

## Truth through art: amplifying revolutionary voices on global stage in Ammar festival

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- In a recent interview with the Tehran Times, Marzieh Hashemi, an American-Iranian journalist, television presenter, and the new secretary of Ammar Popular Film Festival, spoke passionately about the evolving role of the festival in showcasing revolutionary art and providing a platform for underrepresented voices.

Hashemi articulated a vision for expanding Ammar festival's reach beyond its regional origins to embrace a more global perspective. ▶ Page 8

## Ceasefire charade: US seeks to divert attention from Israel's carnage in Lebanon

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- More than a month into Israel's brutal strikes on Lebanon, the United States' efforts for a ceasefire appear to be nothing more than a distraction from the Tel Aviv regime's carnage and destruction in the Mediterranean nation.

US President Joe Biden's Middle East adviser Brett McGurk and special envoy Amos Hochstein were in Israel on Thursday. ▶ Page 5

# Germany's Blind Obedience

### German leaders sacrificing economy, foreign policy, and dignity for Washington and Israel



Iran's consulate in Frankfurt, Germany

## China expresses support for Iran's pursuit of national security

TEHRAN – China has expressed firm support for Iran's pursuit of national security and stability following a deadly terrorist ambush that targeted Iranian police officers in a border province.

In a press briefing on Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian voiced China's condemnation of the attack and reaffirmed Beijing's opposition to terrorism in all its forms. ▶ Page 3

## Berlin's aggressive diplomacy against Iran: German-style atonement

By Afifeh Abedi

TEHRAN – Germany has announced it will be closing all Iranian consular offices in the country – an unwise move that will effectively end consular relations between the two nations.

The German Foreign Minister has condemned the execution of Jamshid Sharmahd, an Iranian terror ringleader with German citizenship, also citing this action as the reason for summoning the Iranian ambassador. Sharmahd, the leader of the Tondar terrorist group, was executed after being convicted of multiple terrorist activities in Iran. ▶ Page 3

# Sahand Sanat Rastek Co. Launches Second Power Plant, Strengthening Private Investment in Iran's Energy Infrastructure

The inauguration of the Mahan II power plant in the Mahmoudabad Industrial Park of Qom province marks another advancement in Sahand Sanat Rastek Company's commitment to infrastructure development in Iran.

During a recent visit to the 25 MW power plant, Akbar Behnamjoo, the governor-general of the province, commended the design, construction, and installation of the plant within less than 14 months.

The official also highlighted the high-quality execution of the project, which has enhanced the stability of power supply for production units in Mahmoudabad Industrial Park.

Accompanied by a number of local officials, the governor-general expressed optimism that Sahand Sanat Rastek Co. would continue investing in power supply for other industrial parks in the province.

Engineer Saeed Soltani, the chairman of the board of Sahand Sanat Rastek, welcomed Behnamjoo and other provincial officials to the plant, interpreting the visit early in the governor-general's tenure as a positive sign of a new development phase for the province.

Speaking to the officials, Soltani underlined the timely addition of the plant's capacity to the grid. He stated that the plant was designed by Iranian experts and established with over €10 million in foreign investment and 2500 billion rials in domestic funds. "With a nominal capacity of 28 MW, it was completed in less than 14 months, setting a new benchmark in the industry for construction and commissioning."

Soltani noted that the plant's high performance was due to state-of-the-art equipment, which, through reduced fuel consumption and increased efficiency, optimizes electricity production.

He also pointed out that this equipment model, introduced in European countries in the past two years, has yet to be installed or operated in any Asian country, including China, the UAE, and Turkey. "Since the start of the plant's trial operation just days ago, numerous requests for site visits have come from companies in neighboring countries."

In December 2020, Sahand Sanat Rastek Co. invested in the Mahan I power plant, which was inaugurated in Golestan



province with full private funding.

Another speaker during the visit was the engineer Soheil Soltani, the managing director of the company and project leader on behalf of the board. He attributed the construction's timely completion and unique technical characteristics to a proper investment, precise planning, and skilled personnel. He expressed satisfaction with the project results and expressed hope that, considering the significant benefits of such power plants, the Ministry of Energy would not only fulfill its existing commitments to private investors but also develop additional support policies for the industry to address the challenges faced by investors.

He pointed to various obstacles observed through experience with the Mahan I plant and dealings with the Ministry of Energy over recent years. Among the main issues he mentioned are strict regulations hindering direct transactions between electricity buyers and sellers, as well as delayed payments for electricity sold to the Ministry.

Among other issues, according to Soltani, is the seasonal natural gas supply cuts to power plants in winter, despite their higher efficiency compared to other plants nationwide.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Soltani shared that toward the end of the Mahan I project, despite repeated requests for

outstanding payments from the Ministry to complete the Qom plant, no action was taken, and he hoped for a serious shift in the Ministry's approach toward genuine industry investors.

Soltani concluded with remarks on the challenges of foreign exchange procurement, fund transfers, and equipment acquisition for the project, crediting the timely construction and commissioning of the plant to the relentless team effort under the supervision of Engineer Hadi Ramezani, the executive director of the project. He expressed gratitude to all involved and invited Ramezani to provide further details on the project.

Engineer Hadi Ramezani, who is a senior electrical engineer, and the CEO of power plant projects with the Arian Niroo Mabna Co., stated that this investment is based on the small-scale power generation development guidelines issued by the Ministry of Energy in 1999. Under those guidelines, the private sector can invest in electricity production through small-scale plants, benefiting from electricity sales to the Ministry and contributing to national power supply. The legislation and amendments added since 1999 have enabled private sector participation in power plants.

This investment model aligns closely with this year's national slogan, "Surge in Production through People's Participation" as small and medium-sized investors can

readily engage, Ramezani added.

Here, we see public participation facilitated solely by favorable legislation, which could serve as a model for attracting diverse public investment in various production sectors.

Ramezani added that the construction of small-scale or distributed power plants, like this one, offers significant advantages, such as reducing national grid power losses. Since these plants are built near consumption points and are scaled to meet local demand, they require minimal reliance on transmission and distribution networks. As the nature of power grids entails inevitable losses, reducing grid usage minimizes losses, allowing the maximum amount of generated power to reach end users. Consequently, widespread adoption of such power plants could raise the overall efficiency of the national grid, meaning less fuel consumption and greater power output.

The efficiency of these plants can be further analyzed by noting that their equipment essentially has higher efficiency than that used in larger plants, and this advantage is compounded by less reliance on the grid, which enhances their efficiency compared to other plants.

Additionally, these plants improve voltage profiles—offering stable voltage with minimal drop—for nearby consumers and strengthen passive defense by decentralizing production. Establishing such plants in industrial parks, both



technically and legally, minimizes power outages for facilities in these parks, even during peak summer days. Since power cuts can cause significant technical and financial damage to industrial units, these plants, which can be built in industrial parks, present a viable solution to this problem. Other distinguishing features of the Mahan II plant include environmental considerations, such as advanced noise reduction measures, comprehensive monitoring and control systems, and automated oil injection and extraction systems.

In conclusion, Ramezani thanked private investors for their commitment to infrastructure projects, emphasizing that ongoing private sector involvement in electricity production depends on a balanced, constructive relationship with investors. He cited Sahand Sanat Rastek's development and operation of the Mahan II plant as a model for realizing the slogan

"Surge in Production through People's Participation", contributing to the nation's growth, prosperity, and development.





## TEHRAN PAPERS

## Israel is America's lethal weapon

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

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed America's role in the Middle East and wrote: America's role in the ongoing developments in the region is completely obvious to everyone.

On one hand, it uses all facilities to support the Zionist regime, and on the other, it sends a message that it wants to reduce tension in the region, especially with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Therefore, according to the experiences we have gained in confronting America for many years, including the JCPOA, as well as their lies regarding the Gaza crisis, we should be well aware of their deception.

America's approach is that whenever the Zionist regime commits criminal actions in the region, it supports this regime and calls its crimes "defense", but if Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas respond to these aggressions, American officials accuse them of making the region insecure.

It is in such a situation that allies of NATO and Western countries start to send various messages calling on the Islamic Republic to exercise self-restraint and in return, they do not show any reaction to the crimes of the Zionist regime.

The Islamic Republic should in no way provide this opportunity for the United States to succeed in suppressing the axis of resistance through Israel.

**Javan: Iran's strength is its ability to deter**

In an analysis, Javan dealt with Iran's strength in confronting the enemy. It wrote: Israel's attack on Iran cannot be hidden as a major attack, but now even the Zionists themselves refuse to publicize it.

According to the Israeli war minister, the attack was aimed to completely destroy Iran's air defense systems and radars and open the country's skies for future attacks.

It should be said that Iran's power is not just limited to its air defense power so that if it is destroyed, America and Israel can carry out attacks with a free hand.

In addition to its self-defense power, Iran has also proven its offensive power. But there are also four types of deterrence.

First, the political deterrence, which is now at its peak with internal unity. Second, the economic deterrence that Iran has shown its tolerance for despite enduring the most severe sanctions for several decades.

The third is military deterrence, which the world is now waiting for Iran's "power of will, initiative and unknown abilities".

And lastly, nuclear deterrence, which we classify as separate from military dimensions

but we know that the enemy's imagination is not free with this deterrence of Iran.

**Donya-e-Eqtesad: Tehran is the most important competitor for Riyadh**

In a commentary, Donya-e-Eqtesad addressed Riyadh's concern about Iran's power and said: The Saudi Crown Prince is looking for military superiority over his regional neighbors.

Saudi Arabia has nuclear ambitions as it seeks to launch a civilian nuclear program similar to Iran through an agreement with the United States.

Bin Salman has openly argued that if Iran moves towards building nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia will follow suit.

Riyadh has always seen Tehran as its regional rival. It was Bin Salman who took an overtly aggressive and confrontational stance against Iran. Riyadh still sees Tehran as the most important threat to its security and regional ambitions.

Harris's message that she is willing to resume talks with Tehran and rejoin the nuclear deal (if she is elected president) may create a strategic dilemma for Riyadh. It may also raise fears among the Persian Gulf (Arab) countries of Iran's regional dominance.

**Iran: BRICS will make Iran-China relations stronger**

The Iran newspaper said BRICS will help strengthen relations between Iran and China. It said: Given its position and economic capacity, BRICS will change the face of the world in the future.

We are moving away from an economic superpower in the world as regional powers and international blocs are emerging.

Recently, at the BRICS summit, the Chinese President clearly told Mr. Pezeshkian that whatever happens in the world it will not hinder the friendship and cooperation between Iran and China.

The recent events and political tensions that have occurred between Iran and the Israeli occupation regime will not disrupt trade relations and cooperation between Iran and China. China plans to expand its level of cooperation with Iran.

Therefore, this issue has two meanings; despite tension in the Middle East and a possible victory of Trump in the U.S. presidential election, the relations between Iran and China will become stronger and we will not witness any disruption. Accordingly, China will continue to be a buyer of Iranian oil in the future. Currently, we sell more than one and a half million barrels of oil, a significant amount of which is sold to the Chinese.

## Iran Navy to receive new combat destroyer 'Zagros'



TEHRAN – Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, commander of the Iranian Navy, has announced the upcoming launch of a new combat reconnaissance destroyer, underscoring Iran's determination to bolster its naval strength.

The Navy chief announced on Friday that the new warship "Zagros" is a combat destroyer designed not only for offensive operations but also for intelligence-gathering purposes.

In an interview with Iranian national television, the Rear Admiral announced that the modern destroyer is equipped with a hangar for helicopter storage and has been fully outfitted, preparing to join the Navy's fleet soon.

Discussing the status of the Sahand destroyer, which was recovered after sinking in Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas in July, Irani stated that the vessel is undergoing swift preparations for its service return.

