

TEHRAN TIMES



'Golden Opportunity'

What are anticipated outcomes and potential breakthroughs of Pezeshkian's attendance at the 2024 BRICS summit?

Sputnik special correspondent in interview with Tehran Times: 'BRICS gained more power and stability with Iran'

MOSCOW – Iran has a pivotal role in West Asia, which makes its membership in the BRICS group a valuable addition with mutual benefits for all involved, says Kristina Malyk, a special international correspondent with Russia's Sputnik News Agency.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Malyk delved into various aspects of BRICS, outlining her vision for how the bloc's establishment and ongoing expansion will reshape global dynamics. She also discussed the implications of Iran's inclusion in the group, specifically addressing how this development will impact both Iran and BRICS. ▶ Page 3

"Mosquito Protocol": Israel uses Palestinian captives as human shields, CNN and NYT report

By Ehsan Etesam

TEHRAN – Recent reports by CNN and The New York Times expose a horrifying reality: the Israeli military's systematic use of Palestinian detainees as human shields in Gaza. Investigations, drawing on testimonies from former detainees, Israeli soldiers, and eyewitnesses, paint a chilling picture of widespread and systematic exploitation of Palestinian civilians, a blatant violation of international law that constitutes a war crime by definition.

CNN's report, published Thursday, details the use of a practice dubbed the "Mosquito Protocol." An unnamed Israeli soldier, speaking on condition of anonymity, told CNN that his unit routinely detained Palestinians with the explicit intent of using them to navigate hazardous areas in Gaza, potentially booby-trapped houses, and tunnels. The soldier stated, "We told them to enter the building before us...if there are any booby traps, they will explode and not us."

War on truth: Resistance media in crosshairs of Zionist aggression

By Sondoss Al-Assad

BEIRUT – In a bid to hide the genocidal massacres that are being committed daily in various Lebanese regions, the pro-resistance media is now the major target of the Zionist regime's aggression after it has miserably failed to achieve a sole strategic achievement.

Without warning, the Israeli enemy targeted one of the offices of Al-Mayadeen TV in the Janah area in Beirut. This crime was followed by attacks on the Lebanese Resistance, Arab and international media correspondents in the town of Hasbaya, southern Lebanon, where Al-Manar TV photojournalist Wissam Qassem, Al-Mayadeen TV photojournalist Ghassan Najjar and Al-Mayadeen broadcast engineer Mohammad Reda were martyred.

Following the attack, Ali Shuaib, Al-Manar's correspondent, who miraculously survived the strike, said: "Today we are the news."

Israeli losses in Lebanon rise

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli military has announced the death of five more soldiers during combat in southern Lebanon.

The soldiers "fell during combat in southern Lebanon," a statement read, without specifying where in Lebanon.

There are conflicting media reports on the number of casualties sustained among the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) over the past 24 hours.

The Israeli military has been widely accused of concealing the true number of its casualties.

News related to the Israeli wars in Gaza and Lebanon, including footage, "must be reviewed by the IDF censorship office before publication".

According to Israeli Army Radio, five armored soldiers were killed and 19 injured after Hezbollah targeted a house they were holed up in in southern Lebanon with a barrage of rockets.

Israel's public broadcaster Kan published a similar story. Five soldiers were killed when a rocket (not rockets, as Israeli Army Radio reported) struck the building they were in.

Devilish dance: Bibi butchers, Blinken bows

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN– Israel is perpetrating back-to-back massacres in the Gaza Strip, emboldened by the latest regional trip of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Health officials in Gaza said on Friday that an Israeli strike killed 38 people, including over a dozen children in the southern city of Khan Younis.

Doctors at Nasser Medical Complex confirmed 14 children, who were transferred to the medical facility, had suffocated to death after the Israeli army fired bombs and shells at residential buildings in an eastern area of Khan Younis.

The Israeli carnage in southern Gaza comes as the regime has ratcheted up its offensive in the north of the Palestinian territory.

Israeli forces raided the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahya in northern Gaza Friday morning ordering staff, patients and the wounded to leave the building.

The raid followed the Israeli bombing and shelling of the medical facility. ▶ Page 5



Funeral ceremony held for Iranian physician martyred in Beirut

TEHRAN – The body of martyr Ali Heydari, a distinguished Iranian physician and devoted aid worker, was laid to rest at the holy shrine of Imam Khomeini in Tehran.

The funeral, held on Friday, saw the attendance of Iranian officials and numerous citizens from Tehran.

Seyyed Hassan Khomeini, grandson of founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Imam Khomeini, led the funeral prayers for Dr. Heydari.

Dr. Heydari was martyred on October 22, when an Israeli airstrike targeted the ambulance he was operating in Beirut, where he had been stationed to provide medical assistance amid the ongoing violence. ▶ Page 3



The sons of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, visited the office of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in Tehran on Friday.

The visit aimed to convey a message from Ayatollah Khamenei following the death of Yahya Sinwar, former Head of Hamas' Political Office, who was killed by Israeli forces in Gaza.

The Leader's four sons expressed Ayatollah Khamenei's condolences and congratulations on Sinwar's martyrdom.

Iran demands UN condemnation of Israeli targeting of Iranian citizens in Lebanon

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, has formally demanded that the UN Security Council condemn the targeting of two Iranian citizens in Lebanon by Israeli forces.

In a letter addressed to the Council, Iravani asserted that these acts constitute a grave violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, representing a direct challenge to the international community's commitment to upholding the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

Necessary warnings were given to some regional countries

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

In a note, Kayhan discussed the approach of the Islamic Republic to a possible war between Iran and Israel and wrote: The conflict between Iran and the Zionist regime is not just a conflict between two political entities in West Asia, and others cannot just watch it. Based on this, necessary warnings were given to some countries in the region.

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's Foreign Minister, visited the capitals of 10 countries in the region in less than a month; and after the brilliant Operation True Promise II, he was trying to convey Iran's message regarding the new developments to the regional leaders and actors. By resorting to the levers of diplomacy in the region, Tehran has also given the necessary warnings in terms of military. The warning initiative and diplomacy together can create a new regional balance and block the way for the Americans to implement the new order.

Farhikhtegan: BRICS capacities for Iran

In an interview with Mehdi Seif Tabrizi, an expert on international issues, Farhikhtegan dealt with the BRICS capabilities for Iran. He said: Economically, this union is valuable for Iran. BRICS has created a bank. The important thing for BRICS, and the Russians emphasized it after the opening of the bank, is that it is not supposed to establish a new currency and be against the dollar; rather in the initial steps, the BRICS member countries are expected to trade in national currencies. Now, nearly 96% of the exchanges between Russia and Iran are done in national currencies.

This is a great step to circumvent the sanctions imposed on Iran and counter financial limitations, like SWIFT. Exchange in national currencies with emerging powers such as India and China whose economies are flourishing, and the global south by capitalizing on the economic mechanisms of BRICS and its bank can make Iran's economy dynamic and bring prosperity for Iran's private companies.

Shargh: BRICS is an anti-Western alliance

In a commentary, Shargh addressed the BRICS summit hosted by Russia and said:

Russia's goal in strengthening BRICS is to increase the financial independence of BRICS member countries and also to reduce geopolitical risks as much as possible, a goal that Iran also pursues.

Diplomats of our country believe that Iran, as a member of the economic bloc, has a very good opportunity to evade unilateral sanctions and use the benefits of the BRICS Development Bank.

On the other hand, the influence of BRICS on the American elections is such that Western analysts describe this anti-Western alliance as worrying. But they believe that this situation may change if Donald Trump becomes president and tries to exclude China from Western markets.

Political experts evaluate the success of BRICS in implementing its banking mechanism. To what extent the member states resist the American pressure or can evade it with the banking mechanism defined in BRICS is key to evaluating the success or failure of BRICS.

Arman-e-Melli: How to end UAE greed over islands

In an analysis, Arman-e-Melli examined the ownership claim of the UAE on the three Iranian islands. The paper said: The claims of the UAE on the three Iranian islands have been there for a long time, but this claim has been repeated more frequently recently.

To counter the UAE's claims, Iran should put economic and agricultural development projects, strengthening military capabilities, and most importantly, active diplomacy on the agenda. With these policies, Iran can solidify its economic and security position in these three islands and adopt a stronger position against foreign claims.

Also, the government can turn these islands into regional hubs with sound policies. To realize it, it is possible to establish free trade zones in these islands, develop fisheries and aquaculture industry, improve security and strengthen military structures in the three islands, as well as establish military bases to help stabilize Iran's sovereignty over the islands.

IRGC chief says Israel 'should not count on THAAD' to defend against potential Iranian attacks

TEHRAN – Major General Hossein Salami, Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), issued a stern warning to Israeli leaders on Thursday, urging them to abandon reliance on defense systems like the THAAD and avoid "irrational decisions" that could hasten the downfall of their regime.

Speaking at the National Congress of Martyrs of Kermanshah Province, Salami cautioned against the missteps of both Israel and its key ally, the United States.

"The Zionist regime," he said, "is a small nation heavily dependent on the sea for 98% of its economy and cannot afford reckless moves. Irrational decisions will only accelerate their collapse."

He further asserted that Israel's association with the U.S. in military operations has led to global disfavor and a loss of legitimacy, leaving Israel increasingly isolated except for American support.

Salami accused Israel of provoking lasting resentment across generations, warning that this anger "will eventually turn into weapons" against it.

Calling on the "young men of Lebanon and Palestine" as well as the youth across the Islamic world, he praised their opposition to Israeli actions, which he said stand as symbols of strength against "decayed and outdated" Israeli defenses.

"Reliance on a few missile launchers will not save them in a broad battle," he added.

The IRGC leader described the residents of Kermanshah, a city that shares a 371-kilometer border with Iraq and has a legacy of Resistance, as "guardians of the nation" who epitomize resilience and dedication to both



faith and country.

Salami highlighted the sacrifices of the Kermanshah province, which has suffered over 30,000 casualties in war, including 9,800 martyrs.

With American and Israeli involvement in regional conflicts under scrutiny, Salami maintained that global superpower influence would not endure, declaring, "Today, the world sees America's power through the bombs it drops on Gaza and Lebanon's children."

The Health Ministry in Gaza reported that over 55 additional Palestinians lost their lives due to continuous Israeli strikes, bringing the total death toll since last year to 42,847.

In the ongoing year-long assault on Gaza, more than 100,544 people have been injured, marking a significant milestone of over 100,000 casualties, according to the ministry.

Despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, Israel has intensified its offensive on Gaza following a Hamas-led assault on October 7, 2023. The conflict has extended into Lebanon, where Israeli actions have resulted in 2,574 deaths and over 12,000 injuries since early October 2023, as reported by Lebanon's health ministry.

1,000 Iranian missiles ready for potential Israeli attack, says U.S. media

TEHRAN – Iran's armed forces have prepared up to 1,000 missiles for a swift response to any potential Israeli attack, a threat that has been looming for weeks, according to the New York Times.

The American paper published a report on Thursday, saying while Tehran is not looking to engage in war, it is ready to enter one if necessary.

The NYT said Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has ordered Iran's armed forces to develop multiple military plans for a rapid response to any Israeli attack.

This report aligns with previous reporting by Iran's Tasnim News Agency, which has stated that Iran has prepared "10 scenarios" for responding to a potential Israeli assault.

"The responses under consideration included a barrage of up to 1,000 ballistic



missiles; escalated attacks by Iranian proxy militant groups in the region; and disrupting the flow of global energy supplies and shipping moving through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz," the NYT report added.

The paper also claims that Tehran may not retaliate against Israel if the regime "limits its attack to a few military bases and

warehouses storing missiles and drones" – An assertion contrary to remarks by several of Iran's high-ranking officials, who have said any attack by Israel will elicit a strong and crushing reaction.

