IRANITIV

| Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 46th year | No. 14891 | Thursday | October 17, 2024 Countering Israel's Warmongering Through **Active Diplomacy** Following discussions with senior officials in Jordan, Aragchi arrives in Cairo to continue his diplomatic mission

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi (C) meets with Jordan's King Abdullah II (R) in Amman on October 16, 2024.

The THAAD and the tall tale: real weapons and fake news

By Ehsan Etesam

TEHRAN - A dangerous new chapter in the ongoing saga of West Asia tensions has unfolded, fuelled by a blatant display of Israeli aggression and the weaponization of misinformation.

The recent delivery of THAAD missile defense systems to Israel, a move celebrated with a gleeful tone by a complicit Western media, has been met in Iran with a heightened sense of consciousness and readiness to respond in case of aggression. This awareness has been further amplified by the circulation of fabricated news regarding the arrest or even death of a high-ranking Iranian military commander, a narrative that has been eagerly disseminated by a network of Western media outlets, acting as willing accomplices in Israel's campaign of disinformation.

The delivery of THAAD systems, cloaked in the preteens of defensive measures against ballistic missile threats, is a blatant escalation of Israeli aggression. This move, coupled with the recent bellicose pronouncements from Israeli officials, signals a shift towards a more confrontational posture, Page 3

Israeli motive behind deadly Lebanon strikes

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Over the past two weeks, question marks have been raised about the targets of Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon.

These suspicions grew when the Israeli military bombed the Christian-majority region of Aitou in north Lebanon on Monday. At least 22 people were killed, according to the Lebanese Red Cross.

The United Nations human rights office said many of the victims of the Israeli strike on a building in Aitou were women and children.

"What we are hearing is that amongst the 22 people killed were 12 women and two children," spokesperson Jeremy Laurence told a press briefing in Geneva.

"We understand it was a four-story residential building that was struck. With these factors in mind, we have real concerns with respect to IHL [international humanitarian law], so the laws of war, and the principles of distinction proportion and proportionality," he said, calling for an

It marked the first time that this particular region has been struck since October last year. ▶ Page 5

Dubious diplomacy: US swords for Israeli protection, pediatric pills for Palestinian suffering

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The United States has thrown its full political and military weight behind Israel since the regime launched war on Gaza more than a year ago.

The administration of President Joe Biden has blocked several resolutions against Israel's brutalities at the UN Security Council in the wake of its genocidal war on Gaza which began on October 7, 2023.

Besides the \$3.8 billion of military aid that Israel receives from the US annually, the White House has also provided the regime with additional weapons worth billions of dollars.

According to US media, Israel has used American bombs in its strikes against Gaza making Washington complicit in the atrocities perpetrated in the enclave.

Israel has butchered more than 42,400 Palestinians, including some 17,000 children since launching its brutal military campaign in Gaza in October last year. > Page 5

Pezeshkian urges Muslims to 'act as one' against Israel in call with Omani Sultan

TEHRAN - During a phone conversation with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said on Wednesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored the need for increased pressure on Israel's supporters to curb its aggression.

He expressed appreciation for Oman's condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza and Lebanon, calling for greater unity among Muslim nations in addressing these issues.

"If Muslim countries act as one, the Zionist regime will not dare to commit violations so easily, nor will the U.S. and Western countries be able to support it," Pezeshkian stated.

The Iranian president reiterated Tehran's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Muscat, emphasizing that Oman's relationship is a top priority for the Islamic Republic. He highlighted the importance of expanding cooperation with neighboring states.

"Strengthening friendly and amicable relations between regional countries, and expanding regional cooperation, guarantee a shared vision and language to solve our region's problems," Pezeshkian explained. "This also provides a platform for collective development, promoting the welfare, peace, and comfort of our nations." ▶ Page 3

IRGC vows continued support for Palestinians on ann. of Israel's strike of Al-Ahli **Arab hospital**

TEHRAN - Marking the one-year anniversary of the bombing of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Palestinians in their struggle against the Israeli regime.

▶ Page **3**

"It is difficult to recall this heinous crime which killed hundreds of innocent Palestinian civilians," the IRGC said in a statement published on Wednesday. "The inaction of the international community back then, allowed the regime to continue such crimes and strike countless more medical facilities in Gaza and Lebanon [in the following months]."

On October 17, 2023, Israel launched a devastating airstrike on the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital compound in central Gaza, killing at least 500 civilians. This marked the first time Israeli forces had targeted a medical facility in this manner. Israel and its Western allies arming the regime claimed the strike was a result of a misfired rocket launched by the Islamic Jihad Resistance group - an assertion immediately refuted by both the Palestinian group and independent experts. The U.S. later announced it was launching an investigation to find the truth. ▶ Page 2

Iran determined to boost trade, energy co-op with Azerbaijan

TEHRAN - Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, in a meeting with the visiting Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev, called for the formation of a joint working group in order to pursue and accelerate bilateral cooperation, especially in the field of energy.

During the meeting on Tuesday afternoon, Paknejad said the two countries have a lot of cultural, historical and national similarities, which will help bring the two nations closer to each other.

While emphasizing the improvement of cooperation between the two countries, he said that neighbors have a priority in Iran's foreign policy and that the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan is special among them.

Stating that the field of oil and energy is one of the axes for the development of economic relations between the two countries, Paknejad said Iran welcomes any initiatives proposed by Azerbaijan to enhance the level of cooperation, adding that such cooperation requires the necessary infrastructure. ▶ Page 4

Education space per student, literacy rate improved

TEHRAN –According to the latest statistics, education space per student in Iran has increased from 5.17 square meters in the calendar year 1396 (2017-2018) to 5.28 square meters in the year 1402 (2023 – 2024).

The literacy rate, as well, has increased from 87.9 percent in 1396 to 90.7 percent in 1402, IRNA reported.

In the mentioned six-year period, the ratio of resilient classrooms improved from 0.64 to 0.82, sport space per student grew from 0.17 to 0.20, and the ratio of classrooms equipped with cooling and heating systems rose from 0.48 to 0.68.

The literacy rate has improved in urban areas as well as rural areas. From 1396 to 1402, the literacy rate among men and women amounted to 93.9 percent and 87.4 percent, respectively. ▶ Page 7



IRCS sends consignment of medicine to Lebanon

The Iranian Red Crescent Society sent a consignment of medicine on Wednesday to Lebanon to help relieve people under brutal attacks by the Zionist regime.

The consignment includes gastrointestinal, antiseptic, and cardiovascular drugs.

The IRCS is planning to set up another hospital in Lebanon after the Zionist regime targeted a field hospital set up at the Lebanon-Syria border in an airstrike on October 11.

POLITICS

OCTOBER 17, 2024 Straight Truth **TEHRAN TIMES**

·TEHRAN PAPERS ·

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

The illusion of a 'new Middle East'

In a note, Donya-e-Egtesad discussed the new Western sanctions on the Islamic transformation in the Middle East after the 7th of October and wrote: After the October 7th attack the situation in the Middle East changed. It led to a direct war between Israel, Iran, and its allies. Israel's possible attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and vital economic infrastructure, and Iran's retaliation against Israel's vital facilities and cities, are among the red lines that bring the war into a new and even more dangerous phase. It is now unlikely that Israel will stop its attacks on Lebanon and Syria. Hezbollah and Iran will not fight back, because we know that Netanyahu's strategy is to destroy Hezbollah to undermine Iran's regional clout. Israel and the U.S. are dreaming of creating a "new Middle East" that would minimize Iran's influence and establish a durable alliance with Arab countries. With these conditions, glimmers of hope such as the global coalition led by Saudi Arabia to create a Palestinian state and propose a common peace need immediate global and regional support.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Ambiguities in possible confrontation between Iran and Israel

In an article, Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the technique, time and level of Israel's response to Iran's October 1 legitimate attack. It wrote: Israeli media claimed that the government has reached a complete agreement on the technique, time and level of response to Iran's attack. About the time of Israel's response, some American media have said that this will happen before the American presidential election on November 5th. About three weeks are left until the election. But regarding the level of Israel's response to Iran's missile attack, it is unlikely that Iran's nuclear and oil facilities will be "directly attacked" at this step, and Israel's focus will be on targeting military sites, especially offensive and defensive units. But what will happen after the possible Israeli attack depends on two factors: first, its level and intensity; and second is Iran's reaction. If Israel shows a limited reaction, nothing special will happen. But if it is widespread and severe, we should wait for Iran's decision.

Iran: Europe's strategic mistake regarding sanctions against Iran

In an interview with Abed Akbari, an expert on political issues, the Iran newspaper examined Republic. Akbari said: The European Union announced new sanctions against Iran.

The duty of European leaders is only impartial mediation, which is the only demand of the people of the region and Iran. The U.S. support for Israel's crimes, which are causing a deep wound in the region, will also harm Europe. Today, Europe's task is to try to prevent the spread of instability in West Asia and, as a result, its neighboring regions. Although Europe owes its security to Iran due to the Islamic Republic's efforts in cracking down on terrorist groups in West Asia, today, as a debtor, it seeks to increase international sanctions and pressure on Iran.

Siasat-e-Rooz: IMEC Corridor and Israeli warmongering in the region

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the planned IMEC Corridor and the purpose of its launch. It said: One of the goals of this plan is to normalize relations between the Arabs and the Zionist regime. Another goal is to intensify economic sanctions against Iran. It aims to undermine Iran's economic relations. The construction of the IMEC Corridor would weaken Iran's economic and geographical status in the region to the extent that it would affect Iran's exports and imports. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), initiated by Iran, has not been completed after many years. It should be put into operation more quickly to counter IMEC. The IMEC Corridor conflicts with the interests of several countries in the region, so Iran can have bilateral and multilateral agreements with countries that are not part of the IMEC project. In fact, the fake Israeli regime plans to destroy Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon to control that area to ensure the security of the implementation of the IMEC plan.

(INSTC is a 7,200-km (4500 mile) long multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation via ship, rail and road. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali, etc.)

Tehran, Pyongyang talk West Asia, Korean Peninsula tensions

TEHRAN - Iran's interim charge d'affaires in Pyongyang has engaged in discussions with senior North Korean officials regarding recent events on the Korean Peninsula, as well as the ongoing violence perpetrated by the Israeli regime in Gaza and Lebanon.

During meetings in the North Korean capital, both parties emphasized the importance of denouncing the criminal actions of the Zionist regime, which were executed with direct support from the "Imperialism Axis", led by the United States.

The Iranian diplomat also highlighted the current situation on the Korean Peninsula, expressing concerns that activities along the border with South Korea are perilous and contribute to rising tensions.

North Korean officials echoed these

sentiments, condemning any escalation in the Korean Peninsula and the West Asian region that could jeopardize regional stability.

Tensions between North and South Korea have been on the rise due to various factors. On October 15, North Korea detonated sections of roads and railways linking it to South Korea, leading South Korea to issue warning shots within its territory. The move was made in response to Seoul's use of drones to rain propaganda leaflets on North Korean territory, as well as its recent joint military drill with the

Additionally, North Korea reported that approximately 1.4 million young individuals had expressed interest in joining or rejoining the military to prepare for potential face-offs with the southern neighbor.



On Wednesday, thousands of Iranians in the eastern city of Mashhad attended a funeral ceremony for Brigadier General Abbas Nilforooshan who was martyred alongside Hezbollah's Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah during an Israeli strike last month. Similar ceremonies were held in Tehran, Qom, Najaf, and Karbala.

Iran says not concerned about Israeli threats against nuclear sites

'We are prepared for any scenario'

TEHRAN - Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesperson for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has dismissed Israeli threats against Iran's nuclear facilities, assuring the public that the country is prepared for any

"The attack and threats of attack on Iran's nuclear sites are not new," Kamalvandi stated, highlighting a history of sabotage and attacks dating back to years ago. "[Former U.S. president] Barack Obama explicitly stated that if he could, he would even unscrew the nuts and bolts of Iran's nuclear industry. Up to now, they have done everything they could against Iran's nuclear industry.

