



Yemen: The Endless Nightmare of Child-Killer Regime



Despite numerous airstrikes conducted by Israel, the United States, and Britain in Yemen, the Arab nation continues to provide unwavering support for Palestine ▶ Page 5

Leader stresses media's key role in modern warfare

TEHRAN – In a message delivered to a media conference in Tehran on Tuesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei emphasized the crucial role of media in today's global conflicts.

Addressing the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization (IRIB) and its directors, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that the power to effectively convey a message and truth is more influential than military might in determining victory.

“You are well aware of the unparalleled role of the media and publicity in the existing global conflicts – which is more than any time. Today, one's victory is determined by the ability to convey one's message and narrative of reality,” the Leader stated.

He also urged for increased precision and innovation in national media outlets.

President Pezeshkian outlines economic priorities in meeting with Leader

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian shared insights from his recent meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, emphasizing a shared commitment to tackling inflation, controlling prices, and addressing critical livelihood issues affecting Iranian citizens.

During the meeting, held on Tuesday, President Pezeshkian stressed that the government's primary focus remains on economic challenges, including reducing poverty and ensuring social justice. He highlighted that collaboration with the Leader plays a pivotal role in fostering unity and cohesion within the government. “These meetings not only strengthen the bonds between different branches of government but also facilitate solutions to many of the country's pressing issues,” he remarked.

A key topic of discussion was inflation control and the effective distribution of subsidies. Pezeshkian explained that the government is actively working to ensure subsidies reach the intended beneficiaries, adding that teams have been established to analyze current trends and improve efficiency. ▶ Page 2

South Pars daily gas production reaches 714 mcm

TEHRAN – The deputy for operations and support at Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the giant South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, announced a new daily production record of 714 million cubic meters of gas from the gas field.

According to Shana, reporting from Pars Oil and Gas Company, Sepahdar Abbaszadeh shared this milestone during a visit by Sedigheh Khazaei, the deputy for management development and human resources at the Oil Ministry, along with senior human resources officials from the ministry and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Abbaszadeh emphasized the relentless efforts of the company's workforce to ensure the continuous and stable production of gas in the country.

Highlighting that POGC contributes more than 70 percent of the nation's gas consumption, Abbaszadeh described consistent production as a “red line” for the company's operational staff. ▶ Page 4

Tehran rebukes U.S., U.K. allegations over red sea tensions at UN

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, has strongly denied allegations by the United States and the United Kingdom linking Tehran to rising tensions in the Red Sea region, calling them “unfounded and politically motivated.”

In a formal response delivered through identical letters to UN Secretary General António Guterres and the president of the Security Council on Monday, Iravani dismissed the claims made during a December 30 Security Council briefing.

These accusations, he argued, were orchestrated by Israel and backed by the United States and Britain to shift blame onto Iran while ignoring their own destabilizing actions.

Iravani specifically criticized remarks by Danny Danon, Israel's representative to the UN, who accused Tehran of violating international norms.

The Iranian envoy countered, stating, “It is not Iran but the belligerent regime of Israel that has relentlessly pursued a policy of provocation and destabilizing activities, posing a grave threat to peace and security in the region and beyond.” ▶ Page 3

Al-Jolani grants high ranks to non-Syrian mercenaries

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – Days after reaching an agreement to dissolve the armed factions and merge them under the umbrella of Syria's Ministry of Defense, the General Command has granted former fighters high ranks in the new army that is to be formed, sparking widespread controversy in the Syrian streets.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's first-rank leaders have been granted the ranks of “Brigadier General,” knowing that such a constitutional step requires the issuance of a presidential decree.

While the leaders of other factions were marginalized, especially those funded by Turkey, the rank of “Colonel” has been granted only to the leaders of the factions allied with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

Among these is the Turkistani Islamic Party's Abu Muhammad al-Turkistani, a provocative step that will anger China. In his book The Call for Global Islamic Resistance, the famous jihadist theorist Abu Musab al-Suri reveals that the TIP was counting on the US support as part of a secret scheme, approved by Congress in 1995, to dismantle China by inflaming ethnic and religious conflicts. ▶ Page 5

Bloodied and bruised: Israeli troops suffer heavy losses in Gaza

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Palestinian resistance groups continue to inflict heavy casualties on the Israeli army on the Gaza battlefield.

According to the Israeli army, 825 Israeli troops have been killed since the onset of the Gaza conflict nearly 15 months ago.

A 23-year-old soldier has become the latest casualty of Israel's brutal military campaign in the Palestinian territory.

Sergeant Uriel Peretz was killed in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza by an anti-tank missile fired by Hamas fighters. Several other Israeli soldiers were also wounded.

According to figures released by the Israeli army, more than 5,500 soldiers have also been injured since the regime went to war with Hamas on October 7, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Broadcasting Corporation said more than 13,500 Israeli individuals have been injured and admitted for treatment at the rehabilitation department of the regime's war ministry since the start of the Gaza onslaught.

It noted that the department receives about 1,000 new people each month who have been “wounded from the war”. ▶ Page 5

2024 was a year of anti-Palestinian censorship and active art rebellion

For artists, it is difficult to reflect on the past year without thinking about Israel's genocide in Gaza that has killed more than 45,000 Palestinians per the official count or more than 220,000 per realistic estimates.

While art is something to be enjoyed, as it enriches every aspect of our lives, identities, and culture, it is also central to struggle. Art is powerful, it allows us to share emotions and stories with people around the world even if we don't share a common language. Israel knows this, and that's why it targets all those with a talent and passion to transmit messages about Gaza's horrific reality.

Indeed, Israel seems to make it a tactic in its broader strategy of ethnic cleansing to wipe out Palestinians who inspire not just their own people, but everyone waging a fight against injustice, Al Jazeera reported. ▶ Page 8



“Resistance Day” commemorates Martyr General Soleimani's fifth anniversary

TEHRAN – In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Hajj Qassem Soleimani's martyrdom, the “Resistance Day” event was held at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization in Tehran on Monday.

Organized in collaboration with the Qassem Soleimani School and Sima Fekr Media Center, the event drew attendees from various fields, including artists, media professionals, and scholars. ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Diplomacy against trigger mechanism

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed Iran's diplomatic actions on the nuclear issue and wrote: 2025 is an important year for Iran's nuclear issue. Western pressure to activate the snapback is a serious warning that can lead Iran's nuclear negotiations into a new and challenging path. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran is not going to neglect diplomatic ways to reduce tension. Perhaps reaching an agreement that respects Iran's red lines and the United States gives real guarantees is one of these solutions. It is based on this framework that (Foreign Minister) Araghchi visited China and openly declared that the nuclear issue was one of the main issues for consultation with the Chinese side. China, as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and one of the main parties to the JCPOA, plays an important role in the equations related to the nuclear deal. Araghchi's trip to Beijing, at a time when the West is pushing for reviving the trigger mechanism, clearly shows that Tehran is seeking to create new diplomatic alliances to neutralize the provocative actions of the Western parties.

Hamshahri: Shared threats push China, Russia and Iran together

In an article, Hamshahri dealt with the view of the 14th government towards the East and said: The prospect of 2025 indicates new developments which make deepening strategic relations between the Russia-Iran-China triangle essential. While tensions in West Asia are continuing due to the continuation of the Zionist regime's aggressions, the looming changes in the White House have become the basis for active diplomatic movements by different countries to coordinate their strategies. The recent diplomatic consultations between Moscow, Tehran, and Beijing show that these three countries are preparing to enter a new era of bilateral and trilateral relations due to their common goals, approaches, and interests in many areas. The common point of the diplomatic talks between these three countries is common enemies. The existence of common threats against Iran, Russia, and China from the Western side has pushed these three countries to deepen strategic cooperation.

Iran: Incheh Borun, Iran's gateway to Silk Road and Eurasia

The Iran newspaper highlighted Tehran's view toward the east of the world. Today,

there are many capacities for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the east of the world. One of the important and major capacities is the Silk Road, which is supposed to connect China from the political and economic East to the political and economic West. Iran is at the focal point of this path. The second capacity is the Eurasian Economic Union, which provides an 800-billion-dollar market for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The point here is that Iran has a very special relative advantage in facing these two major capacities. This relative special advantage is the free zone of Incheh Borun. It is rare to find a country in the world gifted with a geopolitical situation that can connect two economic worlds from one geographical point. Incheh Borun has this capacity. A special advantage that helps Iran to economically and commercially connect the east and the west of the world. We should know the requirements of Iran and the world today and have a national view of this region with an international prospect.

Donya-e-Eqtasad: Iran's closeness with Arab governments and Cooperation Council

In a commentary, Donya-e-Eqtasad discussed the visit of Oman's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi to Tehran and wrote: Trump's return to the White House has made Muscat show its willingness to again activate negotiation channels with Iran. On the other side, Tehran, which has started talks with Europe, is willing to see such a role on the part of a friendly and neighboring country. In addition to nuclear and trade issues that have consolidated relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman, regional issues, especially Syria, also form the third axis of this trip. Although Oman has a neutral stance on regional and international conflicts due to its balanced foreign policy, any political instability in the region in the future can cause concern for this actor in the south of the Persian Gulf. Therefore, Muscat is trying to align with Iran's approach after the fall of Bashar al-Assad. Iran's proximity with the Arab governments including those party to the (Persian Gulf) Cooperation Council, after decades of conflict and ups and downs, is more than ever effective to turn a new page in neighborhood relations in the Persian Gulf.

Ghalibaf rejects move to impeach economy minister, calls for constructive interaction

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf voiced his opposition to the seemingly-abandoned plans to impeach the economy minister during a speech on Tuesday.

"Actions like impeachment at the peak of the currency crisis are misguided as long as the supervisory meetings at various levels of the parliament and the coordination meetings between branches do not reach an impasse," he stated.

Conservative media reports indicate a significant number of Iranian MPs were intending to submit an impeachment motion against Naser Hemmati during Tuesday's parliamentary session.

In his remarks, Ghalibaf reminded the lawmakers about a piece of advice from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, saying, "The wise Leader of the Revolution explicitly recommended constructive interaction with the new government," adding, "The success of the president is our success, as the Leader urged us to believe this deeply."

He stressed that the policy of the Iranian Parliament is to support the government and aid the president in addressing the public's issues.

Ghalibaf stated that while parliament will utilize its full range of supervisory tools—including questions, impeachment, investigations, and legal follow-ups—to resolve public issues, the application of these



mechanisms is contingent on their effectiveness in supporting the government's efforts to address citizens' concerns.

