



©Anadolu Agency

Erasing Gaza Via Starvation

Flour costs \$100 per kilo as Palestinians risk their lives for food aid

► Page 5

A 4-year-old girl, Rezzan Abu Zahir, dies from malnutrition in Gaza as Israel restricts aid, worsening the deepening humanitarian catastrophe.

Occupation soldiers evade capture

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The al-Quds Brigades, the military arm of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement, have released footage of a complex qualitative operation targeting an occupation armored personnel carrier with the objective of capturing several Israeli soldiers.

The al-Quds Brigades video was shot in the area of Abasan al-Kabira, east of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

It shows the personnel carrier belonging to Israeli occupation forces (IOF) going up in flames by a pre-planted improvised explosive device before an exchange of heavy gunfire erupts as resistance fighters advance.

In addition, al-Quds Brigades, reported that they targeted an illegal IOF military command post near Street 5, north of Khan Younis.

The footage shows a helicopter landing at the site using gunfire and smoke grenades, which the Palestinian resistance movement said were used to evacuate wounded personnel.

Handala embarks on lifesaving voyage to break Gaza siege

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - With the continuous deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the departure the Handala flotilla has found its way into international efforts to feed starved populations and highlight the need for an emergency political decision.

The vessel organized by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) carries life-saving supplies for hungry kids and an even louder voice against the continuing blockade.

At the heart of Handala's mission is to provide immediate relief to the children of Gaza, who face acute malnutrition and deprivation after months of blockade-induced shortages. The vessel is filled with baby formula, life-saving medicines, and staple foods, bound for communities caught up in infrastructural collapse and food scarcity. While the scale of need in Gaza has never before been witnessed, international agencies estimate that more than half of the population consists of children—many of whom are on the verge of starvation due to the restrictions on humanitarian aid and attacks on civilian infrastructure.

US high commissioner in Beirut again: What's new?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Amid the raging Syrian seditious events, the U.S. Special Envoy to Lebanon and Syria, Thomas Barrack, returned to Beirut three days early to review comments by American officials regarding initial response to his proposal regarding Hezbollah's disarmament.

Barrack is specifically interested in the Lebanese government's response, particularly its decision to confine weapons within a timeframe set by Washington.

This time, however, many Lebanese— including those opposed to Hezbollah— voiced serious concern over the potential repetition of the bloody Sweida incident, which had already triggered dangerous sectarian repercussions across several regions in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to prevent Lebanon from being directly affected by the Sweida conflict as former prime ministers have visited Druze leader Walid Jumblatt to express their concerns.

► Page 5

E3 has no legal ground to trigger JCPOA snapback mechanism: Araghchi

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has firmly rejected any attempt by the European troika – France, Germany, and the United Kingdom – to trigger the so-called “snapback” mechanism under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, saying such a move would be “null and void” in light of the E3's own violations and abandonment of their commitments.

In a detailed letter addressed to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, members of the UN Security Council, and EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Araghchi laid out legal and political arguments refuting the legitimacy of the E3's claim to invoke dispute mechanisms under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and UN Security Council Resolution 2231. ► Page 2

Iran to press demands from Europe as Istanbul talks near

TEHRAN – Iran will press ahead with its demands in upcoming negotiations with the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Monday, stressing that the European signatories—France, Germany, and the UK—are in no position to make demands after failing to uphold their commitments following Washington's withdrawal from the accord. ► Page 2

Iran, Russia launch joint Caspian Sea search and rescue drill

TEHRAN — A large-scale joint maritime search and rescue exercise, CASAREX 2025, kicked off on Monday in the Caspian Sea with the participation of naval forces from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

The three-day drill is being hosted by Iran's Northern Fleet and the Fourth Naval District of Imam Reza.

Rear Admiral Lower Half Mohsen Razaqi, spokesperson for the exercise, said CASAREX 2025 also includes units from Iran's Army Navy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy, the Law Enforcement Command, and observers from other Caspian littoral states. ► Page 2

What the Persian Gulf countries learned from Iran's war with Israel

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The recently concluded conflict between Iran and Israel—with twelve days of open hostilities—was not merely a battle between two historical antagonists.

It marked the opening chapter of a new era in security, diplomacy, and the very definition of national interests in the Persian Gulf. The Arab littoral states—from Saudi Arabia to Qatar and the Emirates—have had to confront, perhaps for the first time in decades, the collapse of the illusion of external tutelage and the emergence of unavoidable regional dynamics.

Amid this upheaval, Iran's centrality is no longer in question. The urgent question now is different: can the region design its own stable and pluralistic order, with Iran as its cornerstone, and let go of frameworks imposed by foreign powers? ► Page 3

Iran's trade with neighbors tops \$13b in spring

TEHRAN – Iran's trade with its 15 neighboring countries exceeded \$13.42 billion in the spring of the current Iranian year, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Between March 20 and June 21, around 23 million tons of goods were exchanged, reflecting a 17 percent decline in volume and a 16 percent drop in value compared to the same period last year.

Exports accounted for \$6.65 billion of the total, down 22 percent year-on-year. Iraq was the top destination for Iranian goods with \$1.904 billion, followed by the United Arab Emirates at \$1.6 billion, Turkey with \$940 million, Afghanistan with more than \$510 million, and Oman with \$437 million. ► Page 4



© ISNA Mohammadreza Bolandi

'Killed for their potential'

Brother of Iranian scientist murdered in Israeli strike speaks out

TEHRAN – An Iranian survivor whose entire family was killed in an Israeli airstrike on Astaneh Ashrafiyeh has accused the Israeli regime of deliberately targeting civilians with intellectual and scientific potential.

In a press briefing held on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson hosted Mr. Seddighi Saber, the sole surviving member of the family of late Dr. Moammadreza Seddighi Saber — an Iranian scientist who lost his life during the war. “Mr. Saber's family made the ultimate sacrifice in the path of Iran's scientific progress,” Esmail Baghaei said, adding, “The tragedy in Astaneh Ashrafiyeh stands as one of the most horrifying crimes committed by the Zionist regime against the Iranian people.” ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Had Iran not taken precautionary measures, a disaster would have occurred

Hamshahri conducted an interview with former diplomat Ali Bahadori Jahromi about the dangerous and direct involvement of the United States in Israel's 12-day war with Iran. He said: The direct military action of the U.S., which claims it supports world peace, is a direct attack on the foundations of the existing international order.

The U.S. military aggression against Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities could have resulted in a dangerous crime against all humanity, if the Islamic Republic government had not taken appropriate precautions to protect enriched uranium and other security measures related to its nuclear sites.

