

A Response in the Making

Qatari FM's Monday visit to Tehran seen as last push to dissuade Iran from retaliation against Israel

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Tourism progress strategic priority for the new government

By Seyed Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts

TEHRAN - More than a century has passed since mankind scientifically recognized the economic and cultural significance of tourism and traveling, driven by recreational, religious, medical, and sports purposes.

While most countries are eager to develop tourism and have even made plans and policies in this regard, it is essential to replace mere wishes and beautiful rhetoric with well-researched and practical steps.

Why is tourism our priority? The answer is simple: Iran possesses abundant historical and natural resources and an immense potential for travel. It is just important to enhance essential security and welfare infrastructures with the help of private investors.

What should we do as policymakers and overseers to achieve this goal?

- Laying the ground for reaching consensus among decision-makers and stakeholders, with a unified understanding that tourism development is a strategic priority for the country. ▶ Page 6

'Iran refuses to be drawn into Zionist regime regional war': commander

TEHRAN- During the ceremony honoring the newly appointed Iranian Minister of Defense, the chief of staff of the Armed Forces asserted that Iran will not be drawn into the regional war instigated by the Zionist regime.

Brigadier General Mohammad Bagheri highlighted the significant events that have transpired over the past 11 months, including the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, the attack on Iran's consulate in Damascus, Operation True Promise, the assassination of martyr Ismail Haniyeh, and Hezbollah's retaliatory actions in response to the assassination of Fouad Shukur in the West Asia region.

Bagheri condemned the cowardly assassination of martyr Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau, stating, "This incident will not be forgotten and that the Resistance Axis, along with the Islamic Republic of Iran, will seek retribution."

Bagheri emphasized that Iran will not succumb to the traps and media provocations set by its adversaries, asserting, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will determine its course of action regarding revenge, while the Resistance Axis retains its autonomy to operate independently."

The chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces emphasized the role of the Ministry of Defense as the vital connection between the government and the military. ▶ Page 2

Iran freestylers runners-up at U17 World Championship

TEHRAN - Iran's freestyle wrestling team finished in second place at the 2024 U17 World Championship held in Amman, Jordan.

The Iranian team won two gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

Abolfazl Shamsipour (71kg) and Reza Afshar (80kg) won two gold medals. Amirabbas Ramezani (45kg) and Amirabbas Alizadeh (48kg) claimed two silver medals and 92kg: Amirreza Alipour (92kg) and Abolfazl Mohamadnezhad (110kg) seized two bronze medals.

The United States won the team title with 152 points, 20 more than second-place Iran.

Kyrgyzstan finished third with 104 points, its first-ever podium finish at the U17 World Championships.

Iran Greco-Roman team had previously defended their title at the U17 World Wrestling Championships.

Iran clinched the team title with 140 points. Uzbekistan finished second with 113 points, eight points ahead of Azerbaijan which was third.

Meta's staunch support for Israel shines through amid Gaza genocide

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN-Since October 7 and the onset of the Gaza genocide, much news has been reported about the systematic censorship of pro-Palestinian content and users by Meta's subsidiaries, Facebook and Instagram. The company has also explicitly removed any anti-Zionist content.

But Meta's support for the Zionist regime does not end here; the company also involves its WhatsApp application in this battlefield.

Various sources have revealed that Israel is using artificial intelligence in the killings in the Gaza Strip. Among these sources are the Zionist publications "+972" Magazine and the Hebrew-language publication "Local Call".

They revealed the use of AI programs such as "Lavender" and "Where's Daddy?" and "The Gospel," all of which were used to identify tens of thousands of Gazans as targets and to track and strike individuals specifically in their homes. ▶ Page 8

Netanyahu sets new conditions to bring Gaza ceasefire talks to a halt

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Hamas has said its delegation has left the Egyptian capital, Cairo, after Tel Aviv imposed fresh conditions on a ceasefire agreement for Gaza.

The Palestinian group was not directly involved in the talks. Hamas said it has already made its positions clear over the past months to Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

The movement's negotiating delegation left Cairo following their meetings with Egyptian and Qatari mediators, during which they reviewed the outcomes of the latest round of discussions.

The discussions were supposedly aimed at addressing critical issues, including the terms and conditions of a potential ceasefire and a prisoner exchange agreement.

Izzat al-Rishq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, emphasized that the Hamas delegation had demanded that the Israel occupying forces adhere to the framework made on July 2.

This framework is based on the proposal outlined in President Joe Biden's speech. ▶ Page 5

Hezbollah's hybrid war capability sparks fears in Israel

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Lebanon's Hezbollah has kept Israel on its toes since launching a barrage of missiles and drones that targeted multiple sites including a major military intelligence base near Tel Aviv at the weekend.

Reports suggest that the Hezbollah attack dubbed Arbaeen Operation caused significant damage in Israel. The Benjamin Netanyahu regime has been accused of trying to sweep the losses and casualties under the rug.

Hezbollah fired more than 300 Katyusha rockets and a large number of drones at Israel on Sunday morning. That was an initial response to the Israeli assassination of its senior military commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut on July 30.

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech on Sunday evening that the main focus of the attack was the Gilot base north of Tel Aviv around 100 kilometers from Lebanon's border.

The facility is home to the Mossad intelligence service and the military intelligence group Unit 8200. ▶ Page 5

Iran's steel output up 2.5% in 7 months on year: WSA

TEHRAN - The latest report by the World Steel Association (WSA) indicates that Iran's steel output rose by 2.5 percent in the first seven months of 2023 as compared to the same period in the previous year despite the decline in the global output.

According to the WSA data, Iran produced 18.4 million tons of crude steel in the mentioned seven months.

Iran was ranked 10th among the world's top steel producers in the mentioned place, according to the WSA report.

The WSA put the crude steel output by the world's top 64 producers at about 1.107 billion tons in the mentioned time span, 0.7 percent less than the figure for the previous year's same seven months. ▶ Page 4



'National unity and expertise define 14th government': Pezeshkian

TEHRAN- During a ceremony honoring both former and current Iran's interior ministers on Monday, Masoud Pezeshkian expressed his appreciation for the contributions of former minister Ahmad Vahidi and announced Eskandar Momeni as the new Iranian Minister of Interior.

In the introductory meeting for the new minister held at the Ministry of Interior, the president highlighted the importance of national unity and inter-agency coordination, while also acknowledging Ahmad Vahidi's dedication and integrity throughout the presidential elections.

Pezeshkian extended his gratitude to the speaker and members of the Iranian Parliament for their role in facilitating the swift formation of a national unity government. ▶ Page 2

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Pezeshkian extended his gratitude to the speaker and members of the Iranian Parliament for their role in facilitating the swift formation of a national unity government.

He emphasized, "In managing the provinces, cities, and districts under the Ministry of Interior, three fundamental principles must be upheld: first, responsibility; second, clarity of roles for all individuals in their positions; and third, accountability. These principles should be integrated into the management framework of the Ministry of Interior, encompassing everyone from the minister and ministry personnel to governors,

mayors, and district leaders."

Pezeshkian remarked that anyone assuming responsibility in the country must be aware of their duties, stating, "We do not aim to introduce a new governance program; the country already possesses a vision document, overarching policies, and a legislative framework that we must endeavor to implement effectively."

The president asserts, "The primary duty of the government is to clearly define the objectives outlined in the vision document and the methods to achieve them. It is essential to establish a shared language and perspective in this domain, followed by a concerted effort for implementation characterized by coordination, empathy, and synergy."

"All government officials, including governors and district commanders, should prioritize public satisfaction in alignment with these objectives," he added.

Pezeshkian highlighted that a hallmark of effective governance is the establishment of stability in the nation's procedures and laws and emphasized, "Legislation should be grounded in scientific and expert knowledge to prevent rapid changes that could lead to instability."

In concluding his remarks, Pezeshkian expressed gratitude to Eskandar Momeni for taking on the responsibilities of the Ministry of Interior, stating that they are united in this journey and do not view themselves as superior to others.

After the ceremony, Masoud Pezeshkian recognized the contributions of the former minister with a plaque and presented the new minister with his appointment decree.

Pezeshkian to visit Iraq in first foreign trip

TEHRAN- Reports from the Al-Mayadeen News indicate that Masoud Pezeshkian, the newly elected president of Iran, has chosen Iraq as the destination for his inaugural foreign visit, underscoring the significance of Iran's relationship with its neighbor.

Al-Mayadeen said Pezeshkian's first international trip will be to Iraq.

These reports suggest that the visit is in response to an invitation extended by Abdul Latif Rashid, the Iraqi president, and is scheduled to occur before Pezeshkian attends the United Nations meetings in New York.

It is noteworthy that in mid-June, Ali Bagheri Kani, who was then the head of Iran's foreign ministry, conducted a joint press conference with Fuad Hussein, the Iraqi foreign minister, during his final official visit to Baghdad.

During that conference, Bagheri Kani called for an immediate cessation of violence in the Gaza Strip and stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation among regional



nations for the benefit of the Palestinian people.

Bagheri also highlighted the shared stance of Iran and Iraq regarding the actions of the Zionist regime in Gaza, affirming their commitment to supporting the oppressed Palestinian population, with both nations serving as key pillars in the region.

Fuad Hussein further noted the precarious nature of the regional situation, asserting that solutions must be sought to resolve the ongoing crisis, and warned that an escalation of conflict in Lebanon would have repercussions throughout the entire region.

Palestinians will emerge victorious in the battle against tyranny: foreign ministry

TEHRAN- The spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry has asserted that the Palestinian people will ultimately prevail in their struggle against the Zionist regime.

Nasser Kanaani expressed on the X social media platform on Sunday, coinciding with Arbaeen Walk, "The sacrifices of innocent Palestinians, who have fallen victim to Israeli actions, will lead to the triumph of the Palestinian nation over the regime."

Kanaani emphasized, "The significant lesson of Arbaeen is to pursue righteousness and stand in solidarity with the oppressed."

Arbaeen commemorates the 40th day following the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hossein, the third Shia Imam, revered by Muslims for his resistance against tyranny.

Correction

In our Monday issue, Hanoi was mistaken for Havana in the title. The mistake is regretted.

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independently."

The chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces emphasized the role of the Ministry of Defense as the vital connection between the government and the military.

He stated, "Iranian Ministry of Defense bears the significant responsibility of fostering collaboration among the government, the general staff

of the Iranian Armed Forces, the military, and other national sectors. This coordination has reached its highest level in recent years."

"Under the fourteenth government, the armed forces will operate in conjunction with the government, following the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to further national objectives," he added.

In conclusion, Bagheri expressed gratitude to the late defense minister, Brigadier General Ashtiani, and extended his best wishes to the new defense minister, Brigadier General Nasir Zadeh, expressing confidence that he will perform his duties with the same excellence he has demonstrated in previous roles, ensuring that the tasks assigned by the Ministry of Defense are executed to a high standard.

Iranian FM offers condolences over death of former Lebanese PM Salim al-Hoss



TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has extended his condolences following the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss.