Following its participation in a large-scale war game, the Sahand destroyer will be deployed to the northern waters of the Indian Ocean on a mission to bolster security, the Rear Admiral noted.

In recent years, the Iranian Navy has celebrated several significant achievements.

In 2023, Iran's 86th flotilla of warships completed an unprecedented 360-degree global voyage of 63,000 kilometers that took eight months.

The flotilla, featuring the domestically-built destroyer Dena and the Makran forward base ship, set a record for the longest distance sailed by an Iranian flotilla in international waters, successfully navigating the Strait of Magellan, the closest point to the South Pole.

Another monumental milestone for Iran's Navy was the successful hosting of the Indian Maritime Exercise (IMEX) 2024, which welcomed numerous members and observers of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

The Iranian destroyer Jamaran played a key role in the joint naval exercise, which also involved the participation of the naval forces of Russia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Pakistan, Qatar, and Bangladesh.

## Leader's advisor says Iran may change nuclear doctrine if threats become 'existential'

TEHRAN – Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's former Foreign Minister and head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, has clarified that while Iran's policy against nuclear weapons remains intact, any existential threat to Iran could alter this stance.

The advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution made the remarks in an interview with Lebanon's Al Mayadeen, where he offered insights into Iran's nuclear policy and regional security stance.

Kharrazi began by emphasizing that while Iran currently refrains from developing nuclear weapons due to a religious decree, this position might not hold if Iran faces an existential threat. "Iran has respected the Leader's fatwa prohibiting nuclear weapons," Kharrazi stated, "but if the survival of Iran comes under serious threat, we reserve the right to reconsider." Kharrazi criticized European countries for not reciprocating Iran's respect for their concerns, particularly over missile ranges and regional security sensitivities.

"Iran no longer feels obliged to consider European concerns," he



said, hinting at Iran's growing willingness to increase missile ranges if its own concerns continue to be ignored. "Iran's missile capabilities are evident," Kharrazi continued, "and if Europe continues to overlook our red lines, we see no need to be bound by their sensitivities."

In discussing recent Israeli actions, Kharrazi addressed Israel's continued miscalculations. He referenced the recent "True Promise II" operation, an Iranian missile strike in retaliation for Israeli aggression, describing Israel's response as disproportionately weak.

He remarked, "Israel's defense capabilities were overstated, and their inadequate response has

caused frustration among their own ranks." When asked if Iran was preparing for a possible True Promise III, Kharrazi replied that Iran would respond decisively when necessary.

He added, "Israel has made repeated miscalculations, including its belief that it could eradicate Resistance movements like Hamas and Hezbollah through military actions and assassinations of their leaders."

Kharrazi further elaborated on Iran's approach to deterrence, noting that Iran stands prepared for war, though it seeks to avoid escalation. He stated that Iran's recent responses to Israeli provocations have effectively demonstrated its

deterrence capabilities. "The path forward depends on Israel; if it continues its aggressive actions, Iran will respond accordingly," Kharrazi warned.

Kharrazi also discussed Iran's position on the Gaza ceasefire talks, clarifying that while Iran supports Palestinian interests, it is not directly involved in ceasefire negotiations. "The decision lies with the Lebanese and Palestinian people, and Iran will support their choices," he explained.

Concluding the interview, Kharrazi spoke about Iran's regional approach, reiterating Tehran's strategic intent to build and strengthen relationships with neighboring states.

He underscored Iran's policy of maintaining constructive ties across the region to enhance collective security. "Iran's goal is to pursue peace and security through collaboration with all neighboring countries, and we are committed to this course," he said, signaling Iran's intention to remain a stabilizing influence amidst rising tensions in West Asia.

## 'Unimaginable response': IRGC chief pledges retaliation after Israel's strike on Iran

TEHRAN – The commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has promised an inconceivable response to Israel's recent attack against Iran – a response that he says would be a reminder of Tehran's military capabilities and resolve.

In a speech in Iran's southern province of Fars on Thursday, Major General Hossein Salami vowed an 'unimaginable response' to Israel's recent aggression on Iranian soil.

Salami called attention to the "erroneous belief" held by Israelis that they could change Iran's "historical trajectory" merely by launching a few missiles.

"Have you forgotten how Iranian missiles incapacitated your air-defense systems in Operation True Promise II, leading to anxiety and restlessness among your population?"

On October 1, Iran launched around 200 ballistic missiles at Israel in retaliation for the assassination of Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and IRGC General Nilforoushan. The operation, named 'True Promise II', successfully targeted military and intelligence bases across the occupied Palestinian territories, representing Iran's

second direct response to Israel since its first such operation in April.

Less than a month after Iran's act of self-defense, the Israeli military violated Iraqi airspace on October 26 in an attempt to strike Iranian military installations. The attack resulted in minor damage to some radar sites and led to the martyrdom of four Army personnel and one civilian.

The IRGC chief also highlighted the regime's repeated miscalculations and "looming decline", stating, "You lack any foundation [in Palestine] and will ultimately face collapse."

Salami's deputy, Brigadier General Ali Fadavi, affirmed in a statement to Al Mayadeen that Iran's reaction to any Israeli aggression is "inevitable", stressing, "For over 40 years, we have never left any attack unanswered."

Fadavi also stated that Iran is capable of targeting all of Israel's military assets in a single operation.

The emphatic statements from Iran's senior commanders have captured the attention of both Israelis and Americans.

According to CNN, Israel is currently on a "high level of readiness" in expectation of a



IRGC chief speaking at a ceremony in Fars Province on Thursday

response from Iran. This comes after another CNN source indicated that Iran is poised to deliver a "definitive and painful" retaliation to the regime's aggression, possibly occurring before the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

Additionally, Pentagon spokesperson Patrick Ryder told reporters on Tuesday that the US must be ready for all possibilities. "If Iran takes any action against Israel, we are committed to defending Israel," the spokesperson added.

Since October 2023, West Asia has experienced ongoing Israeli violence, which has so far ravaged Gaza, displaced a large segment of Lebanon's population, and led to more than 46,000 civilian casualties.

## Araghchi engages with regional counterparts to address escalating tensions

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, has been actively consulting with regional leaders to address pressing bilateral and regional issues, focusing heavily on the ongoing violence in Gaza and Lebanon.

Over recent days, Araghchi has held separate phone conversations with his counterparts from Qatar, Egypt, Indonesia, and Algeria, emphasizing the need for urgent diplomatic action to restore stability and protect civilians.

In a Wednesday night call with Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Qatar, Araghchi discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly the intensifying conflict in Gaza and Lebanon.

The Qatari Prime Minister provided updates on diplomatic efforts being undertaken to secure a ceasefire and bring relief to affected civilians. Araghchi underscored the critical importance of unified efforts among Islamic nations to support the people of Palestine and Lebanon and called for an immediate end to what he described as Israel's aggressive actions and genocide in Gaza. Both ministers agreed that regional peace hinges on halting Israel's military operations.

In a separate discussion that same evening, Araghchi spoke with Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister Badr Abdul Ati.

Both diplomats expressed optimism over the recent progress in

Tehran-Cairo relations and the positive outcomes of dialogue between the two nations, following a constructive meeting between Iranian and Egyptian leaders on the sidelines of the recent BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia.

Araghchi and Abdul Ati highlighted the precarious situation in Lebanon and Gaza, calling for urgent international action to establish a ceasefire. They also emphasized the special role of Islamic countries in fostering regional stability.

Iran's engagement extended further, as Araghchi reached out to Indonesia's new Foreign Minister, Sugiono, to discuss expanding relations between Tehran and Jakarta.

Araghchi congratulated Sugiono on his appointment and praised Indonesia's firm condemnation of Israeli aggression. The two ministers discussed the deteriorating situation in Gaza, as well as Israeli attacks on Lebanon. Both agreed that the international community, alongside Islamic nations, must act swiftly to halt the violence and protect civilians in these conflict zones.

On Thursday, Araghchi continued his diplomatic outreach by speaking with Algeria's Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf. The two diplomats reviewed the current crisis in Gaza and Lebanon, expressing deep concern over what they described as a genocide in Gaza and persistent aggression against Lebanon.

Araghchi and Attaf emphasized the importance of coordinated inter-

national efforts to address the humanitarian crisis, especially through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They looked ahead to the upcoming Arab-Islamic summit, which they saw as a crucial platform for unifying regional efforts.

Araghchi also expressed gratitude to Algeria for its consistent support for the people of Palestine and Lebanon and for condemning Israel's recent actions against Iran.

## 'Iran would defend itself against any acts of aggression, including the recent Israeli airstrikes on its military installations'

He voiced appreciation for Algeria's backing of Iran's call for a United Nations Security Council meeting on these issues. Attaf affirmed Algeria's commitment to strengthening its ties with Iran and stated that both nations share a common view on the Palestinian cause.

In a related development on Thursday, the Iranian and British ambassadors to Iraq sat down for a meeting in the capital Baghdad to discuss the escalating tensions in West Asia, spurred by over a year of

unchecked Israeli violence.

Iran's ambassador to Baghdad, Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadeq, and his British counterpart, Stephen Charles Hitchen met to explore potential avenues for cooperation and dialogue between their respective countries to promote peace and stability in the region.

During the meeting, Al-Sadeq highlighted the ongoing violence and aggression perpetrated by the Israeli regime in the region, cautioning that a broader conflict could ensue if Western nations do not rein in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Al-Sadeq also condemned the actions of Western countries in supplying arms to Israel, arguing that their support for the regime contradicts their professed commitment to human rights, peace, and stability in West Asia.

The Iranian ambassador reiterated his country's desire for peace and stability in the region while asserting that Iran would defend itself against any acts of aggression, referencing the recent Israeli airstrikes on Iranian military installations on October 26.

The British Ambassador to Iraq reaffirmed the United Kingdom's dedication to "fostering peace and stability" in West Asia.

Hitchen also highlighted the significance of transparent dialogue and collaboration among regional powers to tackle the diverse challenges confronting the area.



# Germany's blind obedience

German leaders sacrificing economy, foreign policy, and dignity for Washington and Israel

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD), led by a new generation of politicians lacking experience and wisdom in international affairs, has steered the country into turbulent waters in a matter of a few years.

Under Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his team, the German economy has gone from bad to worse, after the politician with well-known anti-Russian sentiments decided to sacrifice his country's economic prosperity to help fight Washington's proxy war in Ukraine.

Germany, once the envy of Europe, is teetering on the brink. Its economy is shrinking for the second consecutive year, consumer confidence is in freefall, skilled workers are fleeing in droves, and the aging nation is failing to attract young talent.

German economists and business owners believe the country's industries are unlikely to recover from the energy price shock they experienced after sanctioning Russia's oil and getting the Nord Stream 2 blown up by the U.S. anytime soon. Volkswagen for instance, plans to close at least three factories in Germany, lay off tens of thousands of staff, and downsize remaining plants in the country. Smaller companies are having it far worse.

The rapid growth of Germany's far-right also means that migrants are going to feel less and less welcomed. It seems, therefore, that a perfect storm of economic and demographic decline will be hitting



Germany in the next years.

You'd think that under these circumstances, Berlin would be cautious about creating unnecessary tensions when it comes to its bilateral relations. But, with Scholz at the helm, and the ever-hawkish and unapologetically racist Baerbock by his side, a different path seems more likely.

Germany announced on Thursday that it will close the Iranian consulates in Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich. The move, confirmed by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, is in direct response to the execution of convicted terrorist Jamshid Sharmahd. Baerbock added that her country's diplomatic relations with Iran had reached "more than a low point."

The top diplomat announced the closure of Iranian consulates over the execution of a terror ringleader responsible for the deaths and injury of over 200 civilians a few days after she said civilian sites in Gaza should "lose their protected

status" so that Israel can continue to kill women and children without drawing global condemnation.