After that, Trump officially announced that this war was a joint project between him and Netanyahu. In response, Iran launched a counterattack, invoking its right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. However, rather than acknowledging this legal framework, the Western bloc chose to cooperate with Israel in intercepting Iranian missiles aimed at the invading regime. This action runs contrary to key principles of international law and appears to undermine the very spirit of the United Nations Charter, which was established to prevent "power-seeking and warmongering under the mask of peace and law."

Sazandegi: Europe is making snapback threats as it feels sidelined

In a commentary, Sazandegi addressed the German foreign minister's statements on the snapback mechanism and the continuation of the diplomatic process with Iran. It wrote: The German foreign minister said that following our negotiations, we had contact with Araghchi and at agreed that we wanted to continue the diplomatic process. Over the past days and weeks, the statements of the European troika foreign ministers have hardened their position over the past days and weeks, and put the snapback mechanism on their table as a pressure tool against Tehran.

The important point is that they view the negotiations as only between Tehran and Washington and that they are being sidelined. Therefore, it can be seen that despite trying to present themselves as influential and effective actors in any future negotiations, they are still subordinate to the United States and are trying to use the leverage of the snapback mechanism as a threat or pressure tool. They now seek to accelerate the negotiations process and quickly push Iran toward the negotiating table.

Iran, Russia launch joint Caspian Sea search and rescue drill



The Russian Navy vessel SB738 arrived in the designated exercise zone to take part in the CASAREX 2025 joint maritime search, rescue, and naval drills on July 21, 2025.

From page 1 ► Speaking at a press briefing, Razaqi said the exercise is being held under the slogan "Together for a Safe and Secure Caspian Sea."

He noted that the drill is designed to implement directives by the Commander-in-Chief aimed at expanding diplomacy through international cooperation and fostering greater coordination among the naval forces of Caspian countries.

"The exercise is meant to strengthen joint operational capabilities in maritime rescue and security, safeguard commercial shipping routes, and develop a common framework for future multinational naval exercises," he explained.

Sobh-e-No: A mechanism that has already been activated

In an analysis, Sobh-e-No argued that Iran's current circumstances effectively mirror the activation of the snapback mechanism, given that the P5+1 countries have not honored their commitments under the JCPOA and the United States withdrew from the agreement in May 2018.

The imposition of UN sanctions serves only to damage the credibility of Western powers. Consequently, any meaningful dialogue regarding Iran's nuclear program should focus on extending the snapback deadline. Iran, having faced betrayal amid the negotiation and attacks on its nuclear facilities, now approaches the issue with a markedly different perspective.

Should Europe activate the snapback mechanism, Iran's most strategic response may lie in embracing "nuclear ambiguity." Having endured concurrent confrontations with both the United States and Israel—as well as the full weight of so-called "crippling" U.S. sanctions—Iran can no longer be coerced into retreat or surrender under threats of sanctions or warfare. In effect, the snapback mechanism is already in motion, and Iran has moved beyond the phase of being intimidated by force.

Shargh: Regional and economic fallout of Iran's possible NPT pullout

One of the less studied aspects is the impact of Iran's possible withdrawal from the NPT on regional and economic dynamics. In the Middle East, this action could lead to a nuclear arms race, especially if countries like Saudi Arabia or Turkey decide to develop nuclear programs. This scenario could severely undermine regional stability and lead to increased geopolitical tensions. From an economic point of view, withdrawal from the NPT and the return of sanctions under Chapter 7 (of the UN Security Council) could put further pressure on the Iranian economy and make it more fragile.

Overall, it should be said that Iran's withdrawal from the NPT is a decision that would have far-reaching consequences that could strengthen or isolate Iran's position as an independent actor. The success of this strategy depends on Iran's ability to manage international pressure, maintain the support of its eastern allies, and avoid military conflict. This move could lead to a redefinition of Iran's role in the international system. However, without careful study, this decision could lead to an escalation of regional and global crises.

The drill consists of two phases — coastal and maritime — and will feature a wide range of operations, including assistance to a distressed vessel, vertical transfer maneuvers, search and rescue operations, man overboard response, officer of the watch drills, maritime formation sailing, aerial photography, and a naval parade.

Rezaqi emphasized that Iran is firmly committed to maintaining security in the Caspian Sea, stating, "Ensuring regional and international maritime security is a top priority for the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Our naval forces will not tolerate any maritime violations and will work closely with neighboring states to guarantee full safety across the region."

The CASAREX 2025 maritime rescue and relief exercise began on 21 July 2025 in the Caspian Sea, hosted by the Iranian Army Navy's northern fleet.

The Iranian Navy, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Navy, and Law Enforcement Command, along with the Russian Navy, participate, and observers from other Caspian littoral states are also present.

Russia and Iran's joint naval exercise strongly asserts their military presence in the strategically important region.

This operation shows Moscow and Tehran's capacity for maritime security and rescue operations, strengthening their control of the Caspian Sea region.

Iran to press demands from Europe as Istanbul talks near

From page 1 ► Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Baghaei announced that the new round of talks between Iran and the E3 is scheduled for Friday, July 25, in Istanbul, with a focus on sanctions relief and nuclear-related disputes.

Tehran rules out US talks but keeps door open to diplomacy

Asked about the possibility of direct dialogue with the United States, Baghaei said no talks with Washington are planned under the current circumstances, but emphasized that diplomacy remains a vital tool for safeguarding national interests.

"We have no intention of engaging with the U.S. right now. That said, diplomacy is an instrument for national preservation. Should it serve the interests of the Iranian people, we will not hesitate to pursue it."

Iran rejects snapback mechanism as illegitimate

Baghaei strongly denounced renewed threats to invoke the snapback mechanism to reimpose UN sanctions on Iran, arguing that there is no legal, political, or moral justification for such a move.

"Restoring lifted sanctions under the JCPOA has no legal foundation. The E3 failed to implement their obligations, and in some cases, even sought to justify Israeli aggression."

He confirmed that Iran will hold a trilateral meeting with Russia and



Esmail Baghaei, the spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry, addresses the press on July 21, 2025.

China—both parties to the JCPOA and permanent members of the UN Security Council—on Tuesday in Tehran, where the snapback issue will be a key topic.

"We've been in close consultation with both Moscow and Beijing over the past year, and we'll continue working with them to prevent or mitigate the consequences of any illegal action."

Criticism of Europe's role in Israeli aggression

Baghaei criticized Germany's recent positions, particularly Chancellor Scholz's comment that "Israel is doing the dirty work for us," calling it "legally consequential and ethically

reprehensible."

"We are seriously dissatisfied with Germany's stance. That statement alone has legal implications. The European parties should have taken a firm, independent stand in response to Israel's military actions instead of justifying them."

He added that the upcoming talks in Istanbul will be an opportunity for Iran to hold Europe accountable.