In the context of the currency market, the speaker said that Iran's enemies are exploiting every opportunity to strike at the nation's economy, stressing the need for "brave, wise, and informed decisions."

Decades of Western sanctions have severely damaged Iran's economy, causing the Iranian Rial to reach a record low of around 730,000 per U.S. dollar by the end of 2024. These sanctions, intensified after the U.S. withdrawal from the 2018 nuclear deal, have specifically targeted Iran's oil exports and restricted its access to global finance, resulting in high inflation and economic challenges.

President Pezeshkian outlines economic priorities in meeting with Leader

From page 1 ▶ "Our objective is to ensure that subsidies are targeted and reach the end consumer," he said, emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability in economic policies.

The President also discussed the importance of fostering stronger ties with neighboring and independent countries. He emphasized that economic collaboration with these nations could provide significant opportunities to bolster Iran's economy and expand trade avenues. This strategy, he noted, is crucial for reducing economic dependence and enhancing national resilience.

In response to questions about the ongoing energy crisis, Pezeshkian called for public participation in conserving resources. He stressed that managing energy consumption in non-essential sectors could free up resources for



critical infrastructure projects and improve citizens' quality of life. "If we focus on reducing electricity and energy wastage, we can implement solutions without placing undue pressure on the public," he asserted.

The President underscored the importance of addressing social welfare, calling it one of the government's top priorities.

He highlighted the need to focus on concrete solutions rather than vague strategies, particularly in areas such as housing and improving the livelihoods of underprivileged communities. Weekly council meetings, he said, are dedicated to these issues to ensure meaningful progress.

Additionally, Pezeshkian announced a comprehensive plan

to address educational inequality by tackling the shortage of schools in remote areas. This initiative involves mobilizing public participation, philanthropic contributions, and nationwide efforts to improve access to education. He expressed optimism that the issue would be resolved within a year, significantly reducing disparities in educational opportunities.

Concluding his remarks, Pezeshkian emphasized the critical importance of national unity and public trust. "If the people see that the government is genuinely working to resolve their problems, no enemy can harm the country," he stated. He reaffirmed that unity among governmental branches and adherence to the Leader's policies are essential for navigating the challenges ahead and securing the nation's future.

Iran's nuclear doctrine has not changed, declares security chief

TEHRAN – The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Ahmadian, has reiterated that the country's nuclear doctrine remains unchanged, despite various media speculations.

Ahmadian made the remarks on Monday, during a meeting with Oman's visiting Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi. "Based on the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's religious decree, there has been no change in Iran's nuclear doctrine," he stated.

The security chief emphasized that the country's approach continues to focus on pursuing peaceful nuclear energy while opposing the development of atomic weapons.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, issued a fatwa banning the production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons, citing Islamic principles against mass destruction.

First announced in the early 2000s, this decree underscores Iran's commitment to peaceful nuclear energy, directly countering claims accusing Iran of harboring weapon ambitions.

Additionally, Ahmadian addressed rumors about Iran increasing its stockpile of enriched materials and enhancing enrichment levels, describing them as "baseless."

"The ball is in the court of the other party to fulfill their commitments," he asserted.

After an anti-Iran resolution by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in November, Tehran decided to escalate its uranium enrichment activities and deploy new advanced centrifuges, all under the supervision of the IAEA.

Bahrain and Iran move closer to restoring diplomatic ties

TEHRAN – Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced continued efforts to re-establish diplomatic relations with Iran, signaling a significant step towards reconciliation between the two nations.

Bahrain severed its ties with Iran in 2016, a move mirroring Saudi Arabia's, after Iranian protesters, enraged by the execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr by the Saudi government, stormed its diplomatic mission in Iran.

In a statement published on Tuesday, the Ministry emphasized that Bahrain's foreign policy is grounded in protecting its sovereignty, advancing national interests, and promoting regional stability. The statement highlighted the Kingdom's commitment to good neighborliness, non-interference in other countries' affairs, and fostering

cooperation through mutual respect. Specifically, the ministry said it is working to establish the necessary legal frameworks with Iran to fully restore diplomatic ties. Recent mutual visits, it added, have paved the way for renewed discussions on this goal.

These efforts are being undertaken with the direction of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the continuous support of Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the statement added.

The push for restored relations comes after a landmark agreement in March 2023, brokered in Beijing, that saw Saudi Arabia and Iran agree to re-open embassies. This broader regional shift towards reconciliation has paved the way for Bahrain's efforts.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Gradual lifting of restrictions across all platforms in progress: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed that the ongoing effort to lift restrictions on various platforms will be carried out gradually, with plans to include all platforms in the process.

Addressing the issue on Monday, the President emphasized the importance of cooperation between different branches of government in making this progress possible. "We could not have achieved this without the support and collaboration of the leaders of the other government branches," he stated, underlining the collective effort needed to push forward these reforms.

The President further highlighted the importance of unity in solving national problems, saying, "This is proof

that when we work together, we can overcome challenges. However, if we continue to engage in conflict, we will not make any progress."

In light of ongoing challenges, the President reassured the public that the government is committed to addressing remaining issues. "Despite the difficulties we face, we are determined to resolve the shortcomings and, with God's help, we will succeed in our mission," he added.

Last week, Iran's Supreme Council of Cyberspace decided to lift access restrictions to messaging application WhatsApp and digital distribution service Google Play Store in the first step by the country to ease access to widely-used foreign platforms.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, recently stated that Iran will leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the snapback of UN Security Council sanctions is triggered.

Tehran possesses no mechanism to guarantee Western adherence to the agreement, while the West unilaterally controls the snapback.

The resolution, championed by the United States and the European troika, criticized Iran for its alleged lack of cooperation under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear agreement Washington withdrew from in 2018, and Europe scrapped soon after.

Growing calls within the Iranian public are urging a shift in the country's nuclear doctrine, particularly as unchecked Israeli aggression escalates in West Asia.

A poll by a Canadian opinion research firm, conducted between February 20th and May 26th, found that almost 70% of Iranians were in favor of their country developing nuclear weapons. With the following months witnessing increased fire exchanges between Iran and Israel, alongside threats to target Iran's nuclear facilities and oil infrastructure, the number of those who support nuclear weapons is likely to have increased.

Furthermore, Western powers are undermining prospects for a diplomatic

solution with Iran, evident in the European Troika's continued threats to trigger the snapback mechanism.

The mechanism, embedded in UN Resolution 2231, allows permanent Security Council members and Germany to reimpose sanctions on Iran for non-compliance with the JCPOA. However, following the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the deal in 2018, Iran asserts that both the U.S. and European nations lack the legitimacy to invoke the snapback mechanism, as they have failed to honor their commitments under the deal.

Tehran intensifies judicial efforts to address Israeli crimes as UN report details horrors of hospital attacks

TEHRAN – Iran's Judiciary spokesperson, Asghar Jahangir, has strongly criticized the Israeli regime for its continued breaches of international law and emphasized the country's determination to hold Israeli officials accountable for their actions.

Speaking at a press briefing on Tuesday, Jahangir outlined Iran's ongoing legal and diplomatic efforts to bring the perpetrators of alleged war crimes to justice.

During his address, Jahangir accused the Israeli regime of violating international obligations, including the Genocide Convention, and stated that these crimes remain a top priority for Iran's legal and diplomatic entities.

"These crimes, which constitute clear breaches of international commitments, are being thoroughly reviewed. They have consistently been on the agenda of Iran's diplomatic delegations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Judiciary's International Affairs Department, and the Human Rights Headquarters," he said.

Jahangir underscored the importance of a multifaceted approach, noting that Iran is le-



Destroyed courtyard of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahya, Gaza, following an Israeli attack on December 25, 2024.

veraging all available resources to pursue justice. This includes diplomatic and legal channels, as well as collaboration with independent human rights advocates, non-governmental organizations, and progressive lawyers. "Iran has been actively supporting various initiatives to address these crimes, and we will continue to assist in every way possible," he added.

The spokesperson also announced that Iran's Judiciary, in

coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is working closely with other nations that share similar views on the matter. The goal, he explained, is to accelerate efforts to arrest and prosecute those responsible for what Iran has described as "criminal actions" by the Israeli regime.

Jahangir expressed hope that through these coordinated efforts, justice can be achieved for victims of the Israeli regime's war crimes. He emphasized the

necessity of international cooperation in ensuring accountability for violations of human rights and international law.

The Gaza Health Ministry has reported that the death toll among Palestinians since the outbreak of war on October 7, 2023, has exceeded 45,541. Among the identified victims, over 17,000 are children, underscoring the devastating human cost of the continued conflict.

Last week, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) issued a statement on X (formerly Twitter), emphasizing the gravity of the situation. "One child gets killed every hour. These are not numbers. These are lives cut short. Killing children cannot be justified," the statement read, calling for urgent attention to the humanitarian catastrophe.

In a 28-page report released on Tuesday, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented the targeting of medical facilities in Gaza. The report states that the Israeli military has conducted "at least 136 strikes on 27 hospitals and 12 other medical facilities" since the war began, further compounding the crisis.

Tehran rebukes US, UK allegations over Red Sea tensions at UN

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, has strongly denied allegations by the United States and the United Kingdom linking Tehran to rising tensions in the Red Sea region, calling them "unfounded and politically motivated."

In a formal response delivered through identical letters to UN Secretary General António Guterres and the president of the Security Council on Monday, Iravani dismissed the claims made during a December 30 Security Council briefing.

These accusations, he argued, were orchestrated by Israel and backed by the United States and Britain to shift blame onto Iran while ignoring their own destabilizing actions.

Iravani specifically criticized remarks by Danny Danon, Israel's representative to the UN, who accused Tehran of violating international norms.

The Iranian envoy countered, stating, "It is not Iran but the belligerent regime of Israel that has relentlessly pursued a policy of provocation and destabilizing activities, posing a grave threat to peace and security in the region and beyond."

The ambassador underscored Iran's compliance with international law and its adherence to the UN Charter, denying any involvement in arms embargo violations or



Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani

contributing to conflicts in Yemen or elsewhere. He described the accusations as a "blatant attempt to scapegoat Iran" and distract from Israel's own aggressive actions.

"It is deeply troubling and highly ironic that the U.S. and Britain, as permanent members of the Security Council, choose to support Israel's reckless violations while fabricating baseless accusations against Iran," Iravani said. He further asserted that such actions embolden Israel to act with impunity, exacerbating regional instability and undermining peace efforts, particularly in Yemen.

