالات و کتب، فرصت‌های مطالعاتی اعضای هیات علمی و دانشجویان دکتری، استفاده از امکانات آزمایشگاهی، برگزاری کارگاه‌های تبادل تجربه به ویژه در حوزه حوادث غیرمترقبه طبیعی، خشکسالی، سیل، گیاهان داروئی، تنوع زیستی، تخریب سرزمین و طرح‌های پژوهشی مشترک بین‌المللی در قالب برنامه‌های مشترک مورد توافق طرفین مورد بحث و بررسی قرار گرفت.

New border closure project to kick off

TEHRAN – Ahmad-Ali Goudarzi, Commander of the Border Police, has announced that a new project for closing southeastern borders is scheduled to begin in the second half of the current Iranian year that ends in March 2025.

"Weekly meetings are being held, and needed funds are allocated to border police and other relevant officials. Initial steps such as signing contracts have been taken, and preparations are being made for the construction of watchtowers and stations, as well as purchasing sensors, cameras, and advanced weapons," ISNA quoted Goudarzi as saying.

The border closure project started last year (ended on March 19), and three billion Euros has been allocated to implement it in five years.

Iran shares a 945-kilometer border with Afghanistan. The closure of the eastern borders is seen as a critical step in preventing illegal activities, enhancing national security, and ensuring the safety of Iranian citizens.

In July, the commander of the Army's Ground Forces engineering group announced the plan to close Iran's northeastern borders using four engineering groups from the army and the Khatam al-Anbiya construction headquarters.

Brigadier General Ahmad Akbari stated in a meeting with the governor of Taybad, "Technical operations for the closure are being carried out along the 300-kilometer border shared between Khorasan Razavi province and Afghanistan."

He noted that during the implementation of this plan, various stages have made significant progress in both the southern and northern parts of the Dogharoun border. The necessary infrastructure for continuing this project in this part has been established using domestic capabilities and resources.

Referring to the technical specifications of the border wall closure project, Akbari added, "This border wall is 4 meters high and 3.7 long, with a thickness of one meter."

Mahdi Shirdel, the governor of Taybad, emphasized, "Border security in the eastern part of the country will be enhanced with the construction of this border wall."

Earlier, Brigadier General Qassem Rezaei, the deputy head of Iran's Police Force, had also stated that the plan to close the eastern borders is on the agenda of security forces to combat the infiltration of drug traffickers and armed terrorist groups into Iran.

In June, the Commander of the Northeast Regional Headquarters of the Army's Ground Forces of Iran, Amir-Reza Azarian, revealed that an extensive border closure project is underway in Khorasan Razavi province, located near the northeastern border.

"The closure of the eastern borders is being conducted with great intensity. Engineering groups from the Army, along with four of the nation's top-ranked contractor companies, are currently constructing a four-meter-high wall along these borders," he stated.

The proposed project is planned to be completed in Khorasan Razavi province within a three-year period with a budget of 1.8 trillion rials (about three million dollars).

The initiative to secure borders started in the Iranian calendar year 1379 (March 1990 - March 1991), with the aim of intensifying the security of borders in eastern regions of the country. It has been implemented in parts of the Iran-Afghanistan border in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

It was initially planned to be completed in the Iranian year 1399 (March 2020 – March 2021), but it was postponed due to inadequate funds. Now it is expected to be finished within the next two years.

The project is designed not only to physically fortify the border but also to incorporate cutting-edge technology to monitor and manage border security effectively.

This dual approach aims to create a robust defense system that can respond to various threats and challenges.

Shrinking Caspian Sea likely to drain coastal wetlands

TEHRAN –Studies show that the Caspian Sea water level will decrease by 9 to 18 meters by the end of this century, leading likely to the drainage of coastal wetlands, particularly Anzali wetland and Gorgan Bay.

It is estimated that Anzali wetland will completely dry up in 35 years, and Gorgan Bay is expected to undergo severe dryness in the next 10 years, IRNA reported.

The Caspian Sea, the largest lake in the world with a coastline that stretches seven thousand kilometers, has turned the north of the country into a beautiful resort attracting millions of travelers and tourists every year.