If there is something they have not done, it is because they could not do it, not because they did not want

He emphasized that Iran takes such threats seriously and has taken proactive measures to minimize potential damage: "Accordingly, we have designed and anticipated in

such a way that even in the event of their folly, damages will be mini-

Today, we are in a position to announce that in the event of the enemy's folly, regardless of the response that Iran's military forces will give, the Atomic Energy Organization has also adhered to principles and taken actions that even in the event of an attack, they cannot achieve any-

Israeli media says the regime is bracing to respond to Iran's retaliatory attack on October 1, which involved the launching of almost 200 ballistic missiles at military bases in the occupied territories. Multiple Israeli politicians and Zionist analysts have suggested striking Iran's nucle-

ar facilities and energy sites. Kamalvandi further emphasized the unlikelihood of a successful attack, noting that even if such an event were to occur, the damage would be minimal and quickly mitigated due to Iran's expertise and readily available plans.

"First, it is highly unlikely that such an event will occur. Second, if such folly were to happen, it is very unlikely that they would cause serious damage to Iran.

Third, even if damage occurs, the country can quickly compensate for it because knowledge resides in the minds of our specialists and scientists. We are proficient in technology; plans are available and exist on paper; they only need to be executed.

Therefore, these threats are not serious or concerning to us, but we have always been vigilant and will continue to be," Kamalvandi conclud-

Elsewhere in his remarks, the spokesman pointed to Iran's significant advancements in the nuclear field, asserting that the country is now "invincible" in various sectors, including nuclear technology.

IRGC vows continued support for Palestinians on ann. of Israel's strike of Al-Ahli Arab hospital

other civilian sites in an attempt to cover up its military failures at the hands of the Resistance, the IRGC statement read. "All this time, the United States has been the main force helping the regime by sending lethal weapons and even military personnel to slaughter Palestinian and Lebanese people," IRGC noted, adding the U.S. and

From page 1 ► Israel hits medical facilities and Israel are partners in crime. "They should be held accountable in international courts."

> The statement concluded with a resolute declaration of continued support for the Palestinians: "We believe Palestinians have the right to self-determination and deserve assistance in their fight for liberation from occupation. The IRGC will unhesitatingly provide

aid to the Palestinian people in pursuit of this

Since October 7, 2023, Israel has killed more than 42,000 civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip, where over 60% of the population is under the age of 18. The regime has now expanded its military campaign to include Lebanon, where over 2,000 people have already been slaughtered.

Commander denies shooting incident on Iran-Afghanistan border

TEHRAN – The commander of the border guard in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province has vehemently denied reports originating from Western-funded media outlets that Iranian forces fired upon Afghan nationals.

The Sistan and Baluchestan border guard information center issued a statement refuting the allegations, which emerged after images of injured individuals circulated on social media. It is not clear where the injured are located, or how they ended up with the injuries.

Brigadier General Reza Shojaei, commander of the Eastern Border Guard Center, categorically rejected these claims, labeling the images and reports as inaccurate.

Shojaei emphasized that Iran has consistently treated Afghan nation-

als with respect for their human rights and maintained a spirit of good neighborliness throughout the years. He characterized the accusations of shooting as an attempt to foster negativity and sow discord between the two nations.

Esmail Qaani: target of a Zionist disinformation campaign amid rising regional tensions

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - In recent days, various Western and regional media outlets have raised questions regarding the whereabouts of Ismail Qaani, the head of the Iranian Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds

Recently, the news agency Reuters, known for its history of false reporting concerning Iran, published an article claiming that after the Israeli attacks in Beirut, which resulted in the deaths of Hassan Nasrallah and Iranian General Abbas Nilforoushan, "contact with Ismail Oaani has been lost"

Meanwhile, the Qatari-funded outlet Middle East Eye provided a more elaborate version in an article labeled as an "exclusive," published on October 10 on its website. It claimed that the commander of the Revolutionary Guard is under house arrest and is being interrogated by the Islamic Republic's intelligence forces. However, Iranian experts pointed out that Middle East Eye failed to provide explanations for the alleged reasons behind this arrest and interrogation.

In the following days, after Iranian sources refuted Middle East Eye's article, the outlet turned to anonymous sources in Iraq and Lebanon to reiterate its unfounded claims. Iran International, a Persian-language outlet linked to the Zionist regime and covertly directed by Manouchehr Amir, a former director of Radio Israel, cited an "informed source" claiming that Commander Qaani's family also had no news regarding his whereabouts or what he was doing.

Additionally, Sky News published a supposed detailed report stating that Qaani had suffered a heart attack during an interrogation and was receiving treatment. According to this version, "close sources" to Sky News were unaware of the commander's current condition following the incident.

Finally, the Saudi channel Al Arabiya questioned, "Why is there no news about Commander Qaani? He was absent from the command room during Operation 'Sacred Promise 2,' from the Friday prayer in Tehran led by the Supreme Leader, and from the ceremony awarding the Victory Medal to Commander Hajizadeh. Where is Commander Qaani?"

From the Islamic Republic, various explanations have been provided regarding the state of the Quds Force commander. On October 7, a high-ranking of-

ficial from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps confirmed that General Oaani was in good health. Moreover, the same official indicated that Qaani had issued a message to commemorate the anniversary of the Al-Agsa Flood Operation. In line with this, the deputy coordinator of the Quds Force stated, "Many of us ask, 'What happened to Commander Qaani?' He is healthy and active. Some say, 'Make a statement!' Why make a statement? There is no need for that."

Just a few days ago, the Iranian parliamentary president, Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, during an official visit to Beirut, stated that "Qaani is in good health, continues to fulfill his duties, and the rumors that have been spread about him are false

Finally, putting all rumors to rest and debunking the fake news, Qaani personally appeared at the funeral procession of IRGC commander Abbas Nilforooshan on October 15th. The media outlets that spread these unverified rumors and misinformation have not apologized. Their objective was simple: to spread disinformation.

According to many international relations experts, such as Iranian analyst Afifeh Abedi, the disinformation surrounding Ismail Qaani's whereabouts and health was part of a clearly orchestrated strategy by Israel, with three main objectives:

1. Instilling insecurity: to generate and increase a sense of insecurity within Iranian society, especially in the context of possible attacks. This strategy aims to destabilize the internal environment and instill fear among the population.

2. Gathering intelligence for Assassination: to collect information on the Quds Force commander to facilitate a potential assassination. By obtaining relevant data about his location and activities. conditions can be created for an attack.

3. Discrediting Qaani and fostering internal divisions: to undermine the image of Commander Qaani and encourage internal divisions in Iran. Through disinformation and negative propaganda, the goal is to weaken his standing and sow discord among different factions within the country.

The long-standing tradition of narrative control and information manipulation by Zionist entities is well-known. The Israelis refer to this strategy as "hasbara," which means "explanation" in Hebrew.

Hasbara encompasses efforts to promote a narrative that justifies Israel's policies and actions. This involves shaping public perception, influencing media coverage, and disseminating information that supports Israeli interests while countering opposing viewpoints.

The weaponization of antisemitism serves as a cynical example of how hasbara strategies are implemented, designed solely to divert criticism and shift the conversation. Discrediting reputable critics and objective critiques of the State of Israel as a colonial entity, through the spread of irresponsible allegations of hatred towards Jews, which Zionist apologists know to be false, reflects the hasbara mentality. This approach not only seeks to silence dissenting voices but also manipulates public perception regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's policies.

In the current conflict between the Zionist colonial state and the various members of what is known as the Axis of Resistance, the use of hasbara is characterized by three key elements:

- 1. Unscrupulous tactics: Tactics aimed at discrediting opinions perceived as hostile, which include lies, defamation, and subsidized campaigns.
- 2. Increased sophistication: A more sophisticated strategy that involves diverting criticism through false allegations.
- 3. Abundant funding: Both public and private funding of pro-Zionist messaging, aimed at garnering support and dismantling adversaries. This influx of resources allows hasbara to operate more effectively, amplifying its impact and reach within public opinion.

A notable aspect of this extensive psychological warfare is the surprising division of labor and coordination among Israeli media, Western outlets, and anti-Iranian Arab media in shaping narratives, often citing anonymous sources. This information ultimately spreads through opposition media, particularly anti-Iranian outlets like Iran International.

The ultimate objective of this massive disinformation campaign, as noted by Abedi, was to disrupt the operational activities of Qaani, uncover the location and activities of this commander on the battlefield, and ultimately prepare the ground for his assassination.

Countering Israel's warmongering through active diplomacy

Following discussions with senior officials in Jordan, Aragchi arrives in Cairo to continue his diplomatic mission

TEHRAN - In a crucial diplomatic meeting, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi held discussions with Jordan's King Abdullah II, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced cooperation among Muslim nations to counter Israel's ongoing military actions. The talks, held on Wednesday in Amman, centered around regional instability, particularly in Gaza and Lebanon, where the humanitarian situation has become increasingly dire.

Araqchi expressed deep concern over the devastating conditions faced by displaced people in Gaza and Lebanon, who are suffering from severe shortages of food, water, and medical supplies. The Iranian Foreign Ministry's readout of the meeting highlighted Araqchi's call for Islamic countries to unite and marshal resources to deliver humanitarian aid

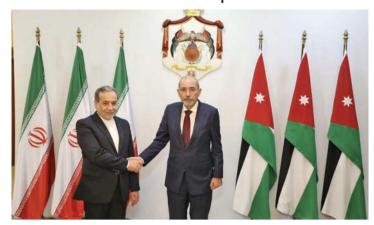
King Abdullah II echoed these concerns, stressing the importance of solidarity to curb the growing conflict and instability in the region. He reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to contributing to initiatives aimed at preserving regional stability and addressing the worsening humani-

Both leaders agreed on the necessity of continued collaboration to bolster security in West Asia, underscoring their determination to strengthen bilateral relations.

'We should prevent the region from sliding further into chaos'

Earlier on the day, Araqchi met with Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman al-Safadi to discuss the urgent need for cooperation to prevent the region from sliding further into

Aragchi emphasized that countries across West Asia must work together to halt the escalation of vi-



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi (L) shakes hands with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman al-Safadi in Amman.

In his public remarks, Aragchi reit-

erated Iran's commitment to regional

stability and called for stronger ef-

forts to prevent further bloodshed.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry later an-

nounced that Aragchi would continue

his diplomatic mission with upcoming

visits to Egypt and Turkey to further

discuss efforts to end the violence.In

a post on X, formerly known as Twit-

ter, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman

Esmaeil Bagaei emphasized the coun-

try's ongoing diplomatic outreach is

intended to promote peace in West

Asia. He noted that Aragchi's talks in

Jordan are part of Iran's broader strat-

egy to stop Israel's genocidal actions

and to prevent further escalation of

This renewed diplomacy follows

an August visit to Tehran by Jorda-

nian Foreign Minister Ayman al-Sa-

fadi, marking the first high-level

talks between Jordan and Iran in two

decades. During that visit, al-Safadi

pledged Jordan's support for clos-

er cooperation with Iran to achieve

lasting peace and stability in the

region. He condemned the assassi-

nation of Palestinian leader Ismail

Haniyeh, characterizing it as part of

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Ne-

war in the region.

olence and protect the region's collective security.