While Baerbock seems to have a personal penchant for supporting terrorism, her latest rash decision coupled with the closure of Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH) in summer speaks to how Germany's oldest party is losing grip on power as well as reality under the leadership of fanatical and unwise figures.

"Baerbock's decision to close consulates is unprecedented in the world of diplomacy," stated Alireza Sheikhattar, Iran's former ambassador to Berlin, who served for nearly six years. "Consulates solely provide services to citizens and foster economic ties.

They are not involved in politics. This reckless act is a direct consequence of Baerbock's lack of experience in diplomacy. She generally doesn't know what she's doing."

An estimated 250,000 Iranians reside in Germany, with significant

communities in Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich. Baerbock's decision to shutter all Iranian consulates will force these Iranian-German citizens to embark on journeys to Berlin for even the simplest consular services. "This is just an inconvenience and unnecessary burden on a large community that contributes significantly to the German society. It has no practical impact whatsoever," Sheikhattar added.

Apart from lacking experience, the current German leadership is deeply influenced by the Israeli lobby and has been brainwashed into an unquestioning acceptance of Israeli actions, according to the former ambassador. He recalls witnessing firsthand Scholz's unwavering support for Israeli actions, even the most egregious, during a meeting years ago when the current chancellor had just stepped down as the president of the European Parliament. "This generation of German politicians seems to believe Israel can do anything, even if it means the deaths of others," he lamented. This blind faith, he argues, forms the core of the German government's growing hostile and aggressive stance towards Iran.

"Germany has always tried to keep its relations decent and respectful with us because these relations that date back to several decades ago have been based on economic interests. It's concerning that a group of irrational politicians are sacrificing everything to satisfy Zionists."

## Berlin's aggressive diplomacy against Iran: German-style atonement

From Page 1 ► Media reports indicate that Sharmahd confessed to coordinating with Western and Israeli intelligence agencies to plan and carry out terrorist attacks in Iran. These confessions, made during media appearances and voluntary interviews with television channels outside Iran, include his responsibility for the bombing of the Hosseynieh Seyed al-Shohada Mosque in Shiraz in April 2008, which resulted in over 200 casualties.

It is undeniable that the German government and its intelligence agencies were fully aware of Sharmahd's actions and his communications with these organizations. From Iran's perspective, Berlin's condemnation of the execution is hypocritical, given their knowledge of Sharmahd's crimes and their support for other terrorist groups operating against Iran.

### Double standard on human rights

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who described the execution of the Tonder terrorist group's leader as inhumane, explicitly justifies and supports the Zionist regime's crimes against the innocent Palestinian people.

While the genocide in Gaza and the killing of Palestinian women and children have sparked international outrage, the German Foreign

Minister describes Israel's attacks on civilian targets as legitimate.

Germany has become one of the most important suppliers of weapons to the Zionist regime in the Gaza war. Human Rights Watch, based in Europe and the Mediterranean, also describes Germany as a collaborator in Israel's crimes in the Gaza conflict. According to this report, Israel uses German incendiary weapons to burn down Palestinian homes, and German mines are used in Israeli operations in Gaza's residential areas.

### Germany's blatant support for Israel's crimes against the Palestinian and Lebanese people, as well as the Zionist regime's terrorist actions in Iran, has exposed its true colors

#### Forgetful of past crimes

Germany's aggressive stance against Iran has fueled public outrage in Iran, with many calling for the country to pay reparations for its past actions. Germany's debt to the Iranian people is significant, stemming from a history of broken

promises and harmful policies.

Before the Islamic Revolution, Germany was a key partner in Iran's nuclear program, agreeing to build nuclear power plants for the West Asian country. Despite signed contracts, Germany, along with other Western nations, failed to fulfill its obligations and instead politicized Iran's peaceful nuclear ambitions. This resulted in crippling economic sanctions that have severely impacted the Iranian people, including access to vital medical services. Germany bears a heavy responsibility for the Iranian people's economic hardship.

Furthermore, Germany's role in supplying Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war cannot be ignored. This heinous act resulted in the deaths and suffering of thousands of Iranian civilians. Germany should apologize to the Iranian people and compensate the victims' families for the pain and loss they endured. Adding insult to injury, Germany granted citizenship to Jamshid Sharmahd, the leader of the Tondar terrorist group, responsible for numerous attacks in Iran.

Germany's actions have demonstrably harmed the Iranian people, and they must be held accountable for their past deeds. Justice demands that Germany pay its debt to the Iranian people for the dam-

age it has inflicted.

### Complementary game with the Zionist regime

Germany's blatant support for Israel's crimes against the Palestinian and Lebanese people, as well as the Zionist regime's terrorist actions in Iran, has exposed its true colors. Like the United States, Germany has adopted an aggressive policy towards Iran, actively supporting the West's agenda in the region.

While the world rightfully condemns Israel's atrocities in Gaza, including the war crime in Beit Lahia, Germany seeks to divert attention from Israel's crimes by manipulating media narratives and attempting to sway public opinion.

Germany, while claiming to be a champion of human rights, has been complicit in countless crimes against humanity. It ranks among the world's most criminal governments, its name forever tarnished by the horrors of Nazism and the mass killings of World War II. For Iranians, Germany is synonymous with the devastating economic sanctions that have killed innocent civilians and caused unimaginable suffering. We cannot forget Germany's role in providing chemical weapons to Iraq, resulting in the deaths of countless Iranians along the border.

## China expresses support for Iran's pursuit of national security

From Page 1 ► "China condemns the terrorist attack and opposes all forms of terrorism," Lin stated, underscoring Beijing's stance against acts of violence and foreign-backed terror groups.

The attack, which took place on October 26 in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, near the Pakistani border, resulted in the deaths of ten Iranian police officers.

According to Iranian authorities, the assault targeted a police convoy traveling through the city of Taftan. The responsibility for the ambush was claimed by the so-called "Jaish al-Adl", a Pakistan-based terror group that has previously carried out attacks in the region.

In response, Iran's Islamic Revolution

Guard Corps (IRGC) initiated a robust counterterrorism operation across the province. By Friday, the IRGC had reported the elimination of four terrorists involved in the recent attack, including a senior member of the terror group.

Earlier this week, Lin Jian also addressed the attacks carried out by Israel on Iranian military facilities. These strikes led to the deaths of four Iranian servicemen and a civilian.

China's foreign ministry condemned the violation of Iranian sovereignty, warning that escalating violence only heightens instability in an already fragile region. "China opposes violating the sovereignty and undermining the security of other countries and opposes the abuse of force," Lin said, urging all in-



involved parties to avoid further conflict and exercise restraint.

Iran, meanwhile, has stated it does not seek conflict but has vowed to respond to any further hostilities. Iranian officials have emphasized their right to defend against any further aggression, pledging to respond to Israel's actions should such provocations continue.

# IRAN IN FOCUS

NOVEMBER 2, 2024

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### Sepahan edge Aluminum to go top: PGPL

TEHRAN – Sepahan football team defeated Aluminum 1-0 and moved top of 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Friday.

Mehdi Limoochi scored the solitary goal of the match in the 53rd minute in Isfahan's Fooladshahr Stadium.

Sepahan moved top with 20 points, one point above Tractor.

In Sirjan, Foolad defeated Gol Gohar 1-0 and leapfrogged Persepolis to go third. Moussa Coulibaly scored the winner in the 71st minute.

Elsewhere, Shams Azar defeated Kheybar 2-0 in Qazvin, Mes earned a late win over Nassaji in Ghaemshahr, Havadar defeated Malavan 2-0 in Bandar Anzali and Chadormalu edged past Zob Ahan 1-0 in Yazd.

On Wednesday, Persepolis lost to Esteghlal Khuzestan 1-0 and Esteghlal suffered a 2-0 loss against Tractor in Tehran.

### Nokhodi wins bronze in 2024 World Wrestling Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyler Mohammad Nokhodi claimed a bronze medal at the 2024 World Wrestling Championships on Thursday night.

Nokhodi, who had defeated American legendary wrestler Jordan Burroughs in the quarterfinals, defeated Kota Takahashi of Japan 10-0 in the 79kg bronze medal match.

The gold medal went to Avtandil Kentchadze of Georgia, who defeated Magomed Magomaeiev (AIN) in the final.

The 2024 World Wrestling Championships was held in Tirana, Albania, on October 30-31.

### Mehdi Taj meets FIFA President Infantino

TEHRAN – Head of the Iran football federation Mehdi Taj met FIFA President Gianni Infantino in Seoul. Taj has traveled to Seoul, South Korea to attend the AFC Annual Awards Seoul 2024.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Taj met Infantino and AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa.

Iran stalwart Saeid Ahmad Abbasi was named the 2023 AFC Futsal Player of the Year on Tuesday.

### Kim Hee-gon to officiate Persepolis, Al Gharafa

TEHRAN – Kim Hee-gon will officiate the match between Persepolis of Iran and Qatar's Al Gharafa at the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Elite.

The match will be held in Dubai's Al Maktoum Stadium on Monday.

The South Korean football referee, who has been a FIFA listed international referee since 2013, will be assisted by Yoon Jae-yeol and Park Sang-jun. Persepolis sits 10th in Group A with a single point, while Al Gharafa is seventh with three points.

### Iran in Pot 2 of AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025

TEHRAN – The stage for the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025 will be set for the 16 qualified teams on Thursday, November 7 when the official draw takes place at 3pm at the Grand Skylight International Guanlan in Shenzhen, China PR.

Set to take place from February 12 to March 1, 2025, the 42nd edition of the tournament

features a final cast that comprises China PR – automatically qualified as hosts – and 15 sides that made it through the Qualifiers, which concluded last month.

Of the 16 previous champions, 12 are in contention to taste glory again, including record 12-time winners Korea Republic who will be aiming for their first title since 2012, and holders Uzbekistan, who won their first title in the previous edition in 2023 on home soil.

The top four finishers will also seal their berths at the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2025 in Chile and three teams – Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic and Yemen – will aim to do so for the first time.

The 16 sides have been seeded into four pots based on their final ranking from the 2023 edition, with China PR seeded first as the host association, as below:

Pot 1: China PR, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Japan

Pot 2: Korea Republic, Australia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan

Pot 3: Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kyrgyz Republic

Pot 4: Qatar, Thailand, Yemen, DPR Korea

### Paralympic champion Rostami hospitalized after car crash

TEHRAN – The 2024 Paralympic Games gold medalist Rouhollah Rostami was hospitalized in hospital due to a car crash.

He had a car accident alongside his father while returning from Qom city to Tehran Thursday night.

They are in a stable condition in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Hospital.

Rostami claimed two gold medals in 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris in the men's 80 kg powerlifting event.

He had won a silver medal in 2012 Paralympic Games in London.

### Iran's freestyle team falls short of expectations

TEHRAN – The 74th World Wrestling Championships, held in Tirana, Albania, showcased the dominance of Georgian wrestlers. Despite the presence of athletes from 50 countries, Georgia clinched the top spot.

Iran's free style team, represented by Ali Momeni, Sina Khalili, Mohammad Nokhodi, and two-time world champion Kamran Ghasempour, fell short of their expectations. The tournament, focusing on non-Olympic weight classes, proved to be particularly challenging for the Iranian team.

Ghasempour, competing in the 92kg weight class, faced off against wrestling giants Abdurashid Sadulaev and David Taylor. His losses to both competitors were a significant blow to the Iranian team and raised questions about the team's preparation and strategy. While Ghasempour's match against Sadulaev was closely contested, his performance against Taylor was marked by a lack of focus and strategic planning. Mohammad Nokhodi secured a bronze medal, defeating Jordan Burroughs in the quarterfinals. However, his loss in the semifinals to Georgian wrestler Avtandil Kentchadze was a disappointment. Nokhodi's inconsistent performance, alternating between dominant and lackluster displays, highlighted the team's overall inconsistency.