Reaffirming Iran's stance on Yemen, Iravani highlighted Tehran's long-standing call for a political resolution to the conflict, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive ceasefire

and inclusive dialogue to respect Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On the issue of Red Sea security, Iravani reiterated Iran's commitment to safeguarding international shipping lanes and dismissed accusations of interference as "fabrications designed to inflame tensions." He accused the U.S. and its allies of using such claims as a pretext for further destabilization in the region.

The Iranian ambassador also called on the Security Council to resist what he termed "Israel's propaganda" aimed at diverting attention from its ongoing human rights abuses and violations in Gaza. He urged the Council to address the root causes of regional instability, particularly Israel's occupation, aggression, and systematic breaches of international law.

"Iran urges the Security Council to fulfill its responsibilities under the UN Charter by holding Israel and its supporters accountable for grave violations of international law," Iravani stated. He warned that failure to act would undermine trust in the UN's ability to maintain global peace and security.

The ambassador concluded by emphasizing the need for the international community to focus on fostering genuine peace efforts rather than perpetuating conflict through baseless accusations and political maneuvering.

Leader honors al-Muhandis ahead of meeting with families of Kerman attack victims



TEHRAN – The family of the late Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, a key figure in Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on the eve of the fifth anniversary of his martyrdom.

Al-Muhandis was a centric figure in the fight against Daesh terrorists, who had captured large swathes of Iraqi land during their regional spread in the 2010s. largely venerated anti-terror Irani-

an icon General Qassem Soleimani also spearheaded the fight against terrorism alongside al-Muhandis. The two generals were martyred on January 3, 2020, during a U.S. drone attack on Baghdad.

Iranians and Iraqis have commemorated the martyrdom anniversaries of these figures with large-scale ceremonies since the first anniversary of their passing.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Leader's advisor meets German envoy amid heightened tensions



TEHRAN – Ali Larjani, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, met with Markus Potzel, the German Ambassador to Tehran, on Tuesday.

The meeting occurred against a backdrop of escalating tensions between Iran and Germany.

The relationship between the two countries saw a major deterioration in July after Germany's controversial decision to close the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH), a move that

Iran strongly condemned as Islamophobic and discriminatory towards Muslims.

Tensions further escalated after the death of Jamshid Sharmahd, a convicted terror ringleader who had been sentenced to death over the killing of dozens of Iranian civilians. His death prompted Germany to order the closure of all Iranian consulates and recall its ambassador from Tehran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Bijan Heydari to officiate Esteghlal, Sepahan match

TEHRAN – Bijan Heydari has been chosen to officiate the important match between Esteghlal and Sepahan football teams in 2024-25 Iran Professional League (IPL) Matchweek 15.

Sepahan climbed to the top of the standings, overtaking Tractor and the team wants to cement its position at top.

Defending champion Persepolis, who has returned to winning ways with a 2-1 victory over Kheybar, will meet Havadar and Ali Safaei will officiate the match.

Vahid Kazemi will also officiate the match between Tractor and Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Winger Urunov pens contract extension

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club are delighted to announce the extension of Oston Urunov's contract for two further seasons.

The Uzbek international winger has extended his contract with the club until the end of the 2026/27 season.

Urunov, 23, joined Persepolis in February 2024 and played a vital role in the team, helping the Reds win the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League.

Persepolis are third in the Iran league table, five points behind leaders Tractor.

Rafa Benitez refuses to lead Persepolis

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club General Manager Reza Darvish said that Spanish coach Rafa Benitez has refused to take charge of the team.

Persepolis parted ways with Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido last week.

The Iranian giant has been linked with former Croatia coach Slaven Bilic, ex- Dortmund trainer Edin Terzic and former Bayern Munich head coach Niko Kovac.

Darvish revealed that they have also negotiated with former Real Madrid Coach Benitez but he didn't accept to work in the Iranian team.

According to him, Persepolis will choose its new head coach within the next two weeks.

Defending champion Persepolis sits third, five points behind leader Sepahan in the Iran football league.

Ex-Milan star Cassano expects Conceicao to take Taremi

TEHRAN – Antonio Cassano teased newly-appointed AC Milan manager Sergio Conceicao about signing Inter Milan star Mehdi Taremi.

Cassano shared a provocative remark on Viva el Futbol via FCInterNews, recalling the duo's immense success at Porto.

Milan fired underperforming manager Paulo Fonseca immediately after Sunday's 1-1 draw against Roma.

Despite dodging several bullets earlier in the season, another dismal home result proved the final nail in his coffin.

One Portuguese tactician made way for another as Sergio Conceicao assumed the reins on Monday.

However, he'll have his plate full from the get-go.

With Milan finishing the calendar year outside the European spots, there's no longer a margin for error.

Adding to this sentiment, they already trail

fourth-placed Lazio by eight points.

Given the circumstances, Conceicao must hit the ground running from day one.

In Serie A, he'll find a familiar face, albeit in the opposite camp. Mehdi Taremi swapped Porto for Inter last summer but hasn't met the club's expectations. Taremi's life in Italy has started with a whimper rather than a bang.

Indeed, he has only netted one goal across 19 appearances in all competitions.

Even that strike came from the spot in a 4-0 demolition of Red Star Belgrade in the UEFA Champions League. Meanwhile, he has collected 12 league outings without scoring.

Therefore, Inter could consider parting ways with the 32-year-old sooner than expected. However, a switch to Milan has never been on the cards.

Cassano, on the other hand, has a different opinion.

"Let's expect him to bring Taremi over from Inter," he said. "He'll just travel 20 kilometers to switch sides and set up a 4-4-2. Conceicao had him at Porto, and they won a lot together."

Zoran Barisic on the shortlist to coach Persepolis

TEHRAN – Former Rapid Vienna head coach Zoran Barisic has emerged as a candidate to take over at Persepolis.

The 54-year-old coach led Rapid Vienna last season and according to laola1, he has been shortlisted to lead Persepolis.

Persepolis parted company with Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido last week following the poor results.

The club have been linked with former Croatia coach Slaven Bilic, ex- Dortmund trainer Edin Terzic and former Bayern Munich head coach Niko Kovac.

Defending champion Persepolis are third, five points behind leaders Sepahan in the Iran football league.

S. African winger Tau linked with Esteghlal: report

TEHRAN – Media reports suggest that Esteghlal football team have shown interest in signing South African winger Percy Muzi Tau in the January transfer window.

The 30-year-old player is a member of Egyptian Premier League club Al Ahly but will part ways with the team.

Tau is regarded as one of the best wingers in Africa.

He started his playing career in South African team Mamelodi Sundowns in 2013 and has also played at English Premier League side Brighton & Hove Albion and Belgian teams Union SG, Club Brugge and Anderlecht.

Esteghlal head coach Pitso Mosimane has previously worked with the player in Al Ahly.

Kaizer Chiefs are also going to sign the player.

AFC inspectors to visit Azadi Stadium

TEHRAN – The delegation of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will travel to Tehran, capital of Iran to examine Azadi Stadium's readiness to host the competition.

Azadi Stadium, which was inaugurated in 1971, is going to reopen after renovation.

The AFC delegation will travel to Tehran in the next two weeks.

The delegation will conduct a comprehensive evaluation to study the effectiveness and efficiency of the various facilities and mechanisms proposed to organize and host the tournament matches, including the mechanism for issuing match tickets, information technology, radio and television broadcasting, hospitality, and security and safety factors.

South Pars daily gas production reaches 714 mcm



South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf water, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

From page 1 ► He also expressed gratitude for the Oil Ministry's Management Development and Human Resources Division's support in addressing salary cap issues for employees.

He voiced hope that ongoing positive and constructive initiatives would resolve major challenges related to human capital in the oil industry.

President orders financing for National Housing Movement

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister for Housing and Construction at Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development announced that President Masoud Pezeshkian has directed banks to finance the construction of 400,000 housing units under the National Housing Movement initiative.

Habib Taherkhani made the remarks in a special News Talk program focused on the government's first Supreme Housing Council, IRIB reported.

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

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

According to the plan, out of these four



million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages.

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

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

TCCIMA signs cooperation agreement with Iran-Russia Joint Chamber

TEHRAN - In a meeting at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), aimed at fostering strategic collaboration to enhance private sector trade with Russia and addressing challenges faced by economic operators, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the TCCIMA and the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce.

The event was attended by Mehdi Sadeghi, deputy head of the Tehran Chamber, and Hadi Tizhoosh Taban, the head of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber, the TCCIMA portal reported.

The agreement aims to strengthen cooperation in resolving trade issues for Iran's private sector with Russia and expanding economic ties between the two nations.

According to the TCCIMA's Public Relations Department, the MOU was signed during a joint meeting by Hesameddin Hallaj, International Affairs Deputy of the Tehran Chamber, and Roshanali Yektai Qarabaei, Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber.

During the meeting, Mehdi Sadeghi highlighted that the Tehran Chamber has identified eight target countries in its strategic roadmap, with Russia prioritized as a key partner for expanding trade relations. He also noted the development of six value chains to guide this strategy.

Sadeghi emphasized that the new phase of collaboration between the Tehran Chamber and the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber is designed to streamline private-sector trade with Russia while creating new opportunities for trade and investment.

Hadi Tizhoosh Taban pointed out Russia's annual import volume of \$290 billion, stressing that Iran's share of this market remains minimal. He called on Iran's private sector to collaborate with specialized trade organizations to identify key obstacles and devise actionable solutions to boost trade between the two countries.

In early December, Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted the stability and reliability of trade and economic relations with Iran, expressing optimism about further growth in bilateral trade volumes.

Speaking at the plenary session of the 15th VTB Russia Calling! Investment Forum in Moscow, themed "The Future of Capital and the Capital of the Future," Putin lauded ongoing

projects between the two nations in logistics, energy, industry, and security.

The North-South Corridor is operational, and the volume of transportation along this route is steadily increasing, Putin said, referring to enhanced cooperation in transportation.

Iran and Russia have initiated the implementation of two major transit-logistics projects aimed at enhancing trade routes and reducing cargo transport times. The projects include the Ulyanovsk-Astara rail corridor and the Volga-Caspian Sea river route, which are expected to cut delivery times from 21 days to seven.

According to a report on December 6, the inauguration ceremony was attended by the governor of Ulyanovsk, Iran's Consul General in Kazan, and officials from India, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iraq, as well as managers from logistics companies, including the Iranian-Russian Salyanka port. The projects aim to expand trade fleet capacity and increase economic and transit exchanges between Iran and Russia.

Iranian Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref has announced Tehran and Moscow's strong determination to strengthen bilateral relations to the maximum level, Shana reported.

