

Courageous Syrian Youth Will Expel Zionists from Syria



Iran lauds Yemen's 'honorable resistance' as Sana'a vows to maintain pressure on Israel

TEHRAN – Footage from Sana'a, the Yemeni capital, shows civilians fleeing a large explosion caused by airstrikes in the city center Saturday night.

Though the scenes are likely shocking to outside observers, they represent a grim normality for Yemenis, who have endured a Saudi-led coalition war since 2015 and regular U.S. and UK airstrikes since last year.

Saturday's attacks were carried out by Washington which claimed to have targeted a missile storage facility and a "command-and-control" site in the middle of the capital. The only reported casualty so far is a fighter jet downed over the Red Sea, which the Pentagon attributed to "friendly fire".

"These attacks will have no impact on our stance," a male citizen in his 20s told local Yemeni media the next morning. "We will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Palestine. I have no right to complain about last night's attacks when civilians are being butchered in Gaza every day. This is not how a Muslim should act." ▶ Page 2



China's economy braves the wind and the waves and sails steadily into the future

By Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu

TEHRAN- The Central Economic Work Conference was held in Beijing recently. In the critical year of achieving the objectives and tasks laid down in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), after the successful convening of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, how this important conference will plan for China's economy has attracted worldwide attention.

I would like to share a few ideas with Iranian friends from all walks of life in this regard:

The Conference analyzed the current economic situation. In the face of a complicated and challenging environment of increasing external pressure and growing internal difficulties, the Chinese government has united and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to respond calmly and implement comprehensive measures. ▶ Page 4

Iran's exports to D-8 countries increase by 24%

TEHRAN – The value of Iranian exports to the Developing-8 (D-8), a group of eight developing Islamic nations, increased by over 24 percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 21) compared to the same period last year, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

During this period, Iran exported approximately 13.6 million tons of goods worth \$6.317 billion to seven of the D-8 member countries. In terms of weight, exports grew by around 26 percent, IRIB reported.

Turkey was the primary destination for Iranian exports, importing around 9.4 million tons of goods valued at over \$4.4 billion. Pakistan and Indonesia followed as the second and third-largest importers, respectively.

The D-8 group, established in 1997 by former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, consists of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and Nigeria. The organization's primary goals include fostering economic and trade cooperation, facilitating scientific collaboration, and promoting technology exchange among its members. ▶ Page 4

US draft resolution intended to confront Hezbollah as CBS scrutinizes Pager Massacre

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – The CBS's 60 Minutes planned to broadcast an episode on Sunday on Israel's Pagers and Walki-Talkie Massacre against Hezbollah on September 17-18, 2024. In her episode, Leslie Stahl conducts interviews with agents of the Mossad who planned for the operation over a period of about two years.

This crime obviously is an aggression against the Lebanese state as Israel has violated all the rules prohibited in security wars. The four Geneva Conventions, which form the basis of international humanitarian law, consider combatants as civilians as long as they are not directly involved in the fighting. They also prohibit any attack that causes excessive harm to civilians that Israel deliberately breached, which is classified as a full-fledged war crime.

Since international law stipulates the prosecution of those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law, those who made the decision and carried out this indiscriminate killing must be held accountable before the International Criminal Court.

US wages new attacks on Yemen

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The United States carried out fresh attacks in the Yemeni capital just hours after an Ansarullah hypersonic missile attack injured Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Reports indicate a large explosion targeted the capital, Sanaa, accompanied by intensive warplane activity in the skies.

The U.S. attacks came hours after Yemen struck Tel Aviv, Israel's commercial hub, with a supersonic missile that left 16 people wounded. It was the second attack by Yemen in a matter of few days.

A statement from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed the targets hit by American forces included a missile storage site and a "command-and-control facility."

CENTCOM also claimed to have intercepted several Yemeni drones and an anti-ship cruise missile over the Red Sea.

The Sanaa government has accused the United States of two hostile airstrikes, which targeted the Attan district in an "act of aggression" against civilians.

Plight of Palestinians: Israeli genocide shows no sign of abating

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Israel continues to slaughter Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amid the international community's deafening silence over the regime's atrocities in the besieged territory.

Israeli jet fighters pounded a school in Gaza City on Sunday morning killing at least eight Palestinians, including children.

Displaced families had sought refuge in the Musa Bin Nusayr School.

The Israeli military claimed that Hamas used the school as a command center to carry out attacks against the regime's forces. It, however, failed to provide any evidence to back up the claim.

In the northern town of Beit Lahiya, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital said the Israeli army ordered staff to evacuate the medical site and move patients to another facility.

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Iran celebrates 3rd anniversary of Yalda Night's UNESCO designation

TEHRAN- A ceremony commemorating the third anniversary of Yalda Night's listing on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list was attended by Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, along with a number of cultural heritage officials and foreign ambassadors in Tehran on Saturday.

During the ceremony, Salehi-Amiri congratulated attendees on Yalda Night and the birthday of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA), Mehr reported.

"Tonight, we have gathered to celebrate one of our primary cultural elements, Yalda Night. We honor both Yalda Night and the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA) this evening." ▶ Page 6



Iran marks National Women's Day with calls for unity, empowerment

TEHRAN – On National Women's Day, Iranian officials highlighted the critical role of women in shaping the country's progress and called for unwavering protection of human rights.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, along with other key figures, reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality, justice, and the empowerment of women, both in domestic policy and international diplomacy.

Speaking on Sunday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stated that violations of human rights, no matter who commits them or their position, must be addressed through dialogue, legal action, or other appropriate measures. ▶ Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Western sabotage intended to create chaos in Iran

In a note, Farhikhtegan discussed U.S. President Anthony Blinken's recent statements about Iran. It wrote: Anthony Blinken admitted in his recent statements at the Council of Foreign Relations think tank that America played a role in the unrest in Iran. He emphasizes that change from the outside is difficult and Washington's main strategy is based on Iran's internal developments. These statements, along with Netanyahu's Farsi messages, show a special focus on Iran's internal protests and attempts to incite social unrest. An examination of the 2022 events reveals three key factors: public dissatisfaction in Iran, the role of foreign powers in inciting chaos, and provocations such as the Mahsa Amini incident.

Although the will of foreigners is beyond Iran's control, two other factors depend on Iran's domestic policies and actions. Reducing public dissatisfaction and creating hope for the future are the main steps that can strengthen the resistance of the Iranian society and make foreign plans ineffective. Therefore, countering public discontent and preventing similar incidents requires basic solutions.

Sobh-e-No: Challenges and obstacles ahead in Tehran-Cairo ties

In an article, Sobh-e-No discussed the importance of Pezeshkian's trip to Egypt and wrote: Despite the positive prospect of the trip, there are still challenges in expanding Iran-Egypt relations. Egypt's proximity to Western countries and the Zionist regime, historical disagreements, and concerns about regional reactions are among the factors that can prevent the deepening of relations. Pezeshkian's trip to Cairo and efforts to expand relations between the two countries indicate the beginning of a process that can lead to the strengthening of cooperation between Tehran and Cairo in the coming years. Considering the importance of Egypt in the Islamic world and the role of Iran as one of the influential players in the region, an improvement of relations between these two countries will not only benefit Iranian and Egyptian nations it can also play a significant role in creating stability and cohesion in the Islamic world.

The prospect of Iran-Egypt relations, with the continuation of diplomatic efforts, based on economic, cultural, and political cooperation, can become a successful model for constructive interactions between Islamic countries and lay the groundwork for neutralizing the plots of common enemies.

Etemad: A new table for negotiation

In an interview with Esmail Gerami Moghadam, a political analyst and former MP, Etemad addressed the declaration of Iran's readiness to start honorable negotiations with the West.

He said: Many analysts believe that these negotiations can operationalize the discourse of the 14th (sitting) government regarding de-escalation and reduce the increasing pressure of sanctions against Iran.

Many political activists are waiting for the idea of de-escalation to be realized through negotiations with Western countries, Russia, and China.

The people of Iran have been under economic pressure for the past few years, and it is necessary to provide the ground to eliminate or reduce these pressures as soon as possible. These problems arise from the significant pressure of economic sanctions, the solution of which depends on conducting negotiations with Western countries, especially America.

If Iran can establish good and strong economic relations with Western and Eastern countries as well as neighbors through negotiations it will create a suitable deterrence in terms of economy and can use these conditions for the benefit of the nation and to improve the living standards of the people.

Ettelaat: Sanctions against Iran will be tougher in Trump admin

To analyze and examine the prospect of Iran's economy, Ettelaat has interviewed economist Morteza Afghah. He said: The damage caused by the sanctions to Iran's economy in recent years was even worse than during the Iran-Iraq war because Iran had no limitations in exports and imports during the war (in the 1980s). At that time, Iran had no trade with America but had economic trade with other countries. Meanwhile, the tightening of sanctions in recent years has stopped all these exchanges. Now the reality is that he will be stricter towards Iran and economic blockade of our country. In the current situation, it is expected that Trump, who has not changed compared to the past (the first presidential term) and gained more experience, to continue the previous strictures against Iran. Since Trump is not in favor of war in general, he tries to have the upper hand in possible negotiations with Iran by increasing economic pressure on our country.

Remarkable space leap for Iran as Saman-1 block succeeds in orbital trials

TEHRAN – Iran has made a significant advancement in its space program with the successful deployment and testing of the Saman-1 orbital transfer block, a specialized component designed to move satellites between different orbits.

Head of the Iranian Space Agency Hassan Salarieh announced the news on Sunday.

The Saman-1 block was launched during the eighth mission of the Simorgh rocket, Iran's primary space launch vehicle. It achieved an elliptical orbit with an apogee (the point in the orbit farthest from Earth) of approximately 410 kilometers and a perigee (the point in the orbit closest to Earth) of 300 kilometers.

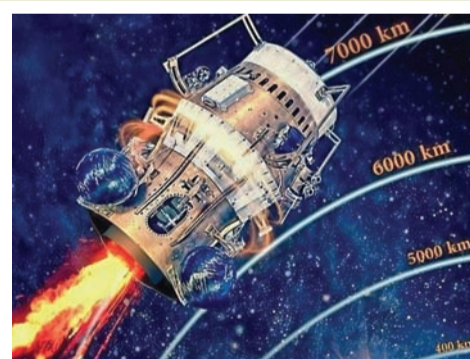
"We established effective communication with the block just hours after its placement into orbit," Salarieh confirmed on Sunday.