Al-Safadi voiced serious alarm over the deteriorating security landscape, particularly the toll on civilians in Palestine and Lebanon. He reiterated Jordan's stance that the ongoing violence must stop and called for an end to Israeli aggression. Both officials stressed the importance of regional cooperation, not only in addressing the conflict but also in mobilizing humanitarian efforts to assist refugees in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

The Iranian foreign minister's visit to Jordan is part of a broader diplomatic tour aimed at deescalating tensions in the region. His recent travels have taken him to Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Qatar, Iraq and Oman, where he has sought to forge alliances and build consensus on ways to end the Israeli military's assaults on Palestinian and Lebanese

Araqchi's visit to Amman marks the first by an Iranian foreign minister to Jordan since 2014, signaling a renewed push for diplomatic engagement between the two nations. tanyahu's broader plan to expand conflict across West Asia.

itary campaign against Gaza on October 7 last year, following a surprise operation by Hamas known as Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. The operation was launched in retaliation for Israel's escalating violence and oppression against the Palestinian people.

during the ongoing assaults.

on the Lebanese capital resulted in the assassination of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah,

In addition to its military offensives, Israel has been responsible for the assassination of prominent Resistance figures, including Ismail Haniyeh, chief of the political bureau of Hamas. Haniyeh was killed in his temporary residence in Tehran just hours after attending the inauguration ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. A commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) was also assassinated in Lebanon. In response to escalating tensions, on October 1, Iran launched a large-scale missile attack targeting Israeli military, espionage, and intelligence installations across the occupied territories. The operation, named "True Promise II," was reportedly successful, with 90% of the missiles striking their intended

Israel initiated its large-scale mil-

Since the conflict began, the Gaza health ministry reports that at least 42,344 Palestinians, the majority being women and children, have been killed by Israeli forces. In addition. 99,013 others have been wounded

The Israeli regime has also expanded its military actions beyond Gaza, intensifying attacks on Lebanon. In recent weeks, these attacks have mainly targeted Beirut. Notably, in late September, Israeli airstrikes Lebanon's Resistance movement.



Pezeshkian urges Muslims to 'act as one' against Israel in call with Omani Sultan

From Page 1 ► Sultan bin Tarig reciprocated Iran's sentiment, praising Tehran's stance on regional issues, including the situations in Gaza and Lebanon. He stressed the need for Western countries to abandon their double standards when addressing these conflicts.

Oman's unwavering support for the rights of the oppressed people of Gaza and Lebanon remains a priority, the Sultan emphasized, stating, "Oman has always maintained that the continued support by Western countries for Israel's crimes is neither acceptable nor justified in any way."

Israel's military campaign in the region has so far claimed over 42,000 lives in Gaza and more than 2,000 in Lebanon. Aside from countries considered part of the Axis of Resistance, the rest of the Islamic Ummah has yet to take any decisive action against Tel Aviv.

Analysts say the impotence and inaction of most Muslim states greenlight further atrocities by Zionists.

The THAAD and the tall tale: real weapons and fake news



From Page 1 ▶ a blatant attempt to consolidate Israeli dominance in the region. The timing of the delivery, coinciding with a renewed campaign of disinformation targeting Iranian leadership, serves as a clear demonstration of Israel's willingness to exploit fear and uncertainty to further its own agenda.

The fabricated narrative surrounding the alleged arrest or death of a high-ranking Iranian military official is not just a smear campaign, but a cynical attempt to undermine Iranian confidence and sow discord within the nation.

These fabricated reports, lacking any con-

es, have been eagerly disseminated by Western media outlets, serving as willing accomplices in build-up and the weaponization of misinforma-Israel's information warfare.

The fact that these stories have been amplified by outlets with a documented history of pro-Israel bias is a testament to the orchestrated nature of this campaign of disinformation.

The confluence of these events - the delivery of THAAD systems, the orchestrated spread of fake news, and the accompanying rhetoric from Israeli officials - paints a disturbing picture of a region teetering on the brink of conflict. This uncalculated escalation, driven by Israel's ambition to establish regional hegemony, threatens to plunge West Asia into a new era of instability and bloodshed.

Iran, however, is not a nation that bows to intimidation. The Iranian people, with a long history of navigating challenging geopolitical landscapes and weathering external pressures, are acutely aware of the motives behind Israel's aggressive actions and its orchestrated campaign of disinformation.

They recognize the blatant hypocrisy of a na-

crete evidence and relying on anonymous sourc- tion that accuses others of aggression while simultaneously engaging in destabilizing military

> The Iranian people, far from being swayed by these tactics, will stand united and resolute in the face of Israeli aggression.

> They are fully aware that the real threat to their nation's security lies not in internal instability, but in the relentless pressure and provocations from external forces, fuelled by a relentless propaganda campaign designed to demonize and undermine their nation.

> The world cannot afford to remain silent in the face of this blatant manipulation. The weaponization of misinformation is a dangerous trend, one that threatens to undermine the very fabric of international security and stability

> It is time for the international community to hold Israel accountable for its actions and to denounce the manipulation of information as a tool of warfare. The future of peace in West Asia hinges on the collective willingness to stand against aggression and deception, militarism, and misinformation.

Iran DM says Israel's deployment of American THAAT 'psychological warfare'

TEHRAN - The Iranian Defense Minister has described Washington's recent provision of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to Israel as a component of psychological warfare against Iran and the rest of the Axis of Resistance.

Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh emphasized that the introduction of THAAD is not a novel or game-changing development, but rather a continuation of Israel's long-standing

and unsuccessful efforts to intimidate Iran. He pointed out that the Israeli regime has consistently posed military threats to Iran.

The THAAD system is a sophisticated, mobile missile defense system designed to intercept and destroy short, medium, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles during their terminal flight phase. Created by the United States, THAAD is an integral part of the nation's Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) and is said to play a crucial role in safeguarding against potential missile threats. The system comprises a radar system, interceptor missiles, and a fire control and communica-

Last week, Hebrew media reported that the THAAD defense system, accompanied by 100 American military personnel, will be deployed in Israel as of October 15.

IRAN IN FOCUS

Straight Truth TEHRAN TIMES

Dominant Iran down Qatar in 2026 World Cup qualifier

TEHRAN - Iran national football team earned a vital win in Group A of the 2026 World Cup qualifier, beating Qatar 4-1 in Dubai's Rashid Stadium.

Almoez Ali was on target for Qatar in the 17th minute but his goal canceled out by Sardar Azmoun in the 42nd minute.

Azmoun needed just three minutes to find the back of the net thanks to a mistake from Qatar goalkeeper Meshaal Barsham. He then assisted on Mohammad Mohebbi's goal in the 66th minute.

Iran's substitutes Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Shahriar Moghanlou scored but their goals were ruled out for offside. Mohebbi completed his brace in stoppage time with a header inside the area.

Team Melli went top of Group A with 10 points thanks to a better goal difference than Uzbekistan.

Ghalenoei very happy over win against Oatar

TEHRAN - Head coach Amir Ghalenoei will always fondly remember Iran's 4-1 win over Qatar in the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 which took the team to the top of the Group A standings on

Sardar Azmoun and Mohammed Mohebi netted a brace each to cancel out Almoez Ali's opener to move Iran up to 10 points, level with Uzbekistan but ahead on goal difference.

"I think it was one of our good days," said Ghalenoei. "We scored four goals and had several other opportunities. "Overall, it was a very good game. Congratulations to Qatar for playing football. It was one of the best games of the group that Asia enjoyed.

"This win will help us further. We can rejoice for a day or two and then we have to think about the next games with Kyrgyzstan and DPR Korea. I hope we can make Iranian people happy with more good games," Ghalenoei concluded.

Qatar coach Lopez rues missed chances against Iran

TEHRAN - Qatar head coach Marquez Lopez was left to count the cost of missed chances as the gap between the two-time AFC Asian Cup champion and the top two widened to six points.

Iran defeated Oatar 4-1 in the AFC Asian Oualifiers - Road to 26 which took the team to the top of the Group A standings on Tuesday. However, Lopez is confident that Qatar can still reach the FIFA World Cup and called on his players to fight tooth and nail in the remaining matches to achieve their target.

"We congratulate the Iranian team on the victory, especially since it performed better than us," said Lopez."We started well and succeeded in scoring first, and had another opportunity to increase the lead. On the other hand, Iran had many chances, including one that hit the post, then they scored two goals," the Spaniard added.

"Our goal has not changed, which is to qualify for the World Cup, and the opportunity is still there, although the group includes good teams such as Uzbekistan and Iran.

"The mission is not easy, but the opportunity to qualify is available and we have to fight for our chances until the last breath. There are still matches and many points that we must work hard to get," Lopez concluded.

Winning start for Iran's men in 2024 ICF Canoe Polo World **Championships**

TEHRAN - Iran men's team defeated France 7-1 and Singapore 11-3 in Group F of the 2024 International Canoe Federation Canoe Polo World Championships on Wednesday.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Portugal on Thursday. Iran's women's team also suffered two losses against the Netherlands 9-6 and France 6-1 in Group B. The Iranian team will face Chinese Taipei on Thursday.

Stakes are high as six men's and women's teams can also seal a spot at the The World Games 2025 in Chengdu. Set to run until Oct. 20, a total of 71 teams from 27 countries and all five continents give it their best to be crowned world champions.

Germany are defending champions among men and women. The tournament was inaugurated on Monday with a spectacular Opening Ceremony, including a parade of the athletes and traditional Chinese dance performances.

Messi surpasses Daei with 110th goal for **Argentina**

TEHRAN - Lionel Messi, the goal-scoring legend, surpassed Iran's Ali Daei with his 110th goal for Argentina. The Argentine is now the 2nd international top-scorer of all time, only behind Cristiano Ronaldo on 133 goals.

Messi added another remarkable chapter to his storied career by scoring his 110th goal for Argentina in a match against Bolivia. The goal not only opened the scoring but also secured Messi's place as the second-highest goal scorer in international football. His latest milestone for Inter Miami's star player moves him past the legendary Daei, edging Messi closer to the all-time record.

He also scored two more goals for Argentina in the 84th and 86th minutes to seal 6-0 win over Bolivia in the 2026 World Cup qualifier.

Top International Goal Scorers of All Time:

132 Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) - 215 appear-

112 Lionel Messi (Argentina) - 189 appearances 109 Ali Daei (Iran) - 148 appearances

94 Sunil Chhetri (India) - 151 appearances 89 Mokhtar Dahari (Malaysia) - 142 appearances

85 Romelu Lukaku (Belgium) - 119 appearances 85 Ali Mabkhout (UAE) - 115 appearances

84 Ferenc Puskás (Hungary) - 89 appearances 84 Robert Lewandowski (Poland) - 154 appearances

Iran's Zabihollah Poorshab announces retirement from karate

TEHRAN - Iranian legendary karateka Zabihollah Poorshab announced retirement from the sport on Wednesday. In the ceremony held in Tehran's Afrasiabi Hall, Poorshab, 36, ended his glorious 20-year career.

Hassan Tabatabaei, head of karate federation, and the Iranian karatekas attended in the retirement ceremony. He won a bronze medal in World Karate Championships in Paris. Two year later Poorshab claimed a gold in the competition in Bremen, Germany.

Poorshab also won two more gold medals in 2016 and 2018 World Karate Championships in Linz and Madrid, respectively. The Iranian practitioner has seized a gold in 2010 Asian Games and three golds in Asian Championships.

Iran defeat Oman in Asian Youth **Beach Handball** Championship

TEHRAN - Iran defeated Oman 2-1 in the 3rd Asian Men's Youth Beach Handball Championship on Wednesday. The Iranian team will meet Jordan on

The 3rd Asian Women's Youth Beach Handball Championship takes place from 17 to 25 October 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.

This marks the third consecutive time that the competition will be hosted by the Handball Association of Thailand (HAT), which has hosted the event since the inaugural edition in 2016. The championship will feature players born in 2008 and 2009. Furthermore, the championship will serve as a qualifying event for the Youth (U17) Beach Handball World Championship, to be held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 17 to 22 June 2025.

The top two teams from this competition will secure qualification spots for the World Championship.

ECONOMY



RAI invites Spanish experts to partake in Iran's railway projects

TEHRAN - The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) has emphasized the increase of academic interaction between Iran and Spain, and invited the technical experts of the Spanish railway field to transfer experience for launching high-speed trains in Iran.

Making the remarks in a meeting with Spain's Ambassador to Tehran Antonio Sánchez-Benedito, Jabar-Ali Zakeri referred to the long-standing cooperation and good interaction of the railways of the two countries, as well as the brilliant records of the Spanish ambassador, including receiving the national emblem of "Madagascar", and said: "The resume of the Spanish ambassador show that with his good experience, he can take very



good steps regarding the expansion of technical and executive cooperation between the two countries of Iran and Spain."

Small-scale power plants with capacity of 127MW come on stream since late Mar.

127MW come on stream since late Mar.