In a message sent on Monday, Araqchi expressed his deep sympathy to the people and government of Lebanon, acknowledging al-Hoss's significant contributions to Lebanon's political landscape.

The message reads as below:

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we shall return"

With great sorrow, I received the news of the passing of Mr. Salim al-Hoss, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon.

Salim al-Hoss was an educated and wise individual, a great and prudent politician who, during some of Lebanon's most critical times, ran the government with wisdom and foresight.

During his tenure as a member of parliament, minister, and prime minister, he was a prominent example of a person committed to ethics, integrity, and dedication to national interests, as well as the supreme interests of the Islamic Ummah.

His firm and clear stance in support of the Palestinian Cause and resistance against the

usurping Zionist regime was a golden and enduring chapter in his political career.

The strong support of the late al-Hoss, in his capacity as prime minister, for the Islamic and national resistance of Lebanon against the Zionist occupation, played a significant role in the great victory of the resistance in the year 2000 and the humiliating retreat of the Zionist army from southern Lebanon.

I extend my condolences on the passing of this great politician to his family, as well as to the government, the people, and the resistance of Lebanon.

I ask Almighty God to grant him the highest ranks and to bestow patience and reward upon the survivors.

Seyed Abbas Araqchi

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iranian parliament speaker commends Hezbollah for successful retaliation against Israel

TEHRAN - Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has lauded Hezbollah, the Lebanese Resistance movement, for its decisive and effective military operation targeting Israel's sensitive military and intelligence sites.

Qalibaf made these remarks in a post on his X account on Sunday, following Hezbollah's large-scale rocket and drone attack on Israeli-occupied territories.

This operation was in direct retaliation for the assassination of Fuad Shukur, a senior Hezbollah commander, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike on a building in the Dahieh suburb of southern Beirut on July 30.

The Lebanese group said in a statement on Sunday that it fired more than 320 Katyusha rockets at 11 Israeli military bases and barracks, including the Meron base and four sites in the occupied Golan Heights.

According to reports from

Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television channel, Hezbollah's coordinated strike was both accurate and impactful, delivering a strong message to Israel.

The operation, which Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah dubbed the "Arbaeen Operation," involved the firing of hundreds of rockets and drones, showcasing the Resistance movement's military capabilities.

Following the operation, Israel's War Minister Yoav Gallant declared a "special situation" and announced a 48-hour nationwide state of emergency from 6am (03:00 GMT) on Sunday.

Additionally, Israel's Ben Gurion airport was temporarily closed in the early hours of the morning, while reports emerged of some injuries in northern Israel. The Israeli army also announced a series of restrictions on civilians in northern Israel and the Golan Heights, including the closure of



some beaches.

Israel's Army Radio, citing defense officials, said the military assessed that Hezbollah had been preparing to fire hundreds of missiles into central Israel in an attack planned for 5am.

Qalibaf, in his post, extended his greetings to the fighters of Hezbollah and expressed solidarity with the resilient people of Lebanon, particularly those in the Dahieh region.

He drew a parallel between this recent operation and the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, stating, "The Zionist

regime's defeat today is comparable to its defeat in the 2006 operation."

The 2006 war, a 33-day conflict that began when Israel launched a large-scale military offensive against Lebanon on July 12, ended with Hezbollah successfully forcing Israeli forces to withdraw without achieving their objectives.

World concern that Israel's war will escalate into an all-out regional conflict multiplied after the assassination last month of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and of Shukur in Beirut, both blamed on Israel.

Tehran's embassy in London condemns UK's double standards on Gaza conflict

TEHRAN - Iran's embassy in London has strongly criticized the UK government for the double standard in its approach to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

The embassy accused the UK of supporting a ceasefire in the Gaza war while ignoring the rising number of Palestinian casualties due to Israeli military actions.

In a statement posted on X on Monday, the embassy highlighted recent remarks by UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, arguing that they demonstrate London's unwavering support for Israel.

The embassy condemned the UK for urging regional countries to avoid escalating the conflict, while simultaneously failing to address the increasing deaths of Palestinians, including women and children, as a result of Israeli brutality.

The statement also pointed to the UK's endorsement of a ceasefire in Gaza, criticizing it as an empty gesture given the UK's lack of concern for the thousands of Palestinian lives lost in the conflict.

The embassy suggested that the UK's call for restraint and ceasefire comes too late for many Palestinian civilians who have already been killed.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Secretary Lammy had a phone conversation with Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, during which he reiterated the UK's support for Israel's security.

Lammy stressed the importance of restraint from all parties, the establishment of a ceasefire in Gaza, and the release of hostages.

However, the Iranian embassy noted that

Lammy did not address the ongoing violence against Palestinian civilians, instead focusing solely on preventing further regional escalation.

The Gaza conflict has already resulted in the deaths of over 40,435 Palestinians, primarily women and children, since October 2023. A ministry statement added that some 93,534 other people have been injured in the assault.

After 10 months of war, 90 percent of Gaza's population has been forced out of their homes with most having to relocate multiple times. They face a lack of safety, sanitation and adequate food with some even forced to shelter in cemeteries.

Repeated attempts at negotiations have so far failed to secure a ceasefire in the relentless Israeli assault on Gaza.

A response in the making

Qatari FM's Monday visit to Tehran seen as last push to dissuade Iran from retaliation against Israel

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs arrived in Tehran on Monday against the backdrop of a worsening regional situation: Gaza ceasefire talks have ended in Doha without any progress, Israel continues to pummel Gaza and murder its civilians, and Iran is poised to retaliate against Israel for its assassination of Hamas Political Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Official sources have depicted the meeting between Qatar's Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani and new Iranian top Diplomat Abbas Araqchi as a routine diplomatic encounter between two nations with friendly relations.

According to statements from both the Iranian and Qatari Foreign Ministries, the two officials covered various topics, including bilateral relations, the current situation in Gaza and the occupied territories, and progress on ceasefire mediation.

Al-Thani's subsequent meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian was reportedly focused on the same issues.

Despite analysts' belief that Iran's potential retaliation was a key factor driving the unscheduled visit, official statements make no mention of the issue being raised during the meetings.

Following Haniyeh's assassination in a Tehran guesthouse on July 31, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowed to avenge the blood of Iran's "dear guest".

"The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear guest in our house and made us bereaved," the Leader said in a statement published through his website, adding that "it also prepared the ground for a harsh punishment for itself."

After Ayatollah Khamenei, multiple Iranian officials reiterated his vow for revenge.

With that, a flux of diplomatic calls was directed at Araqchi's predecessor Ali Baqeri Kani, who told his regional and international counterparts that Iran reserves the right to respond to the regime's aggression.

His persistence brought Jordan's Foreign Minister to Tehran for the first time in two decades.

After about ten days and the



Pezeshkian reiterates call for Islamic unity in meeting with Qatari top diplomat

During a meeting with visiting Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed the need to elevate relations between the two countries across all sectors, describing their political ties as "privileged."

Pezeshkian also reiterated his call for Islamic unity to pressure Israel into ceasing its actions against Palestinians, criticizing the silence and even support from Israel's allies.

"Human rights and international laws are being violated repeatedly in Gaza," he stated.

Al Thani congratulated Pezeshkian on his election victory and cabinet formation, highlighting the Emir of Qatar's commitment to expanding "fraternal and strategic" relations between the two nations.

He acknowledged that the current level of bilateral cooperation doesn't meet the aspirations of both leaders and emphasized the need for increased efforts.

Echoing Pezeshkian's criticism of the international community's inaction on the plight of Palestinians, Al Thani expressed Qatar's commitment to achieving a ceasefire in Gaza, emphasizing Iran's crucial role as a "wise and responsible actor" in this effort.

He also highlighted Qatar's readiness to collaborate with Iran on regional and international issues, praising Pezeshkian's constructive approach to these challenges.

beginning of a new round of Gaza ceasefire talks, which followed a 3-months stall, the prospects of an Iranian retaliation faded into the background.

As more days passed by, some even began questioning whether Iran had abandoned its plans for retribution.

But Hezbollah's Operation Arbaeen on Sunday, and its successful targeting of several Israeli military and intelligence bases, has reignited anxieties among Israel's Western backers and regional allies regarding Iran's promised retaliation.

Affeh Abedi, a researcher and expert on foreign affairs, suggests that the Qatari Foreign Minister's visit to Tehran on Monday was part of a broader effort to link a Gaza ceasefire deal with Iran's stance and actions in regard to Israel.

"Western states and some of their regional allies are attempting to conflate these two distinct issues.

That's because Iran's proactive efforts to resolve the Gaza conflict, even in the wake of the Zionist regime's attack on its consulate in Damascus, have led to a perception that Iran's

potential retaliatory actions against Tel Aviv are negotiable."

She explained, adding, "A full ceasefire in Gaza is undoubtedly the right of the Palestinian people while responding to the regime's aggression on Iranian soil is Tehran's legitimate right."

What will Iran's retaliation be like?

Till now, no one has managed to predict how Iran will be responding to Israel for its assassination of Hamas' Haniyeh.

Hezbollah's Operation Arbaeen which was launched in response to the regime's killing of high-ranking Lebanese Commander Fouad Shokor might serve as a potential blueprint.

The operation involved a coordinated attack on Israeli military facilities, including Iron Dome platforms, using a barrage of over 320 Katyusha rockets and a number of drones.

Iran's move could mirror the scale of Hezbollah's Operation Arbaeen, or it could escalate to a more forceful one.

As for the timing of Iran's retaliation, Western officials and analysts remain equally uncertain.

Western media has been reporting that Iran is on the verge of attacking Israel "within the next 72 hours" since July 31.

"I believe several factors, including government transitions and the observance of the religious occasion of Arbaeen, have likely contributed to the delay in Iran's response" Abedi stated, referring to a pilgrimage that brings millions of Iranians to neighboring Iraq each year.

"However, I don't believe the retaliation has been postponed indefinitely.

On the nature of the response, Iranian officials have consistently hinted that their response will be both surprising and unpredictable, utilizing both land and air tactics.

Much like Hezbollah's unexpected operation during Arbaeen, predicting Iran's retaliation is difficult, as targets could be selected at the last minute."

Not properly responding to Israel's terror acts may have serious repercussions for Iran's national security, the researcher said.

"The response should be assertive and impactful."

Iran to give 'measured response' to Israeli assassination of Hamas leader: FM

on Friday.

During the call, Araqchi clarified that, unlike the Zionist regime, Iran does not seek to expand tension, although the country is not afraid of it.

While stressing the importance of expanding bilateral relations, the parties emphasized the continuation of consultations.

Tehran, Riyadh highlight the need to stop Israeli crimes in Gaza

Amid these developments, Araqchi has been actively engaging in diplomatic conversations with key regional players.

In a recent discussion with Saudi foreign minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, the two diplomats expressed a shared sense of urgency in addressing the ongoing violence in Gaza.

They called for intensified efforts to stop Israel's military actions and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged Palestinian population.