The head of the space agency detailed that the Saman-1 underwent rigorous testing, including assessments of orbital communications and attitude control, which is the ability to control the orientation and position of the block in space.

"The block traversed Iranian airspace several times, maintaining regular communications and testing various subsystems," he explained.

The communication system's performance in the UV band was evaluated, with successful telecommands and telemetry data received.

The block's cold gas propulsion system for attitude control performed well, alongside status determination sub-systems which determine the block's position and orientation.



Saman-1 orbital transfer block achieved an elliptical orbit with an apogee of approximately 410 kilometers and a perigee of 300 kilometers.

"After separation from the launcher, we successfully managed the initial spin, bringing the angular velocity close to zero," Salarieh noted.

Further tests included thermal balance maneuvers for temperature stability, and the operation of onboard computers was verified.

A notable achievement was the soft separation of a dummy satellite and a mass model, monitored by onboard cameras to assess separation quality at the elliptical orbit.

Salarieh mentioned that the main engine's activation chain was tested multiple times, noting the solid-fuel thrusters worked well, providing the necessary dynamic balance for the main engine ignition.

Iran lauds Yemen's 'honorable resistance' as Sana'a vows to maintain pressure on Israel

From page 1 ▶ Yemeni armed forces have been carrying out numerous operations in support of Palestinians since Israel began its ongoing war in Gaza in October of 2023. Yemen's help was initially limited to operations in the Red Sea, where it has been targeting Israeli-owned or Israeli-bound ships in a direct response to Israel's full siege of Gaza. The Israeli Port of Eilat remains deserted as a result of the Red Sea attacks.

The Ansarullah movement in Yemen gradually upped the scale and impact of its offensives, moving towards targeting military sites inside the occupied territories. Its latest operation taking place in the early hours of Saturday, laid bare the limits of the regime's long talked-up defense systems.

The Israeli military acknowledged that it was unable to intercept the Yemeni ballistic missiles launched in the attack, confirming two were fired. 16 Israelis were injured on Saturday, according to regime-controlled media.

'Yemen observes strategic resistance against Israel'

Ansarullah's operations in solidarity with Palestine have garnered immense support among the Yemeni population. Almost every week, millions of people gather in major cities across the country to express their



commitment to the Palestinian cause.

In an interview on Iran's national television, Yemen's Ambassador to Tehran, Ibrahim Mohammed al-Dailami, delivered a powerful message about Yemen's unwavering support for Palestine and its strategic resistance against the Zionist regime.

Ambassador al-Dailami said he believes Israel will not be able to sway Yemen's unwavering resolve: "Yemen, as the main arena of the Resistance Axis, which confronts the Zionist and American plan and stands against the aggression of the Zionist regime against our nation's children in Palestine, believes that the Zionist regime cannot counter Yemeni tactics."

He also addressed the broader implications of Yemen's resistance, noting that the Zionist regime seeks to attract Western support to bol-

ster its defense systems and military capabilities. "The Zionist regime now wants to invoke their sympathy to support itself, which indicates that the Zionist regime cannot support itself alone and must garner the backing of the West and America," he remarked.

The envoy concluded by reiterating Yemen's commitment to its core objective: forcing an end to Zionist aggression and lifting the siege on Gaza. He emphasized this as a fundamental goal of both Yemen and the broader Axis of Resistance.

'West's ultimate goal is to weaken Islamic nations'

In a telephone conversation on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi discussed the state of bilateral relations and the latest developments in the region with his Yemeni counterpart, Jamal Ahmad

Ali Amer.

During their call, Araghchi condemned the attacks by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Zionist regime on Yemen. He stressed that these blatant violations of international law by the U.S. are executed on behalf of the Zionist regime as part of a joint strategy to weaken Islamic countries and dominate the region.

"Despite all its crimes and aggressions, and the limitless support it receives from the United States and other Western countries, particularly the U.S., the Zionist regime has not been able to achieve its evil goals," Araghchi stated, expressing his appreciation for the honorable resistance and support of the Yemeni people for the oppressed people of Palestine.

Yemen's Amer provided an update on the latest developments in Yemen and expressed his gratitude for Iran's support. He acknowledged the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran in standing with the Yemeni government and people against enemy aggressions.

"The efforts of the United States and Israel are aimed at dominating the region. The great Islamic countries and their people must use their immense capacities to prevent these ambitions from being realized," Amer added.

Tehran condemns 'violent' car attack at German Christmas market



TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has issued a condemnation of a violent car attack at a bustling Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, which left at least five people dead and over 200 injured.

Esmail Baqaei, spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, expressed deep sympathy for the families of the victims and conveyed wishes for a swift recovery to those injured. In his remarks on Saturday, Baqaei joined a chorus of international voices denouncing the attack and offering support to the affected community. The attack occurred on Friday when a black BMW plowed through a crowd at high speed, causing chaos and devastation in the market located approximately 130 kilometers southwest of Berlin.

The suspect, identified as a 50-year-old Saudi

Tamara Zieschang, Saxony-Anhalt's Interior Minister, confirmed the suspect was previously unknown to German security services.

Local media reports uncovered a series of posts on the suspect's account on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) that expressed anti-Islam sentiments and support for individuals who had left the Muslim faith. The suspect reportedly described himself as a former Muslim.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz publicly condemned the attack, calling it "terrible" and "insane," and pledged full support to the victims and their families. Speaking on Saturday, Scholz emphasized that such acts of violence have no place in German society. The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs also released a statement on X, extending

Arabian national who had been living in Germany since 2006, was apprehended at the scene. Authorities later revealed that the man was a psychiatrist who had worked at a rehabilitation clinic for criminal offenders with addictions in Bernburg. According to a clinic spokesperson, he had been on sick and holiday leave since October.

its solidarity to the German people and the families of the victims.

'US attacks targeting Sana'a illegal'

In another statement published on Sunday, Baqaei condemned the recent U.S. airstrikes targeting Sana'a, labeling them as flagrant violations of international law.

The Iranian spokesperson stated that the repeated U.S. attacks on Yemen breach international humanitarian principles and the United Nations Charter, describing the actions as war crimes. He also commended the Yemeni people's steadfast solidarity with Palestine, emphasizing that their support stems from a deep commitment to defending the oppressed against occupation and genocide.

The spokesperson urged the Islamic world, regional nations, and the United Nations to take decisive action against the continued aggression by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel in Yemen. Issuing a statement on X social media platform on Saturday, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said that its forces conducted precision airstrikes against a missile storage facility and a command-and-control facility of Ansarullah in Sana'a, Yemen.

CENTCOM forces also shot down several Ansarullah unmanned aerial vehicles and an anti-ship cruise missile over the Red Sea, according to a report from TASS.

Leader's advisor, Chinese envoy talk bilateral and regional cooperation

TEHRAN – Ali Larijani, a senior advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, held a meeting with Cong Peiwu, the Chinese Ambassador to Iran.

According to Iranian media, the two officials reiterated the enduring relationship between Iran and China and discussed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the two nations.

This high-profile dialogue underscores the growing significance of Tehran-Beijing relations in an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape. The meeting followed a noteworthy discussion three days earlier between Ambassador Cong and Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif, where the two officials explored various aspects of Tehran-Beijing relations, including cooperation on international issues and strategic interactions.

Larijani, a seasoned politician and former Speaker of the Parliament, has played a prominent role in shaping Iran's relationship with China.

In 2019, he visited China to discuss the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations, emphasizing Iran's role in China's Belt and



Road Initiative along with political, security, and economic cooperation.

Larijani was subsequently tasked by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, to negotiate and manage the 25-year strategic agreement with China, concluding his role in this capacity in 2021 when the pact was signed.

The agreement aims to strengthen economic ties, particularly in the energy, infrastructure, and technology sectors, with China committing to substantial investments in Iran's development projects.



The son of Hezbollah's late leader Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah attended a Sunday meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The Lebanese martyr's son recently finished his primary religious studies in Qom.

Courageous Syrian youth will expel Zionists from Syria: Leader

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei discussed the situation in Syria, Iran's regional strategy, and the future of West Asia during a meeting with religious eulogists on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA), the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on Sunday.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei described Lady Fatimah Zahra as a perfect role model for all humanity in "rising for the truth, perseverance, courage, frankness, and strength in reasoning and argumentation."

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the failure of the Zionist regime to achieve any of its goals in its efforts to destroy Hamas and Hezbollah Resistance movements, stating, "The honorable nations of the region, by divine grace, will uproot this ominous regime and create a better tomorrow for the region."

Addressing the situation in Syria, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said: "A group of rioters, with the help and planning of foreign governments, managed to exploit Syria's internal weaknesses to plunge the country into chaos."

He reiterated his earlier remarks about the United States' dual strategy for regional countries, which involves either "establishing a dictatorial regime that is submissive toward them"



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei meets with a group of religious eulogists in Tehran on December 22, 2024.

or, if that fails, "fomenting unrest in the country."

"Their plans in Syria led to unrest and chaos, and now the United States, the Zionist regime, and their allies feeling victorious, have resorted to extravagant claims and nonsensical talk, like the followers of the devil."

Ayatollah Khamenei also cited a statement by an American official about "providing assistance and support to anyone causing unrest in Iran" as an example of the enemies' boastful rhetoric and added: "The Iranian nation with their strong steps will trample underfoot any U.S. mercenary who accepts this role."

Reacting to the Zionist entity's boastful claims of victory, he asked: "Is it a victory to kill over forty thousand women and children with bombs but fail to achieve even one of your declared objectives at the start of the war?"

"Have you destroyed Hamas or freed your captives in Gaza? Despite martyring a great leader like Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, have you managed to eliminate Hezbollah in Lebanon?" he added.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the Resistance in the region, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, as alive and thriving. "Therefore, you have not won; rather, you have been defeated," he stated while addressing the Zionists.

He attributed the Zionist advance into Syrian territory and the occupation of some areas to the lack of resistance, even from a single soldier. "This unimpeded movement is not a victory, of course. Without a doubt, the proud, brave, Syrian youth will drive you out of there, he remarked.

The third point articulated by Ayatollah Khamenei regarding regional developments ad-

ressed the psychological and propaganda warfare against Iran, with claims of losing proxy forces within the region.