The sea is bounded by Kazakhstan to the northeast, Russia to the northwest, Azerbaijan to the west, Iran to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southeast; it has an area of 600,384 square kilometers. Hosting 400 aquatic species and holding third place in terms of oil and gas reserves under its bed after the "Persian Gulf" and "Siberia" has doubled the value of this basin, while sturgeon and Caspian seals are the most important inhabitants of the lake.

The Caspian Sea has always experienced many water-level changes and is known for its fluctuating nature, characterized by recurring cycles of rising and falling sea levels.

About 1500 years ago, the water level of the Caspian Sea dropped to 33 meters below the ocean's water level, the water reduction led to the formation of sand dunes on the southern shores of the sea. However, from 1977 to 1995, the water level experienced a sudden increase so that many parts of the land and even many houses along the coastline submerged under water.

For several years now, the water level in the Caspian has undergone reduction and it is continuously diminishing.

According to a study, in the next 76 years, the level of the Caspian Sea will decrease between 9 and 18 meters.

The retreat of the Caspian Sea and the decrease in its water level will increase the salt concentration of the water, develop salt marshes, and desertify the coasts of Caspian states.

It also causes the inlet of the coastal wetlands in the north of the country to shift away from the seashore, which speeds up water transfer from the coastal wetlands to the sea which drains the wetlands.

Studies have revealed that during the Iranian year 1401 (2022 - 2023), the water level of the Caspian Sea witnessed a significant decrease of 26 centimeters, surpassing the already concerning decrease of 24 centimeters observed in 1400, ISNA quoted Seyyedeh Masomeh Bani-Hashemi, the director of the National Center for Caspian Sea Studies and Research, as saying.

"In the past two years, the water level of the Caspian Sea has experienced a significant decrease of approximately 50 centimeters," she stated. Since 1995, the water level of the Caspian Sea has steadily declined, resulting in an approximate decrease of two meters over the years, she mentioned.

Ever since the first water level measuring station was established in Baku in 1837, and the Caspian Sea's water fluctuation was registered by the device's oscillator, the sea's behavior has shown various levels of ups and downs.

"Rainfall and inflow of river water are the key drivers of the Caspian Sea's water level, however, it is the water flowing in from the rivers that has the most significant impact on raising the water level," Bani-Hashemi said and added: "The second most vital factor is surface precipitation."

One of the most crucial factors in the loss of water from the surface of the Caspian Sea is the annual evaporation of one meter, which can vary depending on the different coasts, she said.

In the southern regions of the Caspian Sea, the yearly evaporation rate is significantly higher, she added.

The availability of river water resources can vary and is estimated to range from 300 to 320 billion cubic meters per year and this estimate takes into account factors such as climatic conditions and water consumption patterns, she noted.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Like your body your mind also gets tired so refresh it by wise sayings.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:09 Evening: 19:14 Dawn: 3:51 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:23 (tomorrow)

Exhibition on triple planetary crisis underway in Tehran

TEHRAN-A group exhibition titled "Beyond a Canvas: Eyes on the Work of Nature" is underway at Ech Gallery in Tehran.

This exhibition is organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Information Center (UNIC) in Tehran, in collaboration with Artunity Gallery.

The art event is centered on triple planetary crisis namely climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, as well as pollution and waste.

There are 38 artworks by 18 artists on show, addressing the world's pressing environmental issues. The participating artists include Pooneh Oshidari, Amirali Izadi, Amir Hesari, Yasaman Bazargan, Mahsa Karimi, Zahra Nouri Zonouz, Neda Ghayouri, Pegah Rajamand, Hanieh Azmoudeh, Mirmohamad Fatahi, Neda Jalili, Elahe Ebrahimpour, Mousa Rabbani, Mehrdad Aboutalebi, Mitra Aminayi, Neda Mobara, Neda Estaki, and Mohammad Seymari.

The exhibition seeks to raise awareness and inspire meaningful conversations about the future of our planet's precious environment.

Eight critical global shifts are accelerating a triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss, pollution and waste, according to the new Global Foresight Report produced by the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the International Science Council (ISC).The rapid rate of change, uncertainty and technological developments we are seeing, against a backdrop of geopolitical turbulence, means any country can be thrown off course more easily and more often.

The shifts include humanity's degradation of the natural world, the rapid development of technologies such as AI, competition for natural resources, widening inequalities and declining trust in institutions. Together, they are creating a so-called polycrisis in which global crises are amplifying and synchronizing – with huge implications for human and planetary wellbeing.