The Gaza conflict has already resulted in the deaths of over 40,435 Palestinians, primarily women and children, since October 2023. A ministry statement added that some 93,534 other people have been injured in the assault.

Over ten months into the Israeli war, vast

tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine.

Israel faces accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which has ordered a halt to military operations in the southern city of Rafah, where over one million Palestinians had sought refuge before the area was invaded on May 6.

Araqchi and bin Farhan also discussed the importance of strengthening their bilateral relationship, emphasizing that enhanced cooperation between Tehran and Riyadh would contribute to greater stability across the West Asia.

In addition to his dialogue with Saudi Arabia, Araqchi has reached out to several other regional powers.

Over the past two days, he held separate phone conversations with his counterparts from Egypt, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

These discussions covered a range of issues, from the situation in Gaza to broader regional dynamics.

Araqchi also received calls from Azerbaijani foreign minister Jeyhun Bayramov and Armenian foreign minister Ararat Mirzoyan.

In a series of posts on his X account, Araqchi stated that moving towards a "strong and united region" through dialogue, cooperation, and empathy with neighboring countries is a key priority of Iran's foreign policy.

AUGUST 27, 2024

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

VAR implementation in PGPL faces significant challenges



TEHRAN – The 24th season of the Iran Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) has kicked off amid a new controversy: the inconsistent and often questionable use of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system. Despite the introduction of VAR in five out of the first 16 matches, officiating controversies have persisted, casting a shadow over the league.

While the Football Federation of Iran has prioritized the use of VAR in high-profile matches involving Tehran rivals Esteghlal and Persepolis, as well as one other fixture, Aluminum against Nassaji, the technology has failed to live up to the expectations. Many teams have complained about the uneven application of VAR, arguing that it creates an unfair advantage for those matches where it is used.

Even the teams who had VAR in their games are complaining. The Persepolis fans, for instance, have voiced their discontent over a denied penalty in their match against Zob Ahan and the red card shown to Soroush Rafiei in their second game against Tractor. Even Esteghlal, despite benefiting from several VAR decisions, including two penalties in their 2-2 draw against Malavan, has expressed concerns and issued statements about the officiating problems.

These controversies are compounded by the significant shortcomings of the VAR system currently employed in the Iranian league.

It seems that the VAR system used in these matches merely rebroadcasts footage from existing television cameras, without any additional cameras. These cameras, unlike FIFA-recommended super-slow-motion cameras, lack the capability to provide high-quality slow-motion replays and are not equipped with offside-line technology.

It is clear that, thus far, VAR has done little to reduce controversies in Iranian football. The system's shortcomings, coupled with a lack of adequate resources on the part of the Iran Football Federation, have contributed to widespread dissatisfaction.

As the season progresses, it remains to be seen whether the Iranian federation can address these issues and ensure a more fair and transparent implementation of VAR or not.

Iranian cyclist Labib looking for greater achievement

TEHRAN – Ali Labib, Iranian cyclist who competed in the 2024 Summer Olympics, is now setting his sights on even greater achievements.

Despite finishing 76th out of 77 competitors, Labib's participation in the prestigious event marked a significant milestone for Iranian cycling.

In an interview with Tehran Times, Labib emphasized that his Olympic experience was just the beginning of his journey.

"The 2024 Olympics is just the start for me," he said. "I'm determined to use this experience to reach new heights in the world of cycling."

It had been 16 years since an Iranian cyclist had crossed the finish line in an Olympics road race. Labib's perseverance and determination to finish the race, even under immense physical strain, have earned him widespread

praise in Iran.

"Paris was my first Olympics, and I'm only 21," Labib said. "I stepped into the race at the peak of my fitness, and I fulfilled the challenge to finish the race after 16 years by an Iranian cyclist. It was an achievement for me."

National Teams Committee of the Iran Cycling Federation introduced Ali Labib as the Iranian Olympic cyclist. After Labib's acceptable performance in the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, followed by the bronze medal in the Kazakhstan Asian Championships, he was determined as the only cyclist of Iranian delegation in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

The young cyclist expressed gratitude for the support he received from the Iranian Cycling Federation, particularly its president. Labib also highlighted the impact of his Belgian coach, Jonathan Wiggins, who brought him to a professional level.

"Wiggins had a great influence on my career, and his knowledge of the sport has been invaluable," Labib said.

Labib's journey to the Olympics has been challenging, but he remains optimistic about the future. He is set to compete in the World Championships in Switzerland later this year and aims to use this experience to build on his success. "I'm not satisfied with this result. I know there is a long way to go," he concluded.

Kevin Yamga rejected by Aluminum

TEHRAN – Arthur Kevin Yamga Tientcheu who had planned to join the Iranian football club Aluminum was rejected by the club.

The French winger, who suffered an eye injury in training in January, has been deemed surplus to requirements in Esteghlal and was going to join Aluminum. Yamga, 28, participated in Aluminum's training but the Arak-based team's coaching staff rejected the player. Yamga has undergone eye surgery several times but is not yet fully fit.

He will likely leave Iran soon.

Iran fall short to Egypt at FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Egypt 3-2 (25-19, 25-22, 19-25, 25-27, 15-13) at the 2024 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship on Sunday.

Iran's Kamyab Abdollahifar scored 20 points and Khaled Elfeki led the Egyptians with 22 points.

Arash Sadeghiani's team will face Chile in Round of 16. Iran had defeated Libya 3-0 and Tunisia in their first two matches.

The maiden edition of the U17 World Championship started in Sofia, Bulgaria on Aug. 24 and will run until 31.

The FIVB U17 World Championship for both genders was proposed by the FIVB Volleyball Council and unanimously approved by the FIVB Board of Administration during its meeting held in March 2022.

Gholizadeh Scores in Lech Poznan Win against Pogon Szczecin

TEHRAN – Lech Poznan put in a sensational performance in the 6th round of the PKO BP Ekstraklasa against Pogon Szczecin.

Lech Poznan? defeated Pogon Szczecin 2-0 at home thanks to goals from Afounso Sousa (54th) and Ali Gholizadeh (77th).

Gholizadeh, who has been in the capital of Wielkopolska since July 2023, scored his first goal after a sensational counterattack.

Benedikt Zech from Pogon Szczecin was shown a red card before the halftime.



TEHRAN – Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araqchi, has declared that Iran's response to Israel's assassination of senior Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh will be "definitive," though it will be executed with careful calculation.

This announcement was made during a phone call with Italian foreign minister Antonio Tajani on Sunday, where Araqchi emphasized that while Iran is not seeking to escalate tensions, it does not shy away from potential escalation if necessary.

The assassination of Haniyeh, who was killed in a targeted operation in Tehran on July 31 during his visit for the inauguration of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, has significantly heightened regional tensions.

Araqchi stressed that Iran reserves the right to retaliate against Israel's "unforgivable" act, a message he also conveyed to the United Kingdom and France

Daily gasoline consumption reaches 140m liters

TEHRAN – Gasoline consumption in Iran reached 140 million liters on Saturday, August 25, according to the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC).

According to the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) Former Head Jalil Salari, the country's gasoline consumption has reached its peak due and doesn't seem to in-

crease any further, Mehr News Agency reported.

Over the past few years, the Islamic Republic has managed to not only become self-sufficient in gasoline production but also become a net exporter of the strategic fuel, however, the significant increase in domestic gasoline consumption in recent months has once again raised concerns about the need for imports.

Export from East Azarbaijan rises 37% in 4 months yr/yr

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil export from East Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, rose 37 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, an official with the province's Customs Department announced.

Sadeq Namdar said that 1.317 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$637.497 million were exported from the province in the four-month period of this year, with a 51-percent growth in weight, year on year.

He mentioned cast iron, iron and steel, petrochemical products and plastic products, mineral fuels and mineral oils, fruits, copper and copper products as the main exported items and Turkey, Armenia, Iraq, Georgia and Azerbaijan as the major export destinations.

As previously announced by Mohammad-Jafar Ozmaei, the director-general of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, Non-oil commodities valued at \$1.542 billion were exported from East Azarbaijan province in the past Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19).

He said that East Azarbaijan was among the top provinces of the country in terms of non-oil export in the previous year.

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

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

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

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

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

As previously announced by IRICA, the value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical en-

TEDPIX gains nearly 11,000 points on Monday

TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 10,986 points to 2,063,277 on Monday, which is the third 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).

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has approved a directive allowing the banks of the country to provide up to 100 trillion rials (about \$200 million) of funding to support the stock market.

The mentioned directive was approved on August 20, in a meeting of the CBI Supreme Council chaired by the CBI Governor Mohammadreza Farzin.

As reported, The CBI governor has urged the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) to consider the concerns of the shareholders when injecting these resources into the capital market and to plan in such a way that the funding has an effective role in the

capital market.

Farzin has also announced the CBI's new measures for supporting the capital market.

Referring to the central bank's three new measures to support the stock market and small shareholders, the official said these plans are mainly focused on financing listed companies to accelerate their development.

"The first step is to guarantee 3.6 quadrillion rials (about \$7.2 billion) of bonds of the operating banks to issue Riyal financing bonds to supply working capital to companies listed in the stock market," Farzin said.

The official also mentioned the issuance of 2.0 billion euros of foreign currency sukuk bonds to support the development plans of listed companies active in the field of petrochemicals and mining as the second measure to support the stock market.

The third measure is to grant 1.5 billion euros in foreign currency loans to listed companies that have foreign exchange income and quick-return plans, in order to increase their exports, according to the CBI governor.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Iran's steel output up 2.5% in 7 months on year: WSA

From page 1 ▶ Based on the WSA data, China, the world's largest steelmaker, produced more than 613.7 million tons of raw steel in the first seven months of 2024, followed by India (86.4 million tons), Japan (49.8 million tons), the U.S. (46.9 million tons), Russia (43.1 million tons), South Korea (37.1 million tons), Germany (22.5 million tons), Turkey (21.7 million tons) and Brazil (19.4 million tons).

Production of steel in Iran increased by 5.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19), as compared to the preceding year, according to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

According to the latest data released by the ISPA, the country's steel production reached 29.334 million tons in the previous year.

Of the mentioned amount, 18,452,000 tons were billet and bloom and 10,882,000 tons were slabs; Billet and bloom production increased by 9.2 percent and slab production increased by 0.7 percent in the previous year.



According to the ISPA data, the production of sponge iron also increased by 8.5 percent in the previous year in comparison to the figure for the preceding year.

Iran improved its global standing in steel production, becoming the ninth-largest producer in January 2024, according to new data released by the WSA.

The Islamic Republic produced 31.1 million tons of crude steel in 2023 to account for 58.4 percent of West Asia's total production in the mentioned year, according to the WSA.

The West Asian nations re-

viewed in the WSA report, including Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, managed to produce 53.2 million tons of steel in 2023.

The country's steel production increased by 1.8 percent in 2023 as compared to the previous year, when the production stood at 30.6 million tons, based on the WSA data.

West Asia's total crude steel output increased by 1.3 percent in the mentioned year as compared to 2022.