"This will be a session where Iran sets the tone, not the other way around."

'Iran-Pakistan relations: presidential visit planned'

On regional diplomacy, Baghaei

'Killed for their potential'

Brother of Iranian scientist murdered in Israeli strike speaks out



From page 1 ► According to Saber, the Israeli military carried out two separate strikes on their family homes. "My brother was a mechanical engineering professor. My nephew was a mathematics prodigy. I was left to collect the remains of my loved ones — murdered simply because they had potential to serve their country," he said.

Describing the attacks, Saber recalled that the first strike targeted his brother's home and his father-in-law's house, causing severe burns to the scientist. "In a second, more brutal attack, they bombed our family home in Astaneh Ashrafiyeh, killing every single member of the family. Today, nothing remains of our house."

He stressed that the Israeli regime's aim goes beyond targeting scientists. "Their real target is the Iranian people," he said. "I didn't just hear this — I lived it."

Saber also issued a direct challenge to Western media narratives. "I must say this clearly to the media: Trump and Netanyahu lied to you. Which of these martyrs were building weapons? None. The media must report this truth to the world with honesty."

In closing, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Baghaei said the government would pursue the matter internationally. "As Iran's diplomatic ap-

paratus, we pledge to take all necessary steps to document these crimes and defend the rights of the Iranian people on the global stage."

On Tuesday, June 24, Israel carried out an airstrike on the city of Astaneh Ashrafiyeh, killing 15 civilians, including Martyr Seddighi Saber.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, assassinating many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

More than a week later, the United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.

E3 has no legal ground to trigger JCPOA snapback mechanism: Araghchi

From page 1 ► "The E3 lacks any legal, political, and moral standing to invoke the mechanisms of the JCPOA and UN Resolution 2231 (2015)," Araghchi wrote in his official X account.

The Iranian diplomat argued that the three European states have long forfeited their status as "Participants" in the JCPOA by consistently failing to fulfill their obligations and by endorsing hostile acts against Iran, including recent military aggression by Israel and the United States.

"Through their actions and statements, including providing political and material support to the recent unprovoked and illegal military aggression of the Israeli regime and the U.S., and rejection of the main pillars of the JCPOA, the E3 have relinquished their role as 'Participants' in the agree-

ment," he added.

Araghchi emphasized that Iran had triggered the JCPOA's dispute resolution mechanism (DRM) in 2018 following Washington's withdrawal and had exhausted all legal channels before resorting to remedial nuclear measures. He accused the E3 of not only failing to uphold their obligations, but also aligning themselves with the U.S. "maximum pressure" campaign. He also cited public statements by European leaders that, in Iran's view, amount to endorsement of Israeli war crimes.

"The shameful statement by German Chancellor Merz that 'this is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us' is a clear admission of guilt and complicity," the letter stated.

Araghchi further accused France of direct mili-

tary involvement by shooting down Iranian drones, and condemned the UK for its silence and support of Tel Aviv's recent operations which left over 1,000 Iranian civilians dead.

According to the top diplomat, these actions amount to a breach of international law and strip the E3 of any credibility as honest brokers in nuclear negotiations.

"Actors with such a record ought to be the last to claim 'good faith,'" Araghchi noted on X, adding that "any attempt to reinstate terminated UN Security Council resolutions is legally baseless and politically dangerous."

The letter comes amid heightened tensions following Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and civilian infrastructure.

Muslim leaders must stand against Israeli genocide in Gaza: Iran parliament speaker

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has urged leaders of Islamic countries to break the Israeli-imposed siege on Gaza and end the dangerous era of silence and indifference toward the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the besieged enclave.

In a message posted in Arabic on his official X account on Sunday, Qalibaf warned that the people of Gaza are facing the largest genocide in modern history. He said the Zionist regime, as a criminal apartheid entity, is seeking to wipe out the entire population of Gaza by means of starvation.

The parliament speaker called on

Muslim rulers to act immediately in support of the Palestinian people, stressing that it is their moral and religious duty to respond decisively. He said it was time for Islamic countries to rise up, end their passivity, and confront the ongoing tragedy.

His comments come amid growing international concern over famine conditions in Gaza, with aid organizations warning of starvation, particularly among children, due to the total blockade on food, water, and medical supplies. Iran has repeatedly criticized Western governments and some Muslim states for their complicity in Israel's crimes through silence and inaction.



On Monday, July 21, Mohammad Mokhber, the advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, visited the family of Martyr Fereydoun Abbasi on behalf of the Leader. Abbasi was one of Iran's nuclear scientists assassinated during the Israeli strikes.

‘Iraq stands with Iran:’ Sudani receives Iranian delegation, vows UN action against Israel

TEHRAN – Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani received Mahmoud Nabavian, First Deputy Chairman of Iran’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, and his accompanying delegation on Monday.

The meeting focused on regional security dynamics, recent developments, and the Israeli regime’s aggression against Iran.

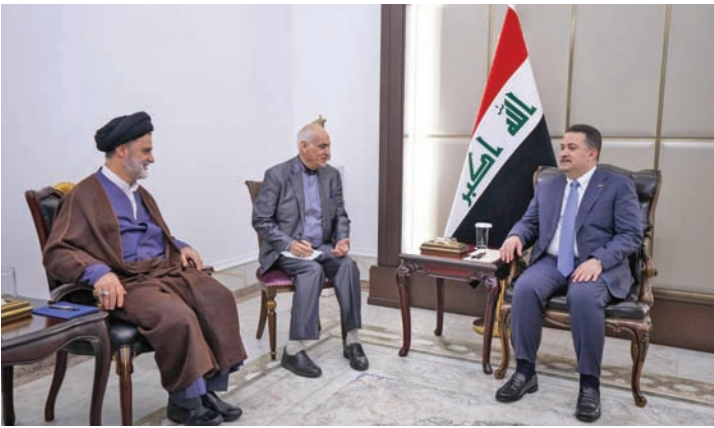
Al-Sudani emphasized Baghdad’s “firm and consistent stance in rejecting aggression,” revealing Iraq had submitted a formal complaint to the United Nations condemning the attacks.

He further outlined Iraq’s diplomatic efforts, stating the country “will continue active communication with world leaders and international powers to support regional stability and prevent the escalation of conflict.”

In response, Nabavian conveyed greetings from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, expressing Tehran’s gratitude for “the stance of the Iraqi government and its highest religious authority in condemning the aggression.”

Nabavian stressed the critical need for “coordinated positions to ensure regional stability and achieve the aspirations of Arab and Muslim nations for sustainable development.”