Iran's third-place finish, behind Georgia and Japan, is a cause for concern. Given the relatively weaker performances of teams like the United States and the absence of Russia, Iran's result is particularly disappointing. Critics argue that the team's poor performance can be attributed to factors such as inadequate training, subpar analysis, and coaching deficiencies.

The spotlight is now on head coach Pejman Dorostkar, who has faced similar criticism following the team's previous disappointing performance. While Nokhodi's bronze medal provided some consolation, the overall performance of the Iranian team has raised serious questions about the Iranian freestyle wrestling.



## Tomato export stands at \$226m in 7 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported \$226 million of tomatoes in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported.

As the IRICA has reported, the value of Iran's agricultural products export increased by 28 percent in the seven-month period of this year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

According to the IRICA report, the country exported 3.8 million tons of agricultural products worth \$2.2 billion in the first seven months of the current year, also indicating a 16 percent rise in terms of weight, year on year.

As previously announced by the IRICA, Iran exported about 3.2 million tons of agricultural products valued at \$1.7 billion in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), registering an increase of 26 percent in value year on year.

According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, the exports of the mentioned products also increased by 20 percent in terms of weight.

The value of Iran's exports of agricultural and

foodstuff products increased by 22.5 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade has said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian producers managed to export about \$6.3 billion worth of the mentioned products in the said year.

As reported, agro-food products accounted for 12.8 percent of the country's total non-oil exports in the previous year.

Iraq was the top destination for Iran's agro-food products in the mentioned year importing \$1.986 billion worth of the said items. The Arab neighbor accounted for 31.5 percent of the total exports of food and agricultural products from Iran.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood in second place, importing \$751 million of the mentioned products, followed by Russia with \$521.5 million.

The value of Iran's total foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.17.8 billion in the last Iranian calendar year.

## Non-oil goods worth \$313m exported from Zanjan province in H1



TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, 533,000 tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$313 million were exported from Zanjan province during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

Majid Golshani, the director-general of the province's Industry, Mining, and Trade Department, also announced that 114,000 tons of goods worth \$238 million were imported to the province in the mentioned six-month period.

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 \$153.17.8 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.

## Tax income up 39% in next year's budget bill

TEHRAN- Tax revenues are predicted to be 17 quadrillion rials (about \$26.153 billion) in the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year 1404 (starts on March 21, 2025), which is 39 percent more than the figure for the current year's budget bill.

The Iranian parliament has approved the general outlines of the national budget bill for the next year on October 29.

During an open session of Majlis (Iranian parliament), the national budget bill for the next year was put to a vote and 146 MPs out of 249 MPs who were present voted in favor of it and the generalities of the bill were approved.

President Masoud Peshkian submitted the national budget bill for the next Iranian year to the Majlis on October 22.

The proposed budget for the next year amounts to about 64.76 quadrillion rials (about \$98.5 billion at the free market rate of 650,000 rials).

The bill has estimated the public resources at 59.876 quadrillion rials (about \$92.116 billion).

The oil, gas, and oil products income is predicted to be 21.07 quadrillion rials (about \$32.415 billion), with 32 percent growth compared to the present year's figure.

Crude oil production is estimated at 3.75 million barrels per day at an average sales price of €57.5.

This is the second budget bill after the implementation of the country's seventh national development plan (2023-2027).

After the presentation of the first part of the budget bill, President Peshkian called inflation reduction a prioritized goal of the bill.

"This budget was the result of numerous meetings with the top experts and parliament. Accuracy in the implementation of the law of the seventh development plan has been a priority for budget formulation", the president stated in the parliament.

# NIDC indigenizes know-how for manufacturing 610 drilling equipment

TEHRAN - National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has managed to indigenize the knowledge for manufacturing 610 drilling equipment items in collaboration with domestic manufacturers and engineers over the past two years, an official with the company said.

Mohammad-Ali Beygzadeh, the director of research, technology and construction engineering at NIDC, said by localizing these items, more than 1.586 trillion rials (about \$3.172 million) has been saved for the company.

According to the official, the mentioned items were manufactured by 160 domestic companies including 85 knowledge-based firms.

NIDC has also signed 90 deals with the country's universities



and research centers for conducting research studies related to the drilling industry, he noted.

Earlier this year, Masoud Afshar, the deputy head of NIDC for drilling operations, announced that the company dug and completed the digging operations of 52 oil and gas wells in the first

seven months of the current Iranian year (March 20 -October 21).

According to Afshar, the drilled wells consisted of 12 development, and 40 workover ones, IRNA reported.

As reported, 39 of the drilled wells were in the operational zone of the National Iranian

South Oil Company (NISOC), six wells were drilled in the fields under the supervision of the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC), two wells were dug by Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), three in the fields under the operation of Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), and two wells were dug in fields developed by private contractors.

Since the beginning of this year, the drilling area of the wells has reached 65,806 meters, he said and added that the figure has increased by 18,342 meters compared to the previous year's same period.

NIDC owns 73 light, heavy, and super-heavy drilling rigs, of which currently 10 are in operation in various areas.

## Natural gas transmission exceeds 130 bcm in H1

TEHRAN - Gas transmission through Iran's natural gas network reached 133 billion cubic meters (bcm) in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), Iranian Gas Transmission Company (IGTC)'s Managing Director Peyman Khazraei announced.

Khazraei said 74 percent of the overhaul plans and development goals of the company for the current year have been completed so far, and the rest will be realized by the end of the year (late March 2025), Shana reported.

"Since the beginning of this year, 1,267 kilometers of smart tracking, approximately 2,000 kilometers of pipeline cleaning, about 26,000 kilometers of leak detection, 2,100

meters of pipeline replacement, 70,543 square meters of coating replacement, and 18 cases of hot taps have been carried out" the official said.

According to Khazraei, about 106 kilometers of optical fiber cables have also been installed by Iran Gas Transmission Company this year with the aim of improving communication across various stations, and the total optical fiber network of the company has reached about 9,000 kilometers.

The official further mentioned the IGTC's achievements in the overhaul sector, saying: "In the past years, a large number of different turbines were sent to the country of manufacture for major overhauls and reconstruc-

tion, but with new planning in this company, capable contractors have been identified and with the proper foundation and necessary support, now a significant number of the domestic contractors of the country are active in the field of repairs and reconstruction and manufacturing of turbine spare parts."

Operating the largest natural gas network in West Asia, National Iranian Gas Company has been continuously expanding this network into the country's most remote areas so that currently over 98 percent of the urban population, as well as 90 percent of the country's rural population, have access to natural gas through this huge network.

## Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan region annual trade to reach \$6b

TEHRAN - The head of the Kurdistan Regional Union of Importers and Exporters has said the trade exchange between Iran and the Kurdistan Region is going to reaches \$6.0 billion annu-

ally, IRNA reported.

Speaking at a conference on joint business and investment opportunities of Iran and Kurdistan region in Iran's southwestern city of Ahvaz, Mostafa Abdulrah-

man Abdullah said: "We are trying to increase this figure with more communication and the signing of more memorandums of understanding."

"The Kurdistan Region of Iraq

is an old neighbor of Iran and has 12 official and semi-official borders with the Islamic Republic, through which commercial and economic exchanges are carried out," he noted.

## TCCIMA underlines need for using AI in agricultural sector

TEHRAN - The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA)'s Agriculture and Process Industries Committee held a meeting on Thursday during which the members underlined the need for using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various agricultural fields.

As the TCCIMA portal reported, in this meeting, which was also attended by the rep-

resentatives of the Agriculture Ministry, the role of artificial intelligence in the future of Iran's agriculture was reviewed.

The attendees suggested that a working group be formed with the participation of the Transformation, Innovation, and Productivity Committee of the TCCIMA with the aim of utilizing the capacities and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence in optimizing

the agricultural industry in Iran.

In this gathering, the representatives of the private sector referred to the development of new and modern technologies and the use of artificial intelligence in various industries and underlined the necessity of developing agricultural intelligence in order to improve productivity.

## 18,000 National Housing Movement units under construction in Khuzestan

TEHRAN- Some 18,000 units of the National Housing Movement plan are under construction in the cities and villages of Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, Amirhossein Jafarzadeh, deputy of Housing and Building Office of Khuzestan Transport and Urban Development Department, announced.

According to Jafarzadeh, of the mentioned figure 2,363 units will be completed and handed over to applicants by the Iranian calendar month of Bahman (begins on January 20, 2025).

As announced by the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry, 2,336.7 hectares of land have been provided for the construction of National Housing Movement units across the country in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

As IRNA reported, 527 hectares of the mentioned figure were allocated in Tehran province, 150 hectares in East Azarbaijan province, 396 hectares allocated in Kermanshah province, and 1,260 hectares in Fars province.

In early September, Hamid Pour-Mohammadi, the head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), said that the National Housing Movement is the

major development plan of the government.

As announced in late July by the former minister of transport and urban development, 2.6 million units of the National Housing Movement were under construction throughout the country.

Mehrdad Bazrpash said that these units in different models are being built in the country, some of them have been delivered and the rest are in different stages of progress.

The National Housing Movement is one of the major policies of the 13th government in the housing sector, and according to this policy, the construction of four million residential units is planned in four years.

It is one of the projects through which the government is trying to help low-income individuals in society become homeowners.

Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Hadi Abbasi-Asl has emphasized the acceleration in implementing the Housing Construction Leap Law to achieve the goals of the 13th government.

In late September 2023, Bazrpash announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples in or-

der to help them build houses.

The National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages.

After the National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by a former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing

Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director of the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini.

The mentioned units were delivered to the applicants in five provinces throughout the country.

The Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to construct 100,000 units under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

According to Norouzi, the headquarters also completed and handed over 2,000 such units back in April, 2023.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the official said construction of the National Housing Movement units is underway by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini in 27 provinces.

Late President Ebrahim Raisi stated that the National Housing Movement is the flagship project of the 13th government to meet the needs of the people, and in addition to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, all relevant organizations are also striving to achieve it.



# 955 Israeli casualties on the Lebanese border

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- The Lebanese Hezbollah resistance fighters inflicted around 1,000 casualties on the Israeli army in battles on the border with occupied Palestine in October.

According to an extensive report issued by Hezbollah's Operations Room over 95 Israeli soldiers and officers have been killed and 900 injured.

The resistance noted that this toll does not include the Israeli enemy's losses in the "military bases, barracks, settlements as well as occupied cities" struck by Hezbollah's extensive rocket barrages.

The report highlights that recent days have seen repeated attempts by the invading army to advance in the front-line southern villages from five directions, which Hezbollah continues to repel.

This is despite the fact that the infantry enjoys "heavy air and artillery cover".

The Lebanese resistance says the infiltration attempts include an area extending from Naqoura in the west to Marwahin in the east.

The second area of infiltration extends from Ramya in the west to Rmeish in the east.

The third point where Israeli infantry has been trying to invade southern Lebanon is from Bleida in the south to Houla in the north.

"The enemy maintains control by fire over the eastern outskirts of Bleida, Mais al-Jabal, and Houla. However, no new advancement attempts have been made following fierce battles in Houla last week, which inflicted significant losses on the advancing forces."

The fourth infiltration attempt has been from Marqaba in the south to the occupied Lebanese village of Ghajar in the northeast.

And the fifth point on the Lebanese border is from Ghajar to the



occupied Shebaa Farms.

Here, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) have made multiple attempts over the past weeks to take control of the town of Khiam.

Heavy fighting has been widely reported to have taken place in this town over the past several days.

It is perhaps the most strategic region of southern Lebanon should the IOF take full control of the town because of its geographically high terrain.

Capturing Khiam would allow the IOF strategic access to the occupied Golan as well as the Kafr Shuba hills.

Tel Aviv has deployed Division 210, also known as Bashan or Utzbat HaBashan, to occupy Khiam.