TEHRAN - Several small-scale power plants with a total capacity of 127 megawatts (MW) have come on stream across Iran since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), an official with the country's Power Generation, Distribution and Transmission Company (TAVANIR) said.

"The total capacity of small-scale power plants inaugurated in the previous Iranian calendar year stood at 250 megawatts," Zahra Esmaeilzadeh said.

According to the official, based on the

Small-scale power plants with capacity of country's Seventh National Development Plan (2022-2027), every year 200 MW of small-scale power plants are going to go operational in the country.

> Iranian Energy Ministry plans to increase the country's power generation capacity by 5,333 megawatts (MW) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2025).

According to the Iranian Energy Ministry data, 2,817 MW of the mentioned figure will be provided by gas units, 914 MW will be provided by combined cycle power plants and the rest will be generated by hydropower plants.

Red meat production up 3% in a month

TEHRAN- Production of red meat in Iran rose three percent in the fifth month of the current Iranian calendar year (July 22-August 21), as compared to the previous month, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced.

As reported, 32,949 tons of red meat was produced in the fifth month of this year.

Beef and veal had the lion's share in the country's red meat output during the fifth month with 18,513 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 11,057 tons, goat meat with 2,639 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 740 tons.

Supply of red meat in the fifth month of this year fell 20 percent from that of the same month in the previous year.

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after. However, the consumption per person is around a third of



what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran's red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious

Iran determined to boost trade, energy co-op with Azerbaijan

From page 1 ▶ As Shana reported, Iran's oil minister has tasked the Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading with the formation of the Tehran-Baku joint working group.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, while congratulating Paknejad for his election as Oil Minister said that the two neighbors have extensive relations, which are based on old roots.

The purpose of our visit to Iran is to review the relations between the two countries and negotiate the implementation of future projects, Mustafayev said.

"He is interested in developing relations," he said while referring to the meeting on Monday with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, and added: "The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elham Aliyev, too attaches great importance to mutual relations with Iran and is committed to implementing current and future projects."

Tehran, Baku determined to boost trade ties

On the same day, Mustafayev also met with Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Abdonnasser Hemmati during which the Iranian side said the country is determined to expand its trade ties with neighboring Azerbaijan.

Hemmati said the size of trade between Iran and Azerbaijan, which is around \$400 million per year, is very low and does not match the state of relations between the two countries.

"Azerbaijan has a special significance for us, we had some good talks on the role of monetary and banking systems in the expansion of trade," said the minister.

Hemmati said he and Mustafayev had agreed in their meeting that communication between the banking and insurance institutions of Iran and Azerbaijan should expand to allow an increase in trade relations between the two countries.



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (L) and Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev meet in Tehran on Tuesday.

Mustafayev also met Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi on Monday.

During the meeting, the Iranian minister called for increasing electricity exchange with neighboring countries.

Mentioning that Iran and Azerbaijan's power grids are already connected and the two countries are exchanging electricity, Aliabadi expressed hope that the level of exchanges will increase soon.

"The electrical connection between Iran and Azerbaijan is now established, and it is hoped that this will increase by the summer of next year; It is also suggested that negotiations be held between Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia to expand cooperation in the electricity sector," the minister said.

"Negotiations have also been held with Russia and it was decided to follow up on this issue in an upcoming meeting. The establishment of a power line between the two countries will be very beneficial for both sides economically," he

During his stay in Tehran, Mustafayev also met and held talks with the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sa-

In this meeting, Sadegh called for the preparation of a roadmap to increase annual transit between Iran and Azerbaijan to 15 million

"The development of relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan has a high importance in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I am confident that these relations will be further enhanced in the future and in line with the interests of the two countries," she

The minister stressed that Iran is ready to develop relations with Azerbaijan in all sectors and the Transport Ministry is prepared to hold the two countries' 16th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran as soon as possible to review all areas of cooperation.

In last December, Iran and Azerbaijan inaugurated a cross-border bridge over the Astarachay River to facilitate transit of goods between the two countries.

The opening ceremony of the border bridge was attended by Iranian and Azeri officials including Mustafayev and former Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash.

The border, which has been completed at a cost of €5.8 million, runs parallel to the Baku-Astara freeway up to the Astara border, the portal of the Iranian Transport Ministry reported.

Spanning 89 meters in length and over 30 meters in width, the bridge has four lanes for vehicles and a covered pedestrian walkway on each side.

The construction of the bridge began in March 2022.

While the existing bridge in Astara is located in the old area of the city, the new bridge is connected to Azerbaijan near the railway bridge.

Along with the Astara-Astara highway, the bridge now completes the route from Astara to Baku, connecting the highway to Iran's land routes.

The bridge facilitates the transit of goods from Iran and Azerbaijan to the countries of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Eastern Europe.

It also provides the Republic of Azerbaijan with access to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the bridge, Mustafayev said: "In the shadow of the wise management of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran, the relations between the two countries are growing and developing continu-

"Last year, the exchange of goods between the two countries grew by 46 percent, and transit rose by 45 percent, which is an important indicator of the development of infrastructure for transit between the two countries," the official said.

Referring to the importance of the North-South International Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the role it plays in the growth of economic relations between the two countries, Mustafayev added: "The opening of this new Astara-Astara bridge is very important in developing economic relations, transfer and transit between the two coun-

ICCIMA seeking expansion of international cooperation

TEHRAN - During the World Chambers Federation's first Europe and Asia Regional Summit in Turkey, the head and board members of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) explored ways for boosting international cooperation.

The two-day Summit opened in Istanbul on Tuesday and is mainly focused on environmental problems, the ICCIMA portal reported.

Some 800 representatives from chambers of

commerce around the world have attended the Summit which is sponsored by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the World Chambers Federation (WCF).

Samad Hassanzadeh, the ICCIMA head, Hossein Pirmoazzen and Keyvan Kashefi, two board members of Iran Chamber of Commerce, and Mohammad Khazaei, the director of ICC Iran represent the Islamic Republic in the Summit.

On the sidelines of the event, the Iranian del-

5th Iran-Tanzania Joint Economic Committee

meeting to be held this week

egation held talks with the president and the secretary general of the ICC and a number of their counterparts from the chambers of commerce of other countries.

Different issues, including ways to expand international cooperation, finding new financial mechanisms, and preparing the necessary grounds for upgrading the level of private sector cooperation, are among issues to be discussed in this edition of the event.

TEDPIX falls 4,200 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 4,207 points to 2,084,153 on Wednesday, which is the fifth day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IREN-EX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

In mid-September, the head of Iran Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said the entity will take the necessary measures to ensure that the direct and indirect interests of the stock market are considered in next year's budget bill.

"We are taking special measures in relation to the budget bill and issues that directly or indirectly affect the capital market," Hojatollah Seyedi stated.

He has also said that improving the stock market's efficiency is the main priority of the SEO in the current government administration

"In the 14th government, our mission is to protect the rights and interests of shareholders, facilitate the formation of capital, and improve the efficiency of the market which is the priority of the SEO programs," Seyedi undelined.

"The capacities of the capital market are

huge and I believe that this market has room for a leap and now we are on the threshold of that leap," the official further noted.

"Now, in addition to great capital and capabilities of the companies, we have powerful workforces, investors and competent managers in the market, so there is no reason why our capital market should not develop and reach at least 300 to 400 billion dollars of gross domestic product," he added.

Emphasizing that big steps should be taken in this regard, the official continued: "I have decided to work to this end with high motivation to play a small role in the development of the country."

The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization pointed to the capital market as a regulatory and supervisory body and said: "In this regard, our mission is to protect the rights of shareholders, promote market efficiency and facilitate capital formation, which are connected to each other like the sides of a triangle. But the question is, which of these factors can be the driving force as a more independent variable?"

"The important variable is the improvement of market efficiency, that is, the formation of more capital, which, in addition to increasing capital, also preserves the rights of shareholders," he finally said.

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Trade Center in Ivory Coast has said the fifth Iran-Tanzania Joint Economic Committee meeting is due to be held from October 18 to 21 in Tanzania,

According to Mehdi Hosseini, the event will be co-chaired by the Iranian Agriculture Minister and the Minister of Industry and Trade of Tanzania, as the heads of the joint economic committee of the two countries.

IRIB reported.

Over 50 companies and enterprises from Iran have expressed readiness to participate in the mentioned gathering, Hosseini said.

In mid-March, Iranian and Tanzanian tax officials have signed the draft of an agreement to eliminate double taxation on income taxes and prevent tax evasion with the presence of the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tanzania.

As reported, the draft was signed by Hossein Abdollahi, director general of the Legal Office and Tax Contracts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and William M. Moja, the acting commissioner of the policy analysis department of the Ministry of Finance of Tanzania.

According to Abdollahi, the two

sides have so far held three rounds of negotiations to prepare the mentioned agreement for signing.

This agreement has various goals such as the elimination of double taxation in the two countries, the attraction of direct investment, further development of economic relations and expansion of tax cooperation between the two countries, exchange of information to promote transparency in the tax behavior of the parties, assistance in tax collection, and the provision of facilities, the official explained.

The final signing and approval of this agreement will be done in the legislative assemblies of the two countries in the near future.

Tanzania is considered one of the most important countries in East Africa and Iran is taking new measures to expand economic ties with this country.

In late November 2022, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) held the first exclusive exhibition of Iranian products and services in Tanzania in collaboration with the Iranian Trade Center in the African country to showcase the Islamic Republic's trade and export capacities.

According to Ra'ed Mousavi, the

head of the Iranian Trade Center in Tanzania, this exhibition was the most appropriate platform to increase the knowledge of East African countries, especially Tanzania, about the products, services, and technological advancements of Iranian companies.

According to Mousavi, companies active in various fields including the agricultural sector, mines and industrial machinery, construction, as well as medicine and medical equipment participate in the first exclusive exhibition of the export capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tanzania.

In mid-July 2023, Iran's late President Ebrahim Raisi also took a visit to three African countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Economic experts believe that the president's visit to Africa provided the basis for increasing Iran's presence in the 60-billion-dollar economy of the African continent and will increase the level of activity of Iranian traders and businessmen in this continent.

Over the past 40 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never given up on its principled policy towards Africa due to political and cultural commonalities, despite the sanctions, pressure, and disruptions of the West, and has always maintained itself alongside the people and countries of Africa.

As reported, during the Iranian calendar years 1384 and 1385 (March 2005-March 2007), the relations between Iran and the African continent increased in terms of trade, but since 1386, the economic relations between Iran and Africa have decreased due to the economic crisis and cruel sanctions against

Surveys show that in the past years, due to the lack of restoration of economic relations with Africa, the amount of trade with the countries of this continent has remained at the level of \$1.2 billion, but according to Mohammed-Sadeq Ghanadzadeh, the director general of the Africa Department of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), facilitating the trade route with Africa is happening now and it is expected that the trade figure with this continent will reach \$10 billion in the next three years.

In fact, good steps have been taken to use Africa's capacity, and Africa can be a suitable market for Iranian goods, Ghanadzadeh stated.

Dubious diplomacy: US swords for Israeli protection, pediatric pills for Palestinian suffering



The 30-day ultimatum issued by the White House for Israel to enhance Palestinian access to basic necessities like food serves as a diversion from the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

From page 1 The US role in feeding Israel's killing machine in Gaza has further come under scrutiny since the regime carried out a ground incursion into northern Gaza nearly two weeks ago.

Reports suggest that 400,000 Palestinians have been trapped in northern Gaza. Israel has issued evacuation orders but its snipers target people who want to flee.

The regime has carried out massacres in northern Gaza, isolated the region and banned the entry of food and other essentials.

The United Nations has announced that no food aid has been delivered to the north, and supplies essential for survival are running out for Palestinians there.

On Tuesday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned that families in northern Gaza were "facing unimaginable fear, loss of loved ones, confusion, and exhaustion" because of the Israeli invasion.

The Israeli military has sent tanks and troops to northern Gaza, in particular in the town of Jabalia and its urban refugee camp under the pretext of fighting the Hamas resistance movement.

Israel stands accused of starving Palestinians in northern Gaza and trying to ethnically cleanse the region.