The artworks will remain on display through August 17 at the Ech Gallery, located at No. 10, Mirza Taraj St., Shahriati St., Qolhak.

Iranian-Armenian animation wins award at Italian festival

TEHRAN- The Iranian-Armenian short animated movie "The Song of Flying Leaves" won the best animation award at the Ariano International Film Festival in Italy last week.

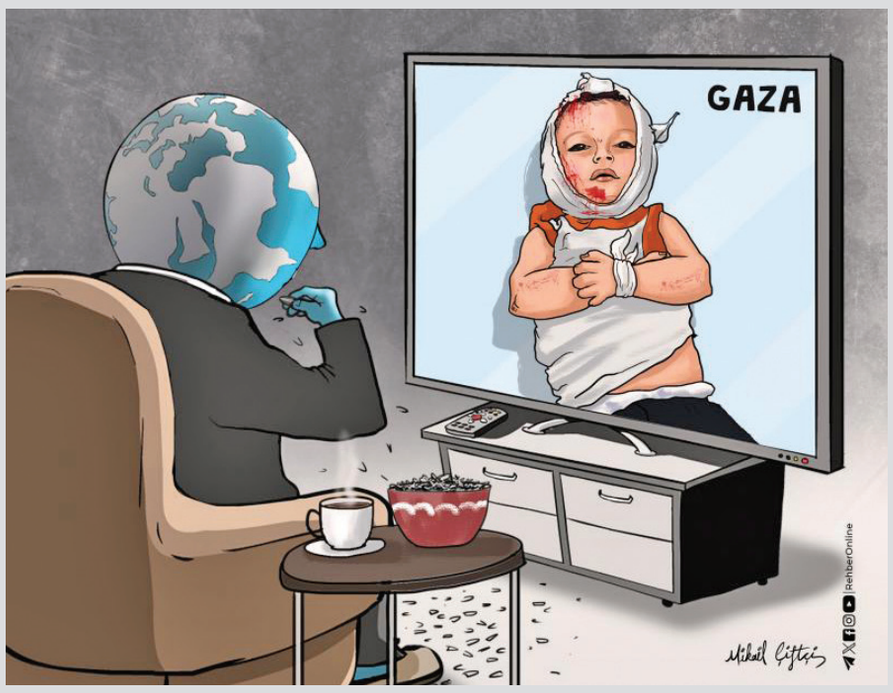
Directed by Armine Anda, the mystery drama is a journey to a dream through an encounter between Suna, a 12-year-old girl who uses leaves as a blanket, and an old man who possesses secret knowledge. It is a reflection on the friendship between a father and a daughter, a teacher and a student, an adult and a child, and the path that can turn the impossible into possible.

Being the first Armenian-Iranian animated film, the 12-minute flick is a co-production of Hoorakhsh Studios from Iran and Hoshkee Film of Armenia.

A production of 2023, the animation has so far won several awards including Golden Flame Best Animation and Producers awards in Lantern & Light International Children's Film Festival (Australia), Special Mention award in Corto Lovere International Short Film Festival (Italy), an award from the Mexico International Short Film Festival (Mexico), and Golden Apricot Award in the short film competition at the Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival.

Founded in 2005 in Tehran, Hoorakhsh Studios provides artists with the tools they need to create their best work. Focusing on creativity and innovation in animation, it attracts young talents, partners, and clients worldwide. With notable efforts for many years, it has become the lead efficient producer, partner, and financer in the field of independent cinematic animation in Iran.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza and the World

Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

"Dune 2": a science fiction narrative of Gaza resistance

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN- Based on Frank Herbert's 1965 sci-fi novel and directed by Denis Villeneuve, the film "Dune" portrays a feudal society on a fictional desert planet 1,000 years in the future, which is more similar to the current situation in the Middle East. The second part of the movie was recently released. In the "Dune" series, major powers battle over a nomadic desert planet, Arrakis, because it is the only place that spice (read oil) - a product essential to space travel - can be mined.

Arrakis, where "Dune" takes place, is inhabited by a nomadic group known as the Fremen. It is evident that they are meant to represent Arab culture; this was also true in the original books.