The high-level engagement builds upon sustained diplomatic momentum between the neighbors. This visit follows Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s significant trip to Baghdad in September 2024, his first international visit as president, where both nations signed memoranda of understanding spanning economics, trade, agriculture, services, communica-



Senior Iranian lawmaker Mahmoud Nabavian (L) meeting Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in Baghdad on July 21, 2025.

tions, and religious tourism, aiming to “drive development and open broader avenues for partnership.”

Earlier this year, Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani traveled to Tehran, where both sides “reaffirmed the depth of ties” during meetings with President Pezeshkian and other officials.

Security coordination

The parliamentary delegation, which also includes committee spokesperson Ebrahim Rezaei and member Ali Khezrian, arrived in Baghdad on Saturday. Their visit began symbolically at the memorial for Resistance martyrs Major General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, where verses from the Quran were recited in honor of the commanders pivotal to defeating U.S.-backed terrorism in the region.

The talks occur against the backdrop of U.S.-Israeli aggression. During a 12-day war initiated by the Israeli regime, the U.S. launched a major strike on Iran’s civilian nuclear facilities on June 22. This operation reportedly involved B-2 Spirit stealth bombers dropping fourteen GBU-57A/B Massive Ordnance

Penetrator bombs on the Fordow and Natanz nuclear sites, alongside Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from an Ohio-class submarine against the Isfahan nuclear technology center.

Reports suggest elements of the strike package transited Iraqi airspace, with U.S. forces in Iraq providing logistical and intelligence support. Salem Al-Mohammadawi, head of Iraq’s Security and Defense Committee, who greeted the Iranian delegation upon arrival, reiterated that any such activities by foreign forces in Iraq are “illegal,” noting that “orders had been issued to curb such operations.”

The war resulted in over 1,062 Iranian martyrs, including senior military commanders, nuclear scientists, and hundreds of civilians.

Arbaeen: A pillar of unity and cooperation

Strategic talks also encompassed cultural and religious cooperation. The Iranian delegation met with Ammar al-Hakim, leader of Iraq’s National Wisdom Movement.

Hakim emphasized leveraging the vast Arbaeen pilgrimage – the world’s largest annual religious

gathering commemorating the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) – to “strengthen official and popular cooperation between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran”, recognizing its “pivotal role” in deepening bilateral ties.

He further called for “strengthening parliamentary cooperation” through joint committees and exchanging expertise.

This focus on Arbaeen underscores its significance as a “major model of the policy of neighborliness” and a catalyst for unprecedented logistical and security coordination.

Only last week, Interior Ministers of Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan convened in Tehran for a trilateral summit finalizing security and logistical arrangements for the upcoming pilgrimage.

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni declared the cooperation had reached a “strategic level,” linking pilgrim safety directly to regional stability and praising Iraqi and Pakistani solidarity following the Israeli attacks.

Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Amir al-Shammari confirmed readiness under al-Sudani’s directives, stating “service and logistical facilities are fully prepared” to welcome millions, recalling over 5 million foreign pilgrims attended in 2024, including 3 million Iranians.

The immense scale of Arbaeen – attracting tens of millions – necessitates deep cross-border collaboration on security, transportation, and hospitality infrastructure, transforming it into both a profound spiritual event and a critical platform for institutionalized regional partnership.

Persian Queens make history in Asian football

TEHRAN – The recent qualification of Iran’s women’s national football team, affectionately known as the Persian Queens, for the AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2026 finals marks not just a sporting achievement but a milestone in the history of the Iranian women’s football.

This success embodies a powerful narrative of resilience, strategic growth, and the indomitable spirit of a team led by an extraordinary coach, Marziyeh Jafari.

Unlike their previous qualification, which came via a less dominant route, this time Iran topped Group A outright—beating formidable rivals like Jordan, Bhutan, and Singapore. Despite limited resources and minimal media attention, the Persian Queens displayed a tactical maturity and mental toughness rare in a team that have faced systemic challenges such as lack of infrastructure, limited international exposure, and scarce financial backing.

Their ability to finish with only one defeat and still lead the group highlights their evolution from underdogs to serious contenders on the Asian stage.

The mastermind behind this transformation is Jafari, a figure whose personal story parallels the team’s journey. Having endured profound personal losses and hardship, Jafari’s leadership style blends resilience with meticulous preparation and psychological strength.

Far from relying on emotional, unstructured play, her team operate with clear tactics and composure. Under her guidance, the players have learned to “comeback”, to rise after setbacks and maintain focus under pressure, qualities that were crucial in overcoming a tough Jordanian side on their home ground.

Key players such as Sara Didar and Negin Zandi have become symbols of Iranian women’s football, scoring vital goals that broke down not just defenses but barriers of doubt and underestimation.

The team’s goalkeeper Raha Yazdani and captain Zahra Ghanbari provided stability and leadership that held the team together in moments of intense competition. Their combined hard work, along with the strong tactical guidance from Jafari, has changed what Iranian women can achieve in a sport that has long been dominated by men and faced many challenges.

This qualification is more than a ticket to a prestigious tournament; it is a testament to the power of perseverance and vision. Despite playing with far fewer resources compared to regional football powerhouses like Australia, Japan, or South Korea, Iran’s women have proven that with unity, determination, and intelligent coaching, success is attainable.

Looking ahead, the challenge will be to sustain this momentum and to demand greater support from media, football authorities, and society at large. The Persian Queens have opened a new chapter, not only in sports but in the cultural narrative of Iranian women asserting their place on the international stage.

In this time of rising Iranian women’s football, the team’s success under Coach Jafari is a clear example that great things can come from hardship.

Iran beat India in 2025 Asian Women’s Youth Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran registered their first victory at the 2025 Asian Women’s Youth Handball Championship, defeating India 42-30 in Group B on Monday. Iran had previously lost to Japan and South Korea in the preliminary round.

Group A features China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, and Kazakhstan.

Iran will face the fourth-place team from Group B in the knockout stage on Wednesday.

The Republic of Korea have won eight of the 10 editions of the competition, all between 2005 and 2019. The last two winners have been Iran, in 2022, when neither Japan, nor Korea took part, and Japan in 2023.

The preliminary round of the 11th AHF Asian Women’s Youth Handball Championship is being held on 18, 19 and 21 July, with the semi-finals scheduled on 23 July.

The big final and the bronze medal match are due to take place on 26 July.

The 2025 Asian Women’s Youth Handball Championship will be the 11th edition of the championship held from 18 to 26 July 2025 in Jingtangshan, China under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation. It was the first time in history that championship was organised by the Chinese Handball Association. It also will act as the qualification tournament for the 2026 Women’s Youth World Handball Championship.

West Ham eye Mehdi Taremi: report

TEHRAN – West Ham are targeting Inter Milan forward Mehdi Taremi this summer.

The Hammers finished 14th in a dismal Premier League campaign last time out and have since lost Mohammed Kudus in a £55million deal to Tottenham.