Based on the WSA data, Iran

was the world's 10th largest steel producer in 2023.

The world's steel producers managed to produce more than 1.888 billion tons of steel in 2023, which is a very slight decrease compared to 2022, and as a result, the World Steel Association has declared the percentage of change to be zero.

China with a production of 1.019 billion tons, India with a production of 140.2 million tons, and Japan with a production of 87 million tons were the top three steel-producing countries in the world in 2023.

The Iranian steel industry has been constantly developing over the past few years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces, such as the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak, which have severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

Over 94m tons of goods loaded, unloaded at Iranian ports in 5 months

TEHRAN – Based on the latest data released by the Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), some 94,284,476 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded at the country's ports in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21).

As reported, during the mentioned five months more than 10.964 million tons of oil products and over 21.291 million tons of non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports, while the loading of oil products in ports was reported to be 32.132 million tons, and the loading of non-oil goods was 29.896 million tons.

Totally, more than 32.255 million tons of oil- and non-oil goods were unloaded at the Iranian ports in the said five months, and over 62.029 million tons of oil- and non-oil products were loaded.

During the mentioned period, loading and unloading operations in the container sector reached 1,079,516 TEUs, which was four percent more than the 1,052,590 TEUs in the first five 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 for ports and their development 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.

Earlier this month, PMO Head Ali-Akbar

Safaei said over the past few years the organization has managed to attract nearly \$1.7 billion of foreign and domestic investment in the country's ports and maritime sector.

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

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

According to the official, regarding 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 sectors.

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 parts of the Caspian Sea," he added.

CBI provides over \$28b of subsidized foreign currency for imports of basic goods

TEHRAN – The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has provided over \$28 billion of subsidized foreign currency to importers of basic goods since the start of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to August 25.

CBI figures showed that some \$28.971 billion has been allocated to imports of basic goods, medicine, commercial goods and products and imports that have taken place in return for exports of goods or services from Iran, Tasnim News Agency reported.

As reported, of the mentioned figure \$6.307 billion was supplied for importing medicines and essential goods, and the rest was for trade-commercial products.

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad appointed Mohammad Sadegh Azimifar as the new head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), Shana reported.

In his decree, Paknejad has urged the NIORDC's newly-appointed head to fulfill the following tasks and take steps to overcome the challenges including:

Realizing the 7th National Development Plan as far as it is related to the duties of the com-

pany; taking necessary steps to meet the country's needs for sustainable fuel; implementing and completing the oil refining projects especially those related to improving the quality and quantity of the oil products; development of the value-chain through establishing new petro-refineries; optimization and diversification of the country's fuel basket; development of fuel distribution infrastructures; boosting energy trade and diplomacy and taking benefit of trans-refineries; promoting and upgrading the country's smart fuel

basic items such as agricultural products, medicine, and its raw materials as well as medical equipment.

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

They stressed that the government would offer preferential rates for clearing or exchanging foreign resources resulting from the export of oil, gas, and gas condensates for the import of "only basic agricultural goods and medicine", the list of which was approved by the Council of the 13th government ministers

at the end of April.

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

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

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

Azimifar appointed as NIORDC's new head

system; supporting domestic manufacturing, digital transformation and development of new technologies; combating oil-products smuggling in cooperation with other related parties; strengthening expertise and managerial capabilities as well as skills and professional ethics to develop human capital and employing faithful, efficient and revolutionary workforce.

Azimifar replaced Jalil Salari who served in this position during the 13th administration.

Hezbollah's hybrid war capability sparks fears in Israel

From page 1 ▶ Nasrallah stressed that the attack struck deep into Israel in contrast to the resistance movement's previous attacks, which largely hit northern Israel and the occupied Golan Heights.

The Arbaeen Operation dealt a devastating and crushing blow to Israel's security and intelligence systems.

This is because Israel had been on high alert since killing Shukur and awaiting a retaliatory attack from Hezbollah. But despite taking advantage of Western satellite technology, the Netanyahu regime failed to deter the Hezbollah strike.

For now, facts on the ground indicate that the Arbaeen Operation substantially eroded Israel's deterrent power and widened gaps within the Israeli establishment which is still reeling from the shock of a surprise military operation (Al-Aqsa Storm) carried out by Hamas on October 7.

The Al-Aqsa Storm highlighted Israel's military and intelligence failures and the Arbaeen Operation reminded the regime that it will have to brace for more tremendous shocks.



But this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Hezbollah also hit an Israeli vessel during its Sunday operation.

Israeli media have confirmed that an Israeli soldier was killed and two others were wounded on a Dvora-class patrol boat off the northern coast of occupied Palestine near Nahariya.

However, Israel claims they were hit by shrapnel from an Iron Dome interceptor missile as the regime tries to downplay the Hezbollah attack.

Israel and Hezbollah have been

trading fire since the day after the start of the Gaza war on October 7.

Over the past months, Israel has threatened to launch an all-out war against Hezbollah if it does not stop strikes against the regime.

But Hezbollah has stressed that it will not stop its attacks as long as the Netanyahu regime continues the Gaza war which has so far claimed the lives of about 40,500 Palestinians.

Although Hezbollah did not use its strategic weapons during the Arbaeen Operation, Israel suffered a painful blow.

Hence, in case of a full-blown conflict, the regime would have to wait for an apocalyptic scenario.

Presently, Hezbollah is not only capable of hitting Israeli military sites on the ground but also its vessels which shows the Lebanese movement's capability to wage a hybrid war against the regime.

Israel failed to continue the 2006 war against Hezbollah for more than 34 days. The resistance movement's military capabilities are currently incomparable with that year.

Hezbollah is underpinned by its sophisticated arsenal and has increased its stockpile of missiles from 14,000 in 2006 to about 150,000. The movement has also developed precision-guided missiles and its drone programs.

The number of Hezbollah fighters who are ready to join a possible war against Israel has exceeded 100,000, according to the Hezbollah secretary general.

Israel is well aware of the military capabilities of Hezbollah. As a result, it only threatens the movement with a direct war as part of its psychological warfare.

Netanyahu sets new conditions to bring Gaza ceasefire talks to a halt

From page 1 ▶ and the resolution passed by the United Nations Security Council.

He highlighted that Hamas is fully prepared to implement the terms of this proposal, which are intended to safeguard the fundamental interests of the Palestinian people and to halt the ongoing genocidal war against them.

The Hamas delegation reiterated the movement's stance that any potential deal must include several key elements.

These include a permanent and unconditional ceasefire, a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, the freedom for residents to return to their homes, provisions for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, and a serious commitment to a prisoner exchange deal.

These terms are seen as crucial for achieving a lasting resolution to the genocidal war on Gaza.

Earlier, sources within the Palestinian resistance leadership told regional media the focus of the Cairo talks was on negotiating a ceasefire in Gaza and finalizing a prisoner exchange deal but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had imposed new conditions on the Israeli delegation.

According to the sources, these new conditions halted any progress in the talks.

The sources stated that Tel Aviv is insist-

ing on maintaining its presence at the Egyptian-Gaza border as part of the initial phase of any potential agreement.

In contrast, Hamas is holding firmly to the proposal outlined on July 2 and rejects the presence of Israeli forces at the border crossing with Egypt, remaining steadfast in its position that this issue must be resolved in accordance with previous proposals.

The Palestinian sources also confirmed that Hamas had dispatched a delegation to Cairo to affirm their commitment to the July 2 proposal.

This proposal is not viewed by Hamas as a subject for negotiation but as a binding reference for implementation.

Al-Rishq had previously stated that the Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo on Saturday evening, led by Khalil al-Hayya, the deputy head of the political bureau.

Their goal was to hear the results of the latest round of negotiations. Al-Rishq stated that Hamas is calling for increased pressure on the occupying forces to ensure compliance with the terms already agreed upon and to overcome any obstacles that delay reaching a final agreement.

Hamas says these must include terms that any agreement must stipulate a permanent ceasefire and the full withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all of the Gaza Strip.

Hamas also said the Netanyahu government put forward other new conditions, including the screening of displaced Palestinians as they return to the enclave's more heavily populated north when the ceasefire begins.

"We will not accept discussions about retractions from what we agreed to on July 2 or new conditions," Hamas official Osama Hamdan said.

This comes as the Israeli military continues to destroy the health sector in the Strip in what analysts believe is more Israeli war crimes to force Hamas into accepting Tel Aviv's ceasefire terms.

In a statement posted on social media, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on Sunday night that a large explosion shook the MSF-supported al-Aqsa Hospital, approximately 250 meters away.

"As a result, MSF is considering whether to suspend wound care for the time being, while trying to maintain life-saving treatment."

From around 650 patients, only 100 remain in the hospital, with seven in intensive care unit, the statement pointed out.

"This situation is unacceptable. Al-Aqsa [hospital] has been operating well beyond capacity for weeks due to the lack of alternatives for patients," it added.

US upset in face of Yemeni Ansarallah

"They hit an airplane, so we hit a transmitter"

TEHRAN – The US military admits failure to prevent Yemen's Houthis, officially called Ansarallah, from targeting ships linked to Israel in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

In solidarity with the besieged Palestinian people in Gaza, who have been subjected to the worst kinds of brutality by Israel since October 7 last year, Houthis have attacked ships to and from Israel. The Houthis have announced that they will halt their actions if Israel lifts the blockade on the Gaza Strip and stops its cruel acts in Gaza.

In a commentary on August 24, The National Interest reveals that the U.S. is angry with the performance of its military against the Houthis even though it has deployed advanced weaponry, including warships, in the region to counter the military group.

Following is part of the article titled "A Proportional Response? American Strategy and the Red Sea":

What is the virtue of a proportional response?" asks President Jed Bartlet of his National Security Council (NSC) in one episode

of The West Wing. "They hit an airplane, so we hit a transmitter, right? That's a proportional response." Angrily, the president cuts off the aides trying to explain and interjects: "They do that, so we do this—it's the cost of doing business. It's been factored in. Am I right or am I missing something here?" Exasperated by the president's interrogation of the virtues of a proportional response, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reluctantly admits, "It isn't virtuous, Mr. President. It's all there is, sir."

The opening story arc of Aaron Sorkin's magnum opus is an extended meditation on the limitations of military power and the responsibility of command. Faced with a crisis in the Middle East, a U.S. jet shot down over Syria, which happened to be carrying a member of his staff, the newly minted commander-in-chief struggles to calibrate his response to this affront to American military power. Ultimately, after asking his national security team to devise a "disproportional response" that "doesn't make me think we are just docking somebody's damn allow-

ance," Bartlet orders the original precision strikes to go ahead out of concern for the civilian casualties and diplomatic blowback that might attend a full-bore military incursion. The president's chief of staff reminds Bartlet—and the viewer—that this is "how you behave if you're the most powerful nation in the world. It's proportional, it's reasonable, it's responsible—it's not nothing!"