The Israeli brutalities have led to growing



Palestinians line up to receive meals at the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza as Israel stands accused of starving people there.

pressure on the United States, which is Tel Aviv's main Western ally.

Political ploy

In order to ease pressure, the Biden administration sent a letter to the Benjamin Netanyahu cabinet on Monday giving it 30 days to boost humanitarian aid access in Gaza or risk having some US military assistance cut off

The letter has been jointly written by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

It has been addressed to Israeli war minister Yoav Gallant and Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer.

The letter says the US has deep concerns about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, acknowledging that Israel denied or impeded nearly 90% of humanitarian movements between the north and south last month

It also calls on Israel to end the "isolation of northern Gaza" by reaffirming that there will be "no Israeli policy of forced evacuation of civilians" from north to south.

US charm offensive

The letter is in line with the charm offensive of the Biden administration towards Palestinians to appease domestic opposition to unwavering support for the Netanyahu

regime

White House officials have openly criticized the Israeli carnage in Gaza but the transfer of weapons has continued unabated.

Democrats fear that discontent over the White House's support for Israel's genocidal war on Gaza could result in Kamala Harris, the vice-president and party nominee, facing defeat against Donald Trump in the November presidential poll.

Many Arab American voters, who can play a key role in determining the fate of the upcoming election, remain critical of Biden's pro-Israel bias.

For now, it is clear that the US letter is just aimed at diverting attention from Israel's massacres in Gaza, particularly in the north.

The United States claims that Israel has the right to defend itself and provides it with lethal weapons.

But Washington merely employs hollow rhetoric to placate both domestic and international outrage regarding the pain and suffering of Palestinians in Gaza.

Such an approach is indicative of the fact that the US administration is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the anti-war voters while attempting to save face regarding its involvement in Israel's atrocious crimes in Gaza.

Israeli motive behind deadly Lebanon strikes



Aftermath of Israeli strike in Aitou, a prominently Lebanese Christian Maronite town in Northern Lebanon

From page 1 The Israeli military has not commented on the strike and it was clear that there were no Hezbollah targets in the Christian-majority town of Aitou.

With rare exceptions, northern Lebanon has been spared so far from the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon. Airstrikes have mostly focused on the Lebanese capital's southern suburb, in some instances central Beirut but mostly on regions east of Beirut such as the Bekaa Valley and south of the Capital city.

On Tuesday night an Israeli strike on the southern village of Qana killed at least 15 civilians, Lebanon's civil defense agency has said.

Qana is in southern Lebanon and the attack brought back dark memories of the Israeli massacre of Qana during the 2006 war that killed many civilians with the majority of the victims – 15 – being young children. On Wednesday, Israeli also bombed the municipal building of Nabatieh in southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese health ministry has

said the attack killed six civilians, including the local mayor and injured 43 others. The death toll is expected to rise. But there has been no evidence of any Hezbollah target or that the building was used to store weapons.

The Israeli military has bombed more extensively than in the July 2006 war on Lebanon. This is while the invasion attempts in the south have proven to be a failure in comparison to 2006 when the Israeli occupation forces occupied much larger territory in a similar time frame.

According to experts, the Israeli military has been instructed to attack regions not just linked to Hezbollah's support base but also areas that have absolutely nothing to do with the resistance movement. This is despite no evidence being offered by Tel Aviv of any Hezbollah members or infrastructure being present at the places being currently bombed in Lebanon. Not even the southern Lebanese towns and villages have shown unwavering support for Hezbollah since 1982 in wide-scale street demonstrations to support the resistance movement against Israeli aggression.

Critics accuse the Israeli military of targeting civilians, destroying residential homes and other vital infrastructure as well as health services in southern Lebanon and regions east and south of Beirut, including its southern suburb of Dahieh because these are Hezbollah strongholds. Experts say the goal is to turn the support base of Hezbollah in these regions against the Lebanese resistance by killing women and children. A similar tactic used in Gaza and the 2006 war on Lebanon.

The strategy backfired in 2006 against the Israeli regime. The support base for Hezbollah within Lebanon emerged stronger and bigger.

But does the plan to target civilians and turn the public opinion against Hezbollah by destroying their livelihoods work?

On Tuesday, a parliamentarian from the Lebanese Christian majority region of Aitou took the enemy by surprise by speaking out in support of Hezbollah and its ongoing efforts to resist the invading forces.

Gaza and deep pain in my heart

'I write with the tears of blood that flow from the nib of my pen'

By Syed Iman Ahmad

LUCKNOW, India - Until now, thousands of children, women and aged people have been devoured by death and millions have been rendered homeless in the Gaza Strip. Should there now not even be a word of condolence for them?

I write this so as not to feel like a criminal all my life. I dread that someday my conscience will question my pen despairingly and say:

You were picked up a thousand times to write while thousands of oppressed people cried out to you, when the helpless called out to you for support, when the injured called out for healing, when the thirst of the thirsty remembered you, when weeping eyes and the wails of the helpless called out to you... You turned away and left them alone! Where were you?!

And if this happens, I will consider myself to be a part of this oppression.

I do not write this myself. What makes me write

this are those grieving mothers in whose laps lie covered the lifeless bodies of their innocent children; and the souls of those suffering mothers and their children who were being treated at the hospital when another blast took place and thousands of children along with their mothers took flight to the skies.

Also, these words are being written by that innocent girl who died in the hospital blast. She knew her death was certain, so she wrote down her heart-rending will on a sheet of white paper. She writes:

"My shoes should be cleaned and given away to the poor; 45 shekels to my mother from my pocket money. Also, 5 shekels for sister Zeinah, 5 for grandmother, 5 for brother Hashim....'

This girl who had nothing left with her, was considerate towards others even when she was dying!

Shrieks of innocent children that terrorize one's heart and sighs of pain coming from the bodies of

innocent dead people are haunting my dreams and making me feel helpless: looking at me with tear-filled eyes and pointing thousands of questions towards me as well!

These words are not being written by Syed Iman Ahmad. Rather, these words are being written by the "pen of humanity". And speaking in favor of humanity is allowed by every system, every law and every court upholds and supports it.

Now if this humanity is imprisoned, then a question looms large for all of us. And if this happens, then it is not a victory for humanity. Rather, it will be a victory for a satanic society and a satanic empire.

We, the followers of Imam Hussein (AS), who sacrificed his six-month-old son Ali Asghar in Karbala and saved humanity, cannot at any age or time tolerate the murderers of humanity.

. Syed Iman Ahmad is a Muslim scholar from Lucknow, India

INTERNATIONAL

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

Humiliated by Hezbollah: Israel turns to industry to help foil drone attacks



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits a Golani training base targeted by Hezbollah drone strike. (Kobi Gideon/GPO)

TEHRAN- Israel is still reeling from the fallout of a drone attack carried out by Hezbollah against one of its military bases near the port city of Haifa at the weekend.

The Lebanese resistance movement hit the Golani Brigade's base, an elite Israeli infantry unit south of Haifa on Sunday. The aerial vehicle penetrated Israeli air defenses undetected killing several soldiers and injuring dozens of others.

The drone conducted its mission successfully without triggering Israel's alert systems.

Now, the regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has turned to industry to bolster his

military's ability to intercept aerial drones.

The Israeli Defense Ministry announced on Tuesday that it has launched a competition among eight large and small companies.

"After analyzing the trial results, the Defense Ministry will select several technologies to enter an accelerated development and production process. This aims to deploy new operational capabilities within months," it said.

The Hezbollah drone attack has turned the spotlight on Israel's vulnerability which receives huge amounts of military equipment from Western countries, in particular the United States.

Gaza hospital overwhelmed with casualties

Al-Awda Hospital has been inundated with casualties as dozens of injured people continue to arrive daily, the acting director of the hospital says. "Israeli forces are targeting everything that moves in northern Gaza," Mohammed Saleh said in a statement, according to Al Jazeera.

Medical staff are grappling with severe shortages of medicines, supplies and fuel, while

food is running critically low for both patients and healthcare workers, he added.

"If the siege continues, we are on the brink of a disaster," Saleh warned.

He called on UN agencies and international partners to urgently facilitate the delivery of medical supplies, fuel and food to sustain the hospital's operations.

Israel escalates Gaza assault to 'horrifying level'

The Israeli forces' assault on Gaza has escalated to a "horrifying level of atrocity" as "northern Gaza is being wiped off the map," dozens of prominent NGOs have said in a statement.

"Under the guise of "evacuation," Israeli forces have ordered the forced displacement of an estimated 400,000 Palestinians trapped in northern Gaza, including Gaza City. This is not an

evacuation – this is forced displacement under gunfire," the statement said, adding that since the beginning of the month, no food has been allowed in the area.

"The world cannot continue to stand by as the Israeli government commits these atrocities. Global leaders have both a legal and moral duty to act now." the statement said.

China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will grow more and more important in a turbulent world

By Dr. Jin Liangxiang

China and Iran formally defined their bilateral relations as Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in early 2016, when President Xi Jinping paid a visit to Iran. The strategic relationship has seen robust development since then.

The growing hegemonic mentalities, power politics and behaviors are seriously destabilizing the region and the world as well, and the future could see even worse scenario. Yet, China is strongly committed to its CSP with Iran, and China and Iran will see stronger cooperation.

Actually, it was in the early new century that China began its endeavor to build partnerships with countries in different parts of the world as one of the pillars of its international strategy. In general terms, partnership can be in political, economic, cultural and strategic areas. It can also be interpreted in security and strategic areas in narrow terms in many circumstances.

Accordingly, China has defined its relationship with countries as partnership, strategic partnership and comprehensive strategic partnership. These efforts contributed to China's vision of building a shared future for mankind in the second ten years of the new century. Partnerships are also part of China's efforts to build a shared future.

Partnership, instead of alliance, is a homegrown concept featuring China's philosophy with Chinese characteristics. China believes that the world order should be inclusive rather than exclusive. In 2014, President Xi Jinping proposed a new security concept at the CICA summit (Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia) in Shanghai, namely to

construct common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. The new security concept later became an essential part of the Global Security Initiative (GSI) in 2022. To put it simply, with the new security concept China believes that the security of the world should not be divided, and countries should work together to deal with the shared security. One country should take regard for others' security while strengthening its own security.

Alliance is by nature a Western concept serving the strategy of Western countries, particularly the U.S. in the contemporary world, to dominate the world with the approach of divide and rule. While allying with a bloc, the U.S. intended to contain the other side of the story. Both China, Iran and countries in West Asia are actually victims of the alliance strategy. Peace and security will never be truly available so long as the concept of alliance is there, particularly by hegemonic powers.

As a kind of vision in the minds of the Chinese political establishment, CSP could mean profoundly in many ways beyond the interpretation of a humble scholar. Partnership, instead of alliance, envisions inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness; the word comprehensive envisions a relationship in all-round ways including political, economic, cultural and strategic aspects; the word strategic in the Chinese language actually features both strategic importance and long-term considerations.

Iran is not only a great nation-state but also a great civilization, which could be dated back to more than 5,000,000 years ago. Enjoying such an old civilization and rich culture, Iran is also gifted with wisdom in statecraft.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

TOURISM



Traditional wrestling in Iran set for national recognition, says minister



TEHRAN - The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has called for the national registration of traditional Iranian wrestling, citing its deep cultural and historical signif-

Speaking on Tuesday during the unveiling of a new book on wrestling, the minister emphasized the sport's importance as a symbol of Iranian identity.

"Wrestling is more than a sport. It is part of our culture and identity, with roots deeply tied to the geography of this land," Salehi-Amiri said, highlighting the need for steps

to be taken to ensure the traditional sport is officially recognized at a national level.

At the event, which was attended by athletes and veterans of Iranian wrestling, Salehi-Amiri praised the establishment of a dedicated think tank for wrestling and the construction of a museum specifically for the sport, stating it was the first time such a facility had been built at the level of a formal

The official also noted that the infrastructure supporting wrestling surpasses that of other sports in the country.

"This is an exciting development, and I feel a renewed sense of energy," Salehi-Amiri added.