Graham Potter’s side are looking to bring in attacking players as they begin their rebuild, notably targeting Liverpool star Harvey Elliott.

Inter forward Taremi has been targeted, just a year after he joined the San Siro giants, after playing just 805 minutes in Serie A last season.

The Iranian looks set to leave Italy as his agent has begun offering him out to potential suitors.

According to Transfermarkt, his market value is estimated at 3.5 million euros. These changes signify a new phase in the player’s career, and there are many speculations about his future club opportunities.

Steven Nzonzi parts ways with Sepahan

TEHRAN – Sepahan football team French midfielder Steven Nzonzi left the team.

The 36-year-old player joined the Iranian club last season from Turkish side Konyaspor.

He thanked Sepahan and its fans for the way they welcomed him and his family.

“I had a great season, I wish all of you nothing but the best for the upcoming season,” the French player posted on his Instagram account.

Under the management of Moharram Navidkia, Sepahan will face Al Duhail in the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Elite Play-off.

Bahram Saveh Shemshaki elected Iran’s ski president

TEHRAN – Bahram Saveh Shemshaki was elected as president of Iran Ski Federation on Monday.

In the presidential elections held at the Iran’s Academy Olympic, Saveh Shemshaki was elected for a four-year term till 2029.

He secured 34 votes of 38 votes cast.

The Iranian Ski Federation was founded in 1947, alongside the establishment of the Iranian Olympic Federation. This occurred after the introduction of skiing in Iran, with the first ski trails established in the Telo hills (Lashkarak) and later in Abali.

Persepolis target Mehdi Zare to join Akhmat Grozny

TEHRAN – Gol Gohar football team defender Mehdi Zare has reportedly reached an agreement with Russian Premier League side Akhmat Grozny.

The 22-year-old has been linked with a move to Persepolis football team.

The Russian club has reportedly reached an agreement with Senegalese defender of Gol Gohar Ousmane N’Dong.

Akhmat Grozny, formerly Terek Grozny, are a Russian professional football club based in Grozny that play in the Russian Premier League.

Iranian, Pakistani interior ministers discuss flood relief and presidential visit in phone call

TEHRAN – Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni expressed solidarity with Pakistan on Monday as catastrophic monsoon floods ravage the nation, offering “all possible assistance” during a high-level phone call with his Pakistani counterpart Mohsin Naqvi.

The diplomatic engagement comes ahead of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s scheduled visit to Islamabad, highlighting deepening bilateral ties amid crisis.

“Heartfelt sympathy to the families of the deceased,” Minister Momeni declared, emphasizing that “Iran stands with the Government and people of Pakistan in this difficult time.”

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has

mobilized readiness to dispatch medical and relief teams, reinforcing Tehran’s commitment to immediate humanitarian action.

IRCS head Pir-Hossein Kolivand confirmed preparations to support Pakistan’s flood response, stating, “We are ready to send medical and relief teams to assist humanitarian operations.”

Pakistan’s eastern Punjab province – its most populous region – faces unprecedented devastation, with relentless rains since June 26 triggering flash floods that killed 63 people in a single 24-hour period.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) confirms at least 124 fatalities and 264 injuries nationwide, predominantly from

collapsing homes. District Chakwal recorded a catastrophic 400mm deluge overnight, submerging entire communities, while Rawalpindi issued mass evacuation orders after 200mm rainfall overwhelmed drainage systems.

Minister Naqvi acknowledged Iran’s solidarity, stating Pakistan “looks forward to welcoming President Pezeshkian” next week.

This diplomatic coordination follows Naqvi’s recent Tehran meeting with Ali-Akbar Velayati, a senior Adviser of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, where both strategized on mutual interests and crisis response frameworks.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))



Addressing the importance of justice and inclusivity, Pezeshkian stated: “Every citizen—regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political orientation—must be treated fairly. This includes justice in appointments, management, and public interaction.”

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

What the Persian Gulf countries learned from Iran’s war with Israel

From Page 1 ▶

A conflict that redraws the security paradigm

Historically, the Persian Gulf’s security systems have rested on two pillars: protection by major Western powers and the strategy of containing Iran through force, pressure diplomacy, and marginalization.

The June war, however, served as a catalyst for systemic crisis. The scale and precision of

Iran’s response to Israeli attacks—including an unprecedented long-range missile strike on targets in Qatari territory—took both the global public and Arab elites by surprise.

The message was unequivocal: neither Western military bases, nor the most sophisticated weapons packages, nor alliances with Washington or London offer total immunity from a regional power capable of combining conventional military might, missile technol-

ogy, and asymmetric warfare.

From that point onward, even in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, speaking of “containing” Iran began to sound like an outdated formula—detached from a geopolitical landscape where deterrence is no longer anyone’s monopoly. The Persian Gulf countries’ ability to determine their own future, once remote and symbolic, has emerged as the only realistic safeguard.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Tehran to host major building industry expo in late August



TEHRAN - The 25th International Building and Construction Industry Exhibition will be held from August 17 to 20 at Tehran's Permanent International Fairgrounds, according to Bahman Abdollahi, head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives.

Despite recent challenges, Abdollahi said the event will move forward as planned, with stronger coordination and broader participation from prominent domestic and international companies. He emphasized that the exhibition will leverage the full capabilities and expertise of Iran's construction sector, along with support from relevant government agencies.

Describing the event as one of the largest and most specialized building industry exhibitions in the region, he said it offers a key platform to showcase the latest technologies, products, and services in construction. The event also aims to highlight domestic capabilities, expand export markets, and promote the exchange of technical knowledge in the sector.

CMDSF injects \$266m into market amid post-conflict volatility

TEHRAN - Iran's Capital Market Development and Stabilization Fund (CMDSF) has spent 133 trillion rials (approximately \$266 million) over the past four months to support Iran's stock market, according to Ruhollah Sharifian, head of the fund's executive board.

Sharifian said the market entered a sensitive phase following the recent 12-day conflict, prompting the fund to prioritize market stability efforts. The interventions were aimed at mitigating systemic risks and supporting the financial system in line with Article 28 of the Law on Removing Barriers to Competitive Production and Enhancing the

Financial System, passed in 2015.

He emphasized that the fund has strictly followed its mandate by purchasing shares directly from the trading board, as block purchases are not permitted under its statutes. The fund's support has been executed through the sale of its own assets, in compliance with its regulations and investment guidelines.

In a further sign of growing interest in market protections, over 115,000 retail investors have purchased share insurance products designed to mitigate individual exposure to market downturns.

Energy minister announces 78,000MW investment demand in renewable energy sector



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Energy Abbas Aliabadi highlighted a strong private sector appetite for investment in renewable energy projects, revealing a demand exceeding 78,000 megawatts across the country.