Iran fired a volley of approximately 200 ballistic missiles at Israeli military and intelligence bases in the occupied territories on October 1.

The attack dubbed Operation True Promise II came in response to a series of Israeli terrorist attacks, which targeted Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July and Hezbollah's Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah in southern Beirut last month.

Reports suggest that 90% of Iranian projectiles hit their targets. The Israeli regime has imposed strict censorship on the aftermath of the attacks, arresting several journalists who attempted to report on the true extent of Iran's operation.

Leader, Iranian officials honor martyred Hezbollah member Hashem Safieddine



TEHRAN – The Leader of the Islamic Revolution and other Iranian officials has extended their sympathies towards Hashem Safieddine, a high-ranking Hezbollah member recently martyred by Israeli forces in Beirut.

Safieddine, who had been expected to succeed Nasrallah as Hezbollah's secretary-general, was a pivotal figure in the Resistance. His death comes amid heightened Israeli aggression toward Lebanon, which intensified following Israel's war on Gaza last October. Since then, Israeli attacks on Lebanon have resulted in the deaths of at least 2,574 people.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, honored late Hashem Safieddine, praising Hezbollah as "the most formidable protector of Lebanon" and a crucial defense against Israeli crimes.

In a message issued Thursday, Ayatollah Khamenei paid tribute to Safieddine, whom he described as "one of Hezbollah's most prominent leaders and a trusted ally of

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah."

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the role of Safieddine and other Hezbollah leaders in fortifying Lebanon against division and securing it from Israeli occupation forces, which once pushed as far as Beirut.

"Through the wisdom and courage of leaders like Safieddine, Hezbollah has shielded Lebanon from threats of disintegration and countered the ongoing danger posed by the occupying regime, which has time and again shown its brutal reach," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

He went on to commend the sacrifices made by Hezbollah fighters under Nasrallah's leadership, which he credited with thwarting Israeli ambitions to annex parts of southern Lebanon, including regions like the Litani River and the city of Tyre.

"Their courage saved Lebanon from being absorbed into the Israeli-occupied territories. Hezbollah risked its resources, honor, and lives to safeguard Lebanon's sovereignty, frustrating the Zionist regime's aggressive ambitions," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei also ad-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian extended heartfelt condolences following the assassination of senior Hezbollah figure Sayyed Hashem Safieddine in an Israeli airstrike in Lebanon. Describing Safieddine as a "great man of jihad and martyrdom," Pezeshkian honored his dedication to the people of Palestine and Lebanon, as well as his role in strengthening the regional Resistance movement.

In his Wednesday statement, the president noted that Safieddine drew strength from the teachings of Ashura, the defining Shia commemoration of struggle against injustice.

"He leaves behind a remarkable legacy of resilience in the face of oppression and tyranny, one that will inspire future generations," he added.



Major General Hossein Salami, chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), also released a statement on Wednesday, expressing grief over Safieddine's death.

He emphasized the strategic importance of West Asia, particularly Lebanon and Palestine, where he believes Western powers prioritize "sacrificing humanity and resistance" to maintain Israel's position.

Salami underscored that those dedicated to Islamic resistance, inspired by martyrdom, embody unparalleled heroism that will thwart the plans of foreign interests in the region.

"The day when this malignant tumor, Israel, is eradicated from the Islamic world is not far off," Salami declared.



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also paid tribute to Safieddine, portraying him as a symbol of unity who gave his life for Islam, Palestine, and Lebanon.

Qalibaf condemned Israel's brutal killing of defenseless civilians in Lebanon and Gaza, attributing this violence to its recent military setbacks against the Resistance Front.

"Facing defeat, the Zionist regime resorts to heinous acts, such as targeting civilians, as it did with Safieddine in Lebanon," he stated.

Qalibaf concluded by affirming his belief that those who pursue martyrdom in defense of faith ultimately attain divine victory, calling it "an eternal path for all who fight in the way of God."

Iran demands UN condemnation of Israeli targeting of Iranian citizens in Lebanon

From page 1 ► The complete text of the letter is as follows:

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing to draw your attention, and that of the Security Council, to yet another brazen act of violence and terrorism perpetrated by the Israeli regime, this time targeting two Iranian nationals in Lebanon in an egregious violation of international law, particularly international humanitarian law.

On 19 October 2024, an Israeli drone launched a missile strike on the personal vehicle of an Iranian national, Ms. Masoumeh Karbasi, and her Lebanese husband, in the densely populated area of Jounieh, Beirut.

After narrowly escaping the first missile, the couple sought refuge

at the side of the street, only to be struck by a second missile moments later, resulting in their martyrdom.

This brutal attack, captured on surveillance cameras and broadcasted across media outlets, reveals the egregious disregard for civilian life and international legal norms.

In a further heinous crime, on 22 October 2024, in an outrageous and deliberate strike, Israel assassinated Dr. Ali Heidari, an Iranian physician and relief worker, in Beirut.

Dr. Heidari was performing life-saving duties, providing critical medical care to the wounded and assisting those in dire need.

His assassination is not only a despicable act of violence but also a blatant violation of the 1949 Ge-

neva Conventions, which expressly prohibit attacks on hospitals and medical personnel. This constitutes a war crime under international law.

These atrocities are not only a blatant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity but also a direct assault on the international community's efforts to uphold the very core of international humanitarian law.

Since the launch of its genocidal campaign in Gaza, followed by its unrelenting aggression and war crimes against Lebanon, the Israeli regime has ruthlessly targeted hospitals, medical facilities, and personnel. Moreover, hundreds of healthcare workers have been murdered in cold blood by this regime.

The Islamic Republic of Iran urges the Security Council to unequivocally condemn these heinous acts and take decisive action, as mandated by the UN Charter, to hold Israel fully accountable for its continuous violations of the Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran calls on the Secretary-General to ensure that all these violations are thoroughly documented in relevant reports to the General Assembly, Security Council, and Human Rights Council.

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

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Sayyed Hashem Safieddine, late head of Hezbollah's Executive Council

dressed those concerned with Lebanon's future, urging them to recognize Hezbollah's role in preserving the nation's independence and resist any attempts to distort the truth about the group's actions.

"Today, Hezbollah remains Lebanon's strongest defender and the solid barrier against the Zionist regime's greed, which has long threatened to divide Lebanon. The enemy tries to undermine Hezbollah's critical role in defending Lebanon. Those who care for the

country should not let this false narrative take root," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's support for Hezbollah and the Palestinian cause, underscoring Iran's continued commitment to backing those who resist occupation.

"Hezbollah is alive and thriving, and with God's grace, the Islamic Republic will continue to support the fighters of Al-Quds and all those standing against the criminal forces that have seized Palestine," he declared.

Golden opportunity

What are anticipated outcomes and potential breakthroughs of Pezeshkian's attendance at the 2024 BRICS summit?

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – The BRICS bloc, once a club of five, threw open its doors in 2023, inviting six new members to join its ranks: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina, and the United Arab Emirates. In the beginning of 2024, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the UAE officially stepped into the BRICS fold which now represents 46% of the world's population and contributes 37% of global GDP (measured by purchasing power parity).

While the founders of BRICS have repeatedly declared their vision of the group as a catalyst for reshaping the Western-dominated world order, for some members, it offers a unique opportunity to break through long-standing roadblocks. For Iran, grappling with decades of intransigence and dishonesty from Western politicians, BRICS presents a pathway to finally mitigate the sting of Western sanctions that have been seemingly insurmountable, even with a comprehensive deal like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In 2015, when Iran sat down with the U.S. and its European allies to negotiate concessions on its nuclear program in exchange for the termination of Western sanctions, many hailed it as a crucial step. For officials who had weathered decades of pressure from the U.S., the JCPOA appeared to signal an end, or at least a long pause, to Western hostility. When the U.S. withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and reinstated old sanctions, adding new, crippling ones,



some officials remained convinced that mending ties with the West was the best course of action. But after several rounds of negotiations characterized by escalating Western pressure, Iranians began to shift their focus away from the West and toward the Global South.

The BRICS bloc holds immense promise for its members. Led by China, poised to become the world's top economy, Russia, a military behemoth with a global political footprint, India, the world's most populous nation with a rapidly developing economic force and South Africa and Brazil, both dominant players in their respective continents, BRICS is a blend of economic strength, political influence, and diverse perspectives.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian returned to Tehran on Thursday after attending the first BRICS summit held after Iran's addition to the bloc. Based on what the president himself has reported, and based what different media platforms have said, this visit was a pivotal moment for Iran as it solidified Iran's integration into

the group, fostered cooperation with other member nations, and advanced shared goals of counteracting Western influence and promoting a more balanced global order.

Below are what the president says were the breakthroughs of his attendance at the BRICS Summit:

Enhanced relations with BRICS members: Pezeshkian highlighted the "golden opportunity" to enhance Iran's convergence with BRICS member countries and the swift implementation of agreements made with some of them.

Counteracting Western unilateralism: Pezeshkian emphasized BRICS's goal of counteracting American unilateralism, the dominance of the dollar, and unfair sanctions against various countries.

Establishing a separate fund: He emphasized the importance of establishing a separate fund to assist BRICS member countries and counter U.S. sanctions, highlighting the organization's push for financial independence.

Strengthening global posi-

tion: The summit aimed to solidify BRICS's global position against unilateralism by enhancing communication among member countries.

Bilateral discussions: Pezeshkian noted the opportunity to have bilateral discussions with leaders from 10 countries, effectively accomplishing the equivalent of 10 foreign trips.

Condemnation of Israeli crimes: The final statement of the BRICS summit condemned Israel's actions in Gaza and Lebanon, demonstrating the group's commitment to supporting Palestinian rights.

Focus on multilateral cooperation: The summit emphasized the development of monetary, economic, cultural, scientific, expert, and security communications among member countries, showcasing a commitment to multi-faceted cooperation.

Iran, joining the BRICS alongside three other nations in January, also brings a unique dimension to the group. This ancient nation, situated at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa, holds a strategic position that grants it influence over crucial trade routes and energy corridors.

It boasts vast natural resources and a formidable military force, encompassing a powerful conventional army, navy, and air force, alongside advanced missile and drone programs. Iran's close alliances with regional actors across West Asia also contribute to its considerable influence within the region.

IRAN IN FOCUS

OCTOBER 26, 2024

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

3

SPORTS

Iran Greco-Roman crowned champions of 2024 U23 World

TEHRAN – Iran Greco-Roman wrestling team won the title of the 2024 U23 World Championships in Tirana, Albania Wednesday night.

Iran claimed the team title with 149 points with yet another incredible performance. Georgia followed with a second-place finish with 121 points and Armenia was third with 93 points.

Iran collected three gold medals and four bronzes in the competition.

Mohammad Naghousi emerged victorious over American rival Beka Melelashvili in the 82kg final 4-3 to win a gold medal.

Ali Ahmadi Vafa defeated European silver medalist Rashad Mamadov from Azerbaijan in the final 11-3 in 55kg final bout.

Fardin Hedayati added the U-23 world title with a dominant run in 130kg, beating Dmitri Baboryko (AIN) 6-0.

Daniel Sohrabi defeated Swede Georgios Barbanos 9-0 in 72kg and Shayan Habibzare emerged victorious over Richard Karelson from Estonia 8-5 in 97kg.

Erfan Jarkani beat Arman Vardanyan from Armenia 8-0 in the 63kg and Ali Oskou defeated Doniyorxon Nakibov from Uzbekistan 6-4 in 77kg to collect Iran's fourth bronze.