Iranian wrestling or Koshti is a martial art and combat sport that has been practiced since ancient times in Iran. A form today is koshti pahlavani practiced in the zurkhaneh.

While regional variations differ from one province to another. Olympic freestyle wrestling is often referred to as the "first sport"

Creating a plastic-free tourism sector is a challenge. Here's why it's worth it

including travel, tourism and hospitality since it first came into widespread use in the early 20th century.

Thanks to plastic's lightweight, affordable and durable properties, single-use items like cups, cutlery, bottles and vanity kits quickly became staples in hotels, resorts and destinations, because they were easy to handle and reduced operational burdens.

Small plastic bottles of toiletries, still found in thousands of hotel bathrooms today, symbolize convenience and luxury. However, as society grows more aware of the negative impact of plastic waste, the role of these products in travel, tourism and hospitality is being closely scrutinized.

With individuals, communities and governments increasingly understanding and agreeing that something must be done about this global environmental crisis, numerous interventions emerged across the sector and the UN Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and UN Tourism-led action and commitment framework have emerged to address the problem of plastic across the global tourism supply value chains.

However, the problem with plastic is still ife and, as highlighted by UNEP, more must

The environmental cost of convenience

The tourism industry significantly contributes to plastic pollution, with a marked in-

Plastic has transformed many industries, crease in marine pollution seen during peak travel seasons in places like the Mediterra-

> According to WWF, plastic pollution levels in the sea can rise by up to 40% in these areas during peak seasons, demonstrating a direct correlation between tourism and the presence of marine litter. Indeed, research from as far back as 1997 indicated that up to 80% of waste in the ocean was made up of non-biodegradable plastic.

> While plastic offers convenience, its downsides are becoming harder to ignore. Customer reviews increasingly call out destinations. attractions and businesses that are plagued by plastic litter, signalling a shift in customer expectations. Such feedback has the potential to damage a destination's reputation and deter future visitors.

> Beyond the visual pollution, microplastics have also emerged as a growing health concern, prompting people to demand changes in how businesses handle plastic.

> A 2022 poll from Ipsos reported that an average of 85% of people from 28 countries want to see a reduction in plastic use, but tourists have little control over local practices and look to the places they stay at to take the lead on reducing plastic use. As these re alities set in, there's been a push to rethink how single-use plastics fit into the travel

> > (Source: World Economic Forum)

Iran moves closer to UNESCO recognition of windmills

strides toward securing a possible UNESCO recognition for its centuries-old Asbads, traditional vertical-axis windmills used for grain grinding, as it works to complete a dossier for their inclusion on the World Heritage

These ancient windmills, which have played a crucial role in the lives of people in eastern Iran, particularly in South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces, are being documented as part of a serial property registration effort.

South Khorasan, considered the birthplace and primary hub of these ingenious structures, is home to approximately 79% of Iran's Asbads, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

These windmills, some of the earliest known human-engineered industrial devices, were designed to harness the strong, seasonal 120-day winds that sweep across the region.

While the Asbads were once a common sight in the broader region of Greater Khorasan, including today's northeastern provinces, South Khorasan boasts the largest concentration, with over 310 windmills still standing, the report said.

Iran's Asbads are unique in their vertical design, a significant departure from the horizontal-axis windmills seen in

Each structure typically consists of two parallel 10-meter walls, spaced about four meters



apart. Large wooden blades are mounted on a vertical axis within the northern part of the structure, and as the wind turns the blades, the movement is transmitted via a central shaft to a grinding stone below, where grains like wheat are processed.

These Asbads were particularly vital in areas such as Nehbandan and Darmian, where the steady seasonal winds were crucial for grain production. As of today, the towns of Darmian and Nehbandan hold the highest number of Asbads. However, there are a considerable number of Asbads in Birjand, Sarbisheh, and Qaen.

Moreover, the historical city of Tabas-e Masina, known for its Parthian-era origins and fertile plains, alone houses 60 Asbads.

Given the dispersal of Iranian Asbads on a vast geographical area, the ongoing documentation efforts aimed to secure global recognition for these remarkable windmills, have turned into a time-consuming project.

Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, who oversees the UNESCO nomination dossier, noted the complexity of the process, given the extensive number of Asbads across the three provinces.

He described the preparation of the dossier as time-consuming, akin to creating a "serial property" file due to the widespread distribution of the wind-

Talebian emphasized that the process is nearing completion, with experts focusing their efforts on ensuring the accurate documentation of each Asbad site. While the task has been daunting due to the sheer number of windmills, particularly in South Khorasan, Talebian expressed optimism that the dossier would soon be ready for submission to UNESCO, marking a significant step toward global recognition of these historical treasures.

Iran's Asbads are not only a testament to the ingenuity of the past but also a symbol of the re-

gion's cultural heritage and sustainable use of natural resources. The upcoming UNESCO submission will seek to preserve these windmills for future generations while showcasing their historical importance on the world stage.

Britannica says the earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Seistan [Sistan], Iran, in 915 CE.

According to the UN cultural body, Robert Forbes, a technology historian, stresses the point that the Islamic era windmill was the invention of Iranian. He writes: "this invention which was initially an exclusive device for Iran and Afghanistan, turned into an important source of energy all over the Islamic territories in the 12th century, and not only it was used for the grinding of grains and operation of water pumps, but also the chopping of sugarcanes and other purposes.

Moreover, the UNESCO website says that such vertical-axis windmills were taken to China during the Mongol reign.

Furthermore, the know-how of windmills was taken to other Islamic territories and was used in Egypt as the main source for the chopping and grinding of sugarcanes. In the 11th century, windmills reached Spain, the Islands of the Aegean Sea, and Portugal.

Qalibaf brings prehistorical artifacts back to Iran following Geneva visit

TEHRAN - Three ancient glazed bricks, dating back to c. 800 BC, have been returned to Iran, brought home by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bager Qalibaf after his participation in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Summit in Geneva.

Qalibaf, who returned to Tehran on Tuesday evening, announced the repatriation of these historical artifacts in a brief statement to the media, CHTN reported.

Speaking about the significance of the relics, Qalibaf said, "The bricks date back to 800 years before Christ."

These bricks, adorned with natural animal motifs typical of ancient Iranian art, were retrieved through coordinated efforts by the Iranian Embassy in Switzerland.

Qalibaf emphasized that the bricks will be handed over to Iran's Cultural Heritage,

Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry, adding, "We are pleased that we had the opportunity to return these valuable objects, which hold importance for the history and civilization of Iran, to the Iranian people.'

While details regarding how the bricks originally left Iran and the process of their return were not provided, the return of these artifacts is considered a significant cultural achievement for the country, contributing to the preservation of its ancient heritage.

In 2001, a collection of the same glazed bricks was discovered in a warehouse in Switzerland. The looted 2,700-year-old bricks are associated with the Mannaean civilization. In the same year, 51 pieces of the glazed bricks, most just over one square foot in size, were retuned home.

They have a wide variety of motifs: winged



lions and bulls with human heads, mythological figures, birds of prey, deer and floral or geometric designs. They come from Qalaichi, one of the most important archaeological sites in western Iran, which is just north of the north-western city of Boukan, near the Iraqi border. Qalaichi was the capital of the Mannaean kingdom.

Tajik envoy highlights shared heritage as key to cementing Tehran-Dushanbe ties

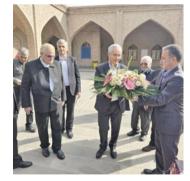
TEHRAN - Tajikistan's ambassador to Iran, Nizamuddin Zahedi, has said the cultural, linguistic, and historical commonalities between the two nations present valuable opportunities to expand bilateral cooperation.

During his visit to Tabriz on Wednesday, where he was invited to attend the city's 11th National Handicrafts Exhibition and the 3rd International Tourism Exhibition, Zahedi emphasized the deep-rooted ties between the two nations, CHTN reported.

The ambassador's visit included a tour of the Kamel Garden and the mausoleum of the famed poet Kamal Khujandi (1320-1400), who is celebrated in both Iranian and Tajik literary tradi-

Speaking to reporters, Zahedi underlined "enduring cultural and literary connections between the people of Tajikistan and Iran" as a strong foundation for enhancing collaboration in various fields.

"Our nations share rich liter-



ary, linguistic, religious, and cultural bonds, and these commonalities offer a unique opportunity to strengthen our bilateral ties," the envoy said.

"Throughout history, scholars and poets like Kamal Khujandi have forged an inseparable link between our two countries."

The Tajik ambassador also pointed to recent economic developments, stating that "the volume of trade between Iran and Tajikistan has increased fivefold in recent years." He expressed optimism that this positive trend would continue, with further expansion in both economic and cultural cooperation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zahedi praised the Tabriz exhibitions, calling them a "positive step" towards bolstering ties between the two countries. "These exhibitions provide an ideal platform for showcasing the cultural and economic potential of both Iran and Tajikistan and can pave the way for even greater collaboration," he said.

Soaked in history and dotted with splendid vibrant historical sites, Tabriz has countless attractions such as Azarbaijan Museum, Arg-e Tabriz, Poets' Mausoleum, Elgoli Park, Shahriyar House Museum, Municipal Hall, St Mary's Church, Qajar Museum, Constitution House, Khaqani Park, and Sarkis Church.

In addition, the ancient city has long been a place of cultural exchange since antiquity. Its UNESCO-registered bazaar complex gives reference to the city's glorious past when it was a peak commercial center on the Silk Road. It is also famous for having a rich Azeri culture, hospitable people, ubiquitous carpet shops, abundant public places, and an efficient transport system.

For centuries, the ancient city acted as a buffer between regional powers, the Persian and Ottoman empires in particular. It became the capital of the Mongol Il-Khan Mahmud Gazan (1295-1304) and his successor. Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, took it in 1392. Some decades later, the Kara Koyunlu Turkmen made it their capital. It was when the famous Blue Mosque was built in Tabriz. Tabriz retained its administrative status under the Safavid dynasty until 1548, when Shah Tahmasp I relocated his capital westward to Qazvin.

During the next two centuries, Tabriz changed hands several times between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the city was temporarily occupied by Turkish and then Soviet troops.

and Park of Versailles Located in the Île-de-France region, Louis XIII, in 1624. A first addition occurred south-west of Paris, privileged place both of residence and the exercise of power of the French monarchy from Louis XIV to Louis

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Palace

XVI, the Palace and Park of Versailles, built and embellished by several generations of architects, sculptors, painters, ornamentalists and landscape artists, represented for Europe for more than a century, the perfect model of a royal residence. The architectural planning and the majestic composition of the landscape form a close symbiosis, serving as a setting for the magnificence of the interior decorations of the apartments.

The inscribed property includes the zone enclosing the prestigious ensemble of the Palace, the Trianon châteaux and their gardens, as well as a narrow band of land offering the perspective from the extremity of the Grand Canal. It is the result of a century and a half of work commanded by the kings of France and entrusted to its greatest artists.

The strongest imprint has been left by Louis XIV, who started by enlarging the small brick and stone château built by his father,

after 1661 under the direction of Le Vau, in a still strongly italianite style. After 1678, Versailles was once again considerably enlarged and radically modified by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, who successfully introduced a sober, colossal, homogenous and majestic architecture, now inseparable from the memory of the Sun King. The famous Galerie des Glaces, between the Salon de la Guerre and that of the Paix, is the masterpiece of the Neo-classical and typically French style, called Louis XIV. The Orangerie and the Grand Trianon are also the work of Mansart, who was assisted by Robert de Cotte in the construction of the Royal Chapel.

The creations at Versailles during the 18th century are among the most perfect and most celebrated works of the Louis XV and Louis XVI styles: the Petit Trianon by Jacques-Ange Gabriel, the decoration of the appartments of Louis XV by Verbeckt and Rousseau, and the appartments and the Hameau of Marie-Antoinette by Mique.

(Source: UNESCO)

IFRC supports IRCS humanitarian measures in Lebanon

TEHRAN –Condemning Israeli attacks on Red Cross and Red Crescent medical facilities, Kate Forbes, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has supported the Iranian Red Crescent Society's efforts aimed at providing relief to oppressed people in Lebanon.