Speaking at a ceremony in Mazandaran province, where new water infrastructure projects in Sari were inaugurated and work commenced on similar initiatives in Mian-dorud, Aliabadi emphasized the government's shift toward leveraging private capital alongside public resources to accelerate development in water and renewable energy sectors.

He explained that while historically energy infrastructure development relied heavily on

government funding, the current administration prioritizes private investment and public participation to enhance project delivery and sustainability. Investors have shown particular interest in complementary projects such as energy storage systems, addressing the challenges posed by the intermittent nature of renewable energy.

Aliabadi also acknowledged ongoing water scarcity concerns, despite recent rainfall improvements that have brought Mazandaran into a more favorable "white" status. He called for sustained efforts to strengthen infrastructure and confirmed that priority projects would receive dedicated funding to ensure timely completion.

During his visit to Mazandaran, the minister oversaw the commissioning of a 183-megawatt gas unit at the Neka power plant, the launch of five distributed generation plants adding 14 megawatts, and the completion of water supply expansions in Sari, including a 20,000-cubic-meter reservoir and a 3.2-kilometer transmission line. These projects represent part of a broader investment package aimed at boosting regional water and energy capacity.

Tax revenues up 51.7% in year to March

TEHRAN - Iran's tax revenues rose by more than half in the calendar year to late March amid efforts by the government to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on oil exports.

A Sunday report by the ISNA news agency said the Iranian government had collected 12,290 trillion rials (\$14.1 billion) worth of tax in the year to March 20.

The report cited figures from government agencies responsible for economic statistics, saying tax revenues had increased by 51.7% from the year to March 2024.

It also quoted the head of the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) as saying that the tax to gross domestic product ratio in the Iranian economy had reached 8.3%, up from 5.7% in 2021.

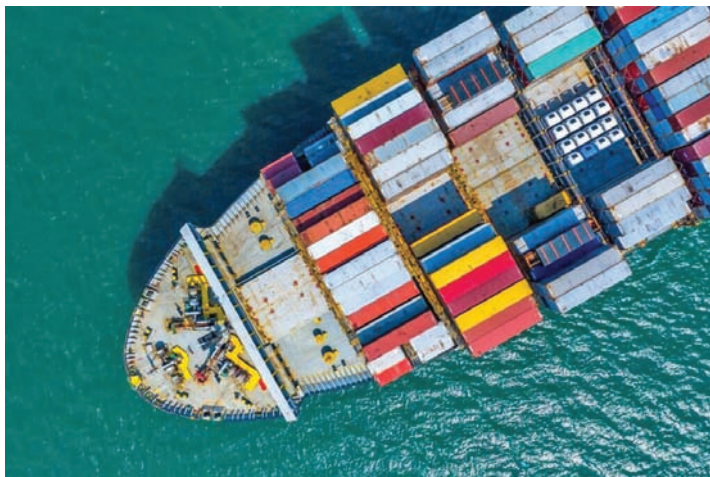
Mohammad Hadi Sobhanian said that tax revenues had funded more than 50% of the Iranian government's budget needs last year, up from below 30% in 2021.

Previous statements from the INTA have shown that the agency relies on direct tax, which mainly includes the income tax as well as duties imposed on corporations and taxes levied on the rich, for more than 70% of its receipts.

The Iranian government has tried to increase its tax revenues in recent years amid US sanctions that have restricted its ability to sell oil in the international markets.

The INTA has reported major increases in its annual receipts thanks to better taxation policies and the increased use of online platforms for tax payments.

Iran's trade with neighbors tops \$13b in spring



TEHRAN - Iran's trade with its 15 neighboring countries exceeded \$13.42 billion in the spring of the current Iranian year, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Between March 20 and June 21, around 23 million tons of goods were exchanged, reflecting a 17 percent decline in volume and a 16 percent drop in value compared to the same period last year.

Exports accounted for \$6.65 billion of the total, down 22 percent year-on-year. Iraq was the top destination for Iranian goods with \$1.904 billion, followed by the United Arab Emirates at \$1.6 billion, Turkey with \$940 million, Afghanistan with more than \$510 million, and Oman with \$437 million.

Non-oil imports from neighboring countries reached \$6.77 billion, marking a 9.65 percent decrease from the previous year. The United Arab Emirates was the largest exporter to Iran with

over \$3.885 billion, followed by Turkey with more than \$1.986 billion, Russia with \$353 million, Oman with \$223 million, and Pakistan with \$174 million.

Despite the overall decline, trade with several neighbors increased. Trade with Qatar rose by 69 percent, with Russia by 19 percent, with Oman by 11 percent, and with Turkmenistan by 8.5 percent.

Exports to Eurasian bloc rise 22% in Q1 under free trade pact

TEHRAN - Iran's exports to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) grew by 22 percent in the first quarter of this year, reaching \$532 million, according to Elham Haji Karimi, head of the secretariat for the Iran-EAEU Free Trade Agreement.

She said the agreement, which came into force on May 14, has already delivered notable results, especially given that 87 percent of goods traded between the two sides are now exempt from tariffs, the portal of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported.

Karimi highlighted the strong interest from both Iranian and Eurasian traders, calling the deal one of Iran's most impactful

trade agreements to date. She expressed optimism about further deepening of economic ties, noting the support and commitment of officials from both sides, as well as from the Eurasian Economic Commission, the union's executive body.

Exports saw the biggest jump to Russia and Armenia, with increases of 33 percent and 28 percent, respectively. During the same period, Iran imported over \$380 million worth of goods from the EAEU, a three percent drop compared to last year. This brought the trade balance for the quarter to a positive \$152 million in Iran's favor, following the country's first-ever trade surplus with the bloc last year.

Karimi noted that prior to the 2019 provisional agreement between Iran and the EAEU, Iranian exports to the region were limited mostly to agricultural products, totaling around \$650 million in 2018. Since then, bilateral trade has steadily increased, with Iran's exports surpassing \$2 billion last year. The export basket has now expanded to include industrial goods, and she expects further growth in this category under the full free trade framework.

Imports from the EAEU primarily consist of essential commodities and items needed domestically, according to Karimi, who reiterated the strong response from businesses looking to capitalize on the agreement's tariff exemptions.

India exports non-oil products worth \$514m to Iran in a quarter

TEHRAN- India exported non-oil products worth \$514 million to Iran during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that India was Iran's fourth source of non-oil imports during the three-month period.

According to the official, Iran's total non-oil trade during the first quarter reached 43.489 million tons, valued at \$24.684 billion.

Imports accounted for 9.013 million tons of that volume, worth \$13.029 billion—down 4.35 percent in weight and 11.73 percent in value year-on-year, the IRICA head stated.