Aref made the remarks during a meeting with the visiting Russian Minister of Energy Sergei Tsivilev in Tehran in mid-November.

As there are considerable capacities in both countries for boosting cooperation, it is important that the two sides enhance trade exchange and implement the agreements on cooperation, Aref noted.

It is an indication of the strong will of both sides to foster ties as they continue consultations, especially during the current global and regional situation, the vice president said.

The Islamic Republic of Iran says that the all-out and long-term cooperation with Russia is of paramount importance, he added.

For his part, the Russian minister of energy said there are several grounds for deepening cooperation between his country and Iran.

The exchange of meetings between the two sides senior officials will facilitate the deepening of relations, he underlined.

Tsivilev, who is also the Russian chairman of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, stressed

Groundwork laid for 2.5-fold increase in trade with EAEU

TEHRAN- The Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi says the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has paved the way for a 2.5-fold increase in trade with member states over the past five years.

As IRNA reported, Dehnavi emphasized the importance of preferential and free trade agreements during a meeting with members of the Entrepreneurs Assembly on Monday, noting that the PTA, signed five years ago, reduced tariffs on certain goods, enabling significant growth in trade with the EAEU region.

This success has encouraged us to pursue a free trade agreement (FTA) with the union, Dehnavi said. The parliaments of the five EAEU member states have already approved the agreement, and in Iran, it is awaiting the Guardian Council's approval. It is expected to be implemented at the beginning of the next Iranian year (starts on March 21, 2025).

Dehnavi added that the TPO, as the entity responsible for trade negotiations, is also pursuing similar preferential trade agreements with other countries. Currently, negotiations for a PTA with Pakistan are underway, he stated.

Iran and the Eurasian Economic



Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

The interim agreement enabling the formation of a free trade area between Iran and the EAEU was signed on May 17, 2018, and officially came into force on October 27, 2019.

Iran is a very important market in the region and the development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU members.

The trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of trade ties between the two sides.

The agreement with the bloc has increased Iran's exports to the EAEU member states significantly, which is a turning point for

the Islamic Republic's plans for boosting non-oil exports during the U.S. sanctions.

The deputy head of the TPO has highlighted the approval of the Iran-Eurasian Economic Union free trade agreement by the Iranian Parliament, describing trade agreements as a driving force for completing export infrastructure.

According to the TPO, Mohammad Sadegh Qanadzadeh stated last week that the Parliament has approved the free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU, adding that the agreement now awaits confirmation by the Guardian Council.

Once ratified and officially issued, its implementation will begin two months later, he noted. Qanadzadeh stated that Kazakhstan's Parliament finalized the agreement last week, and

member countries Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Belarus have fulfilled their commitments.

"With the upcoming Eurasian summit in Saint Petersburg later this week, we hope to launch the operational phase of the agreement during the meeting," he said.

He further explained that after parliamentary ratifications in all member states, a two-month window is provided for implementation. During this period, Iran will prepare necessary infrastructure, streamline coordination, and standardize procedures.

The deputy TPO head emphasized the importance of developing export infrastructure, including logistics, customs, and standards. "While these areas require further work, trade agreements act as moving train-requiring adjustments on the go rather than halting progress," he said.

"In other words, we must not delay trade agreements due to incomplete infrastructure. These agreements serve as both an incentive and a catalyst to address existing gaps," the official added.

It is worth noting that the Iranian Parliament recently approved the general provisions and details of the Economic Commission's report on the Iran-EAEU free trade agreement.

Iran appoints new representative to OPEC, GECF, IEF

TEHRAN - Iran's Oil Minister has appointed Seyed Ali-Mohammad Mousavi as the country's new representative to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Board of Governors, the Executive Board of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), and the International Energy Forum (IEF).

According to Shana, Mohsen Paknejad issued a letter on Monday, December 30, to the Secretaries-General of the Organization of the

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), and the International Energy Forum (IEF), formally appointing Mousavi to the roles. Mousavi currently serves as Deputy Minister for International Affairs and Commerce at the Oil Ministry.

Hereby, Seyed Ali-Mohammad Mousavi, Deputy Minister for International Affairs and Commerce, is appointed as the representa-

tive of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPEC Board of Governors, the Executive Board of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, and the International Energy Forum. He will participate in all future meetings of these international bodies.

Mousavi succeeds Afshin Javan, who previously served as the interim representative of Iran in OPEC and other international energy organizations.

Iran and Russia have been taking serious steps to boost their mutual trade over the past few years.

By connecting the national payment networks of the two countries, the borders of electronic payments will be removed and a new chapter will begin in the economic and cultural cooperation of the two nations, the official emphasized.

He said: The project that we are witnessing its inauguration today, started with the aim of creating integration in the payment networks and facilitating financial transactions between the citizens of the two countries.

Emphasizing that this project is divided into three phases and in each phase, an important step is taken towards the realization of the final goal, the CBI governor said: The first phase of this project, which was put into operation at the end of September and will be unveiled today, provides the possibility of using bank cards of Iran, which are under Shetab network, in Russian ATMs for tourists. In this way, now Iranian tourists can easily receive ruble notes from Russian ATMs using the riyal balance of their Shetab

cards.

Farzin further emphasized that the next phases of this project will be unveiled soon with wider facilities and services.

In early July, the CBI governor said a monetary contract has been signed between Tehran and Moscow for carrying out bilateral trade exchanges.

Farzin told reporters that he and his Russian counterpart had a meeting in Saint Petersburg last Thursday where they finalized agreements already signed between the two countries.

During the meeting, the chief bankers of Iran and Russia also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on joint measures to be taken by the two countries for the expansion of economic and monetary ties.

According to Farzin the new monetary contract enables Iran and Russia to trade in local currencies.

He added that based on agreements between the specialized delegations of the two countries, Iran's Shetab banking system would link Russia's MIR interbank system by the end of August.

The official said that the new scheme would allow Iranian nationals to take ruble from Russian ATMs using their Iranian banking cards.

"During the meeting, the two sides finalized the requirements to connect Russia's Mir payment system to Iran's Shetab and this project has entered the operational phase," Farzin said.

He added that the scheme will further develop in the next phases to allow Russian nationals to use their banking cards in Iranian ATMs and will then enable using Iranian cards at the Russian poles.

"The second stage [involves the possibility of] paying with Russian citizens cards in Iran," Farzin said, adding that in the third stage, Iranians will be able to pay with a Shetab card in Russian stores via an ordinary bank terminal.

In April 2024, the Iranian Foreign Ministry announced that the project to use Mir cards had entered the implementation stage. In May 2022, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said that the countries were discussing how to connect the Mir and Shetab payment systems.

Iran and Russia have been taking serious

steps to boost their mutual trade over the past few years.

In late January, Iran's late President Ebrahim Raisi said that the Islamic Republic and Russia have reached an agreement to boost the trade between the two countries up to \$10 billion.

We agreed to remove trade barriers and boost the economic exchanges between the two countries. Currently, the level of mutual trade is not acceptable, so the two countries agreed to increase trade to \$10 billion a year, Raisi said on January 21, upon arrival to Tehran after a two-day visit to Moscow.

He also noted that the two sides also discussed monetary and banking issues during his talks with Russian officials.

The two countries also agreed to identify mutual agricultural capacities as well as suitable areas for the exchange of agricultural products in order to increase the level of trade in the agricultural sector, according to the official.

He went on to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran has very good capacities in the field of transit and transportation, saying: During this visit, it was agreed to activate the north-south corridor. This transit route will make the time and distance of transiting goods from Russia and different northern countries to the southern regions much shorter.

Meanwhile, during a meeting between Iran's Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Abdolnasser Hemmati and Russia's Minister of Economic Development Maxim Reshetnikov on September 30, the two sides called for strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

Hemmati met and held talks with Reshetnikov on the sideline of the talks between high-ranking delegations of Iran and Russia at the time.

Referring to the increasing trade between Iran and the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, Reshetnikov expressed hope that this process will accelerate further.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed customs issues, Russian investments in the oil industry, the progress of the Rasht-Astara railway, the North-South Corridor, truckers' insurance, trade currency settlement, strengthening the Eurasian Economic Union, and other economic issues between the two countries.

Yemen: The endless nightmare of child-killer regime

Despite numerous airstrikes by Israel, the US, and Britain in Yemen, the Muslim nation continues to provide unwavering support for Palestine

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni forces on Monday night announced a series of complex military operations against Israel as part of their ongoing solidarity front with the besieged Palestinians in Gaza.

The Sanaa government said the operations come as part of resisting aggression in the region.

In an official statement, the Yemeni forces detailed the military actions taken and the motivations behind them.

Statement of intent

In their announcement, the Yemeni Armed Forces stated that “triumphing for the oppression of the Palestinian people and their fighters and in response to the massacres against our people in Gaza, and within the fifth stage of the supportive stages in the battle of the Promised Conquest and Holy Battle and within the framework of retaliating to the Israeli, American and British aggression against our country.”

Sites targeted

According to the statement, Yemeni forces carried out two significant missile strikes on targets within Israeli-occupied territories:

1. Ben Gurion Airport:

A hypersonic ballistic missile, known as the “Palestine 2”, targeted Ben Gurion Airport in the Yaffa area.

Israeli media confirmed the attack, sharing footage of sirens



sounding as passengers ran for cover at the airport in Tel Aviv as a response to the missile strike.

This month alone, Yemen has launched around a dozen hypersonic missiles in the direction of Tel Aviv and central Israel, sending over one million Israelis running to shelters at night.

2. Power station near al-Quds:

A “Zulfiqar ballistic missile” was launched at a power station south of occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

This marks the first time that Yemen has targeted the Israeli regime’s energy infrastructure.

It also shows that Yemen is revealing new and surprising cards catching the regime off guard.

The Yemeni Armed Forces reported that both missile strikes successfully hit their intended targets.

Operation against US aircraft carrier

Simultaneously, the Yemeni

forces reported a coordinated operation against the U.S. Navy, which targeted the American USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier.

The Yemeni naval force, missile forces, and UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) units launched a large number of drones and cruise missiles at the American aircraft carrier.

According to the statement, this attack occurred as U.S. forces were preparing for an airstrike on Yemen.

The operation was described as successful, preventing the planned American air attack. The Yemeni Armed Forces attributed the success to what they said was “the grace and support of Allah.”

Increased combat readiness

The Yemeni Armed Forces also announced enhancements to their combat readiness, emphasizing their resolve to confront threats from Israeli and Ameri-

can forces.