When watching "Dune: Part Two", it is difficult to escape references to current and ongoing political realities affecting our world today. Many have reported on the significant influence that Islamic and Near Eastern cultural attributes – including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish – have had on Frank Herbert's Dune universe.

That includes terms such as 'Lisan Al Gaib' or 'Mahdi' for the messianic leader Paul Atreides, to 'Shai-Hulud' (eternal thing) for the sandworms, 'Fedaykin' for the desert warriors (drawn from the Farsi term Fedayeen), 'Padishah' for emperor, and even 'jihad' in the books – which the movies chose to leave out.

Also, the Fremen men wrap keffiyeh-like scarves over their heads and the women — at least those who do not fight in the Fremen guerilla force — cover their hair with something like a hijab or chador.

All these references, along with those that will be mentioned, have caused the international audience to compare this film to conditions in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Gaza.

For example, the Harkonnens, the colonizing force who control the mining of spice, want to wipe out the Fremen so they can control Arrakis without dealing with the local populace. Some of their statements are very similar to quotes from some members of Netanyahu's government. When the Harkonnens call the Fremen "rats" and roar "exterminate them all!", they seem to be echoing Yoav Gallant, Zionist regime's defense minister, who has said that Israel is fighting "human animals", as well as numerous Israeli talking heads and leaders who have called for the destruction of the entire Gaza Strip.

The Tehran Times conducted an interview with Emad El-Din Aysha, formerly an adjunct assistant professor at the American University in Cairo and the British University in Egypt, about the similarities between the film and the conditions in Gaza. Following is the text of the exclusive interview with Emad El-Din Marei Aysha:

Why can the desert-dwelling Fremen be seen as a metaphor for Palestinians, resisting the invasive and aggressive Harkonnens, who represent the Israeli occupation forces and Zionist settlers?

A: Science fiction has always been a center of protest. It became a key part of counter-culture in America in the 1960s and 70s, evidenced by sci-fi giants like Philip K. Dick and Norman Spinrad. You won't believe this but an American sci-fi buff told me, at WorldCon last year in China, that Bush sr. went from city to city arguing against the Iraq War, against his own son George W., and he never got reported by the mainstream media networks!

And despite all my criticisms of the Denis Villeneuve's "Dune" movies, watching the second installment you got the distinct impression that the Fremen were stand-ins for the Palestinians, especially in the scene where Sietch Tabr is bombarded by the Harkonnens and you see a child wandering in the destruction with blood on his face. And dressed like an Arab.

In your opinion, why does Hollywood continue to produce such science fiction films despite the fact that they are constantly linked to the Palestinian situation by the international audience, especially the movie "Dune," in which the presence of Middle Eastern geographical and Islamic cultural elements is undeniable?

A: Hollywood is a complicated, complicated place! People like David vs. Goliath type scenarios. Just look at the Native Americans in "Prey" (2002), which was applauded by everybody, white Americans and the Native Americans alike. Something I talked about in my review of the "Predator" prequel in fact is that "Star Wars" has lots of little cultural references to the Native Americans, such as the Ewoks and Princess Leia's infamous haircut.

As for "Dune," I would say that the pressure of social media is finally what did the trick. Netflix is even more racist and anti-Islamic but cancel culture got the better of it with the "Cuties" (2020) fiasco. When I watched part two in 2024, I felt like they had read every single sentence I had written attacking the first movie, even down to the oversized scale and bland coloration. Never mind the absence of Arabic actors and words.

Part one has (rightfully) been accused of being Orientalist. Stilgar is a walking buffoon, Jamis is portrayed as being a mindless animal (he 'growls' at Paul as if trying to give him a heart attack) and Chani is only impressed by violence. In Villeneuve's "Dune," the Fremen are not secretly terraforming the planet and Liet Kynes is a joke. They have no agency. You never hear their story, how they were enslaved and brought to this planet to suffer. Even worse, the Harkonnens are portrayed as Oriental despots, with their servants prostrating themselves before them like Muslims in prayer – an image not found in the novel.

It is said that Frank Herbert's novel is originally based on the story of "Lawrence of Arabia" and presents the stereotype of the white savior. Additionally, Frank Herbert's novel addresses the recurring issue of important Middle Eastern resources, such as oil, which has been considered in films like James Cameron's "Avatar." What do you think about this?