The IFRC is following up on the Lebanon situation and the Israeli bombardment of the IRCS's field hospital on the border of Lebanon and Syria in the General Assembly and the United Nations, Forbes noted.

Red Crescent centers should not be targeted, she said, adding that the IFRC has addressed the issue on the Red Cross agenda.

The hospital, established to assist displaced Lebanese on the Syrian-Lebanese border, was clearly marked with the Red Crescent flag and symbols. Despite this, the Israeli attack, on October 9, left the facility and its supplies, including food, medicines, and medical equipment, completely destroyed.

'Clear example of war crimes'

Iran has vehemently condemned Israel's attack on a medical facility on the Syria-Lebanon border, labeling it a "clear example of war crimes."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei stated on October 10 that the strike, which destroyed a 56-bed field hospital, ambulances, and all medical equipment, demonstrates Israel's disregard for international law.

Baqaei called for global con-



colleges, and universities, in-

Despite the UN Security Coun-

cil's call for an immediate cease-

fire in Gaza, Israel continues its

offensive, aiming for the com-

plete eradication of the Pales-

tinian people trapped in the be-

Also reacting to the attack,

Pir-hossein Kolivand, head of the

IRCS, confirmed that the hos-

pital was marked with the IRCS

flag, IRNA reported. "We intend

to file a complaint against Israel

The official made the remarks

during a meeting with the UN

Resident Coordinator of Iran,

Stefan Priesner. The Iranian of-

ficial condemned the brutal

attacks of the Zionist regime on

Gaza and Lebanon, the IRCS web-

Referring to Israeli crimes, in-

cluding targeting civilian areas,

killing civilians, and attacking

ambulances and rescue forces,

hospitals, and health centers,

the official warned about the

site reported.

through international forums."

cluding 65 run by UNRWA.

sieged Gaza Strip.

demnation of the attack, urging international bodies like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to take action.

The IFRC is following up on the Lebanon situation and the Israeli bombardment of the IRCS's field hospital.

He also stressed the urgent need for international aid to support the thousands of Lebanese displaced by Israel's recent aggression.

This incident comes amidst a wider pattern of Israeli attacks targeting medical facilities and educational institutions in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Since the start of the Gaza war on October 7, 2023, Israeli forces have specifically targeted the enclave's healthcare and education sec-

humanitarian crisis unfolding in Lebanon and the possibility of genocide.

He called for the immediate intervention of the United Nations to bring an end to the attacks.

Kolivand also presented a report on the shipment of humanitarian aid by the Iranian Red Crescent Society to Lebanon.

Highlighting the urgent need of the Lebanese for medicine, medical equipment, food, and essential items, Kolivand announced the IRCS's readiness to dispatch more shipments of humanitarian aid. He also stressed the need for active participation and cooperation of the United Nations in the field.

Iran to set up another field hospital in Lebanon

Unfazed by Israeli attacks, the IRCS is planning to set up another hospital in Lebanon.

Condemning Israel's attack as a clear violation of humanitarian law, Kolivand said "All the essential items including foodstuff, medicines, as well as ambulances are burnt in fire".

However, "We will set up another field hospital to provide health services to people impacted by war in Lebanon," the IRCS website reported.

Shipments of humanitarian aid along with relief teams will be dispatched to Lebanon soon. Basic goods like cooking utensils and canned food are among the needed items.

FAO highlights essential role of rural women in food production and environmental sustainability

TEHRAN – The FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran marked World Food Day and the International Day of Rural Women on Tuesday, October 15, with a keynote speech by Ms. Nazi Tavakoli, Officer-in-Charge, emphasizing the interconnectedness of food and nutrition security and the empowerment of rural women.

The Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Organization (AREEO) of the Ministry of Agriculture Jahad, hosted an event on 15 October 2024 to celebrate both International Day of Rural Women and World Food Day.

Speaking at the first International Day of Rural Women Conference and the World Food Day ceremony, Ms. Tavakoli recognized the invaluable contributions of rural women to agriculture, biodiversity, and environmental conservation. She noted that the production of healthy, nutritious food is inseparable from the efforts of rural women, who form the backbone of rural communities and play a key role in sustaining agricultural practices.

"When we support rural women, we invest in a future where biodiversity is protected."

"This year, on World Food Day, we are reminded of the universal right to nutritious and safe food for all. This commitment is also tied to the International Day of Rural Women, where we acknowledge the essential role rural women play in agricultural production and environmental sustainability," Ms. Tavakoli said

In Iran, FAO has collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture Jahad on projects that empower rural women. Through initiatives such as the Bactrian camel conservation project and the Rehabilitation of Forest Landscapes and Degraded Land Project (RFLDL), rural women have been provided with train-



OCTOBER 17, 2024

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

Ms. Nazi Tavakoli, Officer-in-Charge, FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, delivering speech on behalf of FAO at the international conference on the occasion of World Food Day and International Day of Rural Women on 15 October 2024. (Photo: Faranak Bakhtiari)

ing and income-generating opportunities. These projects have strengthened family livelihoods and contributed to the preservation of ecosystems, including efforts to combat desertification.

"When we support rural women, we invest in a future where biodiversity is protected, climate resilience is strengthened, and communities thrive," Ms. Tavakoli added, referencing this year's International Day of Rural Women theme, "Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future."

FAO's commitment to rural women aligns with the broader vision of World Food Day—to create a better life and a better future for all. By supporting rural women, FAO is working toward a world where no one is left behind, and where everyone has access to diverse, safe, and nutritious food.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide, collaborating with governments and partners to achieve food and nutrition security for all and ensure that people have access to high-quality food.

Iran attending ExCom annual session

TEHRAN -An Iranian delegation led by Nader Yar-Ahmadi, an official with the National Organization for Migration, is participating in the 75th Annual Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (ExCom) being held from October 14 to 19 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Officials and representatives from different countries will deliver speeches centered on the international community's commitments to supporting refugees, host countries, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) programs.

The Iranian official is scheduled to deliver a speech during the main session, he is also planning to hold separate meetings with Flippo Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees, Raouf Mazo, Assistant Commissioner for Operational Affairs, Hai Kyung Jun, Regional Director for the Asia and Pacific of UNHCR, as well as other countries representatives on boosting collaborations.

National Organization for Migration, UN-HCR discuss refuges

In September, the head of the National Organization for Migration, Abdollah Mobini, and Kyung Jun met to enhance cooperation

and find solutions to the problems related to refugees.

Lauding Iran's generous hosting of refugees, displaced individuals, and immigrants, Kyung Jun announced that the UNHCR is trying to expand its support to Iran in various ways by assigning resources to compensate for the budget deficit, IRNA reported

Mobini, for his part, stressed the presence of several million displaced immigrants and foreign refugees in Iran, as well as the extensive and generous services provided to them despite the unfair sanctions and the dual policy of the West.

The official further highlighted the fair responsibility of the international community to support refugees and facilitate the conditions for their return to their home countries.

Iran's support for refugees

Iran's support for refugees is demonstrated through its inclusive policies, which encompass protection, assistance, education, and healthcare, inspiring the global community and positively impacting the lives of refugees.

As the second-largest refugee-hosting country, Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee popula-

tions in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees.

The country is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans.

Currently, more than 500,000 Afghan children - including undocumented Afghans and those who have newly arrived in Iran following the Taliban takeover - are benefitting from Iran's inclusive education policies, one of the most progressive in the world.

In total, Iran hosts some 4.5 million Afghans of varying status – including resident permit holders, undocumented Afghans, and family passport holders – many of whom have been in the country for an extended period and require support to strengthen their resilience.

Iran's generous and exceptional services for refugees despite unfair economic sanctions have exceeded expectations and international responsibilities.

The government of Iran has made a very generous effort to provide services to millions of refugees and foreign nationals despite difficult living conditions and oppressive economic sanctions imposed on the country

Education space per student, literacy rate improved

From page **1** The literacy rate in urban areas was announced to be 92.8 percent, males had a literacy of 95.4 percent and females had a literacy rate of 90.2 percent.

In rural areas, the literacy rate reached 83.5 percent. Men accounted for 88.8 percent and women for 78.3 percent of the figure.

Moreover, the number of out-of-school students in primary, secondary, and high school lowered from 2.17, 6.71, and 18.19 percent in 1396 to 2.10, 5.23, and 16.12 percent in 1402, respectively.

Per capita education space extended

In June, former Education Minister Reza-Morad Sahraei said "Per capita education space has extended to five meters and 35 cm as eight schools were constructed on a daily basis on average, ISNA reported.

Also, some 2,700 sports and educational spaces have been built in the same period, the official stressed.

In August 2023, the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipment of Schools announced that the number of newly built schools across the country has increased by 104 percent over the past two years.

Literacy growth rate in Iran 2.5 times the world average

In the past four decades, the growth of literacy in the world has been about 18 percent, while in the same period, this figure in Iran has been 50 percent, IRNA reported.

In the past four decades, the growth of literacy in the world has been about 18 percent, while in the same period, this figure in Iran has been 50 percent, IRNA reported.

Nearly one year after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Literacy Movement Organization



was established by the order of Imam Khomeini with the aim of eradicating illiteracy.

At that time more than half of Iran's population, over the age of six, was illiterate. Now, Iran is on the verge of removing illiteracy.

To improve the literacy rate in the country, the Literacy Movement Organization has taken several measures.

"In line with the development plans of the Literacy Movement Organization to accelerate the literacy movement in the country, it has been decided to select 10 prioritized provinces of the country as pilots to implement the project," ISNA quoted Borouji, an official with the Literacy Movement Organization, as saying.

The Literacy Movement Organization also plans to benefit from the capacity of students to improve the country's literacy rate in the near future.

"In an effort to promote literacy and make illiterates more interested in learning, we will engage students and leverage their capabilities and knowledge in tackling illiteracy," Pana quoted Borouji as saying.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iranian researchers produce nano-mask with 99.9% lethality to coronavirus

Researchers at the Institute of Materials and Energy affiliated with the Ministry of Science, produced nano face masks that can kill coronavirus by 99.9 percent.

According to ISNA, Abuzar Masoudi, a faculty member of the Materials and Energy Research Institute, said that since the fibers of the fabric are hydrophilic. Therefore, the behavior of the virus is different, so different masks have been offered, including the FFP1 mask, which prevents up to 95 percent of the virus and up to 80 percent of the bacteria. While the N95 mask resists the virus up to 95 percent, and up to 100 percent of the bacteria.

محققان ایرانی ماسک نانو با قدرت کشندگی ۹۹.۹ درصد ویروس کرونا تولید کردند

محققان پژوهشگاه مواد و انرژی زیر نظر وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری ایران با استفاده از لایه نشانی نانو ذرات به پارچه به الیافی دست یافتند که قادر به تخریب ۹۹.۹ درصدی ویروس کرونا هستند. به گزارش ایسنا، ابوذر مسعودی عضو هیات علمی پژوهشگاه مواد و انرژی گفت از آنجایی که الیاف پارچه آب دوست هستند؛ از این رو رفتار ویروس متفاوت است و بر این اساس ماسکهای مختلفی عرضه شده است که از آن جمله می توان به ماسک FFP۱ اشاره کرد که تا ۹۵ درصد از ورود باکتری جلوگیری می کند. این میزان برای ماسک ۱۰۰ درصد ویروس و تا ۸۰ درصد ویروس و تا ۸۰ درصد باکتری

TEHRAN TIMES



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

I wonder at a man who loses hope of salvation when the door of repentance is open for him.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:50

Evening: 17:44 Dawn: 4:50 (tomorrow)

Iranian culture minister urges Turkey to avoid statements causing public discontent

TEHRAN- In a recent phone conversation, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi addressed concerns regarding statements made by certain Turkish media officials that have caused disquiet among the public in Iran. "Such statements should be avoided," Salehi stated, emphasizing the urgency of unity among Muslim nations amid regional developments and the escalating crimes of the Zionist regime, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Salehi welcomed Turkey's commitment to enhanced cultural relations, noting that "the Islamic Republic of Iran's fundamental foreign policy principle is strengthening relations with its neighbors, and among them, Turkey holds a prominent and significant position." He highlighted the existing strong political and cultural ties and the opportunities presented by the designated Year of Iranian-Turkish Culture for further collaboration.