They stated, “The Yemeni Armed Forces, with the help of God Almighty, have completed raising the combat readiness of a number of military units to confront any threats related to the Israeli and American enemy that aim to prevent Yemen from performing its religious, moral, and humanitarian duty towards the Palestinian people.”

Commitment to ongoing operations

Showcasing its steadfastness, the Yemeni Armed Forces also reaffirmed their intention to continue military operations until the situation in Gaza changes.

“The operations of the Yemeni Armed Forces will not stop until the aggression on Gaza is stopped and the siege is lifted.”

The latest announcement follows an escalation in the exchange of fire between Yemeni forces on one side and American, British and Israeli forces on the other.

Yemeni political and military officials have underscored that all aggression against the Arab state will not deter Sanaa from launching attacks at the Israeli regime until the U.S.-backed genocidal war on Gaza ends and the siege on the enclave is lifted.

Experts say recent Israeli attacks on Yemen that have targeted oil refineries or Sanaa airport at a time when the WHO chief was inside has highlighted the regime’s increasing desperation in dealing with the Arab state.

The cock of the walk: Elon Musk’s audacious foray into German politics



Germany has accused Elon Musk of trying to influence its February election with articles supporting the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.



Trump’s most powerful advisor has referred to Scholz as “Oaf Schitz” and described German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier as an “anti-democratic tyrant.”



Trump empire: The incoming US president has proposed the notion of taking over Greenland, reinstating control over the Panama Canal, and designating Canada as the 51st state of the United States.

TEHRAN- Controversial remarks made by an ally of US President-elect Donald Trump about German politics have more than ever exposed Washington’s hegemonic views.

Tech billionaire Elon Musk, who is Trump’s most powerful advisor, has strutted on the German political stage as if he is the cock of the walk.

He has explicitly thrown his full weight behind far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD), a tactic aimed at undermining the reputation of German politicians.

Musk, the world’s richest person, first endorsed the AfD in a tweet two weeks ago.

At the weekend, he doubled down on his support for the AfD in a guest opinion piece for the Welt am Sonntag newspaper ahead of key parliamentary elections in the country.

“The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is the last spark of hope for this country,” Musk wrote in his translated commentary, according to the Associated Press.

He added that the far-right party “can lead Germany into a future where economic prosperity, cultural integrity and technological innovation are not just wishes, but reality.”

Musk argued that his investment in Germany gave him the right to comment on the country’s condition.

His statements have caused uproar in Germany.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose three-party

governing coalition collapsed last month in a dispute over how to revitalize the country’s stagnant economy, lashed out at Musk without naming him.

“You, the citizens, decide what happens in Germany. It’s not up to the owners of social media,” Scholz said, according to Politico.

A German government spokesperson accused Musk of “trying to influence the federal election”. Germany is to vote in an early election on February 23.

Other German politicians also excoriated Musk for his comments.

“Musk is strengthening those who are weakening Europe,” Germany’s vice chancellor and economy minister, Robert Habeck, said.

Friedrich Merz, leader of the opposition Christian Democrats and current favorite to succeed Scholz as chancellor, also described Musk’s statements as “intrusive and pretentious.”

The AfD is currently in second place in opinion polls behind the main opposition conservatives, and might be able to thwart a center-right or center-left majority in the election. Germany’s mainstream parties have vowed not to work with the AfD at the national level.

The AfD has grown increasingly extreme since its founding as a euroskeptic party more than 10 years ago. Germany’s federal domestic intelligence classifies the party as a suspected extremist organization.

Bloodied and bruised: Israeli troops suffer heavy losses in Gaza



More than 820 Israeli troops have been killed and more than 5,500 others have been wounded since the start of the Gaza war. [Nir Keidar/Anadolu]

From page 1 ▶ The broadcaster said more than half of those who have been wounded are under 30 years and 43 percent of the total are dealing with “psychological reactions”.

Israel began its war of genocide on Gaza shortly after Hamas carried out a surprise military attack dubbed Al-Aqsa Storm Operation in southern Israel. More than 1,100 Israelis and foreigners were killed in the operation and about 250 others were taken captive. Dozens of the captives still remain in Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has consistently vowed to continue the war until eliminating Hamas and securing the release of the remaining captives. But he has so far failed to make good on his promises.

Amid Israel’s setback on the battlefield in Gaza, its army is facing a shortage of troops.

According to the Washington Post, war fatigue has deepened in Israel and a growing number of Israeli reservists are choosing not to report for duty.

Calls have also grown in Israel for reaching a ceasefire with Hamas to end the war and secure the release of the remaining

captives.

But Netanyahu has hampered efforts aimed at reaching a deal with Hamas.

In the wake of its failure to defeat Hamas, the Israeli army has intensified attacks on hospitals under the pretext of targeting resistance fighters.

Israel claims that Hamas uses hospitals as command centers without providing any evidence to back up its claim.

Israel has slaughtered more than 45,500 Palestinians in Gaza since October last year.

Israel has also largely obstructed the delivery of essentials such as food to Gaza, in particular to the north of the enclave. The regime has pushed Gaza to the verge of famine as it is trying to make the territory uninhabitable for Palestinians.

Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza with impunity in the face of the international community’s failure to stop the regime’s killing machine.

The slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza serves merely as a strategy to obscure Israel’s failure to subdue Hamas and other resistance groups.

Al-Jolani grants high ranks to non-Syrian mercenaries

From page 1 ▶ It is worth noting that the interim government affiliated with the so-called “National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces,” which manages the areas where the Turkish army is deployed in the north, has not yet contacted Mohamed al-Bashir’s government. It continues to manage its areas independently and recently issued a decision to promote police officers in the city of Azaz.

Meanwhile, the promotion decision has been issued by the General Command of the Syrian Army and Armed Forces, noting that it has been signed by “the General Command” without mentioning whether al-Sharaa is the commander-in-chief of the army.

Obviously, al-Sharaa, who has shown hesitation regarding drafting a new constitution, is moving quickly to restructure the security and military system, raising doubts about whether this is to impose the pillars of his authority before the elections, which al-Sharaa said “may not be held for four years.”

Al-Sharaa has previously stated that he would not assign people who he did not personally trust to manage the “first hundred days,” adding that the Syrian army would be demobilized and rely on HTS and new volunteers.

Al-Sharaa further pledged to dissolve all militias and that there would be no weapons except in the hands of the “Syrian state,” claiming that “Assad regime’s crimes have led to reliance on foreign fighters who deserve to be rewarded for supporting the Syrian people after they participated in the

revolution and contributed to the overthrow of the regime,” hinting at his intention to naturalize them.

In an interview with Al Arabiya, Al Sharaa acknowledged that all the appointments were of the same color “not to exclude anyone, but rather a necessity of the stage that requires harmony between the pillars of power.”

Al-Sharaa was firm that “anyone connected to ISIS is an enemy” and that he would fight it everywhere in Syria. At the same time, he obliged the factions in southern Syria to hand over heavy weapons and warned them against approaching the capital. In parallel, he is negotiating with other factions, including defected officers (who at one point formed the Free Army).

Apparently, al-Sharaa seeks to consolidate his alliance with Turkey and Qatar and avoid Jordan and the UAE; however, he seems interested in cooperating with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Despite his interest in good relations with the Europeans, he focuses on the relationship with Washington, to which he has repeatedly reiterated that they have a common enemy, “Iran and Hezbollah”.

In parallel, he supports settling the Kurdish crisis, contrary to the ambition of the Turks who insist on ending the military presence of the SDF forces. He stated that he does not have the ability or desire to engage in fighting the Kurds, but he does not mind Turkey doing the job alone, despite his belief that addressing this file requires an understanding with the US.

Photo exhibit celebrates 70 years of restoration at Soltanieh Dome



TEHRAN - A photo exhibition commemorating seven decades of restoration efforts at the UNESCO-listed Mausoleum of Oljaytu, better known as the Soltanieh Dome, was inaugurated at the Faculty of Architecture and Art of Zanjan University on Tuesday.

The event, opened by Abolfazl Ali, the director of the Soltanieh World Heritage Base, showcases the progress of preservation work on the 14th-century monument since 70 years ago.

This exhibition aims to inform the residents of Soltanieh and visitors about the restoration efforts while familiarizing domestic and international tourists with the intricate preservation journey of this iconic site, Ali said during the inauguration.

As mentioned by the official, the week-long exhibition features a photographic chronicle of various restoration activities, including work on the citadel, dome structure, surrounding grounds, and decorative elements.

The showcased images also highlight contributions by master craftsmen and experts who have been integral to the monument's preservation.

Cultural heritage represents the identity and history of humanity, Ali remarked. It serves as a bridge transcending geographical and ethnic boundaries, fostering peace and friendship worldwide.

The exhibition has been organized for students and cultural enthusiasts, aiming to promote awareness about the significance of preserving historical and cultural artifacts. Our goal is to raise public consciousness and provide insights into the protective measures involved in safeguarding cultural and historical objects, particularly those housed in museums, Ali added.

Meaning Town of the Sultans, Soltanieh was briefly the capital of Persia's Ilkhanid dynasty (a branch of the Mongol dynasty) during the 14th century.

The Mausoleum of Oljaytu, is highly recognized as an architectural masterpiece particularly due to its innovative double-shelled dome and elaborate interior decoration. The very imposing dome stands about 50 meters tall from its base.

According to UNESCO, the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. Here, the Ilkhanids further developed ideas that had been advanced during the classical Seljuk phase (11th to early 13th centuries), during which the arts of Iran gained distinction in the Islamic world, thereby setting the stage for the Timurid period (late 14th to 15th centuries), one of the most brilliant periods in Islamic art.

Stone Age architecture in Near East was far more advanced than thought, archaeologists say

Early architecture in the Near East included a variety of structures built using advanced techniques, according to a new study that challenges previous beliefs about the region's history.

Previous research held that the region's architecture made a simple progression from round to rectangular structures during the early Stone Age. This research relied on qualitative descriptions by scientists which tend to oversimplify complex trends.

A new computer analysis of ancient remains in the Near East, however, shows that advanced building techniques emerged earlier than previously thought in the region.

The analysis covers nearly 120 structures from 23 sites across the Mediterranean region and the Jordan Valley, dating from the Natufian culture of mainly hunters from Palestine and southern Syria to the early Neolithic period.

The study, published in the journal *Archaeological Research in Asia*, shows diverse architecture in the area 15,000-8,500 years ago.

It offers a new perspective on the transition from round to rectangular structures during the Neolithic period in the Near East. It suggests that building codes and standard practices had

not yet emerged in the Near East in this period.