Emphasizing that the Islamic Republic does not have proxies, he stated, "Yemen, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the PIJ are fighting because they have faith, and the power of faith has brought them to the Resistance field."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution underscored that if the Islamic Republic ever wishes to take action, it will not need proxy forces. "Faithful and honorable men in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and, God willing, soon in Syria, are fighting against oppression and the crimes of the imposed Zionist regime. The Islamic Republic is also fighting, and by God's will, we will remove this regime from the region," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that creating opportunities from the depths of threats depends on vigilance, a sense of responsibility, and fulfilling one's duties. He asserted that the future of the region will be better tomorrow than it is today. "We predict that a strong, honorable group will also emerge in Syria, as today's youth in Syria have nothing left to lose. Their schools, universities, homes, and streets are fraught with insecurity. Therefore, they must stand firmly against those who orchestrate and perpetuate this insecurity and strive to overcome them," he stated.

Iran edged by China at Water Polo World Cup 2025, Division 2 bronze medal match

TEHRAN – Iran would have hoped for third position but lost to China 12-11 at the Water Polo World Cup 2025, Division 2 Saturday night.

It was the most important day of the tournament and Netherlands and China did not disappoint, coming through their semifinals with aplomb and finishing with close classification encounters.

Team Melli had defeated South Africa 2-4, Ukraine 16-14 and Portugal 15-11 in their previous matches but failed to qualify for the final, losing to the Netherlands 18-7 in the semifinals.

Netherlands closed the tournament with an 11-9 margin over Germany in the final match.

Netherlands and Germany qualified for the men's Water Polo World Cup 2025—Super Final, joining the six men's teams that will be eligible through the Division 1 Tournaments.

The FINA 2025 World Aquatics Championships will take place in Singapore from 11 July through 3 Aug. 2025.

The Water Polo World Cup 2025 Division 2 was held in Istanbul, Turkey from December 18 to 21.

where he had mixed fortunes.

He is best remembered for returning Al Ahli Jeddah to the Saudi Arabia Pro League when they won the second division to make it back to the top flight in 2022-23 before he left after which he went to the UAE to coach Al Wahda.

He returned to Saudi in the second half of last season to take over relegation-fighting Abha but did not manage to keep them up.

There are also reports that Egyptian giants Zamalek are considering Mosimane to take over having watched the coach's two-year reign at Al Ahli that yielded two CAF Champions League crowns.

Persepolis, Juan Garrido part ways

TEHRAN – Iran's Persepolis football club parted ways with Juan Carlos Garrido Fernandez and his assistant Xavi Olivia on Sunday.

The Iranian club have parted company with the Spanish coaches by mutual consent.

The 55-year-old coach was named as Persepolis coach in June but was forced to leave the Iran champions following poor results.

Persepolis lost to struggling Mes Saturday night in the 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) Saturday night.

Persepolis sit fourth in the table five points behind leaders Tractor.

In the 2024/25 AFC Champions League Elite Persepolis sit sixth with two weeks remaining.

Garrido's assistant Jalal Hosseini has been named interim coach.

On 17 October 2023 Juan Carlos Garrido was appointed new coach in USM Alger for one season. The USMist management set its sights on Garrido for his experience, particularly in North Africa.

In the case of Tumisang Orebonye, Garrido was accused him for his lack of commitment and enthusiasm in the job.

The Spaniard accused his player of cheating, by faking fictitious injuries in order not to take part in matches.

Former Sepahan coach Jose Morais and Brazilian coach Osmar Vieira are among candidates to take charge of Persepolis.

Ex-Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi has been reportedly linked with a move to the club but he is under contract with Foolad.

FIH awards Iran highest development badge in hockey

TEHRAN – The International Hockey Federation, known as FIH, has awarded its highest development badge of the sport to Iran.

The reward was given on Saturday by FIH President Tayyab Ikram to Bahram Ghadimi, who is the president of Iran's Hockey Federation as well as the head of Indoor Hockey Asia Federation.

Ghadimi was awarded because of the significant development of the sport in Asia.

Iranian junior lifter wins bronze at 2024 Asian Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian junior weightlifter Maryam Keshtkar has claimed a bronze medal at the 2024 Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships held in Doha, Qatar.

Iran's Keshtkar secured a bronze medal in the 59 kg weight category by lifting 94 kg in the clean and jerk.

She also lifted 67 kg in the snatch category, finishing the tournament in fifth place with a total lift of 161 kg.

The 2024 Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships are taking place in Doha, Qatar, from December 19 to 25.

Army chief commends Palestinian Resistance for revealing 'true nature' of Israel



TEHRAN – Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, the Chief Commander of Iran's Army, offered high praise for the Palestinian Resistance and its fighters in Gaza, asserting that their actions serve as an accurate reflection of the true character of the Zionist regime and its partners.

Speaking on Sunday, General Mousavi expressed admiration, stating that the Palestinian Resistance, through its extraordinary resilience, has created a new understanding for the world, exposing the deceptive nature of Western and Israeli criminals and

hypocrites.

"Greetings and mercy to the Palestinian Resistance, which, through its astonishing steadfastness, has opened a new scene for the entire world, revealing the true nature of criminals, liars, and hypocrites to the world and history," he remarked at a Tehran ceremony.

The military official indicated that without the path of resistance, highlighting the Palestinian cause through standard means would have been both a prolonged and incredibly costly undertaking.

"However, today, the name of Palestine and the cause of its resistance resonate in the hearts and minds of all truth seekers worldwide."

General Mousavi also observed that nations choosing to abandon resistance have come to understand that the consequences of surrendering are far more severe than the challenges of maintaining a firm and determined stance.

Iranian envoy denounces terrorist attack targeting Pakistani military

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to Islamabad, Reza Amiri-Moghadam, expressed his strong condemnation of the terrorist attack in Pakistan that resulted in the deaths of 16 members of the security forces and offered sincere condolences.

In a post on X on Sunday, Amiri-Moghadam stated, "I extend my heartfelt condolences to the government, army, and people of Pakistan particularly those families who lost loved ones." He also prayed for the departed souls, extending his sympathies to the bereaved families, hoping they find patience and strength during this difficult time.

The incident, occurring on Saturday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was reportedly a bomb attack within an army compound.

Two Pakistani intelligence officials cited by the local media stated that the assault resulted in the deaths of 16 soldiers and the injury of five others. In a recent statement, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the assault.

The TTP, commonly referred to as the Pakistan Taliban is a coalition of



A check post in northwestern Pakistan near the Afghan border which was the target of a terrorist attack on December 21, 2024, resulting in the death of at least 16 Pakistani soldiers

previously separate militant groups that united in 2007.

Pakistan has recently faced a surge in terrorist activities, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, driven by groups such as the TTP, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K).

Since 2021, these attacks have increased in frequency and lethality, complicating the nation's ongoing battle against terrorism.

Iran marks National Women's Day with calls for unity, empowerment

From Page 1 ▶ In his address, President Pezeshkian reflected on societal norms during the time of Prophet Muhammad, when the birth of daughters was often viewed as shameful.

He highlighted the transformative significance of Lady Fatimah Zahra's birth, calling her a beacon of dignity and progress in Islamic history. He quoted the Quran extensively to underscore the importance of justice, equity, and the defense of human rights, stressing that these principles are universal and foundational.

"Prophets came to ensure the recognition and respect for human rights," the President stated. He noted that the Quran encourages righteousness and justice for all, regardless of gender or ethnicity, and promised divine reward for anyone who does good deeds.

President Pezeshkian emphasized the need for openness to truth and the courage to adapt to it. "If the younger generation speaks the truth, we must listen. If I am wrong, I must change to align with the truth," he said. He condemned deceit and the denial of truth as roots of injustice, cautioning against ignoring evidence in favor of personal

opinions, even in professional fields like medicine.

"Justice and truth must guide our actions," he added, warning that disputes arise when people fail to respect others' rights or demand more than their fair share. He cited the Quran, which teaches that justice brings people closer to piety.

Addressing the audience, Pezeshkian reaffirmed women's equality, praising their potential to lead and excel. He called for creating more opportunities for women and girls to participate in the country's development, emphasizing that their contributions are vital for a just society.

"Women are not only equal to men but often ex-



Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf meets with the members of Women's and Family Faction of the parliament on the occasion of National Women Day on December 22, 2024.

cel in many areas," he said. "Superiority lies in piety, not in gender." He highlighted the role of mothers in shaping future generations and stressed that no nation can thrive without the support of capable and dedicated women.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Alumina powder output up 5% in 8 months on year

TEHRAN - Production of alumina powder in Iran increased by five percent in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20), the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced.

Based on the IMIDRO data, the country produced 159,416 tons of alumina powder in the mentioned eight-month of this year, while the figure was 152,293 tons in the first eight months of the previous year.

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Alumina is an important ceramic material for industrial applications. The numerous fields of application range from construction materials, to filling materials, as well as abrasives and catalysts.

In plants and mechanical engineering, alumina ceramics are mainly used for wear and corrosion protection.

The particle size distribution largely determines the application range and the quality of an alumina powder. Reliably identifying the differences in particle size is therefore an essential requirement of the measuring instrument.

Iran's daily diesel production reaches 125m liters



TEHRAN - The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) has announced a 15-million-liter increase in the country's daily diesel (gasoil) production over the past four months, elevating output from 111 million liters to 125 million liters per day.

Mohammad Ali Dadvar, deputy head of NIORDC, expressed optimism that with the commissioning of new units at the Abadan Refinery within the next two months, an additional three million liters of Euro 5 diesel will be added to the national fuel supply. This enhancement is expected to boost daily diesel production to approximately 128 to 130 million liters.

IMIDRO leads 2,300 MW power capacity development for mining, mineral industries

TEHRAN - The Infrastructure Director of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that 2,300 megawatts (MW) of power for the mining and mineral industries have been successfully operationalized as part of the development of infrastructure in this sector under the guidance of the organization.

According to IRNA, Manijeh Gholamrezaei mentioned that IMIDRO's infrastructure sector has a variety of responsibilities, including the planning and long-term provision of necessary infrastructure for the mining and mineral industries in areas such as water, electricity, gas, and transportation.

She added that in the electricity sector, following the Law to Remove Barriers to the Electricity Industry, and in response to industry needs, the construction of necessary power plants began in 2022.

Currently, under the leadership of IMIDRO, 6,600 MW capacity of power plants are under construction by mining and mineral companies, with 2,300 MW of this capacity having already been brought online as of last month. By the end of this year, this figure is expected to reach 2,500 MW. In the long term, these efforts are projected to result in the construction of 10,000 MW of power plants.