Iran unchanged in FIFA ranking

TEHRAN – Iran remained unchanged in 19th in the last FIFA Ranking update released on Thursday. Team Melli were held to a goalless draw against Uzbekistan and defeated Qatar 4-1 in Group A of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26. Japan moved up one place to 15th in the Ranking.

Korea Republic (22), Australia (24), Qatar (46), Iraq (56), Uzbekistan (58), Saudi Arabia (59), Jordan (64) and United Arab Emirates (68) make up the top 10 highest Asian sides.

Argentina (1st) are still on top, but their lead over France (2nd) and Spain (3rd) has been cut.

Wrestler Ahmadi Vafa thanks Iran coaching staff

TEHRAN – Iran's Greco-Roman wrestler Ali Ahmadi Vafa believes that he has won the gold medal in the U-23 World Championships with the help of his coaches' analysis.

The 19-year-old was up against European silver medalist Rashad Mamadov from Azerbaijan in the final 11-3. "It was decided by the coaching staff to compete at the U-23 World Championships after the U-20 one," Ahmadi Vafa said. "Thank God, I was able to participate and return to Iran with a gold medal." Ahmadi Vafa credits his training this year and his study of his opponents as the major factors for his improvement after suffering close losses in the age-group World Championships last year.

"I worked really hard this year," he said. "I spent a full year in training camp and put in a lot of effort. A thorough analysis with the coaching staff made me win. I was able to reap the rewards of all my hard work over the past year."

In the 45-day break between the U-20 and U-23 World Championships, Ahmadi Vafa trained with the senior team.

"A few days after we returned to Iran, we went to the senior camp," he said. "We were under a lot of physical strain, so the coaching staff decided to make our training sessions a bit lighter than the others. "Our bodies responded well. I always felt deep inside that I could do it. I always say that I'm the best in my weight class," Ahmadi Vafa added.

Iran to meet Japan in 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship opener

TEHRAN – Iran will open the 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship with a match against Japan on December

Team Melli Banovan will play Japan on Decem-

ber 3 in Group B. The Persians will also meet India and Hong Kong on December 4 and 6, respectively.

The competition will be the 20th edition of the Asian Women's Handball Championship, which will take place from December 1 to 12 in New Delhi, India.

It was scheduled to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan but later moved to India.

The tournament acts as the Asian qualifying tournament for the 2025 World Women's Handball Championship, with the top four teams qualifying. If countries from Oceania (Australia) participating in the Asian Championships finish in the top five, they will qualify for the World Championships.

Masoud Shojaei appointed Mes coach: IPL

TEHRAN – Masoud Shojaei was named as new head coach of Mes Rafsanjan football club.

The 40-year-old coach replaced Moharram Navidkia in the Iranian top-flight club.

Shojaei led Havadar last season and helped the team avoid relegation.

Mes sit 14th in the 16-team table with five points out of seven matches. Shojaei was also a candidate to lead Shams Azar.

Iran reclaim Asian Youth Beach Handball Championship title

TEHRAN – Iran beat Thailand 2-0 to win the title of the 3rd Asian Men's Youth Beach Handball Championship on Friday.

Iran defeated Oman 2-1, Jordan 2-0, China 2-1, Qatar and Indonesia 2-0 in the competition.

The 3rd Asian Youth Beach Handball Championship took place in Bangkok, Thailand.

This marks the third consecutive time that the competition takes place in Thailand, which hosted the event since the inaugural edition in 2016.

Iran had won the previous edition held in Tehran.

Iran also qualified for the 2025 Youth Beach Handball World Championship, which is the third edition of the event, following its 2017 debut in Flic-en-Flac, Mauritius (U17) won by Spain (men) and Hungary (women) and the second edition in 2022 played in Heraklion, Greece (U18) with Croatia (men) and Spain (women) taking the titles.

Goran Pandev heaps praise on Iran star Taremi

TEHRAN – Former treble winner Goran Pandev has waxed lyrical about Inter Milan marquee signing Mehdi Taremi and his UEFA Champions League impact.

As reported by FCInter1908, the ex-North Macedonia international and Inter Milan Treble Hero Goran Pandev heaped Praise on Mehdi Taremi. After a brilliant display against Red Star Belgrade, Mehdi Taremi started tonight's game in Bern.

The Iranian's impressive Champions League start has caught Pandev's attention.

"I like Taremi up front, the guy is doing impressive things in the Champions League.

"He is a great striker" Pandev continued.

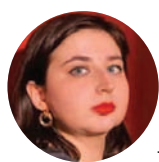
"Taremi is a great striker who can play in tandem with anyone. Congratulations to everyone for buying him," Pandev said.

Sam Vajir wins bronze at Asian Diving Championships

TEHRAN – Sam Vajir secured third place and a bronze medal for Iran this morning in the one-meter springboard event at the Asian Diving Championships.

This achievement marks a historic moment as it is the first individual diving medal Iran has ever won in the history of the Asian Championships.

Sputnik special correspondent in interview with Tehran Times: 'BRICS gained more power and stability with Iran'



MOSCOW – Iran has a pivotal role in West Asia, which makes its membership in the BRICS group a valuable addition with mutual benefits for all involved, says Kristina Malyk, a special international correspondent with Russia's Sputnik News Agency.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Malyk delved into various aspects of BRICS, outlining her vision for how the bloc's establishment and ongoing expansion will reshape global dynamics. She also discussed the implications of Iran's inclusion in the group, specifically addressing how this development will impact both Iran and BRICS.

Below is the full text of the senior correspondent's interview with the Tehran Times:

How can BRICS navigate the geopolitical challenges presented by the current global landscape, especially considering the diverse interests of its member states?

I firmly believe that independent states, each respecting the other's national interests, even when those interests diverge, can find solutions through open and fair dialogue. Such respectful dialogue, as our Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has emphasized repeatedly, is the bedrock of a multipolar world order.

With Iran now a member of BRICS, what strategic advantages does this bring for both Iran and the BRICS coalition?

Iran is a synonym for stability, I

would say. This means BRICS gains another powerful and stable country, one that pursues independent domestic, foreign, and economic policies. Iran can also offer diverse solutions to the security challenges that the BRICS group faces. And of course, Iran is a pivotal state in the Middle East, offering a wealth of options to build peace based on fairness and establish regional security that truly works.

In what ways can BRICS foster economic resilience among its member countries amidst Western sanctions, particularly for nations like Iran?

My answer is simple and straightforward: de-dollarization, mutually beneficial bilateral trade, and the creation of the group's own payment system.

How do you see the balance of power within BRICS, especially with the rising influence of countries like China and India, and how can Iran position itself within this dynamic?

As both our President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov have repeatedly emphasized, cooperation within BRICS is founded on mutual respect and mutually beneficial conditions. If there's no internal competition within the group, only cooperation, there's no need to seek a balance of power. What BRICS member states need is a fair and open dialogue.

What initiatives should BRICS prioritize to enhance technological cooperation among member states, and what role can Iran play

in these initiatives?

At the BRICS business forum, held in Moscow on the eve of the summit in Kazan, the BRICS Pay project – an analog of the Western SWIFT system – was unveiled. I am convinced that our countries must work towards its development and full implementation. And, undoubtedly, Iran could play a key role in testing the system before its wider release.

Given the perceived economic and political isolation faced by some BRICS members, what steps can the organization take to ensure collective growth and stability?

During this summit, I haven't seen any evidence of economic or political isolation for BRICS member states. The Kazan Summit brought together leaders from an unprecedented number of countries – 36 states, including 10 member countries, and 6 international organizations – and they all interacted freely. No one was left out. I believe that if any state refuses mutually beneficial cooperation with BRICS member countries, that's their own problem. They are simply isolating themselves.

How important is it for BRICS to expand its membership further, and what criteria should be used to include new nations, especially from regions like West Asia?

Let's leave the development of criteria to the diplomats; they will soon present the details. Regardless, expanding the number of BRICS member countries or partner states within BRICS+ is always a positive step. The world needs cooperation, not competition.



Front of BRICS symbolic banknote

How can Iran leverage its strategic partnerships within BRICS to overcome economic sanctions and integrate more deeply into the global economy?

I believe de-dollarization is a key priority. Furthermore, developing trade routes between BRICS member states will undeniably strengthen our strategic partnerships, unburdened by Western sanctions. One of the most notable examples of such routes is the International North-South Transport Corridor, which will connect Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan (which is also seeking BRICS membership), and India.

Funeral ceremony held for Iranian physician martyred in Beirut

From Page 1 ▶ Israeli forces, escalating their aggression since the start of operations in Gaza over a year ago, have increasingly targeted civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and medical staff, in both Gaza and Lebanon.

In a statement, Iran's Health Minister, Mohammad Reza Zafarqandi, mourned the loss of Dr. Heydari, honoring him as a "physician of the Resistance Front" and extending his condolences to the family and colleagues of this devoted doctor.

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs con-

demned the airstrike as a "war crime," denouncing it as a "deliberate and egregious attack" on medical personnel.

The ministry further emphasized that Israel's targeting of medical professionals constitutes a violation of international law, specifically the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which prohibit attacks on healthcare workers and facilities in conflict zones. In a written statement, the Foreign Ministry reiterated the global community's duty to hold Israel accountable for these ongoing violations.

"We urge the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization to document these grave breaches of humanitarian law," it read, adding that the international community must act to halt attacks on hospitals and medical personnel.

Dr. Heydari's death follows another attack earlier in the week, in which an Iranian woman, Masoumeh Karbasi, and her Lebanese husband, Reza Awadeh, were killed by Israeli forces while attempting to escape their vehicle under attack on a Beirut highway.

IMIDRO's new head appointed

TEHRAN – Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak has appointed Mohammad Aghajanolou as the new head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), IRNA reported.

Aghajanolou who previously served as the IMIDRO deputy head became the acting head of the organization in late August.

IMIDRO is a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in Iran. It has eight major companies and 55 operational subsidiaries active in steel, aluminum, copper, cement, and mineral exploitation fields.

Back in July, an official with IMIDRO said that the organization has prepared new investment packages for the country's private sector to participate in mining exploration projects.

"Considering IMIDRO's approach in line with the slogan of the year which is the realization of public participation in the leap of production, the private sector should be ready to invest in the exploration sector," IRIB reported quoted Ahmad Fattahi Mejlaj.

According to Fattahi Mejlaj, the necessary guidelines and conditions for the mentioned investment packages have been prepared by IMIDRO and the organization will soon publish a public notice to invite private contractors to partake in certain exploration projects.

Pointing out that IMIDRO's committee for the compilation of rules, criteria, guidelines and standards has prepared the mentioned guidelines, he emphasized: "These standards and instructions are in accordance with international standards and will be published and informed by reliable media soon after the final revision."

Given the significance of mining sector in Iran,

implementation of projects to develop different parts of this sector has been always a major program of the governments.

In this regard, achieving a 10.5-percent value added rise in the mining sector, and increasing mining exploration to two million meters from 510,000 meters has been a top agenda of Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry.

As a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in the country, IMIDRO is playing a significant part in this regard, and in line with its development role, it is seriously pursuing the target of conducting two million meters of mining exploration by the next three years.

To this end, the organization has defined a number of programs including supporting the contractors active in the mining exploration operation, upgrading the geographical information system (GIS) database based on international standards, exploration of hidden and deep resources using new methods and training of required manpower.

Exploration and processing of rare minerals with special technologies, assistance in equipping and updating the drilling fleet with the help of Mining Investment Insurance Fund, planning to support and upgrade the scientific-technical level of exploration consultants, and conducting additional exploration operations in all existing mines for increasing the reserves tonnage are the other programs of IMIDRO in this due.

Involving the private sector in exploration activities is also an approach that the organization has included in exploration programs.