Such building codes and practices have long been tied to societal shifts such as changes in social organization, demographics, and economic strategies.

Previously, archaeologists thought there was a gradual progression in the region from round to rectangular structures during the Stone Age, or the Neolithic period.

The latest analysis shows structures with right angles, previously associated with later architectural phases, from as early as the Natufian period. There's considerably more variability than can be subsumed in the traditional round to rectangular scheme of architectural development, the study says.

The study reflects significant advances in building technology at an earlier stage than previously thought, archaeologists say.

In the later Neolithic period, architecture in the area was largely more uniform, signaling the emergence of codified building traditions, according to the study.

(Source: *Independent*)

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Los Alerces National Park

Los Alerces National Park is located within Argentina's Andes of Northern Patagonia and the property's western boundary coincides with the Chilean border.

The UNESCO-designated property coincides with the formally gazetted Los Alerces National Park covering 188,379 ha and has a buffer zone of 207,313 ha comprising the contiguous Los Alerces National Reserve (71,443 ha) plus an additional area (135,870 ha) which forms a 10-km-wide band around the property except where it borders Chile.

The landscape in this region is molded by successive glaciations creating a scenically spectacular variety of geomorphic features such as moraines, glacial river and lake deposits, glacial cirques, chain-like lagoons, clear-water lakes, hanging valleys, sheepback rocks, U-shaped valleys.

The Park is located on the Futaleufú River basin

which encompasses a complex system of rivers and chained lakes, regulating the drainage of the abundant snow and rain precipitation.

The property is dominated by the presence of Patagonian Forest which occupies part of southern Chile and Argentina. This forest is one of the five temperate forest types in the world, and the only ecoregion of temperate forests in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Los Alerces National Park is vital for the protection of some of the last portions of continuous Patagonian Forest in almost a pristine state and it is the habitat for a number of endemic and threatened species of flora and fauna including the longest-living population of Alerce trees (*Fitzroya cupressoides*), a conifer endemic to South America.

(Source: *UNESCO*)

Preservation initiatives underway for ancient Istakhr

TEHRAN - The ancient city of Istakhr, once a royal residence for the Sassanid kings of Persia and located near the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, is undergoing significant preservation efforts, according to the tourism chief of Fars province.

Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi on Monday announced the launch of a major project to install electronic protection systems and modern lighting infrastructure in the historic city.

The electronic protection program and the establishment of lighting systems are being implemented under close collaboration with the Persepolis World Heritage Base, Sabet-Eqlidi stated.

The initiative, which involves lighting, repairs, and the provision of electronic infrastructure, particularly electrical systems, was completed over one month by a team of specialists.

Sabet-Eqlidi emphasized the importance of round-the-clock



protection for Istakhr, calling it a critical mission of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

He noted that a portion of the annual budget allocated to the Persepolis World Heritage Base is dedicated to the scientific and physical safeguarding of this ancient site.

Historical significance of Istakhr

A folio of Istakhr's history stretches back to 224 CE, when a Persian nobleman named Ardashir, son of Papak, son of Sasan, de-throned the lawful ruler in Persia, Artabanus IV, king of the Parthian Empire.

The new ruler chose Istakhr, situ-

ated near Persepolis to allow the new Sasanian dynasty to identify itself with a glorious past.

The builders of Istakhr often reused architectural elements from the monuments of Persepolis.

The Achaemenid royal tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam are not far from Istakhr too. The city itself was not completely new: human occupation had started as early as the fourth millennium BC, and the site was certainly occupied in the Bronze Age, by the Achaemenids, by the Seleucids (who used it as a mint town), and by the Parthians.

The city, which had strong walls, repulsed the first Arab attack in c. 644, but was captured and sacked in c. 650.

Although the site was not really abandoned, most people moved to Shiraz (which was founded in 684).

Under the Sasanians, Iranian art experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as the palaces at Ctesiphon, Firouzabad and Saravan.

200 restoration projects conducted on Isfahan's historical monuments in nine months

TEHRAN - Over 200 restoration projects aimed at preserving the historical monuments of Isfahan province were implemented during the first nine months of the current Iranian year (starting March 20, 2024), with a total expenditure of two trillion rials, according to the provincial cultural heritage department spokesperson.

Shahram Amiri highlighted several key restoration initiatives on Tuesday. Major projects completed by December include the renovation of the arcades of the Si-o-Se Pol Bridge, the dome and minarets of the Chaharbagh School, the lower arches of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque dome, the Taj al-Molk Dome of the Atiq Jameh Mosque, the Jameh Mosque of Natanz, the Fin Garden complex in Kashan, and the domed chamber of the Jameh Mosque of Golpayegan, Amiri stated.

Investment in tourism and hospitality

Additionally, 198 tourism, accommodation, and hospitality projects, including the construction of hotels, eco-lodges, traditional restaurants, and tourism complexes, are currently underway in the province, Amiri said.

These projects represent an investment exceeding 340 trillion rials and are reported to be 60-90% complete.

Amiri also noted that 390 investment packages have been defined across 29 counties in Isfahan province over the past three months.

These opportunities have been uploaded onto a dedicated platform to attract investors and facilitate development.

Many of these tourism and hospitality projects incorporate the adaptive reuse of historical structures, ensuring their preservation while fostering economic growth, Amiri added.

Archaeological highlights

Amiri also shed light on significant archaeological efforts conducted this year.

The preservation of discoveries in the passageway of Kamar Zarin, along with the implementation of pedestrian access plans in collaboration with Isfahan Municipality, marked the most prominent archaeological project of the past nine months," he explained.

With over 22,000 historical structures and sites, including 15 UNESCO World Heritage-listed properties, Isfahan remains a focal point for tourism.

Kamar Zarin, located near the UNESCO-registered Atiq Mosque, is among Isfahan's oldest sites. Archaeological findings from this area span periods from pre-Islamic times to the Qajar era, with research on these discoveries still ongoing. Other notable archaeological activities, cited by the official, included excavations in the Vigol site near Bidgol, where remnants of a Sasanian-era fire temple and transitional



artifacts from the Sasanian to Islamic periods were unearthed.

Moreover, Amiri noted that restoration and boundary demarcation continued at the Sialk archaeological site in Kashan. This site is recognized as one of Iran's most invaluable historical locations, preserving evidence of human development from the Neolithic period to the Median era.

A province rich in cultural heritage

With over 22,000 historical structures and sites, including 1,940 national and 15 UNESCO World Heritage-listed properties, Isfahan remains a focal point for cultural heritage preservation and tourism.

The province is home to more than 600 historical houses and a diverse array of natural, cultural, religious, and recreational attractions, drawing both domestic and international visitors year-round.

Study: U.S., China and India drive surge in global tourism emissions

The U.S., China and India drove 60 percent of the growth in tourism emissions from 2009 to 2019, according to Nature Communications.

By 2019, they accounted for 39 percent of global tourism emissions.

The research, based on data from 175 governments between 2009 and 2020, found that 20 countries drive nearly all global tourism emissions, with efforts to curb the trend proving ineffective.

The emissions are generated by airplanes and vehicles used for travel to tourist destinations along with power consumption by travelers.

Around 20 countries generate 75 percent of global tourism emissions, while 155 countries share the remaining 25 percent, the study found.

There is now a hundredfold gap in per-capita tourism footprints between the most and least traveled nations.

In 2019, the U.S. led the top 20 in tourism carbon footprint, both

as a destination and through its citizens' travel, accounting for nearly 1 gigatonne or 19 percent of the global total.

The footprint grew at an annual rate of 3.2 percent. The U.S. tourism carbon footprint averaged 3 tonnes per resident, ranking 12th globally in per-capita tourism emissions.

The London-based Nature Communications reported that the UK ranked 7th in 2019 as a destination, contributing 128 megatonnes of emissions or 2.5 percent of the global total.

UK residents averaged 2.8 tonnes of emissions per person, ranking 15th globally.

The study, using the UN-endorsed measurement of sustainable tourism framework and data on tourism expenditure and emissions intensity from national accounts, referenced the UN Environment Programs warning: global emissions must drop 42 percent by 2030 and 57 percent by 2035 to meet the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degrees C warming target.

However, global tourism emissions have been growing at twice the rate of the global economy, the report said.

Between 2009 and 2019, emissions rose by 40 percent, from 3.7 gigatonnes or 7.3 percent of global emissions in 2009 to 5.2 gigatonnes or 8.8 percent of global emissions in 2019.

Tourism-related emissions grew at an annual rate of 3.5 percent from 2009 to 2019, compared to 1.5 percent annual global economic growth.

If this trend continues, global tourism emissions will double in the next 20 years.

The carbon intensity of each dollar spent on tourism is 30 percent higher than the global economy average and four times greater than the service sector.

The main driver of rising emissions is the surge in tourism demand.

The expanding carbon footprint is primarily from aviation at 21 percent, petrol and diesel-powered vehicles at 17 percent and utilities like electric-

ity supply at 16 percent. Slow efficiency gains from technology have been outweighed by the growth in demand.

Aviation accounted for half of direct tourism emissions, making it the Achilles heel of global tourism. Despite decades of promises, decarbonizing the global air transport system through new technologies has proven impossible.

UN Tourism endorsed the study, acknowledging that tourism now accounts for 8.8 percent of global emissions.

For the first time, this year's COP29, the 29th annual Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, included tourism.

A recent UN Tourism report stated that international tourism reached 98 percent of pre-pandemic levels in 2019, with 1.1 billion tourists traveling in the first nine months of 2024. The Americas recovered 97 percent of pre-pandemic arrivals.

(Source: *Asian Hospitality*)

Iranian, Slovak universities ink MOU on scientific research

TEHRAN –Meybod University of Iran and Pavol Jozef Šafárik University (UPJŠ) of Slovakia have signed a three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand scientific research cooperation.

The agreement was signed on Monday by Abbas Niknejad, the chancellor of Meybod University, and Andrej Jenča, a professor at the medical faculty of UPJŠ.

It will provide a great opportunity for sharing expertise and experiences between professors, researchers, and students of the two universities, and will also help improve science and new technologies in related fields, the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology website reported.

The MOU will focus on conducting joint scientific research and designing and implementing targeted research projects in advanced nanomaterials and biomaterials with an emphasis on innovation and practicality.

Publishing joint scientific articles in reliable international journals to share research findings with the world scientific community, exchanging scientific



resources and information, and developing a proper platform to share knowledge, expertise, and scientific resources between the two universities, carrying out joint projects and dissertations by postgraduate students, providing educational and research opportunities to talented students, are among the topics of the agreement.