In October 2021, Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the country's Energy Ministry for constructing 10,000 MW of power plants across the country.

The MOU was signed by former Industry Minister Reza Fatemi Amin and former Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mehrabian noted that these power plants will be built to meet the needs of industrial sectors and according to the signed MOU, industries will meet their electricity needs through them and the surplus power will be injected into the national grid.

The minister stated that the country is currently facing 14,000 MW of electricity shortage, adding: "This figure equals 22 percent of the country's total electricity

demand, which we cannot provide in various sectors including domestic, industrial, administration and agricultural areas."

As the first power plant unit constructed under the framework of the mentioned MOU, Shahid Bakeri power plant went operational in Semnan Province in early August 2022.

In mid-October, IMIDRO started the construction of a 100MW solar power plant for Chadormalu mine in Yazd, central Iran.

The ground-breaking ceremony was held with Mohammadreza Movassaginia, chairman of the board of IMIDRO.

The power plant will be established on 120 hectares of land in Ashkezar County.

Some €60 million has been invested in the project which will generate more than 190 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

The power plant is scheduled to be constructed within 16 months and will run for three months in trial operation.

One of the environmental benefits of implementing this project is to reduce the production of 115 thousand tons of greenhouse gas per year.

During the construction period, the project will create 400 direct and 250 indirect jobs.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) is a major state-owned holding company active in the mining sector in Iran.

IMIDRO's vision is to be a very dynamic organization which, from one side, play an effective role in establishing and supporting companies progress in industry sector toward increasing competitive advantages in international markets and on the other hand, to create an economic corporation with high technical and managerial capabilities enjoying international standards to enable IMIDRO to rank among the global high level companies and the Islamic Republic of Iran rank among the top countries from mines and mining industries point of view.

Iran's exports to D-8 countries increase by 24%

From page 1 ▶ Sheikh Attar, a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that the trade capacity of the D-8 has now surpassed \$68 billion.

In recent developments, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian attended the 11th D-8 Summit held in Cairo, Egypt, marking the first visit by an Iranian president to Egypt in over a decade.

During the summit, President Pezeshkian proposed the establishment of a D-8 development fund aimed at facilitating joint investments among member



states.

Additionally, Iran's Finance Minister Abdolnasser Hemmati met with the D-8 Secretary-General to discuss strategies for enhancing trade relations within the bloc, reiterating the target of achieving \$500 billion in trade volume by 2030.

These initiatives underscore Iran's commitment to strengthening economic ties within the D-8 framework, aiming to leverage collective potential for mutual growth and development.

Private sector investment in Iran's ports hits \$4.4b

TEHRAN - The Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has announced that private sector investments in Iran's ports have reached 2.2 quadrillion rials (about \$4.4 billion) through 362 active contracts as of December 2024.

Hassan Yadollahi, director of Economic Affairs at PMO, highlighted that this investment has led to the creation or ongoing development of storage capacities for over 233 million tons of various goods by domestic and foreign private entities.

According to Yadollahi, the average annual growth rate of private investment in the country's ports has been approximately 24 percent.

This growth aligns with Iran's broader economic policies, including the Seventh National Development Plan and directives for sea-oriented development. Notably, there has been a 150 percent increase in the value of private sector investment projects over the past three years compared to the previous period ending in 2021.

In addition to these developments, PMO has set a target to attract 300 trillion rials (about

\$600 million) in private sector investment by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2025). This initiative aims to further enhance the infrastructure and operational capacity of Iran's ports.

These efforts underscore Iran's commitment to bolstering its maritime infrastructure and fostering private sector participation in port development, which is crucial for the nation's economic growth and trade expansion.

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports, as the major gates of exports and imports, play a significant role in this battle. This role makes all-out support for ports and their further development serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodities, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in the course of five years.

The PMO head has recently announced that transit of commodities through the ports of Iran has increased by 37 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 20).

Speaking in a TV program, Ali-Akbar Safaei stated that 9.366 million tons of goods have been transited via Iranian ports during the eight-month period.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

China's economy braves the wind and the waves and sails steadily into the future

From page 1 ▶ Notably, the decisive deployment of a package of incremental policies at the meeting held by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on Sept. 26 has effectively boosted social confidence and led to a remarkable economic recovery. In November, China's economy has sustained the recovery momentum since September. Imports and exports of goods maintained growth and trade structure continued to optimize. In the first eleven months, the total value of imports and exports of goods was 39,786.1 billion yuan, up by 4.9 percent year on year. Equipment manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing grew fast, with the value added increased by 7.6 percent and 7.8 percent year on year respectively, both are more than 2 percentage points faster than that of the industrial enterprises above the designated size. Modern services developed well. The Index of Services Production of information transmission, software and information technology services, leasing and business services and financial intermediation grew by 9.3 percent, 9.3 percent and 8.8 percent year on year respectively, 3.2 percentage points, 3.2 percentage points and 2.7 percentage points faster than the Index of Services Production. As things stand, China's economic growth

is expected to be around 5%, and major annual goals and tasks of economic and social development to be successfully accomplished.

The Conference released a strong signal to promote the continued improvement of China's economy. The meeting arranged the economic work for 2025, emphasizing that more active and effective macroeconomic policies should be implemented next year. The country will adopt a more proactive fiscal policy, set a higher deficit-to-GDP ratio, increase the issuance of ultra-long special treasury bonds, and increase the issuance of local government special-purpose bonds. The tone of monetary policy was adjusted from "prudent" to "moderately loose", which is the first time in 14 years. The conference also outlined 9 key tasks, including expand high-standard opening up, give full play to the driving role of economic system reform, drive the development of new quality productive forces through scientific and technological innovation, and pursue coordinated progress in new urbanization and all-around rural revitalization. Although the adverse impacts brought about by changes in the external environment have deepened, and the country's economy still faces many difficulties and challenges,

the Chinese government will face up to the difficulties, strengthen confidence, increase counter-cyclical adjustments, further enrich and improve the policy toolbox, and provide strong policy support for promoting the continued improvement of the economy.

The Conference made it clear that China will expand high-standard opening up. At present, the headwinds of economic globalization intensified, geopolitical risks continued to rise, and global governance challenges increased. Under such circumstances, China insists on expanding its independent and unilateral opening up in an orderly manner, consolidating and expanding global trade and investment partnerships, and sharing development opportunities with the world. China will steadily expand systematic opening up, proactively docking the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement and other international high-standard economic and trade rules, accelerating the expansion of the network of globally oriented high-standard free trade zones, and promoting the negotiation and signing of a variety of multi-bilateral economic and trade agreements. China will enhance the resilience of for-

eign trade, promote cross-border e-commerce, push forward the layout and construction of overseas warehouses, actively develop services trade, green trade and digital trade, push forward the innovative development of border trade. China will increase the efforts to attract and stabilize investment, expand the pilot programs of expanding opening-up in the fields of telecommunication and medical, steadily expand opening-up of Internet, education, culture and other services, and further optimize the visa-free entry policy to attract and facilitate cross-border exchanges of business personnel.

With world's most promising mega market, a complete industrial system, a high level opening-up and the increasing effectiveness of innovation and development, China has a strong attraction to the world. At the 7th China International Import Expo (CIIE) held in November this year, Iran participated in the event with nearly 30 exhibitors and an exhibition area of 1,440 square meters, which is among top of all participating Asian countries. In 2025, China's economy braves the wind and the waves and sails steadily into the future, which will provide more development opportunities for all countries in the world, including Iran.

TCCIMA reviews barriers to private sector oil, gas development

TEHRAN - The 24th session of the Energy and Environment Committee of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) focused on the challenges facing private sector involvement in the development of oil and gas fields.

As the TCCIMA portal reported, the members highlighted issues such as the lack of recognition of investor roles in oil contracts, the absence of ownership rights for produced oil, lengthy contract assignment processes, and complex bureaucratic hurdles that restrict private sector participation.

Representatives from the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) and the Ministry of Oil attended the session, where it was decided to



prepare a detailed list of challenges and reform proposals to be submitted to relevant authorities.

During the meeting, Fereydoun Asadi, Vice Chair of the committee, discussed regulatory issues impacting oil and gas businesses. He referred to Table 8, Article 42 of the Seventh National Development Plan, which outlines energy performance benchmarks, and provided additional details on these challenges.

Mehdi Masaeli, another Vice Chair, stressed the importance of the private sector adopting a clear stance when engaging with government agencies. He encouraged the committee to focus on advocating for solutions to pressing issues in the oil, gas, and environmental sectors.

Plight of Palestinians: Israeli genocide shows no sign of abating

From page 1 ▶ Hussam Abu Safiya added that it was “next to impossible” because staff did not have ambulances to move patients.

Nonetheless, Israeli forces carried out fresh attacks on the barely functioning Kamal Adwan Hospital.

On Saturday, the hospital had come under heavy Israeli shelling. The Israeli army had previously threatened to blow up the facility.

Elsewhere, the Israeli military killed five Palestinians in Rafah and Khan Younis in the south of the Gaza Strip on Sunday.

Israel has killed more than 45,250 Palestinians including 17,000 children since launching its war of genocide on Gaza on October 7 last year.

It has not only razed residential buildings to the ground but has also bombed hospitals and schools.

According to international law, targeting hospitals and medical personnel intentionally, and as a strategy of war is a war crime.

But Israel has brazenly violated international law with impunity.



A girl stands at the site of an Israeli attack on the Musa bin Nusayr School in the Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City

The humanitarian director for Save the Children International has raised the alarm about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“Winter’s upon us and it’s very bitterly cold. What we hear from children and their families is that they’re so ill-equipped.

It’s difficult for families to live with any dignity in this context,” Rachel Cummings told Al Jazeera from Deir el-Balah.

She added that there is open sewage in the street, and access to food and clean water remains

extremely difficult.

Cummings also called for ending Israel’s brutal war on Gaza.

“We need an immediate ceasefire, we need the world to stop the bombing of children in Gaza, and we need safe passage and access to humanitarian assistance,” she said.

The situation is worse in northern Gaza where Israeli forces have been widely accused of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from that region over the past three months.

Israel began a renewed military offensive in northern Gaza in early October this year.

Israel has hindered the provision of essentials such as food to the Gaza Strip, in particular to the north. The regime has used starvation as a method of warfare to implement its expansionist plans.

Escalating attacks in northern Gaza are in line with Israel’s attempts to displace all Palestinians from the area and pave the way for settlers to move in.