Today, the United States faces the challenge of mounting a proportional response to in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Houthi's drone and missile blockade of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait is now well into its ninth month. The U.S. Navy has just dispatched its fourth sequential carrier strike group (CSG)—the USS Abraham Lincoln and her escorts—to protect international shipping in the region. Thus far, the Biden administration's preferred response has been to order the Navy into harm's way and let U.S. warships intercept missile and drone attacks directly rather than to address the root causes of the crisis. Tying up scarce strategic resources and expending irreplace-

able munitions against third-tier threats, it has been anything but proportional to the interests of the United States.

Two aircraft carrier strike groups—led by the USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower—were already in the region when the Houthis announced their intention to attack shipping transiting the Bab el-Mandeb in a show of solidarity with Palestinians. Since then, the Theodore Roosevelt CSG and the Abraham Lincoln CSG have been diverted from the Pacific to stanch the bleeding from the global shipping system's open sore. In doing so, Washington has elevated the Bab el-Mandeb to an equivalent level of importance as the Euro-Atlantic, Middle East, and Indo-Pacific theaters—the three regions where the Pentagon aims to maintain a round-the-clock carrier presence. By adopting a posture of direct defense of civilian shipping, the United States has also elected to expend \$1 billion of scarce, difficult-to-procure munitions shooting down Houthi missiles and drones.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Israel's domestic rifts: Lapid slams Netanyahu for tolerating Ben-Gvir

Divisions within the Israeli establishment once again hit the headlines amid controversial comments made by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir about Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid condemned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for keeping the far-right politician in the cabinet. "The whole region sees Netanyahu's weakness against Ben-Gvir," Lapid said on X.

"He can't control the government even when it comes to a clear attempt to destabilize our national security. There is no policy, no strategy, no government really," he said.

Ben-Gvir said on Monday that Jews can pray in Al-Aqsa and he would build a synagogue in its compound, according to the Israeli media.

Media groups demand EU impose sanctions on Israel

Some 60 media and rights organizations have called on the European Union to freeze an association accord with Israel and adopt targeted sanctions, accusing it of "massacring journalists" in Gaza.

"In response to the unprecedented number of journalists killed and other repeated press freedom violations by the Israeli authorities since the start of the war with Hamas, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and 59 other organizations are calling on the European Union to suspend its Association Agreement with Israel and to adopt targeted sanctions against those responsible", the groups said in a joint statement, Al Jazeera reported.

"More than 130 Palestinian journalists and media professionals have been killed by the Israeli armed forces in Gaza since 7 October... The targeted or indiscriminate killing of journalists, whether committed deliberately or recklessly, is a war crime," the statement added.

WFP operations in Gaza 'severely hampered' by evacuation orders

The UN's World Food Program (WFP) has warned that the food distribution centers and community kitchens it supports in Gaza are increasingly being disrupted by Israeli evacuation orders, as desperate Palestinians are squeezed into an "ever-shrinking space".

"WFP's operations are severely hampered by intensifying conflict, the limited number of border crossings and damaged roads. In the last two months, amid continuing catastrophic hunger, WFP has had to reduce the contents of food parcels in Gaza as inflows of aid dipped and supplies dwindled," the UN agency said, the Guardian reported.

It added, "With two, or occasionally three, border crossings open, roughly half of the required food assistance entered Gaza in July. August is set to end with a similar result."

WFP is also warning about the state of the war-scarred roads it uses to transport food assistance around Gaza. The shell craters and debris make driving slow and challenging for truck drivers even in dry weather. In two months, when rain and flooding is expected, most roads will become unusable.

Gunmen kill dozens in southwestern Pakistani

Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan killed dozens of people in three separate attacks on Monday, officials said, while the military said security forces killed 21 insurgents, marking one of the deadliest days of violence in the restive Baluchistan province, with reports of other shootings and destruction in the area as well.

Twenty-three people were fatally shot over-

night after being taken from buses, vehicles and trucks in Musakhail, a district in Baluchistan, senior police official Ayub Achakzai said. The attackers burned at least 10 vehicles before fleeing.

In a separate attack, gunmen killed at least nine people, including four police officers and five passersby, in Baluchistan's Qalat district, authorities said. The bodies of six people were found in Bolan, where insurgents also blew up a railway track. They also attacked a police station in Mastung and attacked and burned vehicles in Gwadar, all districts in Baluchistan.

The military said 14 security forces were "martyred" while responding to the attacks. Those appeared to be included in the overall death toll.

Medvedev: Durov miscalculated by fleeing Russia

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Sunday that Pavel Durov, the Russian-born founder of the Telegram messaging app, miscalculated by fleeing Russia and thinking that he would never have to cooperate with the security services abroad.

Medvedev related a conversation he had with Durov several years ago in which Medvedev told him that if he did not want to cooperate with law enforcement agencies then he would have problems in any country.

Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said Durov wanted to be a 'brilliant man of the world' who lives wonderfully without a Motherland."

"He miscalculated," Medvedev said. "For all our common enemies now, he is Russian – and therefore unpredictable and dangerous."

Jordan FM: Netanyahu pushing region to regional war

Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Ayman Safadi, said on Sunday that unless the root cause of the dangerous escalation in the region is removed, it will explode into wider and more catastrophic confrontations.

"The brutal Israeli aggression on Gaza is pushing the region towards the abyss of a regional war, and stopping this aggression immediately would defuse the escalating crisis", Safadi said in his official X account.

He stressed that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is obstructing the prisoner exchange agreement and attempting to push the region into a regional war in order to save his political future and implement his racist ideology. He said this objective was pursued through mass killings, destruction, and war crimes in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

If the international community wants to stop the escalation, Safadi said it must enforce an end to the aggression on Gaza and impose sanctions on Israel.

Egyptian ports boost Israel's economy amid Gaza genocide

Egyptian seaports have turned into important stations for cargo and cement ships transporting goods to and from Israel during the Gaza war period, that's according to an investigation published by Arabi Post last week.

The probe tracked the activity of 19 ships over the past three months, using an open-source maritime data to trace the sea routes of these ships, which were limited to travelling back and forth between Israeli and Egyptian ports.

During the same period, no ships from Arab countries other than Egypt arrived at Israeli ports, the online news outlet reported.

Egyptian ports are vital points for transporting goods to and from Israel due to their proximity to Israeli ports, especially Ashdod Port, which is about 29 kilometers away from Gaza, as well as the strategic Haifa Port.

This comes amid growing calls in Arab and Islamic countries for imposing sanctions on Israel over its genocidal war on Gaza.

Seldom-seen jewels to shine at Gorgan museum



TEHRAN - A rare collection of jewelry from ancient Jorjan will be unveiled at the Gorgan Archaeological Museum this week, offering visitors an unprecedented opportunity to connect with Iran's deep-rooted history.

This exhibition is part of the ongoing series titled "The Splendor of the Land of Gorgan [formerly known as Jorjan]," which aims to highlight the rich history and cultural heritage of the region, said a local official in charge of cultural heritage.

"The upcoming exhibition features rarely-seen artifacts loaned from the National Museum," Mohammad-Javad Savari brought to light, mentioning that the collection includes exquisite golden and silver jewelry from the ancient city of Jorjan.

This is the very first time these historical artifacts have been displayed to the public, marking a significant cultural milestone, according to the official.

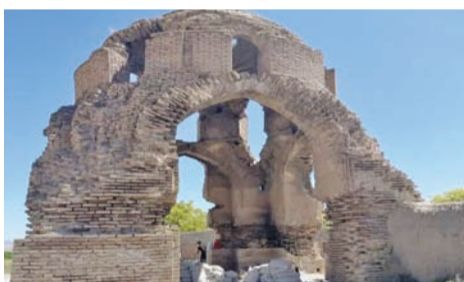
The exhibition is set to open doors on Tuesday, Savari highlighted, adding that it will remain open until October 3, coinciding with National Tourism Week.

He further elaborated that admission to the exhibition will be free of charge, making it accessible to all.

The exhibition is expected to enhance public awareness and appreciation of Iran's ancient heritage, offering visitors a unique opportunity to connect with the country's illustrious past, Savari wined up.

Jorjan (also known as Astarabad), lies at the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. The city, in existence since Achaemenian times, long suffered from invasions of the Turkmen tribes who occupied the plain north of the Qareh River, and it was subjected to incessant Qajar-Turkmen tribal conflicts in the 19th century. It was renamed Gorgan in the 1930s after being devastated by an earthquake.

Restoration efforts advance for Chahar-Taqi of Timurid era



TEHRAN - The first phase of the restoration of the Sangbar Chahar-Taqi structure in Mashhad, has been successfully completed, marking a significant step in preserving the Timurid-era monument, said a local official.

"The restoration included reinforcing the foundation, repairing the base and arches, as well as refurbishing the roof and decorative brickwork," Ehsan Zohrehvandi told IRNA on Monday.

The official noted that the Four-Iwan (known

as Chahar-Taqi in Persian) structure, which dates back to the Timurid period, was registered as a national monument in 2004.

The architecture of this structure, he added, consists of a square room with four walls, each standing over six meters high. At the top of each corner, there is a circular dome, creating a four-arched gateway structure, according to Zohrehvandi.

The Sangbar Chahar-Taqi, located in the village with the same name in Khorasan-Razavi, is built using brick and stone. Its distinctive brickwork, featuring a zigzag pattern on the exterior, reflects the architectural style of the Timurid era.

Historically, Chahar-Taqi buildings are square structures with four arches and four columns, topped with a short dome and lacking walls. The oldest known Chahar-Taqi structure in Iran is the fire temple of Khajeh mountain from the Parthian period in Sistan-Baluchestan.

90 artifacts restored in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari laboratories

TEHRAN - A total of 90 historical and cultural artifacts have been restored and preserved in special laboratories within Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province since the beginning of this Iranian calendar year (March 20).

The artifacts included various metal objects, coins, and pottery items housed in state-affiliated and non-state-affiliated museums, Alireza Jeylan, the provincial tourism chief, announced on Monday.

Jeylan highlighted that the restoration efforts involved collaboration with non-state museums, including the Boroujen City Museum and the Farokhshahr Museum of Anthropology.

Jilan emphasized the importance of these restoration efforts, noting that they not only extend the lifespan of the artifacts but also enhance their display's quality and allow for a deeper understanding of their historical significance. "The restoration process helps preserve and reveal the hidden values of these objects," he added.

Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has a long history of human occupation, owing to its geography and environmental factors. Its location in highly mountainous regions, along with permanent water resources, small plains, deep valleys, and the presence of tribal and nomadic routes, has made it a significant area for settlement throughout history.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis

Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis is a serial transnational property that consists of the ruins of São Miguel Arcanjo in Brazil, and those of San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto, and Santa María la Mayor in Argentina.

According to UNESCO, these are the impressive remains of Jesuit Mission settlements established in the 17th and 18th centuries on lands originally occupied by Guarani indigenous communities.

In Brazil, the ruins of the São Miguel Arcanjo church constitute the most intact and complete structure among this period's designated heritage properties. In Argentina, the four Jesuit-Guarani Missions, located in the southern Misiones province, provide an exceptional example of systematic and organized territorial occupation.