On Thursday, in the direct clashes that took place with Hezbollah east of the town, the Israeli division 211, used smoke defenses to cover its movements.

Nevertheless, the Lebanese resistance engaged in zero-distance clashes with the IOF inside the eastern neighborhoods near the Khiam prison.

The prison, which the IOF is trying to occupy, is located on a high hill inside the town that also overlooks northern Israel.

agement (with the IOF) have remained unbroken since the beginning of the aggression on Lebanon. Frontlines are still supplied with necessary weapons and personnel according to pre-prepared plans."

In another part of the report Hezbollah said that "despite the intelligence blockade imposed by the enemy over the southern skies, the resistance fighters continue to prepare, load, and launch hundreds of rocket salvos towards enemy troop positions deep within the entity on a daily, continuous, and round-the-clock basis. This is confirmed by footage released by military media, and the enemy has failed to thwart any launch operation from Lebanese territory."

According to analysts, the resistance fighters have forced the IOF not to use military vehicles in their attacks for fear of anti-tank missiles.

Hebrew media has also spoken of the difficulty of intercepting and monitoring Hezbollah drones, which has caused a great headache for the Israeli Air Force.

Furthermore, according to Israeli media, Hezbollah's rocket fire cannot be completely stopped, and no one in the Israeli army boasted about that possibility; they only spoke about reducing it.

Meanwhile, after several days of calm, southern Beirut's Dahiyeh suburbs have come under heavy Israeli bombardment.

Hezbollah military media published a video with the warning: "We will make Haifa like Kiryat Shmona and Metula".

The Lebanese resistance had previously vowed to strike Haifa for every attack on the Dahiyeh and Tel Aviv for attacks on Beirut.

Kiryat Shmona and Metula have been almost deserted by its settlers amid Hezbollah rocket fire.

According to reporters in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah inflicted heavy losses on the IOF, which collected its dead and wounded soldiers near Khiam prison and retreated after the failure of its attack.

The statement by Hezbollah's Operations Room pointed out that its "fighters continue to confront repeated enemy advancements toward the southern and southeastern neighborhoods of Khiam with various rocket and artillery types, achieving confirmed hits."

Reports on Friday indicate that fighting in the areas around Khiam is now witnessing a decline in intensity after the failure of the IOF to enter.

However, the IOF is reported to have dropped phosphorus bombs despite the use of these munitions violating international law.

"Islamic Resistance fighters continue to repel the Israeli aggression on Lebanon, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy's forces and equipment across confrontation axes from the front lines to their positions deep within occupied Palestine," Hezbollah said in its report.

Elsewhere, Hezbollah's report also pointed out that "supply lines to the frontline and areas of en-

## Ceasefire charade: US seeks to divert attention from Israel's carnage in Lebanon

From page 1 ▶ They met with senior officials including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, war minister Yoav Gallant, Shin Bet director Ronan Bar and Mossad chief David Barnea.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday's talks had made "good progress" on a potential deal.

But Israel's relentless strikes on Lebanon indicate a different reality. On Friday morning, Israel pummeled Beirut's southern suburbs with at least 10 strikes, according to Reuters.

The Lebanese prime minister, meanwhile, signaled that the expansion of Israel's attacks amounts to throwing cold water on peace efforts.

"[Israel's] repeated threats to the population to evacuate entire cities and villages, and its renewed targeting of the southern suburbs of Beirut with destructive raids, are all indicators that confirm the Israeli enemy's rejection of all efforts being made to secure a ceasefire," Najib Mikati said in a statement.

The premier also denied reports that the United States had requested Lebanon announce a unilateral ceasefire with Israel, stating that the Lebanese government remains committed to a bilateral ceasefire.

### Devious diplomacy

An Israeli broadcaster published a US-drafted agreement for an initial two-month ceasefire on Wednesday.

According to Kan, the Israeli army would withdraw from Lebanon within a week. The Lebanese army would also be deployed along the border in southern Lebanon and Hezbollah would end its military presence in the area.

The truce is believed to be in line with efforts to fully implement UN Resolution 1701 that ended the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon.

Israel appears unwilling to comply with this resolution. Reports indicate that Israel seeks the authority to target Hezbollah even following the conclusion of the conflict.

### War on Lebanon

Israel started launching a massive bombing campaign in Lebanon more than a month ago.

Since the start of the massive airstrikes on September 23, Israel has slaughtered at least



Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati says renewed attacks on Beirut signal Israeli rejection of a US-drafted ceasefire.

2,200 people in Lebanon and displaced 1.2 million others, according to the country's Health Ministry.

Israel also launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon on October 1. According to an analysis of satellite data by The Washington Post, nearly a quarter of all buildings in 25 Lebanese municipalities near the border with Israel have been damaged or destroyed since last Saturday.

The analysis indicates that at least 5,868 buildings have been damaged or destroyed, including nearly half of structures in the two hardest-hit areas, Ayta al-Shab and Kfar Kila. It suggests that the vast majority of the damage — almost 80 percent — has occurred a day after Israel launched the ground invasion.

Hezbollah and Israel began trading fire a day after the regime launched war on Gaza on October 7 last year. The resistance movement has carried out strikes against Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Tens of thousands of people have also been displaced from border areas in northern Israel and southern Lebanon over the course of the Gaza war.

The Netanyahu regime says its war on Lebanon is aimed at returning the evacuated people to northern Israel.

Hezbollah has stressed that its strikes on Israel won't stop unless it ends the Gaza onslaught

and aggression on Lebanon.

Hezbollah's newly-elected Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem warned on Wednesday that the group is ready for a long war with Israel. Qassem was named as Hezbollah leader a day earlier succeeding Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah who was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike on Beirut's suburb of Dahieh on September 27. US media acknowledged that Israel used American-made 900kg (2,000-pound) bombs in the strike.

US-supplied weapons utilized by Israel in its strikes on Lebanon continue to claim the lives of more Lebanese civilians.

On the one hand, the US claims that it is pushing for a ceasefire to end the conflict in Lebanon. On the other hand, its weapons result in the death of Lebanese people.

If the US was sincere in establishing a ceasefire, it would stop the flow of weapons to Israel and use its leverage at the United Nations Security Council to stop the Israeli war machine.

Nonetheless, Washington's peace gesture is a smokescreen to redirect international focus from Israel's brutal bombings in Lebanon and its involvement in the regime's atrocities against the population there.

The peace initiative is also aimed at mitigating growing domestic anger at Israel's warmongering and brutalities ahead of the presidential election in the United States.

## Israeli carnage in quicksand of destruction



Palestinians try to rescue a child from under the rubble following an Israeli strike on the Nuseirat refugee camp in September 2024. Hatem Hani/Reuters

Nearly 50 Palestinians lost their lives in overnight Israeli airstrike against the central Gaza Strip on Thursday night that continued into Friday.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa reported Friday that the attacks occurred in the city of Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al-Zawayda.

Most of the victims were killed in the bombing of several houses in the Nuseirat area. The same houses were hit a second time as people rushed to rescue those who survived the first strike, resulting in more casualties.

According to Wafa, at least 10 Palestinians, including children, were also killed and others injured in another Israeli attack on a school-turned-shelter in the Nuseirat refugee camp.

Israel also attacked Kamal Adwan Hospital

on Thursday. It is one of the last functioning medical facilities in northern Gaza.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said a floor containing the remaining medicines and medical supplies were targeted in the hospital.

Hossam Abu Safiya, the director of the hospital, told The Washington Post that the attack put the dialysis department out of service.

The World Health Organization (WHO) condemned the attack.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the attack "caused injuries to some hospital staff members, and hit a storage space containing lifesaving WHO supplies brought in via complex missions, as well as the desalination station and water tanks on top of the hospital".

## Spain flood death toll crosses 200

Spain is grappling with the aftermath of a recent flood which has been described as Europe's worst weather disaster in five decades.

Officials announced on Friday that the death toll from the tragic event has topped 200.

At least 202 people have died in the eastern region of Valencia which bore the brunt of the devastation. Three others have lost their lives in Castilla La Mancha and Andalusia.

Spanish rescuers established a temporary morgue at a convention center and worked

diligently to access regions that remained cut off on Friday.

Many streets are still blocked by piled-up vehicles and debris, in some cases trapping residents in their homes. Some places still don't have electricity, running water, or stable telephone connections.

On Tuesday, torrential rain triggered flash floods which swept away bridges and buildings and forced people to climb onto roofs or cling to trees to survive.

The death toll is feared to climb as many people are still missing.

## Lebanon health crisis: Appalling fallout of Israeli war

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - According to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, since October 8 the Israeli regime has launched 55 attacks on hospitals and 201 on ambulances.

The majority of hospitals that have been targeted are those affiliated with the Islamic Health Association and the Islamic Resala Scouts due to the poor functioning of government hospitals in war conditions.

Due to the lack of any government plan to upgrade the health system, most hospitals are functioning poorly. They have been affected partially or completely by the Israeli bombardments.

According to Lebanon's Ministry of Health, 80% of the Israeli attacks on hospitals are concentrated in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Bint Jbeil, Baalbek, Tyre, Nabatieh, and Hermel. 11 out of 36 hospitals have been targeted at least twice.

Although the war is concentrated in the southern border areas, the hospitals that have suffered severe damage are in Nabatieh, the southern suburbs, Baalbek and Hermel. However, some hospitals in the border areas are still operating despite the threats and limited facilities. They are withstanding the scarcity of medical, electrical and water supplies.

The Israeli military is also targeting paramedics to discourage them from rescuing those trapped under the rubble to ensure the killing of those targeted.

More than 88% of the attacks have been focused on ambulance teams in the southern border districts, especially Tyre, Nabatieh, Marjeyoun and Bint Jbeil. 151 health workers have been killed and 212 others injured.

74% of the attacks have occurred during re-

lief missions, which explains why Israel has destroyed 230 ambulances and fire trucks, while 26% of the raids on paramedics have targeted relief centers.

Targeting paramedics is considered a war crime. Targeting them increases the overall death rate in wars, as they are responsible for providing relief to the injured and rescuing civilians caught in the rubble.

95% of the attacks on paramedics are concentrated in the South and Nabatieh governorates. They specifically target the ambulance teams affiliated with the Islamic Resala Scouts Association and the Islamic Health Authority.

89% of the crew of these two associations have been targeted, with every 4 attacks resulting in the murder of 3 paramedics.

Fire brigades are also being deliberately targeted. During the Barachit massacre on October 7, 12 fire engines were destroyed and 14 paramedics were martyred.

On October 3, during the assassination of Hezbollah Executive Council chief Sayyed Hashem Safieddine, 6 paramedics were martyred and two others wounded.

The primary goal of these attacks is a mass displacement of more residents of the south, the Bekaa and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Israel considers them supporters of Hezbollah. It also destroys their infrastructure, basically health facilities, to prevent their return after the war.

Besides, one of the punitive strategies that the Zionist enemy seeks is to increase health risks in shelters during the fall and the accompanying infectious diseases that negatively affect individuals' immunity.



## Development of Iran's tourism industry and dealing with Iranophobia

By Hani Rastegaran, tourism expert

The perception of countries by people around the world is one of the determining factors in the level of psychological and mental security regarding the entry of capital, services, and social and cultural development in those countries.

The more positive the public perception of a political geography associated with security and comfort is, the greater the potential for increased growth and advancement in the economic and social development capacities of that region.

In the latest survey conducted by UN Tourism, statistics show that fear of traveling to the Middle East (West Asia) for tourism purposes has significantly increased among Europeans, with 83% of the target population in this survey preferring to spend their vacations in East Asian countries rather than the Middle East. This survey indicates that Europeans are often interested in traveling to destinations outside of Europe. This preference has developed for various cultural, economic, and social reasons, resulting in a search for new and unique experiences for European tourists.