The average value of imported goods was \$1,446 per ton, reflecting a 7.7 percent decline, the official said.

Key import items included unrefined gold at \$965 million, animal feed corn at \$883 million, rice at \$500 million, sunflower seed oil at \$493 million, and mobile phones at \$372 million, he announced.

The UAE was Iran's leading import partner with \$3.886 billion in shipments, Asgari stated. According to the IRICA head, Iran exported \$11.655 billion worth of non-oil goods in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year.

The volume of non-oil exports stood at 34.476 million tons, representing a 9.3 percent decrease in weight and a 14.4 percent drop in value compared to the same period last year, the official stated.

The average customs value of exported goods was \$338 per ton, down 5.6 percent year-on-year, he

added.

Petrochemical exports during the quarter totaled 11,133 million tons, valued at \$4.684 billion, which marks a 28.7 percent decline in weight and a 24.5 percent decrease in value from the year before, Asgari stated.

He said that the top non-oil export items were liquefied propane at \$874 million, liquefied butane at \$611 million, methanol at \$576 million, petroleum bitumen at \$574 million, and natural gas at \$456 million.

China was Iran's largest export destination with purchases totaling \$3.511 billion. It was followed by Iraq at \$1.905 billion, the United Arab Emirates at \$1.592 billion, Turkey at \$937 million, Afghanistan at \$510 million, Oman at \$437 million, and Pakistan at \$420 million, according to the IRI-CA head.

Govt. includes ICCIMA in currency policy committee amid economic pressures



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Atabak said decisions regarding foreign currency management are now being made through a specialized committee that includes a representative from the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA). The move aims to enhance coordination in managing the country's foreign exchange resources more effectively.

Speaking about the recent 12-day con-

flict, Atabak said the enemy's objective was to trigger economic collapse. However, he praised the resilience and unity demonstrated by the military, public, business community, chambers of commerce, and retailers, which helped the country weather the crisis. He said this cohesion strengthened Iran's position among regional powers.

Addressing domestic economic challenges, Atabak acknowledged ongoing tensions in industrial production but called some of the volatility natural. He pointed to the implementation of a crisis support package, which he said had a measurable impact and could be extended. He noted that the rollout of the package was delayed in reaching provincial authorities and banks, and therefore its duration may need to be extended.

The minister explained that foreign exchange decisions are being made through a committee process, where the voice of the ICCIMA is factored in. He admitted that the

entanglement of trade and currency policy had created challenges, which the ministry is working to resolve.

He emphasized the importance of supporting export-generated revenues, asserting that export earnings belong to the exporters and must be respected in policymaking. Atabak also revealed efforts to raise the ceiling for mandatory currency repatriation from 60 percent to 70 percent, a change that may be submitted to the cabinet for approval.

On the issue of production equipment, he said a credit line has been established between the Central Bank and a foreign country to facilitate machinery imports, although the process is slower than for other goods.

The minister expressed concern over rising production costs and said the government is exploring ways to revive non-currency-based trade mechanisms. He also noted that technical issues related to Iran's import registration system are being actively addressed.

importing 23.43 million tons valued at \$38.31 billion in that period. The UAE, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan persisted as the top partner countries in bilateral trade.

These figures suggest a broad mid2024 to early2025 recovery in nonoil trade with neighboring countries. However, the more recent spring figures indicate a downturn in that season—with April to June trade falling about 16 percent in value year-on-year—even while trade with countries like Qatar, Russia, and Oman appeared to increase. This may reflect shorter-term regional and seasonal shifts, or fluctuations in border access, freight routes, or commodity demand.

Overall, year-to-date non-oil trade data signals growth across the broader 202425 cycle, followed by a spring-specific contraction—emphasizing how broader trajectories can diverge from seasonal patterns.

Erasing Gaza via starvation

Flour costs \$100 per kilo as Palestinians risk their lives for food aid

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Israel's relentless military assault on Gaza continues to leave a trail of death, destruction, and starvation, as the international community remains largely passive in the face of what many now describe as a deliberate campaign of extermination.

On Monday alone, Israeli strikes killed dozens more Palestinians, according to medical sources. Just a day earlier, Israeli troops slaughtered more than 100 Palestinians across the besieged strip — including 92 unarmed civilians who were shot dead while desperately seeking food near the Zikim crossing in northern Gaza and at aid distribution points in Rafah and Khan Younis.

The humanitarian crisis has reached catastrophic levels under Israel's suffocating siege, which has pushed Gaza to the edge of famine. With vital crossings sealed and aid severely restricted, Gaza's 2.3 million residents face starvation in real time.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has sounded the alarm, revealing it is receiving "desperate messages of starva-



tion" from inside Gaza — including from its own staff. In a post on X, the agency wrote: "Food prices have increased 40-fold. Meanwhile, just outside Gaza, stockpiled in warehouses UNRWA has enough food for the entire population for over three months."

Calling the crisis "manmade," UNRWA demanded urgent intervention: "The suffering in Gaza is manmade and must be stopped. Lift the siege and let aid in safely and at scale."

The World Food Program echoed these warnings. Antoine Renard, WFP's representative for Palestine, told Al Jazeera from occupied East Jerusalem (al-Quds): "You have a level of despair that people

are ready to risk their lives just to reach any of the assistance actually coming into Gaza. Just to give you an idea, [the price of] 1kg of flour is currently \$100."

Renard added that many families are going days without food, surviving on meals every third day. He noted that only a "very limited" number of charity kitchens are still operating, with malnutrition soaring and fainting among civilians becoming increasingly common.

"[There's a] soaring number of people facing malnutrition, and we can really see that the situation is really getting to levels that we've never seen ever before."

Despite these appalling con-

ditions, Israel continues its brutal military campaign unchecked. Channel 12 reported that Israeli Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir has proposed a new phase of ground operations, described by Israeli sources as "the plan for taking over Gaza."

Since the start of its war on Gaza in October 2023, the regime of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes and crimes against humanity — has killed more than 59,000 Palestinians. Human rights experts and legal scholars accuse Israel of using starvation as a weapon of war in an effort to force Palestinians from their homeland — a strategy that many now openly label as genocide.

Earlier this month, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territory, called for immediate international action to halt Israel's ongoing "genocide" in Gaza.

Yet, Israel's military aggression and starvation policies continue with impunity, bolstered by unwavering support from some Western powers — particularly the United States.

Gaza killings denounced as 'disgrace to humanity' by Belgian king



Belgium's King Philippe said Europe "must show stronger leadership" on the crisis in Gaza, adding that "the current situation has gone on far too long" and "is a disgrace to humanity," Politico reported.