The properties' surviving ruins depict the experience of the Society of Jesus in South America, where there emerged a singular system of spatial, economic, social, and cultural relations in 30

settlements - referred to as reducciones - that included ranches, mate plantations, and networks of trails and waterways extending across the Uruguay River and its tributaries.

This particular model of the reducciones also included smaller structures and constructions designed to support the basic functions of the settlements. Together, these elements, each closely integrated within productive lands, and each manifesting the distinct potential and complementary traits of the various settlements and the other Jesuit provinces in the region, inform this underlying interpretation, reflected by the serial heritage property in a singular and specific fashion.

An integral part of the evangelization campaigns, the Missions stand as an important testament to the systematic occupation of the area and to the cultural relations forged between the area's indigenous populations, mostly Guarani, and the European Jesuit missionaries.

Tourism progress strategic priority for the new government

From Page 1 ► What should we do as policymakers and overseers to achieve this goal?

- Laying the ground for reaching consensus among decision-makers and stakeholders, with a unified understanding that tourism development is a strategic priority for the country.

- Acknowledging this fact, the tourism industry has a direct and strong connection with security.

Many scientific researches over the past century have proven that any country considered secure has witnessed growth in private investment and an increase in foreign arrivals. Thus, after changing our perspective, the enhancement of public security should be prioritized. Here, security does not only refer to its visible, tangible aspects, such as preventing theft or threats to tourists' lives, but also includes psychological, political, social, and cultural dimensions.

- Intensifying efforts to expand the required infrastructure, such as roads, airports, hotels, and public transpor-



Foreign travelers take a selfie during their visits to the UNESCO-registered Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan, central Iran.

tation through stepped-up investment, which is highly dependent on the previously mentioned factors.

- Recognizing that behavioral modification and professionalizing it relies heavily on training for the public and private sectors. Fortunately, Iran enjoys a profound tradition of hospitality that makes our efforts

somewhat easier yet enhances our soft power.

As the government's representative in this sector, I place the greatest hope in the private sector and our people. Furthermore, I see the most challenging task as changing the bureaucratic mentality to understand the necessity of adopting

professional behavior, which, God willing, will ultimately benefit both the nation and the government.

Recently, I read an official report from an international scientific journal stating that 85% of tourists returning from Iran say that their perception of lifestyle, prosperity, and public security in the country had positively changed their mindset.

Isn't the people-to-people communication the best way to counter the spread of anti-Iranian sentiments known as "Iranophobia"? Isn't the development of a sustainable tourism industry the best alternative to the sale of crude, mineral resources, and raw materials?

From here, I invite ambassadors, chargé d'affaires, and economic attachés, through a policy of tourism diplomacy, to pay more attention to the opportunities provided by Iran's unilateral visa waivers with various countries and the joint investment policies between the nations. We are ready and welcoming.

Iran's visa lift opens tourism gates, yet travel barriers linger

TEHRAN - Iran's decision to unilaterally eliminate visa requirements for some countries promises to invigorate its tourism industry, yet persistent issues like expensive flights and limited direct connections are hindering the full realization of this potential.

Travel obstacles cast a shadow over dream of Shiraz and Isfahan

Imad Al-Rahmuni, the Tunisian ambassador to Iran, during a recent interview with ILNA highlighted that Tunisia responded reciprocally to Iran's visa waiver in order to enhance bilateral tourism relations.

The two nations share rich historical and cultural heritage, which could be further appreciated through increased travel and cultural exchange, he noted.

The ambassador mentioned that many Tunisians dream of visiting cities like Isfahan and Shiraz, while Iranians also have a strong interest in traveling to Tunisia. Nonetheless, the lack of direct flights and the high cost of airline tickets currently limit travel between the two countries, he continued.



The Tunisian envoy emphasized the need for the establishment of direct or charter flights to reduce travel costs and improve accessibility.

The ambassador also pointed out that the best time for Iranians to visit Tunisia is during Nowruz, when the country is particularly beautiful and affordable.

He expressed hope that continued collaboration between Iranian and Tunisian officials will lead to improvements in travel conditions and increased tourism.

Persian speakers face travel hurdles

In a related development, Tajikistani Ambassador to Iran, Zohidi Nizomiddin Shamsiddinzoda, discussed the significance of strengthening tour-

ism ties between Tehran and Dushanbe.

Both countries, sharing cultural, historical, religious, and linguistic connections, are well-positioned to expand their cooperation, he added.

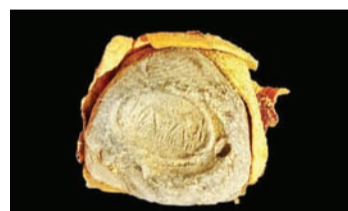
Following the visa waiver, the Tajikistani envoy underscored, travelers can now visit each country through flights between Dushanbe and Tehran, with four flights currently operational.

The ambassador acknowledged that challenges such as high flight costs are a concern but expressed optimism that visa waiver agreements and an increase in tourism would lead to reduced ticket prices and improved services. Ongoing discussions between Iranian and Tajikistani officials aim to address these issues and facilitate better travel conditions, he stated.

Currently, Tajikistan sends around thousands of tourists to Iran annually, with many visiting for health tourism, the ambassador outlined.

All in all, both ambassadors highlighted that while the recent visa waivers are a step forward, continued efforts are needed to overcome logistical challenges and fully realize the potential for increased tourism between Iran and these nations.

Sassanian textile document to be unveiled at Sari museum



TEHRAN - A rare textile document from the Sassanian era, inscribed in Pahlavi script and bearing eight seals, is set to be unveiled at Sari's cultural heritage museum located in northern Iran.

The announcement was made by Hossein Izadi, who presides over Mazandaran province's tourism directorate, CHTN reported on Monday.

According to Izadi, the artifact was discovered by a mountaineer named Mohammad Ali Ebrahimi in 1969 during an ascent to a cave, situated near Hastijan village in Delijan county in Markazi Province.

Since its discovery, the textile document has been kept in Ebrahimi's home under non-museum conditions.

Ebrahimi, upon learning of the artifact's historical significance, decided to voluntarily donate it to the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Mazandaran province, the official explained.

Following verification and documentation, the artifact was officially

handed over to the Sari cultural heritage museum which is embedded inside in the historical Kalbadi Mansion.

Izadi expressed gratitude for the donation and emphasized the importance of preserving such valuable objects. The Sassanian-era document will be displayed at the museum, where it will be accessible for public viewing and scholarly study.

The Sassanid era (224 CE-651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under the Sassanids, Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan,

which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble.

Crafts such as metalwork and gem engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In those years, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

In 2018, UNESCO added an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran - titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" - to its World Heritage list. The ensemble comprises eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan.

Viking Age stone figurine unearthed in Iceland — but no one can agree on which animal it is

Archaeologists in Iceland have discovered what may be a rare Viking Age toy carved out of stone, but it's anyone's guess as to which animal it depicts.

The figurine, which experts dated to between 940 and 1000 CE, was found at the Fjörður excavation site in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland. It's a small, four-legged animal with a chipped ear carved from local stone.

Most of the team thought the animal was a pig, Ragnheiður Traustadóttir, director of the Antikva archaeological team that unearthed the toy, told Live Science. This isn't far-fetched, since Vikings used domesticated pigs for meat. Two team members, however, interpreted it as a bear, and while bears are not native to Iceland, at least 600 polar bears (Ursus maritimus) have been reported on the island since human settlement began to today. But when pictures of the figurine were posted on Facebook on Aug. 13, many Facebook users became convinced that it represented an Icelandic dog.

"Children are not so visible in the Viking Age, so this is an amazing find," Traustadóttir said. The director sees a pig and is skeptical about the Icelandic dog interpretation, as she says the face doesn't match the animal. "I owned an Icelandic dog for 14 years," Traustadóttir said. "I'm not sure."

The Fjörður excavation, named after the historical Fjörður farm, began in 2020 ahead of the planned construction of avalanche protection walls in Seyðisfjörður and was supposed to last only two years. But the excavation revealed so much that Traustadóttir is now in her fifth summer there.

In 2021, archaeologists uncovered a farm mound, mill and sheep shed dating to sometime between the 18th and 20th centuries, per Seyðisfjörður Archaeological Research, a website run by Antikva that publishes findings from the Fjörður excavation. Beneath that, they found medieval remains, and beneath those, they discovered four Viking Age (793 to 1066

CE) graves buried beneath an 11th-century landslide.

In other words, a single excavation had revealed 1,000 years of Icelandic history. In 2022, south of the previous site, the archaeologists discovered a Viking longhouse with a weaving room, animal enclosures and a farm midden, or trash heap, dating to between the 11th and 13th centuries. They placed their findings on this historical timeline by dating the layers of ash from the many volcanic eruptions that have impacted the region since the arrival of human settlers.

"There's no other site in Iceland that has so many finds," Traustadóttir said. In five years of archaeological work, they've cataloged up to 4,000 artifacts, including nearly 100 Viking game pieces from a board game called "hnefatafl" that were crafted from the same type of stone as the toy.

(Source: Live Science)

Iraq lauds IRCS for services, arrangements during Arbaeen pilgrimage

TEHRAN –Iraqi health minister Saleh Mehdi Al-Hasnawi has commended the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) for its outstanding efforts to offer services during the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third grandson of Shia Muslims, and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Meeting an Iranian delegation, led by Pirhossein Kolivand, head of the IRCS, on Saturday in Iraq, Al-Hasnawi said the IRCS's cooperation with Iraq's health ministry in providing health services to pilgrims is praiseworthy, the IRCS website reported.

Medical services are being carried out in collaboration with the two parties for all the pilgrims, including Iranians and Arabs, he added.

The official also expressed optimism that the arrangements for Arbaeen pilgrimage would go on well throughout the event's duration.

Tehran, Baghdad discuss ways to facilitate Arbaeen pilgrimage

On August 5, Iranian and Iraqi officials held a meeting in Baghdad to review and discuss strategies to facilitate the Arbaeen pilgrimage and ensure the safety of pilgrims.

Iran's Deputy Minister of Interior, Majid Mirahmadi, and Kolivand, in a meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Abdul Amir al-Shimmary,



followed up on the latest arrangements made regarding the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

During the meeting, the Iranian officials obtained permission to operate IRCS rescue helicopters as well as ambulances and bring necessary medicine and equipment to provide medical services to pilgrims.

Referring to the IRCS volunteer medical teams dispatched to provide healthcare services to pilgrims in Iraq during Arbaeen pilgrims, Kolivand said necessary agreements have been made for the presence of Iranian physicians in Iraqi hospitals, and the deployment of relief teams along the roads to provide services.

The IRCS hosted the International Congress on Relief and Rescue, Health, and Mass Gatherings in Arbaeen in Tehran from August 1-2.

Relief and rescue in Arbaeen; hygiene, treatment, and health; training, research, and technology; mass gatherings; passive defense; and public participation were the topics of the conference, the IRCS website reported.