In recent years, the changing travel tastes of Europeans have shifted towards countries such as the United States, Canada, and Caribbean nations including Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Lucia due to their beautiful beaches, pleasant weather, and hospitable culture; Australia and New Zealand for their biodiversity, adventurous activities, and unique indigenous cultures; and major cities like Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland, which are known for their tourist attractions, restaurants, and water sports, as well as Mexico, Japan, and Thailand.

Recent research indicates that cultural diversity and local cuisines are significant factors that European tourists seek when traveling outside of Europe. Familiarity with various cuisines and exploring cultural traditions also distinguish destinations. Additionally, travel costs, including airfare, accommodation, and daily expenses, have a substantial impact on destination choice. Countries with affordable expenses typically attract more attention.

Other influential factors include the availability of tourism facilities, hotels, restaurants, and recreational services, which are also important in choosing destinations. Good infrastructure and suitable services can attract attention and motivate travel; however, the most crucial concerns remain security and political stability, which greatly influence travel destination choices and recreational tourism. Tourists tend to favor safe and stable countries where they feel comfortable and secure.

Fear of the Middle East, and specifically Iran, refers to the fear or negative attitude towards Iran and Iranians, which can have deep and multifaceted impacts on Iran's tourism industry. These impacts encompass economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions defined by several determining components. The most immediate effect is the reduction in attracting foreign tourists. Iran, as a tourism destination with a rich history and culture, has significant potential to attract tourists; however, fear of Iran can deter many foreign tourists from traveling. Concerns about insecurity, negative media portrayals, and misconceptions about Iran can lead many to avoid traveling to this country.

The decrease in the number of tourists can have many direct and indirect impacts on both the local and national economy. Revenue from tourism is one of the most important economic resources for Iran. A decline in the number of tourists can result in reduced employment in the tourism industry, including hotels, restaurants, and transportation services. This issue can lead to unemployment and decreased household incomes. Additionally, fear of Iran can create dissatisfaction and despair in local communities. The tourism industry fosters cultural and social exchange and can increase awareness of other cultures; however, with reduced cultural exchange due to negative attitudes, local communities can become isolated.

Tourist areas that have traditionally benefited from tourism may experience a decline in service quality and infrastructure due to a lack of visitors. However, in the context of fear of Iran, one must not underestimate the prominent role of mainstream and international leftist media. The media and social networks play a significant role in shaping the image of Iran. Fear of Iran can lead to an increase in negative news about the country, creating a negative public image of Iran in the minds of tourists. For instance, the propagation of discouraging news and the portrayal of an un-

realistic image of events in the Middle East, such as war, terrorism, or human rights violations, can easily influence tourists' decisions and dissuade them from traveling to Iran, depriving the country of potential tourism revenues.

Another significant challenge facing the strengthening of Iran's tourism industry is marketing and advertising, which play a crucial role in the macro tourism goals in Iran. Branding Iran as a tourism destination may be affected by fear of Iran. Developing a strong strategy to promote Iran as a safe and attractive destination will require considerable effort. In this regard, challenges exist, and opportunities for digital marketing and cultural interactions may be limited.

To overcome the major barrier of fear of Iran and to reintegrate Iran into the global tourism market while reducing the negative impacts of this fear, expanding diplomatic relations and cooperation with other countries to improve public image, devising positive branding strategies, and promoting the strengths of Iran's culture, history, and natural attractions, as well as hosting international cultural and artistic events, can attract the lost global attention back to Iran.

Diplomacy in tourism can act as a powerful tool to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations between countries. Global experiences show that countries have facilitated their relations by holding joint events, festivals, and tourism exhibitions, and through the exchange of experiences and insights regarding tourism development, they have largely overcome obstacles to the growth of their tourism industries. Such interactions can lead to bilateral and multilateral agreements to facilitate travel and reduce entry barriers to countries. Strong and flexible diplomacy can create a robust brand for the tourism industry and present a positive image of Iran to the world. Constructive and dynamic foreign policies can ensure the security of tourists and enhance their sense of security when traveling to other countries. Organizing specialized conferences and meetings on tourism security and creating cooperation networks among countries can improve travel conditions to Iran and provide psychological security for those interested in the history and culture of this land.

In the new era, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the guidance of Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, will engage in diplomacy to exchange experiences and modern technologies in the field of tourism. This exchange can include innovative methods for attracting tourists, utilizing digital technologies in advertising and tourism services, and training human resources in the tourism industry. Collaboration in the planning and management of tourism destinations can improve service quality and reduce tourism-related challenges. Diplomacy in tourism can also contribute to environmental sustainability and local community welfare. It should aim to attract foreign investments and increase national revenues. By reducing trade barriers and facilitating travel, Iran can more easily attract more tourists to its destinations, leading to increased employment and revenue in the tourism industry.

Another positive impact of diplomacy in tourism is the facilitation of visa processes for tourists. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with efforts to reduce visa requirements for foreign tourists or to establish an electronic visa system, will create an easier and quicker travel pathway to Iran in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Although many nationals currently can obtain an electronic visa online to travel to Iran, the process for obtaining necessary approvals appears lengthy and complex.

Undoubtedly, policymaking in the tourism sector, particularly in reducing the level of fear of Iran globally, requires close and collaborative efforts from various influential agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, security agencies, and urban service providers such as municipalities, which will lead to a brighter future for Iran's tourism industry. Attention to the role of the media in reducing fear of Iran is also critical and can impact the public image of Iran in various ways. Media and content production on social networks can help change negative perceptions by providing accurate information, promoting cultural exchange, delivering correct analyses, and creating a space for dialogue. Ultimately, a comprehensive approach from both Iranian and international media can result in a more positive and realistic image of Iran on a global scale.

# Marmar Palace: Ramsar's must-visit treasure along the Caspian coast

TEHRAN - Marmar Palace, also known as the Royal Palace, stands as one of the most captivating historical sites in Ramsar, a coastal town in Iran's Mazandaran province.

Every day, Ramsar attracts hundreds of visitors with its lush forests, picturesque landscapes, and Caspian Sea shores, and Marmar Palace has become one of the essential highlights of any trip to the region.

Situated on Rajaei Street, this architectural marvel is a short eight-minute drive from Ramsar's historic hotel and only ten minutes from the scenic Caspian coast.

Constructed in 1937 (1316 in the Iranian calendar) under the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, Marmar Palace combines elements of Iranian and European architecture.

After its initial construction, the palace was later incorporated into the properties of Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and served as a seasonal residence for the royal family until the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Following the revolution, the palace was transferred to the Mostazafan Foundation and has since been opened to the public as a museum.



Spanning an area of 6000 square meters, the palace grounds include an exquisite botanical garden, renowned for its diverse collection of plants that draw in nature lovers and botanists alike. However, the architectural elegance of the 600-square-meter mansion itself is the primary attraction.

As the name suggests, Marmar (meaning "marble" in Persian) Palace features an exterior crafted from pristine marble, including a spacious front porch, a fountain, and gracefully carved marble columns. The

serene pool in front of the mansion mirrors these marble pillars, enhancing the beauty of the structure, with colorful fish swimming just beneath the surface, adding an idyllic charm.

Inside, the palace reveals a grand central hall with expansive rooms on both its eastern and western wings, each filled with meticulously preserved furnishings from the Pahlavi era. The chandeliers, ornate candlesticks, antique desks, and decorative artifacts offer a fascinating glimpse into the royal family's lifestyle.

Visitors are often struck by the intricate stucco ceiling designs and a stately fireplace that anchors the room with elegance. The walls are adorned with paintings, each a priceless work of art carefully curated and collected by the Pahlavi family.

On the southern side of the palace, visitors will find another entrance, flanked by two life-sized marble statues of Mazandaran tigers, a species that has unfortunately disappeared from Iran's natural landscapes. These statues pay tribute to a once-thriving symbol of Iran's wildlife heritage.

Marmar Palace and its surrounding garden have been officially registered on Iran's National Heritage list, preserving its legacy and ensuring its place as a treasured cultural landmark. Today, the property remains an emblem of the grandeur of Iran's royal past, providing visitors with a memorable journey through both natural beauty and historical significance.

One of the most scenic spots on the Caspian coast, Ramsar is where the jungle-clad lower ridges of the snow-topped Alborz tumble into the sea.

## Bread and food festival celebrates culinary heritage in Semnan

TEHRAN - The second edition of the Taska Bread and Food Festival wrapped up on Friday, attracting a vibrant crowd of locals and visitors in the historical city of Semnan, once a key stop on the Silk Road.

This three-day celebration of local cuisine and culture showcased the rich culinary traditions of the region, a local official said.

It featured a diverse array of activities centered around traditional foods, including booths for local delicacies, bread-making demonstrations, and a variety of artisan crafts, Seyyed Karim Mohammadi said.

"Children enjoyed dedicated workshops such as painting activities, while adults explored sections focused on health and wellness, along with a flower and plant exhibition."

Moreover, the official highlighted the festival's role in promoting Semnan's cultural heritage and tourism. "We aimed to showcase the maximum cultural, artistic, historical, and tourism potentials of Semnan."



He emphasized the festival's objective to revive interest in traditional Iranian cuisine and forgotten local foods, thereby supporting the local economy through cultural and touristic engagement.

The enthusiastic response from attendees underscored the community's appreciation for its culinary roots and the importance of preserving traditional practices. Organizers expressed their commitment to continuing this celebration of

Semnan's unique gastronomic offerings in future editions of the festival.

In 2022, Iran selected Semnan to represent the country at a union of Silk Road cities based on an initiative launched by China to promote tourism along the ancient route that once linked Asia to the Western world.

The ancient Silk Road has existed for thousands of years, passing through empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies throughout history. At certain times in its long history, traders could travel freely along these routes, whereas at others, travel was difficult or dangerous.

According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages, and material goods into societies across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

Taska is the name of a traditional cooking pot from the Semnan region.

## Unseen relics and documents of Anis al-Dowleh to go on show in Shiraz

TEHRAN - A collection of previously unseen relics and personal documents belonging to Anis al-Dowleh, a prominent consort of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, will be showcased for the first time in a special exhibition in Shiraz.

The unveiling will be held at Jahan Nama Garden coinciding with the 3rd International Multimedia Festival of Cultural Heritage, set to take place in Shiraz from November 5 to 8.

According to Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi, the tourism chief of Fars province, this rare exhibition offers unique insights into Anis al-Dowleh's life and influence within the Persian royal court.

Highlights include personal correspondences and telegrams from Naser al-Din Shah himself, sent during his travels abroad, as well as Anis al-Dowleh's will and her charitable endowments, which are being displayed for the first time.

The exhibition also features a catalog of her possessions and a formal document granting the Shahraestanak Palace from the Shah to Anis al-Dowleh, further underscoring her significant role in the Qajar court.

Anis al-Dowleh, born Fateh-meh-soltan, rose from modest origins to become a close and influential confidante of the Shah, earning the distinction of dining with him—a privilege unique

among his wives.

According to organizers, this landmark exhibition offers an exceptional opportunity to explore the legacy of Anis al-Dowleh and the intricate cultural heritage of the Qajar era.

Jahan Nama Garden, nationally recognized for its extensive collection of artifacts and documents, aims to present these items as valuable academic resources for historical and cultural research.

## New excavation phase to begin at Konar Sandal, a Bronze-Age site in southern Iran

TEHRAN - The Kerman province's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced the launch of a new phase of archaeological excavations at the ancient site of Konar Sandal, a prominent Bronze-Age settlement located in Iran's Jiroft region.

Saeid Shahrokhi, director of the department, on Thursday noted that these new efforts will build on previous findings and excavations led by a number of renowned archaeologists such as Seyyed Mansour Seyyed Sajjadi.

The official noted that the new season of archaeological work, expected to commence soon, will involve the cooperation of various scientific and research teams.