IMIDRO had also previously announced that considering the importance of exploration operation in the mining sector, IMIDRO was preparing a strategic five-year program for more focus on exploration activities.

Commodities worth \$226m exported from Yazd province in 6 months

TEHRAN- Non-oil products worth \$226 million were exported from Yazd province during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), a provincial official announced.

Mohammad-Sadeq Kazemian, the head of the province's Industry, Mining and Trade Department, put the weight of the exported goods at 12.79 million tons, and named Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Georgia as the main export destinations.

He further announced that 56,000 tons of non-oil commodities worth \$147 million were imported to the province in the first six months of the present year.

As previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's non-oil exports increased by 6.5 percent during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Mohammad Rezvanifar said that the country exported 70 million tons of non-oil products valued at \$25.8 billion during the first half of this year, also indicating 3.5 percent growth in terms of weight, year on year.

According to the IRICA head, Iran also exported \$23.2 billion of oil and \$600 million of technical and engineering services during the mentioned period, boosting the country's total exports to \$49.6 billion.

During this period, the imports reached \$32.6 billion, including \$2.5 billion of gold bullion.

Stating that the country's total trade exchange during the first half of the current year was \$82.2 billion, he added: "During this period, the trade balance of the country without oil and technical and engineering services was 6.8 billion dollars negative, and taking into account oil and technical and engineering services, it was 17 billion dollars positive."

"The average value per ton of export goods increased by three percent to \$366 in the first six months of this year," he noted.

China with \$7.2 billion, Iraq with \$5.2 billion, United Arab Emirates with \$3.4 billion, Turkey with \$2.4 billion, Afghanistan with \$1.1 billion, Pakistan with \$1.0 billion, and India with \$900 million were the main export destinations of Iranian goods during the mentioned period.

These seven countries accounted for 81 percent of the weight and 82 percent of the total value of Iran's exports, according to Rezvanifar.

The UAE with \$10 billion, China with \$8.5 billion, Turkey with \$5.1 billion, Germany with \$1.2 billion, the Russian Federation and India with \$800 million each, and Hong Kong with \$600 million were also the top sources of imports for Iran in the first half of the current year.

China, UAE, and Turkey were Iran's top trading partners in the mentioned six months, Rezvanifar said.

The official has also announced that the value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.178 billion in the last Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19).

According to Mohammad Rezvanifar, the value of the Islamic Republic's trade with the partners in the previous year increased by 2.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

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

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

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

During this period, liquefied natural gas with \$3.9 billion, liquefied propane with \$3.62 billion, and bitumen-oil with \$2.19 billion were Iran's top exported items.

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

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

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

Iran, Pakistan explore avenues of cross-border energy cooperation

TEHRAN – Energy ministers of Iran and Pakistan met and held talks on the sidelines of the Third Belt and Road Ministerial Conference held in Qingdao, China.

In this meeting, Abbas Ali-Abadi and Sardar Awais Leghari discussed future collaboration, particularly focusing on the development of electricity projects in border regions, IRNA reported.

In this regard, Awais Leghari underscored the importance of cross-border energy projects in boosting connectivity and trade.

Exchanging views on the need for enhanced energy connectivity amongst the regional countries, both sides underlined the importance of strengthening energy cooperation in power plants operations and maintenance. They emphasized the need for regular coordination and communication.

Both the ministers also discussed that effective plant management was essential for sustaining energy output and meeting the growing demands of the region.

In March 2023, Iran's former Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian announced the completion of a power transmission line to Pakistan with the aim of boosting electricity exchanges between the two countries.

The two countries signed a contract that month to officially use the mentioned transmission line for exchanging up to 200 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

"The electricity transmission line between Iran and Pakistan was designed and built in less



Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi (R) and his Pakistani counterpart Sardar Awais Leghari meet on the sidelines of Third Belt and Road Ministerial Conference held in Qingdao, China on Thursday.

than a year, with a capacity of 200 megawatts," Mehrabian told the press.

"The necessary experiments and tests have been carried out on this line and it is now electrified," he said.

Emphasizing the necessity of developing and deepening the relations between the two countries, he added: "It is hoped that we will witness the development of electricity exchanges between the two countries with the final agreement following the formation of technical and commercial teams."

On October 18, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Atabak and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan have discussed trade ties between the two countries, with both agreeing that economic exchanges should be promoted further.

The two ministers met in Pa-

kistan's capital Islamabad on the sidelines of the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Atabak told IRNA that he and the Pakistani minister discussed trade ties between the two countries and agreed to hold further talks in order to explore ways to remove obstacles to the promotion of bilateral trade.

"Considering the historical and cultural commonalities of the two countries, we should take advantage of the strong potentials to expand trade exchanges between Iran and Pakistan," Atabak said.

The Iranian minister also said that he invited Kamal Khan to visit the Islamic Republic.

According to the official, the necessary measures will be taken to prepare an agreement to be signed between the two countries during the visit of the Paki-

stani minister to Iran.

He stated that the current amount of trade exchanges between the two countries is not acceptable from the point of view of both Iran and Pakistan, and considering the strong relations and common links of the two countries, the two sides are confident that they will be able to increase the volume of trade exchanges several times.

The Pakistani minister spoke with IRNA as well. He described his talks with the Iranian minister as constructive, and said that visiting Iran is on agenda of his plans.

"We had good talks with my Iranian counterpart and reached constructive agreements, and we believe that there are many remaining tasks that the two countries are determined to pursue," he said.

As announced by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of non-oil trade between Iran and Pakistan rose 10 percent in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

The two countries' bilateral trade stood at 1.906 million tons worth \$1.128 billion in the mentioned five-month times, indicating also two percent growth in weight, year on year.

Pakistan was the fourth top trade partner of Iran among the Islamic Republic's neighbors in the first five months of the present year.

Tehran hosting intl. electricity exhibition

TEHRAN – The 24th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2024) kicked off at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Thursday, IRIB reported.

Senior energy officials including Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the Head of Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company (known as Tavanir) attended the exhibition's opening ceremony.

The four-day exhibition covers various areas including production, transmission, and distribution, as well as high, medium, and low-voltage electrical equipment.

Some 500 domestic firms and 120 foreign exhibitors from different countries, including China, South Korea, India, Russia, Italy, Tur-



key, Germany, Taiwan, France, and Spain, are showcasing their latest products and services in this exhibition.

All kinds of electrical panels, lighting equipment, smart equipment, diesel genera-

tors and electric motors, batteries, and UPS; earthing and protection systems, transformers, wires and cables, industrial automation and precision instruments, and measuring equipment are being presented at IEE 2024.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Rajabi Mashhadi underlined the significance of the exhibition, saying: "Iran's International Electricity Exhibition is one of the most important events of the electricity industry, which is held annually at the end of the peak summer season to create a platform for interaction and synergy among different sectors through the gathering of public and private sector operators of this strategic industry."

Iran seeks cooperation with China for developing renewables

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Energy Minister Homayoun Haeri has said the Islamic Republic is seeking to use the Chinese expertise and technology to develop the country's renewable industry, IRNA reported.

"The plans to use China's capabilities for the development of renewables has entered a serious stage after the visit of the Minister of Energy to this country," Haeri said at the opening ceremony of the 24th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2024) on Thursday.

"Efforts are underway to develop joint investment with China in the field of renewables, and in this regard, the Energy Minister, who is visiting China, will hold some meetings with the energy

officials of this country," he noted.

Back in September, the head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Economy Committee Farajollah Memamri urged Chinese investors to participate in the development of advanced solar power plants in the country.

The official said Iran is inviting China to collaborate in various areas, including the construction of large and small-scale solar power plants, the supply of solar panels, and the provision of technical expertise for solar energy projects.

China is rapidly advancing in its energy transition, increasing its renewable energy capacities while remaining dependent on

liquefied natural gas to support its growing electricity demand.

China's energy transition is strengthening, particularly in the wind and solar sectors, according to Yaoyu Zhang, deputy director at PetroChina. At the Asia Gas Markets Conference 2024, organized by S&P Global Commodity Insights, Zhang highlighted the growing contribution of renewable energy in reducing coal dependency for electricity generation in China.

Renewable energies, primarily solar and wind, have enabled a 10 to 13 percent reduction in coal use for electricity production. This trend counters the common belief that China's declining coal consumption is mainly due to an increase in natural gas usage.

In recent years, China has significantly accelerated the development of its renewable energy production capacities. Zhang noted that the production costs of solar and wind energy have become more competitive than those of natural gas. It is expected that China will reach a combined capacity of 1,300 gigawatts (GW) of wind and solar energy by the end of 2024, surpassing the 1,200 GW target set for 2030.

This trend is part of China's broader strategy to reduce coal's share in its energy mix while supporting its pledge for carbon neutrality by 2060. According to Zhang, by 2028, about 50 percent of electricity produced in China will come from renewable sources.

Iran exports 40% of its ceramics, tile output

TEHRAN – Iranian tiles and ceramics producers are currently exporting 40 percent of their products to more than 50 countries in the world, the director of Iranian Tile and Ceramics Manufacturers Union said.

Every year about 200 million square meters of ceramics and tiles are exported to other countries, Aziz-Zadeh said on the sidelines of the 29th Iran International Exhibition



of Tiles, Ceramics and Sanitary Porcelain.

According to the official Iran is currently the fifth largest producer and exporter of tiles and ceramics in the world.

He said that more than 150 factories are currently producing tiles and ceramics in the country, creating some 450,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Devilish dance: Bibi butchers, Blinken bows

From page 1 ▶ According to Al Jazeera, Israeli artillery strikes hit the oxygen room of the hospital and severely damaged its ICU. It said a number of babies and children inside the hospital were killed due to lack of oxygen.

Dr Hussam Abu Safia, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, described the situation at the facility as catastrophic, saying there is no medical care available for anyone in northern Gaza.

The Kamal Adwan Hospital is one of the few remaining functioning hospitals in northern Gaza. For now, concerns are growing that Israel's military siege could turn the hospital into a mass grave for patients.

Israel launched a new brutal assault on northern Gaza three weeks ago where 400,000 out of the enclave's 2.3 million population live. It has obstructed the delivery of essentials, including food, to Palestinians in northern Gaza.

The regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is forcibly relocating Palestinians from northern Gaza as part of an ethnic cleansing strategy, paving the way for settlers to move in.

According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the forcible transfer of a population during war and denying access to humanitarian aid for civilians is illegal.

But Israel has clearly demonstrated that it does not care a whit about international law. Is-



The Israeli army raids the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza after bombing and shelling the facility.

rael has turned a blind eye to a ruling issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) calling on the regime to prevent acts of genocide.

On Tuesday, the Haaretz newspaper revealed in an editorial that Israel is pursuing a policy of siege and starvation to force the complete evacuation of the civilian population of northern Gaza.

Citing mounting evidence, the newspaper said Israel is implementing the now notorious "generals' plan".

The plan is attributed to retired major general Giora Eiland, a former head of national security in Israel.

It proposes the wholesale transfer of north Gaza's popula-

tion south beyond the Netzarim corridor in line with a strategy to defeat Hamas.

Israel launched war on Gaza in October last year killing nearly 43,000 Palestinians, including about 17,000 children. But it has failed to eliminate Hamas. Israeli military officials have acknowledged the regime's inability to destroy the resistance movement more than a year into the onslaught.

Eiland told Haaretz in September that "it's permissible and even recommended to starve an enemy to death, provided you've allowed the civilians corridors of exits beforehand. And that is exactly what I am proposing".

Netanyahu, known as Bibi, told Blinken, who began his 11th re-

gional tour since the start of the Gaza war by visiting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (al-Quds) on Tuesday, that Israel is not planning to lay siege to northern Gaza.