Israeli relentless attacks come as efforts are underway to establish a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

But for now, truce talks are just a political subterfuge for the regime to achieve its objectives in northern Gaza and beyond.

Israel’s Western allies, in particular the United States as well as regional Arab countries, have repeatedly called for ending Israel’s war on Gaza.

But they have fallen short of taking any effective measures in this regard. They just pay lip service to pacify growing opposition against Israel’s crimes in Gaza.

Opposition leaders accuse Netanyahu of sabotaging truce talks with Hamas

The political opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have accused him of sabotaging talks to reach a captive-prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid, a former prime minister and leader of the Yesh Atid party, said the government has imposed new conditions.

“We have nothing left to achieve in Gaza; we need to start preparing for the day after the war and bring back 100 hostages,” he told the public broadcaster Kan.

“Once the war ends, we can return to Gaza and do what we need to do,” he said. “Now, we need to stop the war and finalize a deal to bring all the hostages back.”

Lapid said Netanyahu, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in



Gaza, does not want to end the war, fearing that it would lead to his cabinet’s collapse.

Also, Avigdor Lieberman, a former war minister and leader of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, criticized Netanyahu. He told the Maariv newspaper, “The deal can be done.”

Pope condemns “cruelty” of Israeli attacks on Gaza

For the second time in as many days, Pope Francis has denounced the “cruelty” of the Israeli attacks on Gaza.

“And with pain I think of Gaza, of so much cruelty, of the children being machine-gunned, of the bombings of schools and hospitals.

What cruelty,” he said after his weekly Angelus prayer, according to Al Jazeera.

On Saturday, the pope had referenced the bombardment of children and said: “This is cruelty. This is not war. I wanted to say this because it touches the heart.”

How did France get to this point?

After a shellacking for his centrist Ensemble (“Together”) Movement in the June 2024 European Parliament elections, French President Emmanuel Macron decided to call snap legislative elections to try to stabilize the domestic political situation. But Macron’s gamble that French citizens would reward him with a new majority and fresh mandate backfired, and he ended up with a “hung” National Assembly divided between three roughly equal and politically incompatible factions.

Macron appointed the center-right Michel Barnier as prime minister in September with the goal of quickly passing an austerity budget to rein in France’s growing fiscal deficit. By early December, it was clear that Barnier could not muster enough parliamentary support for his budget, and the far left and the far right teamed up to bring down his government.

On December 13, Macron appointed one of his earliest political allies, the seventy-three-year-old centrist François Bayrou, as the new prime minister, with essentially the same task he gave Barnier back in September. Now the main question hanging over French politics is: Can Bayrou succeed where Barnier failed, since he faces the same parliamentary gridlock?

What issues are driving the country’s increasing polarization?

The issues that are dividing both French elites and the general population are not that different from the ones that we have seen in the United States and the rest of the world: the increasing cost of living, the deteriorating state of public services, higher flows of immigration, and the instability in Europe’s near abroad, including in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Macron and his centrist allies want to continue the structural reforms of the French economy they started in 2017, including im-

proving the climate for doing business, stopping any further tax rises, streamlining the unwieldy French pension system, and steering the European Union (EU) towards closer integration on defense and energy. Both the far left and far right want the wealthy to pay a higher share of taxes, would like to undo Macron’s pension reform by bringing the retirement age back down to sixty, and are more Euroskeptic when it comes to delegating more sovereign powers to Brussels. The far-right National Rally led by Marine Le Pen wants to take more drastic measures against immigration, slow down the clean energy transition, and is skeptical of interventions abroad. The united left-wing New Popular Front, led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon of France Unbowed and by Olivier Faure of the Socialist Party, would like to maintain France’s generous social protections and enact more ambitious measures to fight climate change.

At a time when France’s fiscal deficit stands at 6.1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), it is hard for these parties to agree on a budget that can both temper public spending and increase revenue through even higher taxes. France’s current public spending already stands at a record high 58.3 percent of its GDP, while its tax collection is about 52.2 percent.

Could the country’s debt situation pose a risk of broader EU contagion?

The current situation in France is nowhere close to the severity of the Greek debt crisis in the first half of the 2010s, when borrowing costs spiraled out of control and Greece almost fell out of the Eurozone. However, the sovereign credit rating agency Moody’s has taken note of France’s political impasse and downgraded the trustworthiness of the country’s debt by one notch from Aa2 to Aa3.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US wages new attacks on Yemen



From page 1 ▶ U.S. and British forces have been waging regular strikes on Yemen this year in response to Yemeni attacks on Israeli, American and British ships transiting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Yemeni forces have also conducted attacks deep inside Israel, targeting the port city of Eilat and Tel Aviv in support of Gaza.

Israeli media was quick to highlight that the occupying regime played no role in the latest U.S. aggression on Yemen.

Experts point out this may have been an indirect message to Yemen in the hope of avoiding another hypersonic missile being launched from the Arab state in the direction of Tel Aviv.

Some Israeli analysts have concluded that airstrikes on Yemen will not deter the Sanaa government from its ongoing military support front for Gaza.

Israeli authorities have confirmed on more than one occasion that the Israeli military is unable to intercept Yemeni hypersonic missiles that have prompted many residents to

evacuate their homes in the early hours.

According to the Walla Hebrew site, “Israeli officials must quickly disclose the reasons behind the repeated failures to intercept Yemeni missiles to the Israeli public.”

Following the latest attacks on Yemen, the Sanaa government’s Foreign Minister, Jamal Ahmed Ali Amer, stated, “Any country that supports the Israeli entity in its aggression against Yemen will become complicit and bear the consequences of its decision.”

The Sanaa Minister of Information, Hashim Sharaf al-Din, also said, “It is clear that the Americans have not learned from their mistakes and will continue to reap humiliation at the hands of us Yemenis.”

On February 25, the U.S. and Britain launched six airstrikes on the Attan district. On March 22, the two countries also launched four airstrikes on the same area.

The new aggression on the capital aims to pressure Yemeni forces to cease their operations against Israeli targets.

However, the Yemeni Armed Forces confirmed on Sunday that “their operations will not stop until the aggression on Gaza ends and the siege is lifted.”

Amid the attacks on Yemen, a U.S. warplane was shot down.

US fighter jet downed

There are disputing viewpoints as to how a U.S. warplane was shot down over the Red Sea.

According to a statement by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), an American warship “mistakenly shot down” a F/A-18 warplane as it was flying over the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman in the Red Sea.

One of the carrier’s escort ships, “mistakenly fired on and hit” the plane, the statement said.

CENTCOM confirmed that two navy pilots were forced to eject “over the Red Sea early on December 22 after their F/A-18 was downed in what appears to be a friendly fire incident.”

The statement noted that the pilots managed to eject and survive, with one of them sustaining injuries. The “apparent case of friendly fire,” is being investigated, CENTCOM added.

Yemeni officials have indicated there may be more to the story than what the Americans are saying in public, without directly claiming responsibility for shooting down the fighter jet.

A member of Yemen’s Supreme Political Council, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, stated that “the U.S. Central Command will not disclose the truth about the downing of the American warplane.”

He added, “What the United States is doing may be a tactic to prevent further collapse in the morale of its soldiers.”

At the same time, he affirmed that “the terrorist actions against Yemen will not stop support operations for Gaza.”

US draft resolution intended to confront Hezbollah as CBS scrutinizes Pager Massacre

From page 1 ▶ Meanwhile, US Senators Ben Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen and Jack Reed Cardin have introduced Preventing the Undermining of Lebanon’s Sovereignty and Economy (PULSE) Act.

The bill allegedly authorizes robust assistance “to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces as the legitimate defenders of Lebanon, provides humanitarian relief to those displaced, and supports essential state institutions, education, and investigative journalism.”

Besides, the PULSE Act allegedly assists “to uphold the rule of law in Lebanon and supports resolution of the electoral deadlock in the selection of a new president that will put first the well-being of Lebanon’s citizens.”

“Thanks to the diplomatic efforts of the Biden administration, the current ceasefire offers a path to stability and prosperity for the people of Lebanon,” said Cardin, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Cardin claimed the act will be “a critical tool to support the Lebanese people as they move

forward to build a future that is secure, stable, and prosperous, free from conflict and external threats.

The United States must stand by the Lebanese people in this pivotal time—they deserve nothing less.”

Chair Reed stated that the bill, which is divided into 12 points, would “help improve Lebanon’s ability to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its citizens.”

The bill coincides with Washington’s persistent attempts to restrict Hezbollah under the pretext of combating “Iranian entrenchment.”

It is linked to the “soft power” methodology theorized by Joseph Nye, former Assistant Secretary of State for Defense in the Clinton administration, which is based on three basic resources: culture, political values, and foreign policy.

Since 2009, instead of using the term “soft power,” Sayyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, coined the term “soft war” in a bid to mobilize the masses to confront the US colonial hegemony.

Then the term has become part of Hezbol-

lah’s literature, not only within its Shiite demographics but also among the pro-Axis of Resistance people despite their various ideological affiliations.

Since its founding, Hezbollah’s discourse has reconciled its Islamic doctrine with Lebanese nationalism politically, culturally, and socially, taking into account sudden and unexpected changes and challenges.

Hezbollah’s strategy of flexible adaptation has been quite essential, helping it establish wide networks of supporters and sympathizers.

Hezbollah has further devised a set of creative tactics with the aim of providing an alternative for Gen-Z. Unlike some Islamic movements that respond to cultural Americanization either by turning to extremism and self-isolation or by responding through complete submission to Western imperialism, Hezbollah has succeeded – as was demonstrated during the last war – in creating a broad, highly organized, disciplined, and productive popular environment. It is a diverse but cohesive environment at the national and regional levels.



Heavy rains and chilly winds in Gaza can make the winter unbearable, especially for people stranded in makeshift plastic tents.

Hindu Temple to host handicrafts exhibition



TEHRAN- The Hindu Temple in Bandar Abbas, southern Hormozgan province, is scheduled to host a handicrafts exhibition from December 25 to 27.

This exhibition is a valuable opportunity to showcase the traditional arts of the talented women of Hormozgan and to acknowledge their role in preserving and promoting local culture and art, a provincial tourism chief has said.

The exhibit will feature a variety of handicraft works, including traditional embroidery, gilded embroidery, pottery, and weaving, Sanaz Ramaji explained on Sunday.

The modest temple was built in the early 20th century to serve the Indian community working for the British East India Company.