"The cultural zone of Halil Rud, centered around Jiroft, has historically held a crucial place in ancient civilization," Shahrokhi stated, emphasizing the area's significance in understanding the region's ancient urban development.

Situated in the Jiroft plain of Kerman province, the site consists of two mounds a few kilometers



apart, called Konar Sandal A and B with a height of 13 and 21 meters, respectively. At Konar Sandal B, a two-story, windowed citadel with a base of close to 13.5 hectares was found. Tablets with scripts of unknown nature were reportedly discovered at the site.

An initial archaeological dig at the site occurred about twenty years ago, led by Iranian archaeologist Yousef Majidzadeh and a team of international experts. This survey uncovered a Bronze Age settlement nestled in the Halil-Rud Valley.

Nestled among mountains rising around 4,000

meters high on three sides, Jiroft's discoveries are viewed by many Iranian and international experts as evidence of a civilization as significant as Sumer and ancient Mesopotamia. The remarkable Jiroft site's discovery was accidental in the early 21st century when severe floods along the Halil River unearthed numerous previously unknown tombs, revealing artifacts believed to date back to the Early Bronze Age (late 3rd millennium BC).

Reports initially described the sight of "an ancient object floating on the water's surface." Recognizing its value, villagers, impacted by two years of drought, swarmed the riverbanks the following day, searching for 5,000-year-old relics.

Despite its historical significance, geological factors led to the site's oversight by tourists and archaeologists, who were typically more focused on locations like Mesopotamia, situated roughly 1,000 km away.

In 2003, Iran invited Jean Perrot, the renowned French archaeologist who directed excavations in the Shush (or Susa) area from 1969 to 1978 as head of the French National Centre for Scientific Research.



# Iran ranked 94th in Government AI readiness

TEHRAN – Oxford Insights, which provides data on preparedness to implement Artificial Intelligence in public service delivery, has ranked Iran 94th among 193 governments across the world.

Governments are not only working to foster AI innovation and establish regulatory frameworks but also striving to integrate this technology into public services.

However, understanding how to ensure that AI is adopted effectively for the public good remains a challenge. This index attempts to address this issue.

It includes 39 indicators across 10 dimensions, which make up 3 pillars: Government, Technology Sector, and Data and Infrastructure pillars.

According to the index, the country's best ranking is in the Data and Infrastructure pillar, 55.88. It includes infrastructure, data availability, and data representativeness indicators.

The country's score in the Technology pillar was 38.77. It includes human capital, innovation capacity, and maturity indicators.

Iran's lowest score is in the Government pillar, 31.56, probably due to the absence of a national document on AI development. However, with the implementation of the document, the country's ranking is expected to rise in the future.

The United States, Singapore, and England are ranked first to third, respectively.

In most countries, the Technology pillar including human capital, and innovation capacity has the lowest score. However, most of the Arab countries have been able to make significant



progress in promoting governments' readiness to implement AI due to their investment in strengthening the infrastructure and developing strategies related to the establishment of AI. They are placed among the top 50 countries in the index.

## Iran tops Islamic nations for AI documents

According to a report released by the Web of Science database, Iran ranks first for the highest number of documents in artificial intelligence (AI) among Islamic countries.

The country issued 2,638 AI documents between 2013 and 2022.

Saudi Arabia (2,465) and Turkey (2,303) were ranked second and third, respectively, IRIB reported.

Iran has also been ranked 14th worldwide in artificial intelligence.

Based on the report, the country ranks second in 3D printing and robotics, fourth in the Internet of Things, fifth in 5th generation (5G) communication technologies and big data, seventh in

drone technology, and eighth in blockchains among Islamic nations.

The most scientific productions in the last ten years in artificial intelligence have been respectively related to Tehran University, Tabriz University, and Amir Kabir University of Technology.

Also, the data analysis shows that the number of scientific productions of artificial intelligence has improved in the last five years, reaching 577 documents in 2022 from 157 documents in 2018.

Robotics with 1,596 documents, and the Internet of Things with 1,270 documents followed artificial intelligence in terms of scientific production.

Blockchains with 7 documents had the lowest scientific production in the ten-year period.

## Developing AI infrastructure

By allocating 50 trillion rials (some \$100 million), the public and the private sector plan to develop the infrastructure for artificial intelligence operators in the current calendar year, which

started on March 21.

In February, the former vice president for science and technology, Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, said the importance of artificial intelligence cannot be denied. However, it's hard to keep pace with the rapid [global] growth in the area, IRNA reported.

He made the remarks while attending the first meeting of the national steering committee's working group on artificial intelligence.

The main objective behind founding the national steering committee is to promote and develop AI in the country with the help of both the private sector and the public sector, he added.

Dehqani-Firouzabadi went on to say that the national committee is not seeking to hold a share in management. It aims to facilitate and coordinate the development of AI by developing a streamlined, dynamic, and synergistic structure. It also endeavors to pave the way for individuals to participate in the development of artificial intelligence.

On December 3, 2023, late President Ebrahim Raisi issued an executive order for the establishment of the 'National Steering Committee and the National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center'.

Creating a complete and stable chain of ideas to market in AI, benefiting from AI for the economic progress of the country, planning to achieve a leading and sustainable position among the countries of the world, as well as identifying and nurturing talents in the field of AI are among the most important tasks of the national AI center.

## Doha meeting: VP highlights preserving family values, structure



TEHRAN –Acknowledging the pivotal role of the family in making progress, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs has underscored the significance of strengthening the foundation of the family through the preservation of family values and structure.

"Today, families are facing four major global trends bringing about profound impacts on them. These include technological change, demographic trends, migration and urbanization, and climate change, IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

She made the remarks while addressing the High-level Ministerial Session on the sidelines of a global conference on 'Family and Contemporary Megatrends' which was held on October 30-31 in Doha, Qatar, commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF).

All in all, these trends necessitate special care and attention due to the changes they have made in the daily life, social, and economic structure of families, the official noted.

These changes have challenged the structure of families and affected family relationships as well as the future of the children in different ways.

The official highlighted the importance of national and local strategies along with policy-making in fostering relationships and preserving the family foundation, "what used to strengthen families in the past, in the absence of these programs, were the social values such as respect for elders, solidarity, sacrifice, commitment, and loyalty.

Preserving these values and passing them on to future generations is our duty," she further noted.

Improving communication skills, resilience, empathy and family solidarity, managing conflict, and resolving crisis, should be put on the agenda. By supporting social-cultural programs and activities, opportunities will be provided for face-to-face interactions of the families.

Moreover, enhancing cultural and sports

programs as well as family tourism can reinforce relationships and develop empathy in families, Behrouz-Azar stressed.

Global conference on 'Family and Contemporary Megatrends' brought together many policymakers, experts, and thought leaders to explore megatrends including demographic Change, migration, urbanization, technological advancement, and climate change that are affecting the family.

The conference also discussed family-friendly policies, best practices, and strategic partnerships to promote family welfare and social development.

One of the main objectives of the conference was to shape a future in which every family can flourish.

## Demographic changes affecting family well-being

This year, the International Day of Family, celebrated annually on May 15, provided an opportunity to reflect on social, economic, and demographic changes that affect the structure and stability of families.

It aimed to raise awareness of how climate change impacts families and the role families can play in climate action.

Climate change negatively impacts the health and well-being of families through increased pollution, while extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change, such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods, often lead to forced displacement and loss of livelihoods for families and individuals.

Such events impact agricultural productivity and access to water, intensifying hunger and vulnerability.

They cause economic disruption in industries sensitive to climate impacts such as agriculture and fisheries.

Empowering families through education, changing consumption habits, and advocacy is critical for meaningful and effective climate action.

Through family and community initiatives, we can foster climate action with education, access to information, training, and community participation.

Families pass values across generations, so instilling sustainable habits and climate awareness in families from an early age is important.

Integrating circular economy principles into early childhood education can help build a sustainable economic model based on minimizing waste and regenerating natural resources. Families as consumers and advocates can drive the transition to a circular economy.

## ICT ministry to bolster ties with Venezuela, Cuba

TEHRAN –An Iranian delegation led by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister, Sattar Hashemi, is paying a visit to South America and the Caribbean region to boost joint efforts in the ICT sector.

The ICT minister is scheduled to hold meetings with his Venezuelan and Cuban counterparts, respectively, to explore avenues for expanding collaborations in the ICT, IRIB reported.

In Caracas, Hashemi will hold talks with the vice president, and the head of the regulatory body of Venezuela, as well as the vice-president for science and technology, who is in charge of telecommunications, as well, IRIB reported.

Enhancing cooperation between the private companies of the two countries in ICT is one of the main focuses of the meeting with Venezuelan officials.

In the second part of the visit, the delegation will travel to the Caribbean countries,

particularly Cuba, to develop ICT ties with these countries.

Moreover, a memorandum of understanding on postal services is going to be signed by Iranian and Cuban officials, which is expected to significantly increase postal exchanges between the two countries.

Hashemi is also going to attend the 40th edition of the Havana International Fair (FIHAV) which will take place from November 4 to 9.

This event is a significant platform for business consolidation and strengthening alliances. FIHAV 2024 will serve as a space for participation and exchange between exhibitors, businessmen and professionals.

Over 50 countries from all regions of the world and 800 companies including Iranian knowledge-based firms are expected to participate in the event.

In September, Hashemi and his Cuban counterpart, Mayra Arevich Marin, discussed ways

to bolster cooperation in different fields of ICT.

During a video call on September 24, the officials further reviewed possibilities to enhance ties in artificial intelligence, digital economy, and e-government, as well as post companies, Mehr news agency reported.

The Cuban official proposed and highlighted expanding collaborations based on formerly signed agreements.

He also welcomed the presence of Iranian private companies active in providing ICT-related equipment and services in Cuba.

Hashemi, for his part, announced Iranian private companies' readiness to provide ICT services in Cuba and expressed optimism to promptly implement needed measures.

In July, Cuba's First Deputy Minister of Communications, Wilfredo González Vidal, in Tehran said it is important for Havana to develop strategic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields," IRIB quoted the Cuban official as saying.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Existing vaccines are effective against mutated coronavirus: Iranian expert

The COVID-19 vaccines, which have been so far produced in the world are also effective on the mutated virus, so people who receive the vaccines will be protected against the new virus strain, Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said.

What raised concerns about the newly-produced vaccine was the ineffectiveness against the mutated virus, which fortunately studies show, the mutation of the virus and the chromosomal alteration are not enough to change its general nature, he explained.

According to Mardani, it is possible to detect the new coronavirus in Iran. All British and European passengers are tested at the airport for a quick and PCR test, while so far no case has been confirmed in the country, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

## واکسن کرونا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند

مسعود مردانی عضو ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا می گوید واکسن تولید و تایید شده در دنیا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند و افرادی که واکسن تایید شده را بزنند علیه این ویروس هم مصونیت پیدا می کنند.

مردانی روز سه شنبه در گفت وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: آنچه نگران آن هستیم این است که واکسن تولید شده برای کووید ۱۹ در دنیا نسبت به ویروس جهش یافته بی اثر باشد که خوشبختانه بررسی ها نشان می دهد، جهش ویروس و تغییر کرموزومی ویروس به قدری نیست که ماهیت کلی آن تغییر کند.

به گفته او، امکان تشخیص ویروس کرونا جهش یافته در ایران وجود دارد. از همه مسافران انگلیس و اروپا در فرودگاه تست سریع و از موارد مشکوک تست دقیق تر «پی سی آر» گرفته و بررسی می شود و تاکنون موردی از این ویروس در ایران تایید نشده است.

## Involving youth in urban decision-making to foster resilient cities



By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –It is estimated that 60 percent of the world population will live in urban areas by 2030, and up to 60 percent of them will be individuals under the age of 18.