Iran targets world's 12th spot in science production

Despite ongoing sanctions, Iran is planning to elevate the country's ranking for scientific productions from currently 17 to 12 by 2027.

Due to sanctions, economic restrictions, and the limitations on publishing papers by Iranian scholars, particularly during the last three years, Iran's ranking in

scientific productions has lowered from 15 to 17, Shahin Akhondzadeh, an official with the health ministry, has said.

The country's advancement in science production requires compensating for the regression in research and technology through providing funds, facilitating research, and promoting meritocracy which will reduce young elites' migration, as well, the health ministry's website quoted Akhondzadeh as saying.

Scientific associations grow by 23%

The number of scientific associations as one of the pillars of science in the country has increased from 322 in the Iranian year 1392 (2013 -2014) to 396 last year (ended on March 19), signifying a 22.9 percent growth.

Interdisciplinary and humanitarian associations have experienced the highest growth.

Within a decade, the number of interdisciplinary and humanitarian associations has increased from 50 and 102 to 85 and 142, respectively, IRNA reported.

Scientific associations have always played an essential role in producing knowledge and achieving scientific development.

They are the main foundation of institutions beyond political, racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual boundaries.

Scientific associations have emerged in response to the needs of the world of democracy and the enhancement of human solidarity.

They have also created an appropriate environment for free thinking and the establishment of a culture of conversations.

Their Independence from governments in finance and human resources, speed of action, high decision-making power, limited bureaucracy, and flexible mechanism bolster their efficiency at national and international levels.

Below-average rainfall forecasted for next six weeks



TEHRAN—According to Meteorological Organization, average precipitation is projected to be less than normal from December 30 to February 18.

In the first week (from December 30 to January 5), the precipitation in the eastern and the central part of the country, as well as the eastern slope of central Zagros, and parts of Gilan province will be above normal, while it is predicted to be less than normal in other areas, ISNA reported.

Accumulated precipitations will be 20 to 50 mm in the central and eastern parts of the country.

The average air temperature is predicted to be normal over the Caspian coast, the northwest, and the southern part of the country, and 1-5 OC less than normal in other areas.

The temperature in central areas of the country is likely to exceed 3-5 OC.

In the second week (January 6-17), the amount of rainfall will be less than normal, and in most parts of the country, no rainfall is expected.

The east, southeast, and some central parts of the country will experience normal temperatures. In the rest areas, it will get 1-5 OC above normal.

The northwest and east of the southern Zagros mountains will experience the maximum increase (3-50C) in temperature.

During the third and fourth weeks (January 18 February 4), precipitation is expected to be less than normal in the south and east of the country, more than

normal in the north, and normal in other regions.

The cumulative rainfall in the fourth week is estimated to be between 50-100 mm in parts of Zagros and central Alborz.

The highest air temperature will occur in the third week, getting 1 to 6 OC above normal.

In the southeast, south, and the provinces located in the middle and south Zagros and on the Caspian coast, it will get 1-3 OC and in other areas 3-6 OC above normal.

The air temperature will be 1-3 OC above normal in the fourth week.

Precipitation in the fifth week (February 5-11) is said to be normal in the northwest, northern Zagros, Alborz mountains, northeast, and some parts of the southeast, and less than normal in other areas.

The air temperature is estimated to be 1 OC above normal in the east and north of the country, and 1-3 OC above normal in other regions.

The rainfall in the sixth week (February 12-18) in the eastern parts, parts of the south and southwest of the country is forecast to be less than normal and in other areas, it is estimated to be normal.

It is expected that the air temperature in the sixth week in the

central, and southern Zagros, as well as the south of the country, will get 1-3 OC above normal. It will be normal in other regions.

Over 250mm rain in previous water year

The previous water year (September 22, 2023 September 22, 2024) came to an end with receiving 252.7 mm of precipitation, showing a 19 percent increase compared to the year before.

The low precipitations at the beginning of the previous water year were worrisome, but the volume of precipitations improved with the passage of time.

Due to successive years of drought, the increase in rainfall amounts did not compensate water deficit in the country, some provinces are suffering from water shortage, IRNA reported.

A total of 10 provinces received less than normal rainfall.

According to the latest reports, the total amount of recorded rainfall in the previous water year (ended on September 23) amounted to 252.7 mm, which signifies a 19 percent increase compared to 212.9 mm rain received in the water year before (September 2022 September 2023).

Compared to the long-term figure, 248.7 mm, it shows a two percent increase.

IRCS, UNICEF hold workshop to support children's mental health

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have organized a workshop to support children's mental health through games.

The workshop, titled Structured Play, Games in Child-Friendly Spaces, was held from November 16 to 20 in Bushehr, southern Iran, UNICEF website announced in a press release on December 23.

This interactive event was part of the joint UNICEF-IRCS work plan, aimed at empowering the IRCS psychosocial support (SAHAR) master trainers with updated concepts and tools to support children's mental health and psychosocial well-being through structured play in humanitarian settings.

The IRCS SAHAR teams are responsible for providing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to affected communities and children in humanitarian contexts.

During the workshop, 49 SAHAR master trainers and young volunteers from across Iran gathered to explore the impact of structured play.

This hands-on training emphasized the importance of structured play in promoting mental health and psychosocial wellbeing among children. Participants engaged in various activities designed to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of play and to equip them with practical skills for their work in the field.

UNICEF remains committed to supporting the IRCS in enhancing its capacity to integrate structured play into its MHPSS programmes, ensuring that children in humanitarian settings receive the support they need to overcome adversity and build resilience.

In August, the IRCS in cooperation with UNICEF conducted a workshop for the IRCS psychosocial support team to enhance their capacity for Ensuring Quality in Psychosocial and Mental Health Care and Support (EQUIP) during emergencies.

The workshop was held from August 18 to 20 in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province; a total of thirty-five national master trainers of the IRCS SAHAR participated in the workshop, UNICEF website announced in a press release on August 28.

The IRCS SAHAR teams consist of volunteers trained to provide MHPSS following disasters.

EQUIP assists SAHAR's master trainers with planning and conducting training and supervision for the volunteers of the SAHAR teams.

The enhanced skills and capacities will result in more children, adolescents, and their families receiving effective and safe mental health services during emergencies.

The next step involves supporting the IRCS in the field implementation of EQUIP. Towards this, UNICEF will organize advanced-level training for SAHAR's master trainers, involving EQUIP facilitators from UNICEF's Headquarters.

UNICEF will also explore expanding this framework to other MHPSS service providers, such as the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the State Welfare Organization, NGOs, and other relevant community workers.

This activity is part of a series of UNICEF-supported capacity-building initiatives with IRCS SAHAR teams to provide quality MHPSS to children, adolescents, and their families during emergencies.

Recent collaborations

In September, the IRCS held a training of trainers (TOT) workshop based on the UNICEF training package on Disability Inclusion for Frontline Workers.

Organized in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the two-day



training of trainers pilot workshop was held at the IRCS physical rehabilitation center from September 8 to 9 in Tehran, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on September 26.

UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS) 2022-2030 is guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). It stresses a more inclusive world by 2030 where all children, including those with disabilities, live in barrier-free and inclusive communities.

The two-hour session aimed to train professionals from IRCS in three provinces of Khorasan Razavi, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Tehran on best practices in early identification and referral of persons with disabilities.

The overall training program aimed to ensure that people with disabilities, especially those in remote areas, are identified and referred to access rehabilitation services in a timely manner through IRCS Primary Rehabilitation Centers across the country.

Following this workshop, participants from IRCS will conduct training sessions in their respective cities for IRCS selected volunteers in Helal Houses (IRCS community-based centers).

Under a newly launched initiative, titled Green DADRAS, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Climate Change Secretariat aim to promote students climate literacy.

A total of 11,536 high school students, girls and boys aged 12 to 15 years, from across Iran will benefit from the educational program, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on August 22.

By raising awareness and promoting proactive measures, the IRCS and UNICEF aim to create a positive environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable future for all.

The newly launched Green DADRAS Initiative, guided by the Climate Change Secretariat of the IRCS, has equipped 46 master trainers from the Youth Organization of the IRCS to lead educational sessions on climate change for these school students.

These dedicated trainers will train 824 provincial trainers across the country to finally empower over 11,000 high school students within DADRAS teams, focusing on critical topics such as drought and floods.

The initiative will enable these students to design and implement impactful climate change-related campaigns within their schools and communities.

Having received education on the importance of climate change, these young minds will then be equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to protect their environment.

Considering the significant impact of climate change in Iran, this initiative is considered a crucial step towards securing a better future for the next generation.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation's head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization's head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday.

As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to breadwinners with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the ex-advicts under the Organization's coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, Qobadi Dana explained.

احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر تفاهم نامه مشترک برای احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان بین بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و سازمان بهزیستی کشور منعقد شد.

تفاهم نامه احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی روستایی با حضور علیرضا تابش رئیس بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و وحید قبادی دانا رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشور روز دوشنبه به امضا رسید.

قبادی دانا گفت: این تفاهم نامه به منظور ساخت ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای معلولین سرپرست خانوار، زنان سرپرست خانوار، و بهبودیافتگان از بلای اعتیاد که در روستاها و شهرهایی با جمعیت کمتر از ۲۵ هزار نفر ساکن و تحت پوشش بهزیستی هستند؛ منعقد می شود.

Knowledge-based companies to attend IETF 2025

TEHRAN- A delegation of Iranian knowledge-based firms will attend the International Engineering & Technology Fair (IETF), which is scheduled to take place in New Delhi, India, from February 18-22. The 26th edition of IETF 2025 will showcase innovations through focused shows in industry sectors Artificial Intelligence (AI), Capital Machinery, Digital Gaming, Fluid Power, Industrial Automation, Robotics and Electronics, Modern Logistics Solutions, Metal and Metallurgy, Water and Waste Management, Net Zero Products & Solutions and Consumer Durables and Electronics, as well as Plant Equipment, Component, Factory and Plant.

Notable growth in knowledge-based companies

The significant and fast-paced growth in the

number of knowledge-based companies with over 200 percent increase in their number just over the past year (March 2023 March 2024), shows the solid foundation, dynamism, and growth of the country in innovation and technology and the productive atmosphere which have been made available in line with the goal of boosting domestic production with public participation.

The current administration underscores the quantitative and qualitative development of knowledge-based companies. The number of companies, which was around 5,000 before the current administration took office in August 2021, has now reached 10,000 with a total value of two billion dollars.