But since launching its new offensive in northern Gaza on October 6, the area has been under the Israeli siege. Hundreds of Palestinians have also been killed by the Israeli army in the area since then.

Israel's relentless attacks against Palestinians indicate that Blinken's speeches on a ceasefire in Gaza ring hollow and serve as a cover for the regime's genocide. The top American diplomat called for reviving ceasefire efforts to end the war on Gaza.

Presently, it stands out a mile that Israel is seeking to return settlers to northern Gaza after they were removed from the territory in 2005.

Itamar Ben Gvir, the Israeli national security minister, said on Tuesday that "encouraging emigration" of Palestinian residents of Gaza would be the "most ethical" solution to the conflict. Bezalel Smotrich, the regime's finance minister, also told journalists that the Gaza Strip was "part of the Land of Israel" and that "without settlements, there is no security".

The comments made by the far-right ministers have taken the lid off the Israeli apartheid regime's ethnic cleaning plan in Gaza.

Israeli losses in Lebanon rise

From page 1 ▶ However, the broadcaster reported 24 other soldiers were injured in the attack.

Other reports indicate up to 37 Israeli soldiers were injured over the past 24 hours. This is while some Hebrew media outlets reported a rise in the number of soldiers killed to 13.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a consensus among Hebrew media that the past 24 hours were one of the most difficult for the IOF since ground operations in Lebanon began on September 30.

According to the IOF, since September 30, the number of Israeli army fatalities has risen to 32 inside Lebanese territory.

On Wednesday, Hezbollah announced that since the start of the Israeli ground war more than 70 officers and soldiers have been killed and over 600 other wounded.

The figures don't include the Israeli casualties, which Hezbollah reported through its statements on Thursday.

The Lebanese resistance also reported on Wednesday the destruction of 28 Merkava tanks, 4 military bulldozers, an armored vehicle, and an armored personal carrier since Israeli ground operations began.

Furthermore, three Israeli Hermes-450 drones and one Hermes-900 drone have been shot down.

These losses do not include any of the casualties or damage from Hezbollah missile and drone attacks inside Israel.

The numbers inside Lebanon have now risen following Thursday's operations, which saw the "destruction of two Merkava tanks, confirming casualties among both their crews, the killing and wounding of occupation soldiers at the border in complex ambushes and point-blank confrontations, and

the striking of soldier gatherings in military sites and bases across the occupied north."

According to Hezbollah's Media Office, the Israeli military has failed to take "full control" or "fully occupy" a single village on the Lebanese border despite the heavy casualties it has suffered.

Hassan Fadhlallah, a Hezbollah parliamentarian, echoed those remarks on Thursday, saying, "The enemy has not fully controlled any village, and there are enough resistance fighters on the frontlines".

This is despite the fact that tens of thousands of Israeli soldiers have been deployed to the Lebanese border. Experts suggest between 70,000 to 80,000.

In an indication that the ground invasion of Lebanon is not going according to the plan, senior Israeli military officials have spoken about ending it and resorting to air raids.

"Mosquito Protocol": Israel uses Palestinian captives as human shields, CNN and NYT report

From page 1 ▶ This chilling admission lays bare the Israeli military's callous disregard for Palestinian lives and their blatant disregard for international law. This is not merely a tactic; it is a calculated strategy designed to shield Israeli soldiers from danger while deliberately exposing Palestinian civilians to certain death or injury.

The report corroborates the soldier's account with testimonies from five Palestinian detainees, each detailing experiences of being forced to enter potentially dangerous locations by Israeli forces. Mohammed Saad, a 20-year-old from Jabalia, recounted being detained for 47 days after fleeing his home during Israeli airstrikes. Saad described being used for reconnaissance missions while dressed in military uniforms and outfitted with a camera and metal cutter. He was forced to enter buildings, "move the sofa, open the fridge, and open the cupboard," potentially exposing him to danger.

"The army took us in a jeep, and we found ourselves inside Rafah in a military camp," Saad told CNN. "They dressed us in military

uniforms, put a camera on us, and gave us a metal cutter. They would ask us to do things like, 'move this carpet,' saying they were looking for tunnels. 'Film under the stairs,' they would say. If they found something, they would tell us to bring it outside."

The practice was not limited to adults. 17-year-old Mohammed Shbeir, detained following the killing of his father and sister during an Israeli raid, described being used as a human shield while handcuffed and wearing only his boxers. He was forced into demolished houses, places potentially containing landmines, placing his life in imminent danger.

"I was handcuffed and wearing nothing but my boxers," Shbeir told CNN. "They used me as a human shield, taking me into demolished houses, places that could be dangerous or contain landmines."

These testimonies paint a harrowing picture of the systematic nature of the "Mosquito Protocol," highlighting the vulnerability of Palestinian civilians in the face of Israeli military actions. The practice not only violates fundamental human rights but also undermines

the very principles of international law that govern conflict. The deliberate use of civilians as human shields is unequivocally a war crime, a fact that the Israeli military seems intent on ignoring.

The New York Times report, published earlier this month, further supports the allegations of human shield use. The investigation reveals that Israeli soldiers and intelligence agents have been coercing detained Palestinians to carry out life-threatening reconnaissance missions, often in areas where Israeli forces suspect resistance fighters may have laid traps or ambushes.

Seven Israeli soldiers interviewed by The New York Times corroborated the practice, describing it as organized and supported by military logistics. One account details a group of displaced Palestinians forced to walk ahead of an Israeli squad advancing toward a militant hideout in Gaza City. Jehad Siam, a 31-year-old Palestinian graphic designer who was part of the group, described the terror and fear of being forced into harm's way.

"They told us they were looking

for tunnels," Siam told The New York Times. "They told us if we refused to go, they would shoot us."

The investigations offer compelling evidence of a systematic pattern of using civilians as human shields. The justifications offered by lower-ranking officers, labelling detained Palestinians as "terrorists," are demonstrably false and serve to further dehumanize Palestinian civilians and legitimize their exploitation.

The testimonies from both reports highlight a pattern of coercion, manipulation, and disregard for the fundamental rights of Palestinian detainees. They were stripped of their agency, forced to participate in military operations without any regard for their safety or well-being.

The Israeli army has not yet issued a formal response to either report. However, the weight of evidence presented by CNN and The New York Times demands a thorough investigation by an independent international body. Israel's silence only strengthens the allegations and raises concerns about potential cover-up attempts.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UN rights chief: 'Darkest moment' of war unfolding in northern Gaza

The UN human rights chief on Friday said Israel's practices in northern Gaza could amount to "atrocities crimes and crimes against humanity."

Describing what is happening in the north of the strip today as "the darkest moment of the Gaza conflict," Volker Turk called on the world leaders to act, Anadolu reported.

"The bombing in North Gaza is non-stop," he said.

"The Israeli military has ordered hundreds of thousands to move, with no guarantees of

return. But there is no safe way to leave: the bombs continue to fall; the Israeli military is separating families and detaining many people; and people fleeing have been reportedly shot at," the UN official said.

He added, "Unimaginably, the situation is getting worse by the day. The Israeli government's policies and practices in northern Gaza risk emptying the area of all Palestinians. We are facing what could amount to atrocity crimes, including potentially extending to crimes against humanity."

War on truth: Resistance media in crosshairs of Zionist aggression

From page 1 ▶ Hezbollah's Media Relations Office condemned the attack, saying: "We are fully confident that this crime will not prevent free and honorable channels from covering the ongoing aggression against Lebanon and its people and conveying the heroism of the resistance fighters and the steadfastness of the people and the defense of their land and villages."

Ghassan Ben Jeddou, the chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Mayadeen channel, held the occupation regime "fully responsible for this war crime".

By targeting journalists Israel exposes its "crimes", Ben Jeddou said, stressing that "Al-Mayadeen will continue and will not retreat from performing its media duties."

This is not the first time that the Israeli enemy is targeting Al-Mayadeen. Less than a year ago, the channel's correspondent, Farah Omar, and photojournalist, Rabie Maamari, were martyred in Tair-Harfa in southern Lebanon.

Joseph Al-Qasifi, the head of the Lebanese Journalists Syndicate, stated that the number of Lebanese media persons martyred has reached 9, stressing that targeting journalists is "a full-fledged war crime."

Since the beginning of the Israeli aggression in October last year, these journalists have been fighting the unprecedented Western prejudice in favor of the Israeli narratives by exposing the deliberate and systematic crimes carried out by the Israeli occupation regime.

In parallel, some Lebanese and Persian-Gulf Arab media outlets are waging a systematic hostile campaign against the Resistance to the point that observers call them "Israel's support front in Lebanon."

Besides, this is taking place in line with the provocative role played by Avichay Adraee, the Israeli military Arabic spokesman. He has become one of the sources for hostile channels. For example, he asked journalists to visit a bunker built under the Al-Sahel Hospi-



tal, where he claimed Hezbollah had stashed hundreds of millions of dollars in cash and gold. His claims turned out to be false.

In the same context, Adraee claimed that six Palestinian journalists for Al Jazeera - namely Anas Al-Sharif, Alaa Salama, Hussam Shabat, Ashraf Al-Sarraj, Ismail Abu Omar and Talal Al-Arouqi - work in favor of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Adraee claimed that they are "the spearhead in spreading Hamas propaganda messages within the framework of their work for Al Jazeera, with a focus on the northern Gaza Strip."

This is what the enemy claims to justify targeting journalists. Since the Israeli onset of the genocidal war in Gaza, more than 170 journalists and photojournalists have been killed.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar has warned of the malicious role played by the US embassy in Beirut against the Resistance media. Al-Akhbar stated, "If the goal is to distance us from the option of comprehensive resistance against the Israeli enemy and the US hegemony, then he is delusional who believes that he can achieve this goal, or prevent us from confronting and exposing all forms of American, British, German, Saudi and Emirati interference in Lebanon. As for our position regarding the Resistance fighters, who are defending the land at every moment, Al-Akhbar will remain their voice and their shadow, no matter what the enemies at home and abroad do."

Israeli soldiers returning from war struggle with trauma and suicide: CNN

A 40-year-old father of four, Eliran Mizrahi deployed to Gaza after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

The Israeli military reservist returned a different person, traumatized by what he had witnessed in the war against Hamas in the strip, his family told CNN. Six months after he was first sent to fight, he was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) back at home. Before he was due to redeploy, he took his own life.

"He got out of Gaza, but Gaza did not get out of him. And he died after it, because of the post-trauma," his mother, Jenny Mizrahi, said.

The Israeli military has said it is providing care for thousands of soldiers who are suffering from PTSD or mental illnesses caused by trauma during the war. It is unclear how many have taken their own lives, as the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has not provided an official figure.

One year on, Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 42,000 people, according to the health ministry in the strip, with the United Nations reporting that most of the dead are women and children.

The war, launched after Hamas killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostages, is already Israel's longest since it was established. And as it now expands to Lebanon, some soldiers say they dread being drafted into yet another conflict.

"A lot of us are very scared of getting drafted again to a war in Lebanon," an IDF medic who served four months in Gaza told CNN, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter. "A lot of us don't trust the government right now."

Israeli authorities - with rare exceptions - have closed off Gaza to foreign journalists unless under IDF escort, making it difficult to capture the full extent of Palestinian suffering or the experiences of soldiers there. Israeli soldiers who fought in the enclave told CNN they witnessed horrors the outside world can never truly comprehend. Their accounts offer a rare glimpse into the brutality of what critics have called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "forever war," and the intangible toll it takes on the soldiers who participate.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tourism minister calls for five-year development plan for Ali-Sadr Cave



TEHRAN – The Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri has emphasized the need to develop a five-year plan for the tourism and maintenance of Ali-Sadr Cave, a vast water-filled cavern believed to date back to the Jurassic era.