Its architecture features a combination of Persian and Hindi architecture, which is one of the historical monuments in Hormozgan province. However, it lacks the

vivid colors that are usually associated with Hindu temples.

Iranian handicrafts are a vibrant expression of the country's rich cultural heritage, showcasing centuries of artistry and craftsmanship. From intricate Persian carpets, celebrated for their elaborate designs and vivid colors, to exquisite miniature paintings and calligraphy, Iranian artisans create works that blend tradition with unmatched skill.

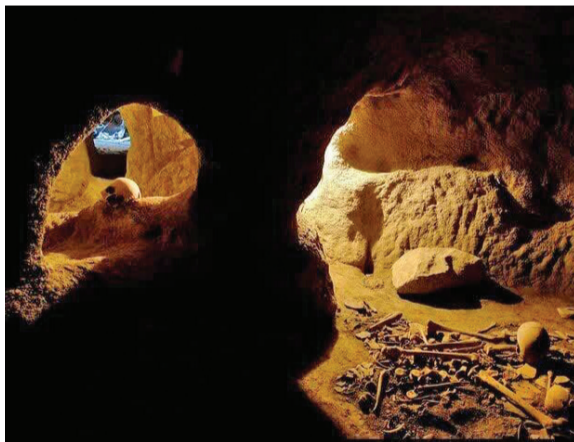
Pottery and ceramics, often adorned with geometric or floral patterns, reflect the country's historic connection to the Silk Road. Metalwork, including engraved copper and brass, highlights the precision of Iranian craftsmen, while turquoise inlaying, or Firoozeh-kubi, transforms jewelry and decorative items into cultural treasures.

Woodworking traditions such as Khatamkari, which is a form of marquetry, combine delicate inlaid pieces to create mesmerizing designs. Handwoven textiles, such as Pateh embroidery or Gabbeh rugs, represent regional identities and local stories.

Experts say that each Iranian handicraft is more than a product; it's a narrative of history, artistry, and cultural pride, passed down through generations of dedicated artisans.

Currently, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts".

Tourism in Samen underground city to see enhancement, official says



TEHRAN- The underground city of Samen in Malayer, Hamedan province, is poised for tourism enhancement, the provincial tourism chief has said.

The Samen underground city holds significant tourism potential for both Malayer and the surrounding region, Mohsen Masoum Alizadeh said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

With government support and its growing popularity during Nowruz celebrations in recent years, this unique destination has sparked a renaissance in Hamadan's tourism sector, ranking it among the five most-visited attractions in the province, he added.

He also highlighted that this remarkable underground site attracts over 200,000 domestic and international tourists each year.

Samen subterranean settlement has 25 rock-carved rooms, interlinked tunnels, and corridors.

The subterranean complex appears to have been first used for religious purposes, then as a cemetery, and finally as a shelter during emergencies.

The underground complex, located 400 km west of Tehran, is believed to be built sometime between the fall of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC) and the early Parthian era (247 BC-224 CE).

Excavations at the site began in 2005 and are still going on. So far tens of well-preserved skeletons have been retrieved from

its interconnected chambers.

Iran is a haven for ancient troglodytic architecture which is somewhat forgotten though they are filled with life and creativity. The northwest Kandovan village is one of the most famous examples of troglodytic architecture in the country; its ice-cream cone-shaped homes resemble that of Turkey's Cappadocia.

In October 2018, the country hosted the 3rd International Troglodytic Architecture Conference in which tens of experts, researchers, and academia discussed troglodyte-associated architecture, culture, and technology.

Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations. Ecbatana was the capital of Media and subsequently a summer residence of the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia from 553 to 330 BC.

Hamadan has had many names: it was possibly the Bit Daiukki of the Assyrians, Hangmatana, or Agbatana, to the Medes, and Ecbatana to the Greeks. One of the Median capitals, under Cyrus II (the Great; died 529 BC) and later Achaemenian rulers, it was the site of a royal summer palace.

About 1220, Hamedan was destroyed by the Mongols. In 1386 it was sacked by Timur (Tamerlane), a Turkic conqueror, and the inhabitants were massacred. It was partly restored in the 17th century and subsequently changed hands often between Iranian ruling houses and the Ottomans.

Sitting on a high plain, Hamedan is graciously cool in August but snow prone and freezing from December to March. In summer the air is often hazy. Ali Sadr cave, Ganjnameh inscriptions, Avicenna Mausoleum, Hegmataneh hill, Alaviyan dome, Jameh mosque, and St. Stephanos Gregorian Church are amongst Hamedan's attractions to name a few.

Iran celebrates 3rd anniversary of Yalda Night's UNESCO designation

TEHRAN- A ceremony commemorating the third anniversary of Yalda Night's listing on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list was attended by Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, along with a number of cultural heritage officials and foreign ambassadors in Tehran on Saturday.

During the ceremony, Salehi-Amiri congratulated attendees on Yalda Night and the birthday of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA), Mehr reported.

"Tonight, we have gathered to celebrate one of our primary cultural elements, Yalda Night. We honor both Yalda Night and the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (SA) this evening."

"The duality of Iranian identity and Islam coexists in Iran, demonstrating that Iranians live with a rational approach where there is no distinction between their Iranian identity and Islam, celebrating cultural elements such as Yalda and Chaharshanbeh-Suri alongside religious occasions like Ashura and Tasua," he added.

He also emphasized on Iranian identity and culture that are tied to the strength and vitality of Iran. "Iran remains a constant in our lineage and history."

The minister continued, "Iran's cultural richness acts as a magnet attracting the world. Its legacy places it among the top ten countries worldwide historically and culturally. We have identified one million artifacts and registered over 40,000."

"Another crucial element is the Persian language, which embod-



ies the shared spirit of all Iranians around the globe. The persistence of the Persian language over a millennium signifies a continuous cultural legacy, a key to the endurance of this land," he added.

The minister emphasized the importance of cultural diversity in Iran, stating, "Throughout history, no event has caused Iran to break apart. People of Azarbaijan have lived in Iran for thousands of years as beloved people. The Kurds, with their rich cultural heritage, also span thousands of years in this land. The people of Sistan and Baluchestan boast over 5,000 years of history, known for their bravery and resilience. In this geography, we also have Arabs who lived in Iran before Islam, deeply connected to the land. The Turkmen, too, are noble people, and this community is not artificial; they have long been a part of Iran. This cultural diversity has established Iran as a land of plurality and unity."

He concluded by stating that

the Iranian intellect has always been renowned throughout history, with ethics being a superior trait of Iranians.

For his part, deputy minister for cultural heritage Ali Darabi stated that honoring Yalda Night highlights how the customs and rituals belonging to the nation's ancestors have persisted through time, becoming part of Iran's intangible heritage.

Yalda Night has been cherished among Iranians from ancient times to the present day, he mentioned. Darabi expressed pride for Iranians in having this festival recognized globally.

"The global recognition of Yalda Night signifies its international potential."

Speaking at the ceremony, the Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador in Tehran Tordogan Sedigov congratulated attendees on Yalda Night, emphasizing that it is part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

"Yalda is an ancient tradition among Iranians and several oth-

er countries, symbolizing Iran's respect for nature, family, and culture. Yalda is also celebrated in Kyrgyzstan."

He added, "Let us first congratulate Iranians on Yalda, as they have been celebrating it for thousands of years, since ancient times. Through this celebration, the people of Iran honor their past and cherished traditions. Yalda signifies the victory of light over darkness, which holds great significance."

In 2022, UNESCO added Yalda Night to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, highlighting its significance as a cornerstone of Persian culture and tradition.

Yalda refers to a traditional celebration of the sun and the warmth of life. Practiced in Iran and Afghanistan, the event takes place the last night of autumn, when families gather at the houses of elders and sit around a table adorned with a series of symbolic objects and foods: a lamp to symbolize light, water to represent cleanliness, and red fruits such as pomegranates, watermelons, beetroots, jujube, and grapes to symbolize warmth.

Broth, sweets, dried fruits, and nuts that are used specifically for the occasion are also set on the table and consumed during the gathering. Activities range from reciting poetry and storytelling to playing games and music and giving gifts to new in-laws, brides, and children. The event celebrates cultural identity, nature, respect for women, friendship, hospitality, cultural diversity, and peaceful coexistence.

Transforming rural tourism: A journey through culture, cuisine and sustainability

Rural tourism in India has seen a transformative shift over recent years, blending sustainable practices with immersive cultural experiences. Haritika Organization, in partnership with the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, has emerged as a frontrunner in this sector. By promoting homestays and local cultural heritage, the initiative is not only promoting tourism but also empowering rural communities economically and socially. Manoj Nayak, Team Leader at Haritika Organization, provided a detailed overview of their journey, challenges and aspirations.

Initiating rural tourism

The rural tourism project began in 2021 under the supervision of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, which enlisted Haritika Organization as a partner support agency. The initiative aimed to promote rural tourism by leveraging local resources and traditions. It started modestly with six homestays in select villages, showcasing rural India's untapped potential as a travel destination.

The concept was simple yet innovative, which was to provide tourists with authentic experiences rooted in the traditions and lifestyles of rural India. The initial success of these six homestays led to rapid expansion.

"Initially, we developed six homestays, and due to their success, we expanded to 16 more. As of today, we have a total of 22 homestays operational," Nayak quoted. These homestays are seamlessly integrated into the digital marketplace, listed on major travel platforms. This digital accessibility ensures a steady flow of visitors, enhancing the visibility of rural destinations.

Homestays at Orchha

Nayak shared fascinating insights about the homestays in Bagan village and the surrounding areas. "We have built two homestays, Sheetla Green Homestay - what makes it special is the way it is naturally preserved. The entire place feels like a wall, surrounded by a variety of plants, including papaya and guava, which thrive there," he explained.

Moving on, the team leader spoke about the homestay in Ladpura called Madhav Hill homestays, where Bundelkhandi paintings add a unique cultural touch, creating an inviting atmosphere for guests. "The Bundelkhandi paintings are beautifully done, and we even have a selfie point where visitors are encouraged to take photos and learn about the artwork."

He also highlighted Rekha and Kamala's

homestay, where sustainability and self-sufficiency are prioritized. "Here, they have installed steel lights and grow everything organically; no chemical fertilizers are used. You'll find papayas, guavas, mangoes, and jamun on the property. There's no need to bring anything from outside," he said.