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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895

Email: info@tehrantimes.com

Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430

Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



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

JANUARY 1, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If a Muslim plants a tree or any plant and a human, bird, or any other animals use it, Allah counts it as an act of charity.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 17:13 Dawn: 5:39 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:09 (tomorrow)

Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform at Vahdat Hall

TEHRAN-The first winter concert of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra titled *White Lands* will be held on January 7 and 8, 2025 at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

Hamed Garschi will be the guest conductor of the orchestra, which is set to perform famous classic pieces, ISNA reported.

The repertoire will include pieces by the Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Soviet-Armenian composer and conductor Aram Khachaturian, Soviet and Azerbaijani composer Fikret Amirov, and Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.

Born in Tehran, Hamed Garschi, 39, is an Iranian-German conductor and pianist. Initially studying piano and clarinet at Tehran's University of Music and Performing Arts, he won prizes for his performances as piano soloist, riteur, chamber musician, song accompanist, and clarinet player.

He performed as a soloist and as a member of various orchestras and ensembles including Tehran Symphony Orchestra, Iran's National Orchestra, The Youth Symphony Orchestra, The Wind Orchestra, and Tehran Opera Ensemble.

In 2012, Garschi started his conducting studies at the Cologne Academy of Music under Prof. Michael Luig, Prof. Stephan E Wehr, Prof. Alexander Rumpf, and received his master's degree with honors in 2018.

During his studies, he was a fellow at the Richard Wagner Foundation and headed the Gch Orchestra Cologne, the WDR Symphony Orchestra, the MDR Symphony Orchestra Leipzig, the Orchestra Philharmonique de Nice, the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, the South Westphalia Philharmonic, the Ruse Opera and Philharmonic Society, the Thalia-Saal Philharmonie, the Bergische Symphoniker, Tirana Radio and Television Orchestra, and the Bucharest Symphony Orchestra.



Garschi has been the assistant-conductor to Dirk Kaftan at the Bonn Opera, Heinz Holliger at the Cologne Academy of Music, Prof. Alexander Rumpf and Toshiyuki Kamioka. He was nominated in 2017 for the German conductor award and conducting WDR Symphony Orchestra and Gch Orchestra Cologne. In 2018 he became the semifinalist at the Antal Dor International Conducting Competition in Budapest.

Since 2017, Garschi has been chief conductor of the young symphony orchestra Wetzlar. As a riteur, Garschi has gained a vast experience in the field of music theater and opera literature. He has accompanied many opera singers and taken part in productions such as *Magic Flute*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Bat*, and *Friesch*.

Since the summer of 2023, Garschi has been the musical director of the City Youth Symphony Orchestra Cologne.

The Cologne conductor Hamed Garschi is known for his stirring and sensitive interpretations, which include the great symphony and opera repertoire, historically informed performances and contemporary scores.

He specializes in working with young symphony orchestras. His focus and strengths lie in guiding and supporting young musicians to develop their musical skills and potential.

The extraordinary temperament of his conducting and the impressive depth of his musical interpretations put Garschi in the focus of international interest and make him one of the most distinguished conductors of the younger generation.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1933, is Iran's oldest and largest symphony orchestra. During the years, celebrated musicians including Rubik Gregorian, Morteza Hannaneh, Haymo Taeuber, Heshmat Sanjari, and Farhad Meshkat took over as the orchestra's conductor.

Cartoon of Day



Santa in Gaza

Cartoonist: Mohammad Sabaaneh from Palestine

Resistance Day commemorates Martyr General Soleimani's fifth anniversary

TEHRAN- In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Hajj Qassem Soleimani's martyrdom, the "Resistance Day" event was held at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization in Tehran on Monday.

Organized in collaboration with the Qassem Soleimani School and Sima Fekr Media Center, the event drew attendees from various fields, including artists, media professionals, and scholars.

During the dialogue segment of this event, regional researcher Seyyed Ali Kashfi and political analyst Ali Samadzadeh addressed the crucial question, "How Should We Speak of Resistance Today?"

Additionally, Hamidreza Fartookzadeh, a university professor and faculty member at Malek Ashtar University, presented an analysis titled "Qassem Soleimani: The Geography of Resistance," exploring the late general's pivotal role in shaping and expanding the geography of resistance across the region.

The event also featured a screening of the documentary film "Grief-Stricken," which captures the journey of General Soleimani and his comrades on the path of resistance.

In the concluding segment of "Resistance Day," political analyst Ali Abdi shared poignant narratives of Martyr Soleimani through the words of the late Imad Mughniyeh, Lebanon's Hezbollah's mili-



tary chief.

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, a highly esteemed Iranian military strategist and prominent figure in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC), left an indelible mark on Iran's defense efforts. Born in 1957 in Qanat-e Malek, Iran, Soleimani devoted his entire life to safeguarding his country's interests.

He gained widespread recognition for his crucial role in leading successful military campaigns, particularly in the battle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. His exceptional strategic planning, exemplary leadership abilities, and unwavering commitment to preserving Iran's security earned him profound respect both within the military and among the Iranian populace.

General Soleimani, with his remarkable charm and fearless demeanor, commanded immense admiration from his comrades as well as the general public.

His resolute dedication to safeguarding Iran's sovereignty and ensuring its security solidified his position as an emblem of fortitude and perseverance.

Despite facing numerous hurdles, such as international sanctions and political tensions, Soleimani remained an indispensable figure in Iran's military and foreign policies.

His assassination in January 2020 had a seismic impact on the region, profoundly grieving the Iranian people and intensifying tensions between Iran and the United States.

General Qassem Soleimani's impactful contributions to Iran's defense will forever be etched in the nation's memory, serving as a testament to his enduring influence on the geopolitical landscape of the region.

The Reborn published in Persian

Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman government.

The English version of the book is being released in the U.S. simultaneously with its Persian translation.

Zara Babayan, a graduate in Armenian language and literature from the National University of Armenia, was born in Yerevan.

In 1993, she immigrated to Switzerland to pursue her studies in psychology, and her first book was published in 2012, earning her the Best Book of the Year award that same year.

The image on the front cover of the book is a work by English photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, preserved from the Armenian genocide, and currently housed in the Armenian Genocide Museum.

The Armenian Genocide refers to the systematic mass extermination of the Armenian population by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, particularly between 1915 and 1923.

An estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed, and countless others were forcibly deported from their ancestral lands. This tragic event unfolded amid the backdrop of a crumbling empire and escalating ethnic tensions.

Armed forces, along with local authorities, carried out a series of atrocities including mass shootings, death marches through the Syrian desert, and the use of concentration camps.

The intent was clear: to eliminate the Armenian presence in the region and to erase their cultural heritage.

Despite extensive documentation and eyewitness accounts, recognition of the Armenian Genocide has faced significant political and historical resistance, particularly from Turkey, the successor state to the Ottoman Empire.

While numerous countries and institutions acknowledge this atrocity, others remain hesitant due to diplomatic tensions and geopolitical considerations. The genocide significantly shaped Armenian identity and diaspora, leading to a collective memory steeped in both resilience and tragedy.

Today, efforts continue to seek justice, international recognition, and education about the Armenian Genocide to ensure that such horrors are never repeated.

2024 was a year of anti-Palestinian censorship and active art rebellion

For artists, it is difficult to reflect on the past year without thinking about Israel's genocide in Gaza that has killed more than 45,000 Palestinians per the official count or more than 220,000 per realistic estimates.

While art is something to be enjoyed, as it enriches every aspect of our lives, identities, and culture, it is also central to struggle. Art is powerful, it allows us to share emotions and stories with people around the world even if we don't share a common language. Israel knows this, and that's why it targets all those with a talent and passion to transmit messages about Gaza's horrific reality.

Indeed, Israel seems to make it a tactic in its broader strategy of ethnic cleansing to wipe out Palestinians who inspire not just their own people, but everyone waging a fight against injustice, Al Jazeera reported.

Painters, illustrators, poets, photographers, writers, designers so many talented Palestinians have already been killed. It is incumbent on us to ensure that they are not forgotten. They are not numbers, and their work should be remembered, always.

Some in the art world have joined the resistance within art spaces and ensured that Israel's crimes are denounced on their platforms. There have been many acts of solidarity and bravery throughout the past year.

When the Barbican Center in London cancelled Indian writer Pankaj Mishra's lecture on the genocide in Palestine in February, art collectors Lorenzo Legarda Leviste and Fahad Mayet withdrew artwork by Loretta Pettway from the center's gallery.

It is incumbent on all of us to stand up to institutional violence, and demand transparency and accountability in its wake. We will never accept censorship, repression and racism within its walls, they wrote.

In March, Egyptian visual artist Mohamed Abla returned his Goethe Medal, awarded for outstanding artistic achievement by Germany's Goethe Institut, in protest of the German government's complicity in the Israeli genocide.

Before the opening of the Venice Biennale in April, more than 24,000 artists from around the world including previous Biennale participants and prestigious award recipients signed an open letter calling

on the organizers to exclude Israel from the event. One Israeli artist eventually decided not to open her exhibition.

In September, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri refused to accept an award from the Noguchi Museum in New York after it fired three employees for wearing Palestinian keffiyeh scarves.

In December, artist Jasleen Kaur, who received the prestigious Turner prize, used her acceptance speech to condemn the genocide, calling for a free Palestine, an arms embargo and extending solidarity with the Palestinians. She stood in solidarity with all those who protested outside the Tate Britain in London, where the event took place, calling on it to divest from funds and projects linked to the Israeli government.

I want to echo the calls of the protesters outside. A protest made up of artists, culture workers, Tate staff, students, who I stand firmly with, Kaur stated. This is not a radical demand, this should not risk an artist's career or safety.

Despite these acts of solidarity, the vicious censorship, omission, repression and witch-hunts of art related to Palestine have not abated

over the past 12 months.

In January, the Indiana University art museum cancelled an exhibition by Palestinian artist Samia Halaby.

In May, the town of Vail in Colorado cancelled the artist residency of Danielle SeeWalker, a Native American artist who had compared the plight of Palestinians to the plight of Native Americans.

In July, the Royal Academy of Arts removed two pieces of artwork from their Young Artists Summer Show because they were related to Israel's war on Gaza. This came after the pro-Israel Board of Deputies of British Jews had sent it a letter regarding the artwork.

In November, the altonale festival in Hamburg cancelled an exhibition of artworks produced by children in Gaza after social media posts attacking it.

These are just a few examples of the massive censorship that Palestinian art and artists and creators who have voiced their solidarity with Palestine have faced over the past year. The silencing and white-washing within cultural spaces have also taken place at an institutional level.