Salehi-Amiri made these remarks on Thursday on the sidelines of his visit to the cave and its surroundings in Hamedan province.

He stressed that the proposal should be prepared by the Hamedan provincial government, in collaboration with the prudential tourism department and with the involvement of the area's representative in the Iranian parliament and other relevant bodies.

Salehi-Amiri also highlighted the importance of including nearby villages and towns in the development process, stating, "The residents should benefit from the economic opportunities generated by the cave, and decisions should be made transparently within

a provincial working group."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister underlined the significance of proper conservation to prevent environmental damage to the cave, a popular tourist destination. "It is crucial that both locals and tourists benefit from the revenue generated by the cave, alongside provincial funding," he added.

Salehi-Amiri also called for careful scrutiny of the cave's tourism management contracts, including any potential renewals or changes in contractors. "The details regarding the duration, renewal terms, and possible transfer of management to new contractors must be determined by the working group in Hamedan," he explained.

Ali-Sadr Cave, known for its extensive network of water-filled passages, draws thousands of visitors each year and is regarded as one of the world's largest water caves.

According to available data, Ali-Sadr Cave was Hamedan province's most popular destination, welcoming 566,000 visitors during the first six months of the Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

The cave embraces a huge matrix of sunless channels, ponds, grottoes, and water passages which are stretched along with imposing rock formations and stalactite-covered tops in a span of several kilometers. The entrance to the lengthy cave is situated some 70km north of Hamadan, the provincial capital.

National Museum of Iran to showcase rarely seen relics at Persepolis



TEHRAN – The National Museum of Iran will organize a special exhibition of rarely seen relics at the UNESCO-registered site of Persepolis, concurrent with the 3rd International Multimedia Festival of Cultural Heritage.

The festival will take place soon in Fars province, according to Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, IRNA reported on Thursday.

In addition to the museum's exhibit at Persepolis, a handicrafts show will be held at the entrance of the Hafezieh complex, with artisans from various provinces participating.

Darabi explained that the primary aim of the festival is to enhance cultural heritage literacy, promote healthy competition, and identify new talents. "This event helps provinces gain more visibility, as the artists participating in the festival become ambassadors of their region's cultural heritage," he added.

The slogan for this year's festival is "Our Iran, Our Heritage – Our Heritage, Our Iran." Empha-

sizing the importance of cultural heritage, Darabi said, "With over 7,000 years of civilization and numerous historical treasures, it is essential to ensure the younger generation connects with the richness of their heritage."

The deputy minister further noted that Iran has been home to human habitation for over a million years and ranks among the top 10 countries in the world for the registration of tangible and natural heritage sites. "Our identity is built on our cultural heritage," he said, stressing the need for large-scale efforts to raise awareness about the nation's vast historical wealth.

Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, stands as one of the greatest architectural achievements of the ancient world and is an iconic example of advanced stone carving and cutting techniques.

Constructed some 2,500 years ago, the site features vast palatial structures, intricate bas-reliefs, and towering stone columns, all of which display the extraordinary skill and craftsmanship of ancient Persian artisans.

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979, Persepolis remains a testament to the Achaemenid dynasty's wealth, power, and artistic prowess. The site's enduring stone monuments are not only significant for their historical value but also for their role in showcasing ancient Persian innovations in stonework. From detailed carvings of soldiers and dignitaries to elaborate decorative motifs, the artistry of Persepolis has inspired generations of artists, architects, and historians.

Venice to double number of days tourists must pay entry fee

Venice is to double the number of days it charges tourists an entrance fee in 2025, following a "successful" trial last year, the city's mayor said.

Luigi Brugnaro said the objective remained that of discouraging tourists from visiting the city on the same days "to give Venice the respect it deserves".

Day trippers who book ahead will have to pay €5 (£4.17; \$5.41) to access the Italian city on certain days between April and July, rising to €10 if they book less than four days in advance.

A charge was first introduced last April and it covered 29 days – mostly weekends and public holidays – over a four-month period.

The tax will be applied every Friday through Sunday and on public holidays between 18

April and 27 July 2025, for a total of 54 days.

All visitors over the age of 14 will have to pay the charge on their phones and download a QR code to show inspectors, who will check people at random in common arrival areas, like the train station.

As with the previous charge, people with hotel and guest house reservations will be exempt, as will residents of the Veneto region, students enrolled at Venice university, and those visiting relatives who live in Venice.

"Venice has gone from being the city most exposed to and criticized for the phenomenon of overtourism, to being the city that is reacting to this phenomenon the earliest and most proactively on the global stage," said city councillor Simone Venturini.

(Source: BBC)

Discover Turan Protected Area, one of Iran's most precious ecological sanctuaries

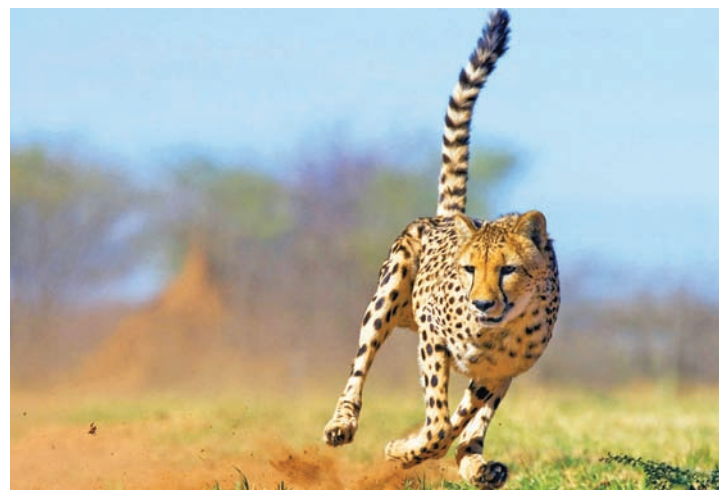
TEHRAN – Situated some 250 km southeast of Shahroud in eastern Semnan province, Turan Protected Area, also known as Khar Turan National Park, is a gem for nature enthusiasts and adventure travelers.

Encompassing a vast stretch of wilderness that borders the central desert of Iran, this ecological treasure offers a unique blend of wildlife, natural landscapes, and conservation efforts.

UNESCO status and conservation milestones

Turan's journey towards environmental protection began in 1972, when it was designated as a wildlife refuge under the management of the Department of the Environment. In 1976, it gained international recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, underlining its global ecological importance. Further conservation efforts culminated in 2002, when the central part of Turan was upgraded to national park status, reflecting its growing environmental significance.

Today, Turan Protected Area stands as the second-largest biosphere reserve in the world, surpassed only by the Serengeti in Tanzania. Spanning 1,470,640 hectares, it is also the sec-



ond-largest protected area in Iran, after the Naybandan Wildlife Refuge in Tabas, according to Visit Iran.

Within its vast borders lies a mosaic of wilderness areas, including the Turan National Park and Wildlife Refuge, which alone covers over 1 million hectares.

Breathtaking landscapes and surrounding mountains

Turan is a natural paradise, surrounded by three prominent mountains: Shotorkuh, Qale Bala, and Kuh-e Peyghambar. These rugged peaks frame the diverse landscapes of the park, which range from arid desert zones to

lush oases that attract migratory birds and wildlife. Although overgrazing has diminished some of its original vegetation, the park still offers beautiful scenery, with large expanses of sand dunes, rocky outcrops, and unique desert flora.

A diverse and fragile ecosystem

Turan boasts a thriving ecosystem that supports a rich variety of animals and plants, many of which are rare or endangered. It is home to 41 species of mammals, 167 species of birds, 42 species of reptiles, and 2 species of amphibians.

A haven for ecotourism and wildlife exploration

Turan's proximity to the central Iranian desert makes it an ideal destination for travelers seeking an off-the-beaten-path experience. Visitors can explore the national park through guided safaris and wildlife tours, with the chance to spot the elusive cheetahs and onagers in their natural habitat. The area's striking scenery, including dunes and mountain vistas, makes it a perfect location for trekking, birdwatching, and nature photography.

How to Visit Turan Protected Area

For travelers, the city of Shahroud serves as the main gateway to Turan. From there, guided tours can take you deep into the heart of the protected area. The park offers opportunities to experience untouched nature, explore diverse wildlife, and witness Iran's commitment to environmental conservation firsthand.

Whether you are an ecotourist, wildlife enthusiast, or adventure seeker, Turan Protected Area promises a captivating journey through one of Iran's most precious ecological sanctuaries.

Ashgabat festival highlights Iran-Turkmenistan cultural and tourism ties

TEHRAN – The capital city of Ashgabat hosted a joint tourism festival highlighting the cultural heritage and tourism potential of Iran and Turkmenistan, underscoring the deep-rooted relationship between the two neighbors.

The three-day event, which concluded on Thursday, brought together government officials, diplomats, tourism representatives, and business leaders from both countries to promote cooperation and mutual understanding.

Tourism cooperation on the rise

During the opening ceremony, Akiniyaz Agamuradov, head of the Tourism Department at the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan, expressed his satisfaction with the growing tourism collaboration between the two countries.

"We are witnessing steady progress in the tourism sector under the leadership of the President of Turkmenistan. Tourism plays a crucial role in the economic development of any country, and in Turkmenistan, great efforts have been made to develop this sector," Agamuradov stated.

He also highlighted the growing interest of international travelers in Turkmenistan's historical and cultural landmarks, such as Nisa, Dehistan, Konye-Urgench, and ancient Merv.

The official also emphasized Turkmenistan's unique position along the historic Silk Road, referring to it as the "crossroads of the seven roads of the world," connecting the East and West. Promoting the country's tourism offerings internationally and enhancing cooperation with neighboring countries remain central goals, which, he noted, would further strengthen regional tourism ties.

Economic and cultural impact of tourism

Ali-Mojtaba Rouzbehani, Iran's ambassador to Turkmenistan, underscored the mul-



tiplicated nature of tourism. "Tourism is both a cultural and economic exchange," he said. "While it promotes cultural understanding, it also plays a significant role in boosting economic relations, often referred to by economists as 'invisible exports.'"

Moreover, Rouzbehani cited the UN Tourism's data, indicating that over 1.5 billion people travel internationally each year, generating nearly \$2 trillion in revenue. He added that tourism now stands as the world's largest service industry, contributing to one in every ten jobs globally.

Highlighting Iran's attractions, the ambassador said: "Iran is known for its rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage, making tourism one of the country's largest and most diverse economic sectors." He also stressed the growing cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan, noting increased cultural exchanges, mutual visits, and events like Nowruz celebrations and other tourism festivals.

Shared heritage and tourism potential

Furthermore, a Turkmen tourism professor spoke about the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries. "Culture has always served as a bridge between people," he remarked, pointing out that both nations have long exchanged knowledge in art, language, and history.

The professor highlighted the potential for tourism development in both countries,

referring to Turkmenistan's famous attractions like ancient Merv, Konye-Urgench, and its renowned hospitality, and Iran's global reputation for landmarks such as Persepolis and Isfahan. Joint tourism initiatives, he said, could attract both regional and international visitors, fostering economic growth and strengthening cultural ties.

Hope for deeper cooperation and closer ties

Navid Rasouli, Iran's Cultural Attaché in Turkmenistan, emphasized the importance of tourism in today's global economy. "Tourism is recognized as the world's largest revenue-generating service industry," he noted, adding that it accounts for one-third of global trade in services.

Rasouli praised the strong tourism potential of both countries, noting their shared cultural heritage and historical connections. "This festival aims to promote these commonalities and expand tourism cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan," he said. Rasouli expressed hope that such events would foster closer bonds between the two nations.