With rapid urbanization and population growth, cities are projected to house 70 percent of the people by 2050, facing intensifying challenges in the context of climate change.

Despite progress towards Sustainable Development Goals, cities, particularly in the Global South, continue to grapple with poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, necessitating urgent action.

Experts have emphasized engaging youth in urban decision-making to harness their creativity and drive sustainable development.

Observed annually on October 31, World Cities Day aims to promote the international

community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities addressing challenges of urbanization, and contribute to sustainable urban development around the world.

World Cities Day 2024, themed "Youth changemakers: Catalyzing local action for urban sustainability," showcases the crucial role of local governments and young people in addressing urban climate challenges.

The event highlights youth-proposed innovative ideas and explore ways to transform these into concrete actions.

International initiatives like the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations seek to prioritize youth voices in shaping sustainable urban environments.

The Summit of the Future was an opportunity to integrate youth perspectives into global policy and ensure the multilateral system responds to younger generations' needs.

Proposed actions include establishing youth councils, integrating youth representatives into local governments, and maintaining ongoing dialogue between young people and policymakers.

These efforts aim to create cities that are not only sustainable and resilient but also reflective of all inhabitants' diverse voices and needs, both present and future.





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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Mix with people properly, so that they weep for you when you die, and show you affection and fight your enemy when you are alive.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 11:48 Evening: 17:27 Dawn: 5:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:29 (tomorrow)

## Claire Joubert's children's religious book "Linaluna" published in Turkish

TEHRAN-The children's religious book "Linaluna" written by the Tehran-based French writer and illustrator of children's books Claire Joubert has been translated into Turkish.

Translated by Masoumeh Aydin, the book has been published by Kowsar Publication in collaboration with the cultural attaché office of Iran in Istanbul, ISNA reported.

Containing beautiful and attractive illustrations, the book narrates a fantasy tale about the character Linaluna for children aged five to nine. It is entered on religious issues and based on divine verses. Most of Joubert's works are written for children in the fields of religious subjects. Teaching moral concepts to children is one of the concerns of parents as they like to teach their children good social skills and moral values. Children's books are one of the ways to convey these concepts to children. Using simple language along with pleasant pictures, such books have a strong role in raising children, especially if they are written based on the Quran and Islamic values.

Joubert was born in Paris in May 1961. Brought up in a Christian family, she converted to Islam at the age of 19 and immigrated to Iran when she got married. She has a bachelor's degree in educational sciences.

She illustrates her stories herself. With a cursory look at her works, one can easily perceive her preoccupation with issues such as faith and religion, identity, children's relations with their surroundings, etc. Most of her works are for primary school-age children.

She is also interested in doing research on children's literature and philosophy for children. She writes both in Persian and French and has published some French books in Lebanon and France, but her preference is to write in Persian.

She has written about 120 works for children, which have been published by various publishers in Iran. Her works deal with axiology, ethnology, anthropology, and mythology. Ethics and trustworthiness, forgiveness, envy, selfishness, and suspicion are among the subjects of her stories.

## Short film "The Brother" wins at New Zealand festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film "The Brother" directed by Mahdieh Ghotbudin Mohamadi won an award at the 19th Show Me Shorts Film Festival in New Zealand.

An Oscar-qualifying festival, this year's edition of Show Me Shorts, which concluded last week, presented the Best International Film Award to "The Brother," making it eligible to enter the upcoming Academy Awards, IRNA reported.

The jury called the moving and uplifting Iranian fable about human connection within a revolution: "Shockingly good; transcendent in its theme of empathy; a perfect short story. Beautiful performance from the lead, and an effective naturalistic style."

The eight-minute drama is about a young man

who is preparing for his wedding in the midst of the revolution when he meets a soldier who needs help.

Show Me Shorts is New Zealand's leading film festival showcasing the best short films from across the world. Its mission is to connect New Zealand audiences with short films and share New Zealand short films with the world.

It prioritizes cinematic narrative-style, documentary and animated films with strong audience appeal, as well as films that are making their premiere in our festival. This year, the festival screened 126 short films from 85 filmmakers.

It also provided professional development and networking opportunities for aspiring short filmmakers through Industry Day, Short Film Talks, Filmmaker Resources and various masterclasses.

## Cartoon of Day



Gaza Holocaust

Cartoonist: Mo Qasem from the Netherlands

# Truth through art: amplifying revolutionary voices on global stage in Ammar festival

From Page 1 ▶ "Since its inception by the late Iranian filmmaker Nader Talebzadeh, the Ammar festival has served as an essential counterpoint to events like the Fajr Film Festival.

It offers revolutionary filmmakers a chance to present their works and share messages that often go unheard," Hashemi shared. She emphasized the importance of discovering emerging talents, particularly young artists, whose perspectives contribute to the festival's unique narrative.

As the secretary of the festival and a judge in various editions, Hashemi expressed excitement over Ammar festival's aspirations to open its doors wider—"not just to Iran or our region, but to the world."

This bold approach aims to unite artists from the resistance front facing Western hegemony, granting them much-needed visibility through their art.

### Towards international expansion

When questioned about the Ammar festival's transition from a localized event to an international one, Hashemi acknowledged the need for gradual growth. "We knew from the beginning that jumping too far too fast could set us up for failure.

The natural progression has brought in works from neighboring regions like Yemen, gradually paving the way for more global submissions," she explained. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the quality of the received works as well.

"However, in a world rife with censorship, many artists, especially those in Western countries, are searching for platforms to share their truths.

It's crucial that we connect with them and showcase their works. Our immediate priority is effective public relations—getting the word out about Ammar festival and what it stands for."

### A symbol of revolutionary art

Hashemi articulated a clear distinction between Ammar festival and mainstream festivals that, in her view, often mimic Western styles.

"We aim not to replicate a Hollywood formula but to highlight genuine narratives that resonate with anti-imperialist sentiment. Our goal is to give voice to marginalized perspectives and share their stories with the world," she stated.

Regarding the pressing reality of contemporary media and its influence on the narratives surrounding resistance movements, Hashemi acknowledged that while Western media holds significant power, that influence is waning.

"Just as people underestimated Iran after the revolution, they are now beginning to see the multifaceted realities of global struggles, which challenge



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previous misconceptions," she noted.

### Highlighting heroism in adversity

Hashemi also introduced the Wafa Prize, an award named after Palestinian journalist and activist Wafa Aludaini, who was martyred along with her family in an Israeli air strike in late September. "These days, we are witnessing the systematic targeting of journalists and attempts to silence them by the Israeli regime. We've never seen anything like this on such a scale," she remarked.

"This prize aims to honor journalists who risk their lives to share the truth. It is a statement against silencing voices and a testament to the sacrifices made by those striving to expose the reality on the ground," she explained.

Reflecting on the role of filmmaking amid overarching pressure and censorship, Hashemi encouraged filmmakers to portray genuine stories rather than relying solely on scripted narratives. "Today's audiences crave reality.

The era of grand fantasies has passed; people want to see the truth of their heroes," she asserted, suggesting that there lies a unique opportunity for filmmakers to redefine storytelling.

"In this time, we do not need to deal with fictional and fake superheroes when unbelievable realities are taking place that simply need to be shown.

We have incredible heroes who deserve to be seen as they truly are."

"It is important for our filmmakers and documentarians to start highlighting these individuals. I believe that the world, the whole world, after what we have witnessed over the last year, would be quite interested in knowing the truth of the real heroes, such as Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and what he accomplished," she added.

"For the most part, people would be interested to learn how he fought against terrorism and

how he gave his life not only for Iran but for the entire region. Or consider martyr Sinwar.

In these cases, we must reflect the reality. We have real superheroes; we just need to show the world who they are and represent the truth about them."

"To do so, we have a challenging road ahead, as Western audiences have been misled and presented with a negative image of these true heroes. First, we must overcome that narrative. We will have to work hard—there's no doubt about it," she explained.

"We are contending with over a hundred years of propaganda, and the unfortunate reality is that Westerners and the Israeli regime have no red lines when it comes to spreading false news and lies, while we do have our own red lines," she mentioned.

"However, I do believe that people are now much more ready to hear the truth than they were before October 7.

The events of the past year have shattered many of their false beliefs. The ongoing conflict and genocide in Gaza have prompted them to start questioning everything."

### The future of Ammar: a collective vision

As Hashemi looked ahead to the next decade, she expressed hope that the Ammar Festival would evolve into a major forum for the anti-imperialist front.

"With the shifting power dynamics in the world, particularly from West to East, the Ammar festival can serve as a bridge uniting artists from across the globe. Together, we can stand not just for Muslims but for anyone who resists oppression," she declared.

"The festival now holds a significant place among oppressed people. Before starting this interview, I received a video from the children of Gaza, in which they graciously mentioned me and the Ammar Festival, expressing their support.

I want to take this opportunity to thank them and say that we truly appreciate their support for the festival. We eagerly look forward to receiving works from

Gaza to participate in the festival."

In closing, Hashemi reiterated the importance of artistry in fighting against genocide and depicting the truth of what is happening in the world.

"This is a critical time for artists to mobilize, present their narratives, and remind the world that the truth is on our side," she concluded.

As the Ammar Popular Film Festival prepares for its upcoming session, Hashemi's insights assure that it will continue to be a beacon for revolutionary art and resistance, inviting voices that challenge the status quo while fostering artistic growth and solidarity worldwide.

The Ammar Popular Film Festival seeks to showcase diverse artistic contributions and support movements that transcend borders through art.

The festival's mission is to amplify voices that challenge oppressive narratives and encourage active engagement from all sections of society.

Over its 14 previous editions, the Ammar Popular Film Festival has focused on elevating the voices of people who have remained resilient against agendas aimed at promoting apathy and distortion.

It regards art as a vehicle for unity, urging individuals to gather around the common principles of justice and equity.

This year, the festival aims to further explore the dynamic interplay between societal struggle and artistic expression, emphasizing that all communities, regardless of geographic, ethnic, or social boundaries, have a vital role in creating and consuming art.

Ammar Popular Film Festival was established in 2010 by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures to honor film and art products promoting topics such as resistance and revolution.

It was named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The 15th edition of the festival will be held in Tehran and several other Iranian cities in December.

## Arasbaran Cultural Center to show "Joker: Folie à Deux"

TEHRAN-Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran will screen the 2024 movie "Joker: Folie à Deux" directed by Todd Phillips on Sunday.

According to the center website, the film screening is set for 6 p.m., and it will be followed by a review session attended by Iranian film critics Kurosh Jahed and Amir Ghaderi.

The American musical psychological thriller film is loosely based on DC Comics characters and a sequel to "Joker" (2019). Joaquin Phoenix reprises his role as the Joker, with Lady Gaga as his love interest, Lee Quinzel, better known as Harley Quinn.

Zazie Beetz and Leigh Gill also reprise their roles, while Brendan Gleeson, Catherine Keener, Steve Coogan and Harry Lawtey join the cast. It is produced by Warner Bros. Pictures in association with Joint Effort and was



distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures.

In the movie, the failed comedian Arthur Fleck, while incarcerated at Arkham State Hospital and struggling with his dual identity, not only meets the love of his life, Harley Quinn, but also finds the music that's always been inside him.

The first film premiered at the 76th Venice International Film Festival, where it won the Golden Lion. It was a box office success and set records for an October release. It grossed over \$1 billion, becoming the first R-rated film to do so, and it was the highest-grossing R-rated film until being surpassed by "Deadpool & Wolverine" in 2024.

It was also the sixth-highest-grossing film of 2019. The film received numerous accolades, including two Academy Award wins at the 92nd Academy Awards for Best Actor (Phoenix) and Best Original Score out of 11 nominations including Best Picture, becoming the first DC film to do so.

The sequel also premiered at the same festival, its 81st edition that was held earlier this year, but failed to repeat the critical and commercial success of the original film.