Moreover, the homestay offers pure, locally-produced products such as cow ghee and milk, which guests rave about. "It's rare to find this level of authenticity. Some tourists even prefer to leave their five-star hotels, like the Orchha, to experience the genuine homestay vibe."

Training and capacity building

Central to the project's success is the training provided to homestay caretakers. These individuals were enrolled in professional development programs at IHM Bhopal. "They have received training from IHM Bhopal in hospitality management, record-keeping and guest interaction. From documenting visitor details to providing authentic experiences, they are well-prepared," shared the team leader.

This structured approach has ensured consistent and high-quality experience for tourists while equipping locals with employable skills. The initiative's emphasis on professional training not only benefits the homestay owners but also enhances the overall appeal of rural tourism as a credible and sustainable venture.

Economic benefits

The economic impact of the initiative has been substantial. While the homestay owners are reaping the benefits, other villagers are also experiencing positive effects from the project. "We've hosted more than 3,000 tourists, generating substantial revenue for homestay owners and benefiting the wider community. For instance, cultural performances like Bundeli music and traditional meals not only attract tourists but also provide additional income to locals," Nayak said.

The project has also resulted in a remarkable increase in land values. Previously, an acre of agricultural land in these regions was valued at around Rs 5 lakh. With the influx of tourists, the same land now commands prices upwards of Rs 20 lakh. This fourfold increase reflects the economic potential that rural tourism holds for communities. The benefits extend beyond direct monetary gains. Tourists often engage with local artisans, musicians and farmers, creating a demand for Bundeli music performances, traditional culinary services and local produce.

Cultural preservation through tourism

One of the most compelling aspects of the project is its focus on cultural preservation. Each homestay is designed to reflect the region's unique Bundeli heritage, with traditional paintings, furnishings and decor. These elements not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the properties but also serve as a medium for cultural education.

Tourists are treated to authentic Bundeli cuisine prepared using organic, locally sourced ingredients. Dishes like khichdi, sabzi and kheer are served, providing a taste of rural India. Visitors can also witness farming practices, including vegetable cultivation and livestock rearing, gaining insights into the agrarian lifestyle.

Many families from urban areas and even international tourists visit these homestays specifically to introduce their children to rural life. The idea is to offer them with a unique firsthand experience. These activities create supplemental income streams for local performers and artisans, further embedding tourism as a pillar of rural development.

Empowering women through tourism

Another notable feature of the initiative is its focus on empowering women. Haritika Organization has partnered with the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board to implement a project aimed at creating safe and inclusive spaces for women tourists.

"Through a project aimed at creating safe tourism spaces for women, we've trained women in reception management and as e-rickshaw drivers. This initiative fosters an environment where women, even at night, can feel safe exploring the area," Nayak shared. By increasing women's visibility in public spaces, the initiative promotes a sense of safety and inclusivity for tourists.

A model of sustainable tourism

Haritika's approach to rural tourism is deeply rooted in sustainability. The homestays use organic farming practices, avoiding chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Guests are served farm-to-table meals, ensuring freshness and health while promoting local agriculture. The initiative also addresses environmental concerns by encouraging the use of bicycles for local transportation and organizing eco-friendly activities such as nature walks and picnics. These efforts not only reduce the carbon footprint of tourism but also instill environmental consciousness among visitors.

(Source: Bwhotelier)

Administration aims to raise women's presence in entrepreneurship: VP

TEHRAN –The administration has focused on increasing women's share of entrepreneurship in the science and technology sector from currently 12 percent to 30 percent, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, has said.

"Since graduated women constitute a large percentage of unemployed individuals, we are trying to implement the idea of increasing the share of women in entrepreneurship in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, technology parks and business incubators, as well as the Ministry of Information, and Communication Technology, to minimize the gap and witness the presence of more and more women in businesses," IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

The official made the remarks on Saturday, December 21, on the sidelines of an exhibition called 'Women, the pivot of innovation and technology'.

Women hold over 24% share of inventions in Iran

According to Behrouz-Azar, women account for more than 24 percent of inventions in the country, compared to the global average of 17 percent.

In Iran, entrepreneurship officially commenced in 2000. Following that it was defined as a field of study in universities, and the first entrepreneurial major as an interdisciplinary one launched at University of Tehran, she explained.



The official went on to say that the concept of entrepreneurship is interwoven with various fields such as economy, psychology, culture, sociology, and even religion.

With the conceptual development of entrepreneurial thought, women's entrepreneurship begins to grow because there is a difference between men and women in terms of performance, motivation, and access to resources.

One of the most important differences between entrepreneurship among women and men is the issue of motivation.

Men's motivation in entrepreneurship is more concerned with earning a living and increasing wealth, but women all over the world tend to use it to strengthen the family foundation.

The most important goal in women's entrepreneurship in the current administration is to pro-

mote motivation.

Men entrepreneurs can more easily provide resources and capital for their businesses, but this happens less for women.

Therefore, educated women face funding problems to start their businesses.

The government is well aware of the issue and is looking for solutions to boost access to finance for women entrepreneurs, Behrouz-Azar highlighted.

Women's economic, social empowerment

Addressing the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from November 19 to 21, Behrouz-Azar stated that the current administration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

"Iran has always focused on

programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings," Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

Referring to Iran's remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields.

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

Addressing a roundtable focusing on 'Advancing women's economic empowerment through employment, decent work, social protection, and entrepreneurship', Fakhr al-Sadat Fatemi, an advisor to the deputy vice president for women and family affairs, for her part proposed three ways to advance women's empowerment in different fields, these ways include training, empowering, acquiring skills, and developing opportunities for women's participation, as well as providing legal and executive support, Mehr news agency reported.

Heart mobile clinic to be launched in deprived areas

TEHRAN –Barekat Charity Foundation is planning to inaugurate a heart mobile clinic in deprived areas to conduct cardiovascular screenings.

The project aims to improve health infrastructure by providing health-oriented services as well as supportive services in prevention and treatment sectors utilizing mobile clinic services, IRNA quoted.

Barekat Charity Foundation has so far constructed and equipped 20 hospitals with over 1,700 beds, as well as 275 medical centers in deprived areas. A group of volunteers including general practitioners, specialists, dentists, as well as heart and brain surgeons are offering services to the patients in these centers.

Currently, the country's biggest mobile hospital, with 92 beds, is located in Khuzestan province.

Over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2023-March 2024), it was dispatched to several deprived areas and provided health services to more than 70,000 people.

Regarding the high cost of cancer treat-



ment and the significance of early diagnosis of the disease, Barekat Charity Foundation has already started the cancer screening project in less privileged areas.

It has also allocated some 1.5 billion rials (around 2,000 dollars) for the treatment of people in deprived areas.

A total of 2,000 patients, who have been diagnosed with cancer, in these areas are receiving treatment.

Public participation essential in environmental protection: DOE chief

TEHRAN –According to Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), no single organization will be able to successfully preserve the environment on its own; environmental issues will be best addressed through public participation.

"There are many environmental challenges in habitats, wildlife, and wetlands which can not be tackled just by the efforts and measures of the Department of Environment," IRIB quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks at the closing ceremony of the 22nd international environmental exhibition which was held from December 18 to 22.

According to the Constitution, protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility, Ansari added.

She went on to call for assistance and cooperation from different strata, organizations, economic sectors, activists, as well as government bodies like ministries of education, agriculture, and foreign affairs.

To be able to preserve the environment, we need to recognize it as one of our main concerns, Ansari further noted.

The 22nd international environmental exhibition was held with the theme of 'public involvement, green economy, sustainable future'.

It focused on 'economic environment, environmental economy', to highlight the importance of social responsibility in protecting the environment.

It aimed to raise public awareness about environmental issues, provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and experiences among experts, specialists, and environmental activists, and introduce and encourage the use of innovative solutions and advanced technologies to reduce fuel and energy consumption.

Preserving natural resources, fostering interactions and cooperation between institutions, organizations, and companies active in the field of environment and energy, promoting the concepts of sustainability and social responsibility among the people as well as encouraging environmentally friendly behaviors were among the other goals of the exhibition.

The event also sought to persuade industries, mining, and petrochemical units to support the preservation of plant and animal species and encourage them to take steps toward enhancing air quality.

Administration's environmental policies

During the presidential election, the environmental committee of the elected President Masoud Pezeshkian offered a program with a focus on the preservation of the environment and the stability of the country.

The program is structured around six axes: moving towards a green economy; managing



and improving various quantitative and qualitative dimensions of environmental imbalances (such as economy, energy, and water); effectively protecting biological resources (including natural resources and biodiversity); achieving good environmental governance; addressing public demands in the field of environment, and enhancing international bilateral or multilateral cooperation in the field of environment.

To compile the program, general environmental policies, Article 50 of the Constitution, and other national policy documents have been taken into account.

Moreover, the president-elect has highlighted the necessity of observing environmental considerations in development plans.

Pezeshkian believes that no development plan should be initiated without taking environmental considerations into account; in other words, the environment should be the central pillar of all development matters.

Referring to the increasing occurrence of sand and dust storms (SDSs) in the region and the environmental statement on bolstering environmental diplomacy, the administration of Pezeshkian will definitely endorse regional and global interactions to tackle not only SDSs issue but also water diplomacy and transboundary waters as other critical issues.

Exchanging regional and global experiences in the field of environment, laying the ground for facilitating interactions and benefiting from global experiences and modern knowledge, and participating at various levels of environment-related negotiations in order to attract resources, enhance capabilities and secure national interests are parts of objectives in this context.

Drafting a binding legal document within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity to protect biodiversity, and manage valuable ecosystems such as national parks and national natural monuments has been highlighted.

Also, preventing the extinction of endangered species including cheetah, and bustard will be a top priority.

1,000 female prisoners freed to mark Mother's Day

TEHRAN – On the occasion of National Mother's Day, which fell on December 22 this year, a total of 1,000 female prisoners of unintentional crimes were released across the country.

National Woman's Day (also called Mother's Day), coincides with the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatemeh, the daughter of the holy prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Currently, there are over 600 women imprisoned for unintentional crimes, IRIB reported.

In the first six months of the current Iranian year (which began on March 21, 2023), 4,224 prisoners of involuntary crimes were released from prisons.

Of the total released prisoners, 4,032 were male and 192 were female, IRNA reported.

The prisoners had a total debt of 56 thousand billion rials (about \$103 million).

On January 5, with the participation of altruists and benevolent people, a total of 2,548 prisoners of unintentional crimes were released from prisons nationwide, ISNA reported.