Festival highlights and participation

The three-day featured booths showcasing the tourism capabilities of nine Iranian tourism companies, one hotel, and several handicraft traders. Eleven tourism companies from Turkmenistan are also participating.

According to organizers, visitors, including diplomats and officials, had the opportunity to explore the offerings from both nations, engage with tourism representatives, and sample traditional Iranian and Turkmen delicacies.

The festival is seen as a crucial step in expanding bilateral tourism and cultural exchanges between Iran and Turkmenistan, paving the way for future collaborations and a deeper understanding between the two neighboring peoples.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Sagarmatha National Park

Including the highest point on the Earth's Surface, Mount Sagarmatha (Everest; 8,848 m) and an elevation range of 6,000 m Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) covers an area of 124,400 hectares in the Solu-Khumbu district of Nepal. An exceptional area with dramatic mountains, glaciers, deep valleys and seven peaks other than Mount Sagarmatha over 7,000 m the park is home to several rare species such as the snow leopard and the red panda. A well-known destination for mountain tourism SNP was gazetted in 1976 and with over 2,500 Sherpa people living within the park has combined nature and culture since its inception.

Encompassing the infinitely majestic snow capped peaks of the Great Himalayan Range, the chain of mountains including the world's highest Mt. Sagarmatha (Everest) and extensive Sherpa settlements that embody the openness of SNP to the rest of the world. The carefully preserved natural heritage and the dramatic beauty of the high, geologically young mountains and glaciers were recognized by UNESCO with the inscription of the park as a world heritage site in 1979. The property hosts over 20 villages with over 6000 Sherpas who have inhabited the region for the last four centuries. Continuing their traditional practice

of cultural and religion including the restriction of animal hunting and slaughtering, and reverence of all living beings. These practices combined with indigenous natural resource management practices, have been major contributing factors to the successful conservation of the SNP.

The constantly increasing numbers of tourists visiting the property, 3,600 visitors in 1979 to over 25000 in 2010, has immensely boosted the local economy and standard of living with better health, education, and infrastructure facilities. One initiative of SNP has been to implement a buffer zone (BZ) program to en-

hance protection and management of the property and was motivated by a desire to enhance conservation in combination with improved socio-economic status of the local communities through a revenue plough back system. The SNP area is also the major source of glaciers, providing freshwater-based benefits for the people downstream. In addition to conservation of the values of the property a priority of the park is to monitor the impacts of global warming and climate change on flora, fauna and Sherpa communities.

(Source: UNESCO)

The elderly account for over 11% of Iranian population

TEHRAN – Men and women aged above 60 constitute some 11.5 percent of Iran's population, an official with the health ministry has said.

For the time being, elderly women account for 52.3 percent of the total population, outnumbering men (47.7 percent), ISNA quoted Saber Jabbari as saying.

The aging of individuals signifies increased life expectancy. However, population aging demonstrates a shift in the distribution of a country's population towards older ages which is not a favorable indicator. In other words, the number of young people in society declines in comparison to the elderly population.

It is one of the most important challenges facing the country.

Despite offering incentives to encourage childbearing in line with youth population law, the desired growth in the youth population has not been accomplished yet.

"At best, Iran's population with a total fertility rate of 2.5 will reach 102,890,000 by the next seven years," IRIB quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the Civil Registration Organization, as saying.

In the last two years, the fertility rate has stabilized around 1.6 which has intensified concerns over the decreasing trend in population growth in the coming years, and the probability of turning Iran into one of the oldest countries in the world, the official highlighted.



Increased life expectancy for women

In the past four decades, women's life expectancy has increased from 54 years to 78 years, Malihe Kianfar, an official with the health ministry, has announced.

According to a survey conducted in the calendar year 1399 (2020 - 2021), ischaemic heart diseases (caused by narrowed heart arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle), heart attack, stroke, and diseases associated with high blood pressure and diabetes, as well as breast cancer are among the top 20 leading causes of death among women, Mehr news agency quoted Kianfar as saying.

Despite the increase in women's life expectancy, there are still significant challenges regarding chronic disease and lack of self-care. Raising awareness and promoting social support are

essential steps to further boost women's health, she added.

Aging with dignity

Commemorated on October 1st each year, the International Day of Older Persons recognizes the contributions of senior citizens, raises public awareness about the challenges associated with aging populations, and highlights the needs to be met.

Iran observes the day as part of National Elderly Week which is held from September 28 to October 4.

To address the issue of aging population, a national plan was designed with the aim of changing health-related behaviors in middle-aged people and focusing on preventing disabilities caused by common problems in the elderly.

This year, the national week's theme was 'active aging for everyone's tomorrow'.

Thanks to improved healthcare systems' services, life expectancy has noticeably increased globally. It is forecast that old individuals outnumber the youth population, particularly in developing countries, in seven years. Hence population aging, as a global trend, is reshaping societies worldwide.

The number of older people (defined as those aged 65 years or older) tripled from around 260 million in 1980 to 761 million in 2021. Between 2021 and 2050, the global share of the older population is projected to increase from less than 10 percent to around 17 percent.

Consequently, the demand for comprehensive healthcare, care, and social support services has grown substantially, particularly for older persons with conditions such as dementia.

The trend also highlights the significance of promoting health, as well as preventing, and treating illnesses throughout the entire course of life.

In recognition of these challenges and opportunities, the International Day of Older Persons focused on 'Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide'.

The theme encourages governments, policymakers, and social services across the world to take needed actions to address the physical, social, psychological, and health needs of older persons.

Iranian red crescent, Russian red cross to develop cooperation

TEHRAN –The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pir-hossein Kolivand, and the president of the Russian Red Cross Society (RRCs), Savchuk Pavel Olegovich, have discussed ways to develop cooperation between the two countries.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which will be held from October 28 to 31 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Highlighting that the IRCS is a member of the BRICS Civil Forum, and the chairman of the health working group of the forum, Kolivand stressed the significance of developing cooperation between the two societies. He also announced readiness to conduct joint activities with the RRCs.

"Red crescent and red cross societies shoulder the same responsibilities, they can cooperate to expand international peace and security in the world," the official noted.

The official went on to enumerate the capabilities of the IRCS in manufacturing medicines, medical tools, and prostheses, as well as establishing medical and rehabilitation centers.

Kolivand highlighted the expertise of the IRCS in providing relief services, and promoting resilience in communities during crises, like natural hazards or war.

During a meeting held on April 22, Alena



Peryshinka, co-chair of the BRICS Civil Forum told Kolivand that "The great capabilities and accomplishments of the IRCS in various fields have made BRICS eager to cooperate with the society," IRNA reported.

In July, Kolivand chaired the health working group of the BRICS Civil Forum.

With the motto of 'Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security', the BRICS Civil Forum was held from July 3-4 in Moscow.

IRCS expertise 'an added value' for BRICS: Russia's Ryabkov

In September, Sergei Alexeyevich Ryabkov, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, said "The extensive and acknowledged activities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) at the national and international levels can be an added value for the

BRICS member states."

The official has also requested the IRCS to share its knowledge and experiences with member states, the IRCS website reported.

Ryabkov made the remarks in a meeting, held on the sidelines of the fourth Eurasian Women's Forum, with Razieh Alishvandi, the IRCS director for international affairs.

Alishvandi represented Iran in the fourth forum which was held from September 18 to 20 in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Presenting a speech on the empowerment of Iranian women in the forum, the official emphasized the importance of fostering women's participation in social, economic, and political decision-making.

IFRC lauds IRCS

In September, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) project manager, Faisal Mahboob, lauded the capabilities of the IRCS as outstanding.

The official said he was impressed by the capacity and the wide range of activities carried out by the IRCS.

"The International Federation will support the activities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society to commence a new phase of collaboration with the society," Mahboob added, the IRCS website reported.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei as saying on Sunday. He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. "The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster," he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه‌ای امضا می‌شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص‌های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص‌ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.

Tehran seeks to boost environmental ties with Tokyo

TEHRAN –The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has announced Iran's willingness to boost cooperation with Japan in the field of environment.

"As environmental issues including global warming are transboundary, it necessitates the need for international collaborations," Ansari stressed, "We welcome collective thinking and any joint activity to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions."

She made the remarks in a meeting with the Japanese Ambassador to Tehran, Tamaki Tsukada, on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

The Iranian official expressed the country's interest in benefiting from Japan's knowledge and expertise in technologies related to the environment.

Referring to former memorandums of understanding (MOUs), she highlighted the need to implement the MOUs by taking effective measures.

The official further noted that achieving desired goals requires continuous cooperation rather than adopting short-term measures.

Tsukada, for his part, highlighted the possibilities for fostering cooperation between the two countries, referring to Japan's capabilities in managing wetlands, marine environment, desertification, as well as sand and dust storms.

The Japanese official said the restoration of Lake Urmia is one of the issues that requires enhancing ties.

In reference to the Anzali wetland project, Tsukada said Japan is ready to assess the projects that have been so far implemented and empower the country through environmental education.

"Japan is also interested in expanding cooperation with Iran on air pollution," the official noted.

Boosting environmental co-op

Visiting the Japanese Embassy in Iran on the occasion of Japan's National Day in February, Ali Salajeqeh, former head of the DOE said, "Bilateral relations and cooperation between Iran and Japan can be broadened, especially in environmental fields."

The conservation and restoration projects of Anzali Wetland and Lake Urmia are two typical examples of the joint actions taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Japan in the environmental fields, IRIB quoted Salajeqeh as saying.

The cooperation is expected to continue towards capacity-building, modern technologies, and knowledge-sharing for waste management, protection of wetlands, prevention of dust storms, pollution control, and climate change, the official added.

"The friendly relationship between the two countries shows that there are many capacities for the development of bilateral relations and expansion of cooperation in the regional and international arenas," he further noted.

Lake Urmia restoration program

The lake's restoration program was established in 2013 and aims to restore the lake within a 10-year program. The contribution is being implemented as a component of UNDP's ongoing

Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project – a joint project between Iran's Department of Environment and UNDP.

Lake Urmia in the northwestern West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s. The lake is the largest lake in West Asia and the sixth-largest Salt Lake in the world with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

Since 2014, together with the Government of Japan, UNDP has been supporting Lake Urmia restoration efforts. The project covers 202 villages in northwestern East and West Azarbaijan provinces.

In February 2021, the Government of Japan contributed \$3 million to help revive Lake Urmia through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This was Japan's eighth contribution to UNDP Iran.

In 2023, Claudio Providas, the UNDP resident representative in Iran, said that sanctions have had no effect on providing financial support to protect Iran's wetlands and revive Lake Urmia, in particular.

Providas pointed out that the Japanese government, as the financial sponsor of the project, continues to provide aid.

"Over the past 10 years, Japan has made generous contributions to the global plan to protect Iran's wetlands and has contributed one million dollars annually, which is quite acceptable," he said.

He continued: "In the last 5 years, Iran has tried different strategies to save Lake Urmia and has been trying to find out whether it should follow the same previous methods to restore the lake or it needs to try out new solutions."

"During the last decade, the financial aid of the Japanese government has protected Iran's wetlands and this plan has had some achievements. However, it should be noted that Japan's aid by itself was not expected to save Iran's wetlands or even Lake Urmia," he added.

Conservation of wetlands

Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project aims to focus on better management of wetlands in accordance with climate change, improving the management of natural resources, and highlighting the role of public participation and raising awareness.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported the Iranian government in conservation of the Anzali Wetland since 2003 through "The Study on Integrated Management for Ecosystem Conservation of the Anzali Wetland (2003-2005)" and "Anzali Wetland Ecological Management Project (2007-2008, 2011-2012)".

In 2006, DOE and the JICA signed a two-year agreement to start the Anzali Wetland Ecological Management Project to save the deteriorating Anzali wetland in the northern province of Gilan.