Salehi pointed out that culture provides a foundation for interaction and cooperation, stating, "Iran and Turkey share many cultural resources, and both countries should benefit from this shared potential." He also acknowledged recent initiatives in media cooperation, affirming that Iran is fully prepared to strengthen these ties in alignment with the interests and goals of both nations.

In related developments, General Director of Turkey's state broadcaster TRT Mehmet Zahid Sobaci, made controversial remarks during an event

last Thursday. Referring to the organization's actions, he claimed, "We are in a state of confusion and discomfort for Iran. We must do this," while announcing plans to launch a Persian-language broadcast by the end of the year as part of TRT's expansion into 41 foreign languages.

During the conversation, Turkey's Presidency's Director of Communications, Fahrettin Altun, expressed his country's commitment to strengthening political and cultural ties with Iran. He emphasized the importance of increased communication and mutual understanding between the two nations and referenced the recent meeting between the two presidents, where they highlighted the necessity to expand ties in all sectors.

Altun regretted the recent statements made by the Turkish media official, clarifying that "any statement contradicting this has no connection with the thinking and approach of the Turkish President and government." He reiterated Turkey's steadfast approach to enhancing friendship and cooperation with Iran, noting that even if challenges arise, they can be addressed through dialogue and mutual goodwill.

The conversation concluded with a shared commitment to ongoing cooperation, underscoring the importance of maintaining a mindful approach toward media environments and public opinion, and ensuring that collaborative efforts serve the interests of both peoples.

TISFF to screen 4 short films by Wim Wenders

TEHRAN-The 41st Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) will kick off on October 18 at Mellat Cineplex in Tehran. One of the standout sections of this year's festival is a special screening of four short and medium-length films by the renowned German filmmaker Wim Wenders, scheduled for Monday, October 21.

The program includes "Same Player Shoots Again," "Room 666," "Silver City Revisited," and "Reverse Angle," which will be shown in one session.

In individual notes provided to the international secretariat of the TISFF, the esteemed filmmaker has explained his films.

About "Room 666," he said: "At the 1982 Cannes Film Festival, there was a general sense of despair. It felt as if the end of cinema was inevitable, and this feeling was pervasive. It was as if a 'black hole' in the history of cinema was about to open. So, I decided to conduct a survey among my colleagues about the future of cinema. I invited all of them to the only available room in the city: Room 666 at the Martinez Hotel. There was a camera in the room, and the question was placed on the table. My colleagues only had to turn on the tape recorder and the camera. When they were ready to give their individual answers, filmmakers like Godard, Fassbinder, Spielberg, Antonioni, Herzog, and others responded to the question: 'Is cinema a dying art form? Is it a language that is being lost?' Some gave detailed answers, while others, feeling uneasy, remained silent, and we cut them out..."

In the 50-minute documentary "Room 666" (1982), 15 famous directors from France, Italy, Brazil, Lebanon, Germany, Turkey, the Philippines, and the U.S. are asked to give their views on the future of cinema.

"Silver City Revisited" is a 25-minute film Wenders directed in 1969. It depicts the inhabitants of a busy city, who go about their everyday lives as the traffic on its roads swells and diminishes gradually.

Explaining the film, the director said: "I was greatly influenced by the landscapes of the various apartments I lived in as a student in Munich, and I had a collection of postcards. In the attic of the film school,

I found a collection of old 78 shellac records and numbered them accordingly, but the recording mix didn't happen. In the end, using the film school's 16mm projector, I recorded them directly and approximately onto the audio track."

Wenders made "Same Player Shoots Again" in 1968. In the 12-minute film, in a sequence of five shots, a man carrying a machine gun runs until he starts to slow down.

Speaking about the film, he said: "My first short film was 'Scenes' but it somehow got lost. However, two shots from it survived and became the first two shots of 'Same Player Shoots Again'. These two shots form the prologue. The rest of the film, after the title, consists of a three-minute shot repeated five times, like five balls in a pinball machine. The film was shot in black and white, then repeated five times, each time tinted in a different color. It didn't really turn into a color film; there's just a little blue, red, yellow, and green along the way."

"Reverse Angle" is a short documentary made in 1982. In the film, Wenders discusses his experience during the making of the film "Hammett," and reflects on the differences between film production in Europe and in the U.S.

"This film was a kind of diary. It was about New Wave music (including the band The Del-Byzanteens, led by Jim Jarmusch), about wandering around New York, about editing with Francis Ford Coppola, about a novel by Emmanuel Bove, and about Edward Hopper. In fact, the whole thing was somehow a reflection on filmmaking in Europe and America," Wenders said.

Wim Wenders, 79, is renowned for his films that possess deep philosophical and emotional themes and is recognized as one of the prominent figures of New German Cinema.

Among the honors he has received are prizes from the Cannes, Venice, and Berlin film festivals. He has also received a BAFTA Award and been nominated for four Academy Awards and a Grammy Award.

He has a diverse body of work, with some of his most famous films being "Paris, Texas" (1984) and "Wings of Desire" (1987), which have not only won numerous awards at international festivals but have also had a significant impact on European and North American cinema. In 1984, he won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for "Paris, Texas," and in 1987, he received the Best Director award at the same festival for "Wings of Desire".

Wenders is known for addressing social and human issues with a unique aesthetic, and he has had a significant influence on both commercial and artistic cinema worldwide.

He formerly served as the president of the European Film Academy from 1996 to 2020. He also earned an Honorary Golden Bear in 2015. He is also an active photographer, emphasizing images of desolate land-

مروری بر آثار ویم وندرس

WENDERS

This year's edition of the Tehran International Short Film Festival received 13,651 submissions from more than 30 countries. The number of submitted films is a new record in the history of the event, about twice the number of submissions last year. Of the total submissions, 107 short films will compete for the top awards.

The line-up includes 59 short fiction films, 21 animated movies, 18 documentaries, and nine experimental films. The submitted works are from India, China, Poland, the U.S., Egypt, Greece, France, Palestine, Turkey, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Russia, Australia, Japan, Germany, Italy, and Cuba among others.

The TISFF has been held for 40 consecutive years in Iran, by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) one of the most renowned schools of cinema and short film production in Iran and throughout the world.

The TISFF is approved by the Academy Awards® (Oscars) and the winner of the Grand Prize becomes eligible for the Oscars.

Mehdi Azarpendar, the managing director of the IYCS, will serve as the secretary of the upcoming edition of the TISFF, due to be held from October 18 to 23 in Tehran.

Iran's "Requiem for a Tribe" to compete at Ji.hlava film festival

TEHRAN- Iranian director Marjan Khosravi's "Requiem for a Tribe" will go on screen at the 28th edition of the Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival, which will be held in Jihlava, the Czech Republic, from October 25 to November 3.

The documentary is about a 55-year-old Hajar, who has spent her entire life in the nomadic Iranian tribe of Bakhtiari. She is betrayed and disappointed by her closest family, who want to force her to settle down and peacefully live out her life in the city. Although the circumstances, including the patriarchal social system, increasing urbanization and climate change, are not in her favor, Hajar is not going to give up her flock of sheep or her nomadic freedom.

In her extremely empathetic, partly person-

Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival is the largest festival for creative documentary films with a special focus on Central and Eastern Europe. It draws attention to socially relevant projects that possess innovative style and imagery, as well as a certain depth of reflection and confrontation. In to experimental cinema and hosts various industry events for film professionals.

al documentary debut, director Marjan Khosravi creates a portrait of a strong woman who, even in the face of turbulent modernity, does not want to let herself be deprived of the most valuable things she has - memories, traditions, contact with nature and the joy of free movement.

addition, the festival offers screenings dedicated

Cartoon of Day



Israel Attacks UNIFIL Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

Belt and Road's success mit underway in Urumqi, China. He noted that the Belt and Road Initiative seeks



TEHRAN-Speaking at the 6th World Media Summit in China, Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group (which consists of Mehr News Agency and English-language daily Tehran Times), emphasized the crucial role of people-to-people exchanges in the success of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative.

He highlighted the importance of cultural and human connections, alongside economic benefits, in revitalizing the ancient trade route at the sum-

to revitalize ancient trade routes and foster collaboration. "The BRI is more than just an economic concept," Rahmati stated. "It is a vision driven by China's human-centered development model, emphasizing the interconnectedness of economy, culture, and people for sustainable progress. The cultural and human exchanges are perhaps even more crucial than economic benefits for the people of the Silk Road."

People-to-people exchanges: a key to

He stressed the significance of intercultural dialogue and shared values in strengthening the BRI. "When a shared understanding and consensus among the people regarding common values emerge," he said, "the Belt and Road Initiative will become more deeply rooted, and cultural and economic exchanges among participating countries

Rahmati concluded by emphasizing the importance of mutual learning and respect among civilizations, drawing upon the legacy of Zheng He, the Chinese admiral and explorer who sailed in the 15th century. "His influence in Iranian history is so profound that he feels as though he was born and lived in Iran," he said, highlighting the impact of cultural exchange.

"We have much to learn from one another, and by fostering these connections, we can keep the spirit of the Silk Road, now manifested in the Belt and Road Initiative, alive."

He also underscored the significance of supporting the Palestinian people's struggle for peace and dignity. "The right of the Palestinian people to live in peace, dignity, and without humiliation is paramount," he stated. "As long as people like Ziad Khaddash, a Palestinian writer whose book vividly portrays the humiliation and injustice faced by his people, are alive, their struggle will not be forgotten."

Irish visual artists' Christmas fundraiser for Gaza

The Irish Visual Artists for Gaza, a broad collective of Irish visual artists, designers and artisans, has raised more than €80,000 so far for life-saving aid for displaced Gazan families and orphans, who have been under attack by Israel for over a year.

The brainchild of Dee Conneely, Leigh Brady and Aoife Neasy, it started life after a conversation between Leigh and Dee about the devastating events unfolding on a daily basis in Palestine, Irish Country Magazine reported.

Leigh is an international human rights worker who had lived in Palestine for over five years and was being contacted by families on the ground in Gaza, who had lost everything. She wanted to organize a fundraiser, but didn't know where to start.

An art teacher from Co Galway, Dee had some connections in the art world and decided to organize prize draws of art by Irish visual artists.

"I have always believed in the power of art to inspire and change people's hearts and minds," she said. "I knew some Irish artists from my days at the Limerick School of Art and my gut feeling was that they would want to support our initiative."

The response was phenomenal - over 70 Irish visual artists donated stunning pieces of art, craft and design for the initial art prize draw, which took place in May.

Among the artwork up for grabs for the initial prize draw was a poignant hand-colored portrait by Anne-Marie Farrell depicting Mohammed Al-Yazi, an orphaned 14-year-old boy from Gaza holding his 6-month-old sister in his arms.

When the art donations kept flowing and the situation on the ground in Gaza just got worse and worse, Dee, Leigh and Aoife were adamant they would keep trying to raise as much money as possible to cover basic needs such as clean drinking water, food parcels and tents for groups of displaced families in Gaza.

What followed has been weekly art and design draws in aid of specific families, who are highlighted on the Instagram page and stories for a week. This is a joint initiative between Irish Visual Artists for Gaza and Gaza go Bragh, an Irish-Palestinian collective providing direct

humanitarian support to displaced families in Gaza and has helped to raise almost €10,000 in donations for individual families.

In addition to these weekly draws, Irish Visual Artists for Gaza have found more and more creative ways to sell, auction and raffle Irish art, craft and design in aid of Gaza.

On sale at the moment are prints of an original design by artist Jason O'Gorman commissioned by the actor Hilary Rose. "These two beautiful people came together to reimagine the Cork coat of arms with the slogan 'Safe Harbor for All Ships'. They donated 35 artist quality prints of this design for us to sell with all the proceeds going to Gaza Go Bragh," explained Leigh.