Each year, a huge crowd of people flocks to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform mourning rituals.

This year Arbaeen fell on August 25. Some five million Iranian pilgrims were estimated to attend the Arbaeen trek.

Also, the 4th International Congress on "Health in Arbaeen" was held in Tehran from July 3 to 5.

A total of 3,500 national and international participants attended the 4th congress. Hosting the event, the Iraqis comprised the majority of-

eign attendees to enhance services to pilgrims.

The congress focused on the following scientific areas including accidents and hazards; artificial intelligence; traditional medicine; processions; environmental health; nursing; relief and rescue.

It also covered rehabilitation; forensic medicine; mental health; nutrition; cultural issues; pharmaceuticals; medical tools; as well as mawkibs (voluntary stations to serve the pilgrims). Moreover, some new topics such as dentistry and oral hygiene were discussed.

Xavier Castellanos Mosquera, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) undersecretary-general for national society development and operations coordination, attended the inauguration ceremony of 'the International Congress of Relief and Rescue, Health and Mass Gatherings Management in Arbaeen' held in Tehran on August 1 via video conference.

Castellanos Mosquera said that Arbaeen International Congress offers a unique model of mass gathering management for other red crescent societies worldwide.

"The management of mass gatherings demonstrates exceptional expertise and the Iranian Red Crescent Society is a pioneer in sharing its knowledge and experience in this international congress," Castellanos Mosquera highlighted.

National exhibition to showcase students' achievements in nano-tech

TEHRAN –The 14th national exhibition of students' achievements in nano-technology is scheduled to be held concurrently with the 15th Iran nanotechnology exhibition from November 3 to 6 in Tehran.

The event will provide a great opportunity for talented students to showcase their capabilities in different sections like solutions and products, scientific reports, research articles, educational aids, games and entertainment, lectures on nanotechnology, as well as artworks including short films and handicrafts.

The event will organize free workshops on how to launch and develop startups for selected students.

It aims to support top students to learn how to develop a product and commercialize it.

The use of nanotechnology in the fields of water and environment, energy, health and hygiene, textile, manufacturing cars, agriculture, and food are the main themes of this year's exhibition.

The 15th Nanotechnology Exhibition will be held to expand the market, increase the number of innovative companies, and boost the export of products in various industrial fields.

The first nanotechnology exhibition was held in 2004 under the auspices of the nanotechnology development headquarters to recognize the research and industrial potentials and raise public knowledge in the nanotechnology field. The event is held annually attracting both domestic and foreign technologists.

Iran a global leader in nano-tech

Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are

noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide.

According to StatNano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

This ranking proves the country's remarkable scientific development.

The site considers the number of scientific articles to compare scientific progress in nanoscience, technology, and industry.

Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter on a near-atomic scale to produce new structures, materials, and devices. The technology promises scientific advancement in many sectors such as medicine, consumer products, energy, materials, and manufacturing. Nanotechnology refers to engineered structures, devices, and systems.

In the past two decades, the world has observed a steady increase in the number of industries producing nano-based products and the number of countries promoting nanotechnology.

More importantly, the ratio of nanotechnology to nominal GDP has increased significantly, suggesting that the contribution of nanotechnology to World GDP has increased. Nanotechnology has also played a key role in the creation of new jobs, Press TV reported.

The nanotechnology sector is a prime example of success in Iran, an arena consisting of expert and program-oriented human resources with significant goals that shine like a jewel in the country's innovation and technology ecosystem.

With the support of talented academicians and knowledge-based companies, the nanotechnology sector has indigenized many technologies to solve the country's main challenges in various areas, including industry.

Policy making and planning for progress in nanotechnology started in 2003 with the formation of a special headquarters for the development of nanotechnology, and accelerated with the approval of the first 10-year document for the development of nanotechnology entitled "Future Strategy Document".

According to the latest statistics, Iran's nano-tech products are exported to 48 countries worldwide.

The first five export destinations are Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey, and Georgia, accounting for some 80 percent of exports, Mehr quoted Emad Ahmadvand, an official with the vice presidency for science and technology, as saying.

A total of 1808 nano-tech products have so far been produced and marketed in 15 different industrial fields based on domestic technologies in the current Iranian calendar year that ends on March 20.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran spends \$477m on refugee education annually

Iran spends about 20 trillion rials (nearly \$477 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) every year on the education of foreign national students residing in the country, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education has said.

Over 558,000 foreign national children are receiving education in Iran completely free of charge, 474,000 of whom are Afghan children, ISNA quoted Gholamreza Karimi as saying on Wednesday.

Karimi said that there are currently about 137,000 undocumented Afghan students in the country, adding that their parents do not have valid residency documents, "but we have provided the conditions for enrolling them in schools."

ایران سالی ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای دانش آموزان اتباع خارجی هزینه می کند

ایران هر سال حدود ۲ هزار میلیارد تومان برای ۵۵۸ هزار دانش آموز اتباع خارجی در مدارس سراسر کشور هزینه می کند. به گزارش روز چهارشنبه ایسنا، غلامرضا کریمی رئیس مرکز امور بین الملل و مدارس خارج از کشور وزارت آموزش و پرورش گفت از این تعداد ۴۷۴ هزار نفر آنها اتباع افغانستانی هستند. کریمی با بیان اینکه در حال حاضر ۱۳۷ هزار دانش آموز غیرمجاز در کشور داریم گفت پدر و مادر این افراد مدارک اقامتی معتبر ندارند اما ما شرایط ثبت نام آنها را مدارس فراهم کردیم.

Almost 420 earthquakes occur in a month

TEHRAN –A total of 419 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the past calendar month that ended on August 21, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

The epicenter of 20 earthquakes was in neighboring countries, namely Azerbaijan (3), Afghanistan (6), Iraq (5), Turkmenistan (5), and Armenia (1).

Of the total quakes, 1 had a magnitude of 4.8 on the Richter scale which occurred on July 26 with the epicenter in Gahvareh, Kermanshah province.

Statistically, 159 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 2; 219 earthquakes with magnitudes between 2 and 3; 29 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4, and 12 earthquakes with magnitudes between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi with 49, Isfahan with 43, and North Khorasan with 38 recorded the highest number of earthquakes in the country.

A total of 6,949 earthquakes were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2023 –March 2024) according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Most of the earthquakes happened respectively in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi, southeastern Kerman, northwestern West Azarbaijan, and eastern South Khorasan provinces, ISNA reported.

Statistically, 2,268 earthquakes were less than 2 on the Richter scale; 3,685 were between 2 and 3; 796 were between 3 and 4; 181 were

between 4 and 5; 22 were between 5 and 6; and 5 were between 6 and 7.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran but more than 6% of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Iran has entered a decade of earthquakes since the [Iranian calendar] year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), as the Iranian plateau is shrinking by 30 millimeters per year, Mehdi Zare, professor of engineering seismology at the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), has said.

The Strait of Hormuz region in the south of Iran has the highest seismic activity in the region and its formation is related to the continuation of the convergent movement between the Arabian plate and the central continental plate of Iran.

Tehran is also one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslides, fire following an earthquake, etc.

On the other hand, Tehran has a nighttime population of over 8,300,000 with a mixture of old non-resistant structures as well as modern high-rise buildings that affect the vulnerability of this city.

Iranian inventors grab colorful medals at IFIA 2024

TEHRAN – Three Iranian inventors have managed to win gold, silver, and bronze medals at the fourth International Invention and Innovation Competition for International Federation of Inventors' Association (IFIA 2024) INV Members.

The fourth International Ideas and Inventions Competition was held virtually from August 16 to 18, exclusively for members of IFIA holding the INV title.

Ali Ahmadvand-Asl Alamdari, an employee in the emergency ward of a hospital, northwestern Jolfa county, won a gold medal for 'Bleeding prevention pad with sensor mechanism for the moisture of the wound'.

The winner of the silver medal was Amir-Mohammad Bakhtiari, a mechanics engineering student at Sharif University of Technology, for the invention of the 'Fire extinguisher device using soil'.

Pouria Masoumi-Najarkalaei, who is a dentist, grabbed a bronze medal for inventing 'Slimming device equipped with carbonic paper mold and ultrasonic stimulator'.

This year's fourth International Invention Competition saw impressive participation, with over 600 innovative inventions submitted by inventors from over 40 countries across the globe. Participants from diverse regions, including the USA, Canada, Australia, Morocco, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Russia, Qatar, Bahrain, the UK, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Poland, and many others, contributed their pioneering ideas to the competition.

The entire competition was conducted online, allowing inventors to submit their entries through a streamlined process.

Each participant provided their INV title certificate, completed a detailed registration form, and submitted a concise video presentation showcasing their invention. This process allowed the IFIA judges to evaluate each submission thoroughly and efficiently.

The jury's evaluation was based on multiple factors, with a strong emphasis on the invention's potential for environmental sustainability and its relevance to public needs. These criteria were crucial in determining the most impactful innovations.

All inventions were classified into 15 distinct categories, covering a wide range of disciplines such as Information Technology, Medical Devices, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Environmental Conservation, Agriculture, and more.

The third International Ideas and Inventions Competition was held in August 2023, both in person and online.

Ehsan Aghajani Rizi, a Ph.D. student in Tourism at Qeshm International Campus of Tehran University, won the world silver medal for his invention



in tourism.

Also, Faraz Sadeghi Moghadam and Mohammad Rezaei won the silver medal at the IFIA INV Members for the invention of "the portable solar refrigerator". The invention was presented under the supervision of Sadeghi Moghadam.

Another student, Javad Dastyafte, won a bronze medal in this competition for his product made of organic honey with four new formulations to be used for the treatment of different diseases including diabetes, eye cataracts, pregnancy, and fertility.

Recent achievements

Iranian inventors won medals and special awards at the International Invention and Innovation Competition for the Silicon Valley International Invention Federation (SVIIF) and Korea Intl. Women's Invention Exposition (KIWIE).

The SVIIF was held from July 26 to 28 in California, USA.

Amir-Masoud Asadi and Reza Fakhar won silver medals at SVIIF for the invention of the Dacryocystography Injection Device.

SVIIF is under the patronage of the International Federation of Inventors Associations – IFIA, and the World Intellectual Property Organization – WIPO and is supported by the United Inventors Association.

The 17th Korea International Women's Invention Exposition (KIWIE) took place both online and offline in Goyang, South Korea from June 20 to June 22.

Iranian teams succeed in winning three gold medals, three silver medals, as well as two bronze medals.

The team also won a special award from the WIPO, four special awards from the Research and Innovation Center of Thailand, and a special award from the Association of Polish Inventors.

The event successfully highlighted and celebrated the remarkable achievements of women inventors from around the globe.

This year's KIWIE featured 400 innovative inventions and patent technologies developed by women from 20 countries, including Poland, Peru, Sri Lanka, Russia, Iran, Thailand, China, and many others.