Covering more than 19,000 hectares, Anzali Wetland is located near the northern port city of Bandar Anzali, neighboring the Caspian Sea. The wetland was designated as a Ramsar site on June 23, 1975. It is fed by several rivers and separated from the Caspian Sea by a dune system.

Less rain, warmer weather forecast for fall, winter

TEHRAN –According to the Metrological Organization, the country is forecast to receive less than normal rainfall and experience above-normal heat from the start of the second month of autumn (October 22) to the end of the first month of winter (January 19, 2025).

From the beginning of the current water year (September 22) till October 21, rainfalls were mainly distributed in the southern part of Alborz as well as the northern part of the country. The average rainfall was recorded to be about 38 percent less than normal, ISNA quoted Ahad Vazifeh, an official with Metrological Organization, as saying.

In the same period, the temperature was about 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above normal average, he added.

Most of the numerical weather prediction models have forecast below-normal rainfall and above-normal temperature to continue for the next five or six months. They are not due to El Niño and La Niña, but neutral conditions, Vazifeh noted.

The country is predicted to go through weak La Niña conditions during autumn and winter as the water temperature in the tropical Pacific Ocean

will not drop significantly.

El Niño and La Niña are opposite extremes of the ENSO, which refers to cyclical environmental conditions that occur across the Equatorial Pacific Ocean.

La Niña is characterized by unusually cold ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific, compared to El Niño, which is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific.

During El Niño, precipitations are more than normal in fall and winter, while in La Niña, the rains are less and the temperature is higher than normal.

These changes are due to natural interactions between the ocean and the atmosphere. Sea surface temperature, rainfall, air pressure, and atmospheric and ocean circulation all influence each other.

Under optimal conditions, when La Niña dominates, there is a 60 percent likelihood that the fall season in Iran begins later, and the probability of facing a dry year increases.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



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

OCTOBER 26, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best form of devotion to the service of Allah is not to make a show of it.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 11:49 Evening: 17:37 Dawn: 4:55 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:19 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



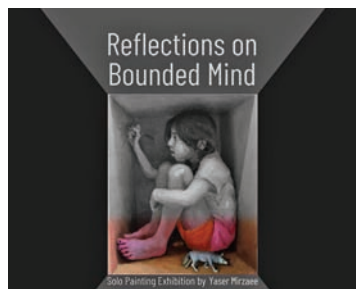
Painting

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Honia Abbasi.

Entitled "The Wind Was Blowing Against the Sycamore Tree", the exhibit runs until November 8 at the gallery that can be found at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.

* Paintings by Fatemeh Vafaejad are on show at Haft Samar Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until November 6 at the gallery that can be found at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahari Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Yasser Mirzai is underway at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery.

The exhibition named "Reflections on Bounded Mind" will be running until October 30 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

* Asr Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Zohreh Hatamipour.

The exhibit entitled "From the Window of the Euphoria" will run until November 8 at the gallery located at 18 Delaviz St. off North Mirzaye Shirazi St.



* Hoor Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mehdi Hosseini.

The exhibition will be running until November 15 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi St., off Motahari Ave.

* Paintings by Mohsen Rustai are being shown in an exhibition now underway at E1 Gallery.

The exhibit named "Society" will run until November 8 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdih St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.



* Sepehr Mosallai is displaying his latest paintings in an exhibition at Shamis Gallery.

The exhibition named "Erased Body" will run until November 4 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Daniali St., Andarzgu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

* An exhibition of paintings by Laleh Dehqan is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

The exhibition titled "Invisible Worlds" will run until October 29 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.



* Shadi Talei is showcasing a collection of her latest paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named "Fragments of Reminiscence" will run until November 5 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

Multimedia

* Artworks in different media by Moein Abbasi, Masoud Najari, Nasser Ovisi, Sepideh Sabet and other artists are currently on display in an exhibit at Shokuh Gallery.

Entitled "Deforce", the exhibit will continue until October 30 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. off Andarzgu Blvd.



Tehran International Short Film Festival concludes at Milad Tower

TEHRAN—The 41st Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) concluded on Thursday at Milad Tower, where the winners of different categories received their prizes.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Mehdi Azarpendar, the secretary of the festival, paid tribute to the memory of Martyr Yahya Sinwar, saying, "He was born in a camp, grew up in prison, and fought until his last moment. In my opinion, the world is awestruck by the bravery of Martyr Yahya Sinwar," Honaronline reported.

Yahya Sinwar (1962–2024) was a Palestinian politician who served as the chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau from August 2024 and the leader of Hamas in the Gaza Strip from February 2017 until his martyrdom earlier this month. Sinwar lost his life in a confrontation with Zionist occupation forces in Gaza.

Following the secretary's remarks, a video clip of resistance martyrs was shown to the audience.

Later in the program, a memorial ceremony was held for Martyr Mehdi Ashiri, a member of the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) who was martyred in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), and a commemorative plaque was presented to his family.

The IYCS is the organizer of the Tehran International Short Film Festival.

Raed Faridzadeh, the head of Iran Cinema Organization, honored the memory of the nation's martyrs, the martyrs of resistance, and those who sacrificed their lives for justice and freedom, stating, "I started my career with the IYCS 23 years ago, and now I have returned to my home.

The festival is now 41 years old and has reached maturity. With such a long history, this festival has established itself on the international stage, and this year, more than 13,000 works were submitted from various countries. Numerous workshops were offered at the event demonstrate that the TISFF is forward-thinking and incorporates the latest global technologies."

"The festival is a realm of creativity and courage for the



Hossein Allahyari holding his award for "Under the Shady Oak" at the closing ceremony of the festival, October 24, 2024.

younger generation, allowing them to solidify their place in the art world and work with passion and bravery," he added.

The next part of the ceremony was dedicated to awarding the winners in different categories.

In the international section, the Golden Leaf for the best film, the grand prize of the festival, was presented to "A Short Film about Kids" by Ibrahim Handal from Palestine.

The Golden Leaf for the best fiction was awarded to "Crack of Dawn" by Anna Llargues from Spain. "The Poem We Sang" by Annie Sakkab from Palestine won the Golden Leaf for the best experimental film.

The Golden Leaf for the best animation was presented to "In the Shadow of the Cypress" by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani from Iran.

"The Granny & Fishes" by Ehsan Farokhi Fard and Maria Mavati from Iran won the Golden Leaf for best documentary.

The special prize in the artificial intelligence category was awarded to "Miracle" by Afrouz Bavafa from Iran, who presented her award to the Palestinian children.

"Moment of Flight" by Ruhollah Jalalitalab received the Golden Leaf in the Book and Cinema category.

In the Truth Seekers category,

"Incident" by Bill Morrison from the U.S. received the prize and "Sour Candy" by Nishi Dugar from India won the award in the Silk Road category.

In the national section, "Under the Shady Oak" by Hossein Allahyari was the big winner of the night, grabbing four awards. Allahyari received the Golden Leaf awards for best film and best original screenplay. Moreover, the Golden Leaf awards for best sound editing and sound mixing were presented to Meysam Kiamarsi and Reza Godazgar, respectively.

Two Iranian works, which were honored in the international section, repeated their achievement in the national section as well. "In the Shadow of the Cypress" won another Golden Leaf for the best animation and "The Granny & Fishes" won another Golden Leaf for best documentary.

"The House and My Mother's Leprosy" by Navid Sadeghi won the Golden Leaf of best research in the documentary category.

The Golden Leaf for the best artistic achievement went to Morteza Ghadiri for his performance in "Farewell Paris".

"Iliha" by Reza Daneshpazhouh won the Golden Leaf for best director of experimental films.

The Golden Leaf for best editing went to Pegah Ahmadi for "Alone Together" and Ehsan Amini won

the Golden Leaf award for best adapted screenplay for "Tunnel".

"Thirteen Years Old" by Mohammad Esfandiari won the Golden Leaf for best film from national view. Erfane Karimi received the special award by the festival secretary for her film "Hanabandoun" and "Limo Knew Everything" by Edris Mahmoudian received the jury special prize.

This year's edition of the TISFF 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 competed for the top awards.

The line-up included 59 short fiction films, 21 animated movies, 18 documentaries, and nine experimental films. The submitted works were 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 41 consecutive years in Iran, by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society – one of the most renowned schools of cinema and short film production in Iran and throughout the world.

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

"An Ordinary Man" comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN— A Persian translation of French writer Yves Simon's book "An Ordinary Man" has recently been published by Hermes Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Hamideh Lotfinia and Romina Taheri.

Originally published in 2011, "An Ordinary Man" is a poignant reflection by Yves Simon that intertwines the narrative of his childhood with a deep exploration of his relationship with his father.

As the only spoiled child of modest parents, Simon's early years are framed by the profound love and resilience of his parents, who tirelessly navigate the challenges of life.

The picturesque setting of places like Zurich and Contrexeville contrasts sharply with the working-class struggles that young Yves begins to comprehend.

Witnessing the unconditional love between his parents instills in him values of courage and joy.

As he transitions into adolescence during the tumultuous 1960s—a period marked by the rise of rock music, the influence of icons like Bob Dylan, and the allure of youthful rebellion—Yves grapples with understanding

his father's love in light of this newfound freedom and chaos. He finds himself caught between the idealism of youth and the enduring virtues of humility and discretion imparted by his father. The sudden loss of his father thrusts Yves into a journey of self-discovery as he realizes that his artistic freedom is a legacy rooted in his father's unwavering love.

Throughout the book, Simon addresses his father, oscillating between lamentation and celebration.

This narrative technique invites readers into a deeply personal exploration of memory, grief, and forgiveness.

Through conversations with his father—now a ghostly figure—Yves revives the essence of his childhood, ultimately understanding that even as an orphan, he carries forward the spirit of an "ordinary man" whose love profoundly shapes his identity and artistry.

The book serves as a heartfelt tribute to the complexities of familial bonds, underscoring how love transcends loss.

Born in 1944, Yves Simon is a celebrated French writer and singer with a prolific career encompassing over 30 books and around

twenty albums. His literary journey began in the early 1970s, coinciding with his initial forays into music.

His first notable novels, "En couleur" and "L'homme arc-en-ciel", were published in 1971 and quickly gained acclaim, marking him as a significant literary figure.

Simon's writing often reflects his rich life experiences and social observations, culminating in his best-selling novel, "Oceans", in 1983, which solidified his reputation. In 1991, he won the prestigious Prix Médicis for "La Dérive des sentiments", further establishing his literary credentials.

He has explored various themes in his works, from personal narratives to societal issues.

In addition to his novels, Simon's lyrical prowess is celebrated in his music, where he seamlessly blends elements of rock, classical, and personal storytelling.

His later career saw him dedicate more time to writing, producing works that resonated deeply with contemporary issues and personal reflections. Through his versatile talent, Yves Simon continues to leave an indelible mark on both literature and music.

Mehregan ensemble takes stage at Vahdat Hall for women-only audience

TEHRAN— The all-female troupe Mehregan captivated audiences at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Friday with their performance of ritual movements and traditional dance, designed and directed by Mehrmoush

Mehrinfar, exclusively for women.

Entitled "Meh o Mah", the performance featured live music and showcased a talented cast, including Nazanin Didehvar and Golshid Bahraei, with Farnak Yousefi pro-

viding narration.

Highlighting the artistry of traditional dance, the performance also included the skilled performances of Sheida Zamaniannad, Tina Bahrami, Shadi Rezvani, Zahra

Jalili, Fatemeh Ramezani, Hanieh Khalili, Sepideh Eslami, Setareh Sediqi Dehkordi, Asana Khalilzadeh, Kimia Yazdani, Anahita Sadeqi, and Bita Bahrami.