A: That's spot on! My students, when I was teaching at the American University in Cairo, caught on to this before me. They explained that Padishah Emperor Shaddam is in fact 'Saddam' and 'Arrakis' is in fact Iraq.

Herbert was inspired by "Lawrence of Arabia," the movie or the person, and how gullible the Arabs were to follow him. And I'd say he wanted to criticize that all.

"Avatar" is an interesting case though and for a whole other reason. Cameron's "Aliens" (1986) has actually been described as the ultimate Reagan-movie, a Vietnam type scenario with American 'colonial' marines saving a U.S. settlement from dark natives that blend in with the surroundings. Also, Cameron was no environmentalist hack. I have seen an interview of him in a documentary about "The Terminator" and he does not believe in any ideal garden of Eden situation in the past, and yet he produced "Avatar" where the Marines are the bad guys and the natives are living in harmony with nature – with both African American and Native American actors!

What happened in the meantime? I guess the 'mood' changed with global warming and James Cameron either wanted to ride the wave, or make amends for his jingoism in "Aliens". (He also wrote the script for "Rambo: First Blood Part II").

How much capacity does science fiction have to express political issues? How should Muslims use this capacity to explain their anti-colonial and anti-Israel views?

A: Science fiction is the most self-reflective of the literary genres, so it has always been political. It's all about world-building too, so you can make your ideal world as you see fit. With the proviso that one man's utopia is another's dystopia. Third World authors are no different. If anything they need science fiction more, as a tool for development and spreading scientific literacy.

One of the lessons is that it is often better to build than attack. Prove we can be creative in our solutions for our own problems and think up our own near-perfect future worlds and put those on display. If they are attractive, plausible and distinctive, then foreign audiences will flock to our causes.

I've got a story in a forthcoming Future Fiction anthology, "Arabilious: Anthology of Arab Futurism," and to my amazement the story they liked from the bunch I gave them is about a future Tripoli dominating the Mediterranean because of its ecofriendly economics to the point that Europeans are flocking to the Libyan shores to work in the agricultural communes, being unemployed in Europe because of robots and soil erosion. The story was a spur of the moment thing, written originally for a Utopian contest (got nowhere), and was influenced in part by the historical example of Tripoli, in the Qaramanli era, thanks to a Libyan friend and SF writer – Abdulhakeem Amer Tweel.

SF is doubly important for peoples in exile because it's a way to recreate a lost world, as well as improve on it and critique it – by checking your reservoir of so-called memories. I did that in my story in "Palestine+100", and the same for the forthcoming "Thyme Travelers[A1]". Quite independently of each other we focused on setting the record straight as both an act of defiance, especially against those who want to wipe out any trace of you or your people, and an instrument of healing to unite us and learn from our mistakes.

"Persian Echoes" to reverberate at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theater

TEHRAN-The musical piece "Persian Echoes" by Iranian composer Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour will be performed by Mariinsky Theater Orchestra in St. Petersburg, Russia, on September 26.

The Concert Hall of the Mariinsky Theater eagerly anticipates the return of Ali Rahbari as the conductor for his nineteenth performance on the stage.

The program is a testament to Rahbari's signature fusion of European classical masterpieces with the vibrant spirit of Eastern musical traditions.

The evening commences with a sonic odyssey to Persia, as Tafreshipour's mesmerizing "Persian Echoes" takes the spotlight. Composed in 2005, this work holds a special place in Iranian music history as the first-ever harp concerto.

Inspired by the ancient rock carvings of Kermanshah, this composition artfully blends European compositional techniques with Persian rhythms and modes, allowing ample room for improvisation. Maestro Rahbari, a longtime champion of this piece, is poised to unveil its full evocative power.

Tafreshipour is a leading Iranian contemporary composer. He specializes in contemporary music that reaches across time and continents and has worked with a number of major ensembles, soloists and orchestras.

In 2003 he won the first prize at the biennial composition competition for new music at Tehran University with his solo piano work "Images of Childhood" and in the same year he was awarded a silver medal for outstanding achievement at Trinity College of Music.

He has studied piano and composition at the Esbjerg Academy of Music, Trinity College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and in 2016 he completed his Ph.D. in composition at Brunel University, London.

After singer Reza Fekri and violinist Amin Ghaffari, Tafreshipour is the third Iranian artist to be invited by Ali Rahbari to the Mariinsky Theater Orchestra.