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 Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
 Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

AUGUST 27, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who engages in various tasks, cannot do any of them properly, and brings himself into troubles.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:06 Evening: 18:57 Dawn: 4:05 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:33 (tomorrow)

Charity art market in Doha raises funds for Palestine

Nakama, Qatar's premier Japanese cultural community, hosted a two-day charity art market at Doha's Education City, bringing together 31 artists to raise funds for Palestine.

Held from August 23 to 24, the event was marked by a strong sense of solidarity and a shared commitment to the Palestinian cause, Doha News reported.

The market offered a rich array of artistic expressions, from intricate embroidery and bold paintings to handcrafted items, each piece reflecting the spirit and resilience of Palestine.

Visitors engaged directly with art through interactive workshops, including painting sessions and bead jewelry making, making the experience both creative and personal.

A free board game section, organized by Majliss Ashabab, added an element of fun and interaction. Japanese Ambassador Satoshi Maeda attended the event to show strong solidarity with Palestine and to support the artists who gifted him various artworks, including drawings, stickers, and other creative items.

The market also featured discussions with prominent Qatari artists, Ghada Al-Suwaidi and Jassim Al-Mohannadi, who shared their artistic journeys and connected with attendees.

Nakama extended a special invitation to 100 evacuated Palestinians, offering them free access to the market, meals, and workshops. All proceeds from the event will be donated to support Palestine.

Among the participating artists was Mona Yessen, a Palestinian woman with special needs who presented a diverse range of art, including paintings, jewelry, and crafts.

Mona has lost over 55 family members due to Israeli airstrikes. Despite her personal losses, she continues to create art as a form of resistance and a tribute to her family, expressing her unwavering belief that Palestine will one day be free.

Qatari watercolorist Haya Al-Mohanadi,

in an interview with Doha News, expressed her renewed passion for helping Palestine through her art. She reflected on how Palestinians have inspired her to appreciate the important things in life, showing courage and resilience in the face of adversity.

Syeda Ritaj, another artist, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing her strong support for Palestine through her art. She described Palestinians as "the pride of the Ummah," whose strength cannot be destroyed.

Attendees at the event highlighted that the Nakama Charity Market was not just a gathering of art lovers, but a powerful expression of shared "beliefs and hope that freedom for Palestine will prevail, no matter how much Israel tries to suppress it".

At least 40,405 Palestinians have been killed and 93,468 others injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Oct. 7.

Children are paying the heaviest price, with the combination of a poor diet, decimation of basic healthcare services and abysmal water, sanitation and hygiene conditions continuing to increase their malnourishment and vulnerability to diseases. An assessment conducted by UNICEF in July revealed that only one percent of children in northern Gaza, and six percent in the south, received the recommended dietary diversity, with meat, fruits and vegetables, dairy products and eggs being among the almost inaccessible foods.

More than 80 percent of buildings in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed. The material losses from the war are estimated to range between \$50 to \$60 billion.

However, the exact figures will only be known after the fighting ceases and a detailed engineering survey is conducted to assess the cost of the destruction and the reconstruction.

Israel faces accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which has ordered a halt to military operations in the southern city of Rafah, where over one million Palestinians had sought refuge before the area was invaded on May 6.

Meta's staunch support for Israel shines through amid Gaza genocide



By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN—Since October 7 and the onset of the Gaza genocide, much news has been reported about the systematic censorship of pro-Palestinian content and users by Meta's subsidiaries, Facebook and Instagram. The company has also explicitly removed any anti-Zionist content.

But Meta's support for the Zionist regime does not end here; the company also involves its WhatsApp application in this battlefield.

Various sources have revealed that Israel is using artificial intelligence in the killings in the Gaza Strip.

Among these sources are the Zionist publications "+972" Magazine and the Hebrew-language publication "Local Call".

They revealed the use of AI programs such as "Lavender" and "Where's Daddy?" and "The Gospel," all of which were used to identify tens of thousands of Gazans as targets and to track and strike individuals specifically in their homes.

Details contained in the April 3 "+972" report on "Lavender" and "Where's Daddy?" revealed that they were obtaining their information through WhatsApp, the communication behemoth owned by the tech giant Meta.

It is noteworthy to highlight that in 2021, a book titled "The Human-Machine Team: How to Create Synergy Between Human and Artificial Intelligence That Will Revolutionize Our World" was published by Yossi Sariel, the current commander of the elite Israeli intelligence unit 8200. In the book, he outlines the design of a special machine that can rapidly process massive amounts of data to generate thousands of potential 'targets' for military strikes.

Sariel writes, such technology would resolve what he describes as a "human bottleneck for both locating the new targets and decision-making to approve the targets."

As we can see, the machine that the chief of Israel's Unit 8200 was discussing has now come into existence, and Meta is the supplier of its data.

The Tehran Times conducted an interview with Paul Biggar, an Irish software engineer, innovator, and founder of "Tech For Palestine", a coalition of technology experts working to benefit Palestinians, about the various forms of support provided by Meta to the Zionist regime. Below is the text of the exclusive interview with Paul Biggar:

What is the role of AI Lavender and Meta Company in the Gaza genocide?

Lavender is an AI system created by Israel to massively



speed up the bombing, especially in the first few weeks after October 7, by processing targets with AI instead of relying on human intelligence operators. This allowed the IDF to drop far more bombs and cause many more casualties.

The AI component of this, however, seems to be especially flawed. They claim to use data about Hamas commanders from before the invasion to train the system, which they then claimed could be used to identify Hamas militants. This is very flawed logic, and combined with other whistleblower claims -- in particular that Israel lowered Lavender's thresholds on days when they did not have enough targets -- implies that Lavender is simply a talking point to allow bombing.

It's about plausible deniability. Consider the various claims that Israel used and continues to use to prevent food aid from coming into Gaza -- there are protesters, the gate was bombed, it is not safe, it will be stolen -- it is important for Israel to have fake reasons to commit the genocide it is aggressively pursuing, in order to satisfy the West.

Similarly, Lavender is plausible deniability for bombing civilians. By having a non-human system choosing targets, they can claim that "the AI did it", and put an opaque layer in front of the bombing decisions that defies the ability to investigate or even explain how they chose the targets.

I consider the role of Lavender to be similar to the train lines, gas chambers, or data storage systems used during the Holocaust - automation allowing the scale of the genocide to increase massively.

How does WhatsApp, a Meta app, help Israel to kill Palestinians? Is it legal for a so-called 'private' messenger like WhatsApp, which is used internationally, to provide such data to Israel for massacre? Is it clear how much information Lavender provides to Israel?

It is claimed that one of the

considerations about whether someone should be killed -along with up to 20 civilians per bombing- was whether they were in the same WhatsApp group as alleged Hamas militants. As such, there are questions about how this data was revealed to Israel.

Meta has refused to provide any information about this. They made a short statement back in April, in which they denied that WhatsApp had any "backdoors" -- any deliberate flaws to enable government snooping -- or that governments received WhatsApp data in bulk from Meta. These answers are extremely unsatisfactory. If an allegation exists that users of your product are being killed for being users of your product, especially during what had already been internationally condemned as a genocide, then a company should move heaven and earth to discover how this happened. Instead, Meta gave a short statement.

This short statement was also shown almost immediately to be misdirection. The Intercept revealed that flaws in WhatsApp could allow WhatsApp group membership to be learned if the attacker was in control of the internet service, as is the case in Gaza. It also revealed that Meta was aware of the issue and had discussed it internally months earlier.

"Flaws" and "backdoors" are technically different, which is why I believe that Meta deliberately used "backdoors" to mislead the public in their statement.

In the "Meta and Lavender" report, you mentioned that Meta employees are connected to the Israeli army and Unit 8200. To what extent does this connection exist, and did Meta have a specific plan for it?

Israel has for many years created a pipeline from Unit 8200 into tech, to the point that former Unit-8200 soldiers are greatly over-represented in the tech industry. In particular, they are well-represented as startup founders, as venture capitalists

(VC), as software engineers and product managers, and also in the Trust&Safety function -- the part of the industry that supervises content on social media.

At Meta, Guy Rosen is the CISO - the most senior person making decisions around what content is allowed on Meta, and supposedly the architect of their "anti-anti-Zionism" policy which equates anti-Zionism (opposition to a racist political ideology) with antisemitism (opposition to a religion). Guy Rosen is Israeli, lives in Tel Aviv, and was in Unit 8200 in the IDF (the Israeli equivalent of the U.S. National Security Agency).

Meta has been very active in spreading lies about sexual violence related to the October 7 attack, and in this sense, it has been quite supportive of Israel. What is the relationship between Meta leaders such as Mark Zuckerberg and Guy Rosen and Israel? It is noteworthy that Sheryl Sandberg, one of the key figures in the formation of Facebook, created a promotional documentary for Israel focusing on sexual violence against Israeli women during the October 7 attacks.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg donated \$125,000 to Zaka, the Israeli organization that is the source of most of the disinformation that was used to dehumanize Palestinians and allow the genocide in Gaza. These false claims - beheaded babies, mass rape - were repeated by Israeli and the U.S. politicians, as well as news media around the world, to promote a narrative of savagery that was exploited by Israel.

Israel has continually recycled and reproduced the same discredited claims in different formats, with Sandberg's "Screams Before Silence" being just the latest time that they have done this. Sandberg claims that she is speaking up for women and victims of sexual violence, but does not speak up against the systematic rape of Palestinians by the IDF.

Cartoon of Day



There Is No Escape from The Resistance
 Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

Three Iranian shorts to compete in Turkish festival

TEHRAN—Three short films will compete in the international competition section of the 6th Directed By Women Turkey, to be held from September 13 to 15 in Istanbul.

Short films "Sona" written and directed by Zahra Torkamanlou and "Spasm" by Sahra Asadollahi as well as the short animation "Piano" by Marjan Keshani and Shahab Shamsi are the Iranian works to take part in the event.

"Sona" is about Sona, who is about to turn 40, and must decide how to solve her issues of loneliness and emotional relationships in a small and highly traditional society.

Sona has to free herself from the cage that society has constructed for her.

The cast includes Fariba Sohrabi, Narjes Delaram, Samaneh Babazadeh, Hessam Kazemi, and Hamed Ghaffarpour among others.

Running for 25 minutes, "Spasm" depicts a girl who has dreamed of acting since childhood, like a horse that wants to be the first in all competitions.

Asadollahi, also plays in the film along with Tino Salehi and Mohammad Nima Mazaheri.

"Piano," seven minutes, is a production of the Documentary, Experimental, and Animation Film Center (DEFC).

It explores the themes of poverty and the hardship of life. It tells the story of someone who dreams of buying a Piano but their dream is shattered when a war erupts, leaving them struggling to acquire even the most basic necessities of life.

Directed By Women Turkey which will bring together the directors and films of women at the national and international level in Istanbul.



There will be a universal festival where short films from women with different perspectives and stories from each language and culture meet.

Directed By Women Turkey is the Turkish organization of the festival, which has been held in many countries around the world, especially in New York and Spain, for six years in September.