Governmental contribution

In March 2023, heads of the three branches of the government donated sums of money to



help release prisoners of unintentional crimes.

Late President Ebrahim Raisi, Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, and Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf allocated a total of 8.6 billion rials (about \$16,000) for the issue, IRNA reported.

As an annual tradition, benefactors come together in a ceremony to raise funds for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes during the holy month of Ramadan, according to the Blood Money Organization.

Previously, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, earmarked 15 billion rials (some \$27.7) for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes.

Asadollah Joulaei, the head of the Blood Money Organization, said on March 26, 2023, that a total of 6,875 prisoners of unintentional crimes have been released over the past 12 months, Mehr reported.

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways. The first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison.

The third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt.

The Blood Money Organization was established in 1990. Since then, more than 160,000 prisoners of unintentional crimes who had debts have been freed.

On March 6, 2023, Mohseni-Ejei said the Leader had pardoned a sizable number of prisoners.

He also said that over 80,000 prisoners have received pardons as a result of the order issued by Ayatollah Khamenei.

The top judge stressed that thousands who had been detained during recent disturbances in the country were given amnesty.

He added that the number of pardon cases could approach 90,000.

ENGLISH IN USE

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\$22m earmarked for technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry's main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت‌بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.

حسینی مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:04 Evening: 17:16 Dawn: 5:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:12 (tomorrow)

IAF cinemathèque to show Ingmar Bergman's "A Dream Play"

TEHRAN- The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) cinemathèque will screen "A Dream Play" directed by the Swedish film and theatre director and screenwriter Ingmar Bergman on Wednesday.

Set for 5 p.m., the screening will be followed by a review session with Abbas Ghaffari as the host and theater critic Alireza Naraghi, ISNA reported.

The made-for-television film, made in 1963, was Bergman's first production of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg's namesake fantasy play.

First published in 1902, the play remains one of Strindberg's most admired and influential dramas, seen as an important precursor to both dramatic Expressionism and Surrealism.

The primary character in the play is Agnes, a daughter of the Vedic god Indra. She descends to Earth to bear witness to problems of human beings. She meets about 40 characters, some of them having a clearly symbolical value (such as four deans representing theology, philosophy, medicine, and law) and is herself enmeshed in a wrenching marriage.

After experiencing all sorts of human suffering (for example poverty, cruelty, and the routine of family life), the daughter of gods realizes that human beings are to be pitied. Only the Poet, who has created the dream, seems unaffected by human suffering. Finally, she returns to Heaven and this moment corresponds to the awakening from a dream-like sequence of events.

August Strindberg (1849-1912) was a Swedish playwright, novelist, poet, essayist, and painter. A prolific writer who often drew directly on his personal experience, Strindberg wrote more than 60 plays and more than 30 works of fiction, autobiography, history, cultural analysis, and politics during his career, which spanned four decades.



A bold experimenter and iconoclast throughout his life, he explored a wide range of dramatic methods and purposes, from naturalistic tragedy, monodrama, and historical plays to his anticipations of expressionist and surrealist dramatic techniques. From his earliest work, Strindberg developed innovative forms of dramatic action, language, and visual composition.

He is considered the "father" of modern Swedish literature. In Sweden, Strindberg is known as an essayist, painter, poet, and especially novelist and playwright, but in other countries he is known mostly as a playwright.

Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) is widely considered one of the greatest and most influential film directors of all time. His films have been described as "profoundly personal meditations into the myriad struggles facing the psyche and the soul".

Among his most acclaimed works are "The Seventh Seal" (1957), "Wild Strawberries" (1957), "Persona" (1966) and "Fanny and Alexander" (1982), which were included in the 2012 edition of Sight & Sound's Greatest Films of All Time. He was also ranked No. 8 on the magazine's 2002 Greatest Directors of All Time list.

Cartoon of Day



Don Quixote!
Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

Book Garden Theater restaging adaptation of Dostoyevsky's "The Gentle Spirit"

TEHRAN-A new round of performance of "Tonight - Borscht & Blood," directed by the well-known Iranian actor, director, and writer Saber Abar is on stage at the Book Garden Theater in Tehran.

Written by Mehdi Yazdani-Khorram, it is an adaptation of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's short story "The Gentle Spirit," ILNA reported.

Abar and Fatemeh Naghavi are the only actors in the 60-minute play, which was staged at Book Garden Theater during spring and summer.

Also known as "A Gentle Creature" and "The Meek One," the story is a compelling study of despair, based on a real-life incident. A pawnbroker mourns the loss of his wife, a quiet, gentle young girl. Why has she killed herself? Could he have prevented it? These are the questions the pawnbroker asks himself as he pieces together past events and minor incidents, changes of mood, and passing glances, in his search for an answer that will relieve his torment.

Originally written in 1876, it is a first-person stream of consciousness narrative. It chronicles the relationship between a pawnbroker and a girl who frequents his shop. The story was inspired by a news report that Dostoyevsky read in the paper about the suicide of a seamstress. Dostoyevsky referred to it as a "meek suicide" that "keeps haunting you for a long time".



Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) was a Russian novelist, short story writer, essayist and journalist. Numerous literary critics regard him as one of the greatest novelists in all of world literature, as many of his works are considered highly influential masterpieces.

Dostoyevsky's literary works explore the human condition in the troubled political, social, and spiritual atmospheres of 19th-century Russia, and engage with a variety of philosophical and religious themes.

"Tonight - Borscht & Blood" will remain on stage until January 19, 2025 at the Book Garden Theater.

Vladislav Bajac's "Hamam Balkania" available in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Hamam Balkania" written by the Serbian writer Vladislav Bajac has been re-released in the Iranian book market.

Amir Kabir Publishers has brought out the book that has been translated by Yousef Sohrabi, IRNA reported.

This is a book that lives in two parts - one set in the Ottoman empire of the 16th century, and the other in the 21st century. It tells the story of two friends, both taken as children from their homes and inducted into the Turkish Sultan's private guard: Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, the Serbian shepherd boy who rose to the position of Grand Vizier and Koca Mimar Sinan, the "Michelangelo of the East".

Between them they represent both destruction and creation, while at the same time providing readers with a harrowing insight into the heart of religion and identity. There is also the voice of the author, sharing his experiences in the modern world, and his musings on faith, identity and nation.



"Hamam Balkania" has won five awards. In the tradition of great modern Serbian novelists, Bajac twists and weaves a tale between old and new, modern and rusted, East and West, water and fire.

This is a truly ambitious book that rewards the reader with insights into some of the great questions of our time.

The author's home country of Serbia is fascinated with its Ottoman roots, and

this novel is no exception. Bajac takes the lives of ancient figures and weaves them together with flashing, real, and dirty characters from Western society's recent past - his stories at times dipping their pen into the well of memoir.

Bajac has rubbed elbows with Leonard Cohen, and shared words and stages with literary greats - none of that is lost on the reader here. Two stories collide in the reader's mind, not on the pages, as if learning two different histories from two separate professors.

Vladislav Bajac, 70, is a novelist, story-teller, poet and publisher. He has worked as a journalist and translator from English into Serbian, and has edited dozens of literary texts, including several anthologies and books. As an author, he has written six novels, three collections of short stories and two books of poetry.

Bajac was the vice-president of the Serbian PEN Center 2008-10 and the founder and president of Geopoetika Publishing.

Gaza's young filmmakers capture the suffering of war

In four short films made amid the chaos and destruction of a terrible conflict, stories have been captured of how the hope of children can thrive over horror.

In Gaza's camps for displaced people, cameras were placed in the hands of children as part of an initiative to capture the thoughts and creativity of a people living through the horrors of war, Al Majalla reported.

The result is four short films which reveal what life is like for some of the youngest people living in some of the most difficult conditions in the world.

They amount to an extraordinary visual expression of a determination, under terrible circumstances, of a quest for a new concept of life - and hope - amid all the destruction, hunger, and despair.

Together, the films amount to a unique cinematic experiment which reveals, in intimate detail, the harrowing human experience of war.

The unique insights of the films and the way they have captured such a poignant and important moment in time were guided by directors Saud Muhanna and Youssef Khattab.

When asked about the meth-

odology used in filming these movies, Khattab explained: "We followed a methodology with the young filmmakers that centered on idea generation, encouraging them to draw on their personal experiences with war, displacement, destruction, loss, dreams, and art. We also had discussions with them about older and contemporary films that have won international awards".

"We engaged the children in interacting with the elements of filmmaking, including visual composition, dramatic structure, character development, and narrative goals. This approach significantly helped them develop their ideas about their harsh realities," he added.

The four short films are marked by symbolism and an emotional pull on the audience. They convey a subtlety of meaning through the children's gazes, movements, clothing, and the surrounding furniture, elements of their previous lives that accompanied them during filming.

"We aimed to use symbolism in filming, steering clear of direct messaging. We were searching for a universal language that everyone could understand and connect with. Deepening these

ideas was a constant goal to convey the Palestinian child's message to the world through cinema," Khattab explained.

The project faced immense challenges. There were obstacles to be overcome for the children, the film crew, and the directors, owing to the complex realities of life in Gaza, where every artistic or cultural endeavor is under threat.

"We encountered significant obstacles that nearly halted the work multiple times. Our primary concern was keeping the children safe from harm, so we chose a location near their camps for training and filming," Khattab elaborated.

"It is not easy to produce a film in a place where electricity has been absent for over a year. Every step requires energy, which was exhausting and posed many barriers during filming and editing," he continued.

The films are a blend of spontaneity and deliberate planning. They also combine a grim reality with a way of finding joy in adversity, drawing smiles from the children and offering some hope for the journey that lies ahead for them and for Palestine.

The storylines are crafted from

personal testimony and captured on film to convey what amounts to a profound and passionate message for the world from the children, conveyed from their difficult position so early in the journey of life.

As Khattab remarked, this process had an effect of its own on the participants themselves. "The children's personalities changed after producing these films. They became more aware of the responsibility on their shoulders - to document the destruction with the few tools available to them - something absent in earlier Palestinian tragedies".

"The children contributed numerous ideas for reflection and development, and we chose four to bring to life. In the Palestinian camps, there is a quest for life that children witness and learn from, despite the bleak reality," Khattab noted.

"Here, Palestinian artists live in tents, playing music and singing day and night. Through art, they teach the children to love life, even under the dark skies above them. This is the spirit we wanted to capture through their cinematic adventure," he concluded.