Belgium's head of state made the comments in a speech on Sunday ahead of the country's July 21 national holiday. He said Belgium supports a call by UN Secretary-General António Guterres' for "an immediate end to this unbearable crisis."

At least 73 people were killed on Sunday while attempting to obtain aid across Gaza, the enclave's health ministry said, scores of them at the Zikim crossing with Israel in the north of the territory. More than 150 people were reportedly wounded.

That followed the deaths of at least 32 people on Saturday as witnesses said Israeli troops shot at Palestinians seeking food from distri-

bution outlets run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

The group is backed by the U.S. and Israel and has led humanitarian efforts in Gaza since May, but according to the United Nations human rights office, 674 people have been killed near its distribution sites as of July 13.

Pope Leo XIV added his voice to the outcry on Sunday, saying after a prayer ceremony that "I once again call for an immediate end to the barbarity of this war." The previous Thursday, Israeli shelling hit the only Catholic church in Gaza, killing three and prompting the pope to call for "the prohibition of collective punishment [and] the indiscriminate use of force."

The weekend violence in Gaza did not draw a public response from the EU's top brass, however.

On the previous Tuesday, EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels had declined to sanction Israel over its conduct in the war despite a human rights situation in Gaza described by the EU's High Representative Kaja Kallas as "catastrophic."

"We don't have a ceasefire, and that's why it is so much harder to provide that aid," Kallas said after the July 15 Foreign Affairs Council. "But we really need to work for that to help the people because we don't know how far the ceasefire really is [from being agreed]."

'I'm afraid to go home': Israeli soldiers fear prosecution over genocide in Gaza

Israel's genocide in Gaza has left soldiers serving in the occupation army "afraid" to return "home", fearing prosecution for war crimes committed during the ongoing assault which has killed more than 59,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, that is according to Middle East Monitor.

In Canada, where several citizens have served in the Israeli army, a growing number of those soldiers are reported to be reconsidering trips home after learning they may be under investigation.

In June, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) confirmed it had launched a "structural investigation" into crimes committed during the Gaza assault.

The RCMP said it was acting under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, which gives Canadian authorities the power to gather evidence and eventually open criminal cases into genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity, even when these crimes happen abroad.

The investigation began in early 2024 and is described as an intelligence-gathering process, but the RCMP has not ruled out future prosecutions.

In a statement issued on 4 June, the force clarified: "Should a perpetrator of core international crimes — such as genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity — with the appropriate nexus to Canada be identified, the RCMP will initiate a separate criminal investigation."

While no charges have been laid, the investigation has already created anxiety among dual Israeli Canadian citizens who served in Gaza. Several have reportedly cancelled trips or sought legal advice.

Some fear being detained at the border; others say they have received no support from Israeli officials or consular services.

This comes amid growing international momentum for legal action against those responsible for the mass killing of civilians in Gaza. At least 12 countries, including Brazil, Belgium, and Ireland, have received legal complaints targeting Israeli soldiers for alleged war crimes.

In some cases, investigations have begun into individuals identified through open-source evidence such as news footage, social media posts and military records.

One group, the Hind Rajab Foundation, named after a six-year-old Palestinian girl killed in Gaza, has played a leading role in these efforts.

The organization has tracked Israeli army soldiers, submitted evidence to governments, and filed cases in countries where international law allows for universal jurisdiction.

In Canada, a public website created by journalist Davide Mastracci has listed the names of Canadians who served in the Israeli army.



northern Gaza.

The resistance forces said the operation was part of their ongoing "David's Stones" campaign.

After nearly two years of U.S.-backed Israeli genocidal war on the enclave, the occupation regime has failed to achieve its war objective of defeating Hamas and the Palestinian resistance.

Handala embarks on lifesaving voyage to break Gaza siege



From page 1 ► Yet, Handala's role goes beyond delivering supplies. The organizers insisted that their trip is an expression of solidarity and resistance.

They challenged the legitimacy of the blockade and called for it to end. Their trip is stated as an attempt to "break the siege," which allows them to build an international discussion, not only on humanitarian obligations, but the legal and ethical implications of the blockade as well.

Crew reflects international solidarity

Handala's diverse crew of 21 activists from ten countries embodies a global wave of solidarity with Gaza, uniting parliamentarians, human rights lawyers, medical professionals, journalists, and seasoned sailors. Seven U.S. citizens are on board, including Palestinian-American lawyer and seasoned flotilla veteran Huwaida Arraf and Amazon Labor Union founder Chris Smalls.

France contributes prominent figures such as parliamentarian Gabrielle Cathala, member of the European Parliament Emma Four-

reau, and nurse Justine Kempf, who brings extensive field experience with Doctors Without Borders.

Seventy-year-old Norwegian activist Vigdis Bjorvand, nearly half a century into Palestinian solidarity work, is joined by Italian journalist and anti-mafia campaigner Antonio Mazzeo and Spanish engineer-activist Sergio Toribio, notable for legal action following another flotilla's interception.

Handala distinguishes itself as a civilian, grassroots initiative—its participants have resigned from jobs, braved sabotage, and risked their lives to deliver aid and affirmation of rights to Gaza's children, where official pathways have failed.

Sabotage and escalating risks

Handala departed from Gallipoli, Italy, on July 20, entering international waters as the final phase of its voyage to Gaza began.

Just prior to departure, the mission was marred by two sabotage incidents: a rope wound around the propeller and the delivery of sulfuric acid instead of fresh water—an act that injured crew members with chemical burns.

Despite these life-threatening challenges, the team managed to resolve the crisis and proceed, drawing renewed attention to both the dangers of their journey and the lengths to which opponents may go to impede the mission.

To mitigate further risks—particularly the threat of Israeli naval interception, which has derailed earlier flotilla attempts—the coalition equipped Handala with advanced track-

ing technology.

Developed with Forensic Architecture, the tracker enables real-time public monitoring of the vessel's progress and aims to deter surreptitious interference.

This public transparency is expected to garner global public opinion and protect the ship from any unauthorized actions at sea.

Political and legal implications

The coalition is asking governments to make the vessel's passage safe under maritime conventions and humanitarian standards.

The campaign raises two questions, namely, whether world powers will uphold their commitments to protecting civilians, and whether media scrutiny will generate the diplomatic pressure necessary to prevent more deaths at sea.

For Gaza's besieged population, Handala embodies hope for both immediate relief and long-term liberation from the cycle of deprivation.

The ship's progress—intensely monitored by supporters and adversaries alike—now stands as a barometer for broader efforts to address Gaza's starvation crisis not only through aid, but through an end to structural violence.

As the ship navigates perilous waters, its mission illuminates the dire consequences of inaction amid starvation, and calls upon the world to honor the fundamental right to dignity and safety for Gaza's children.

Through it, we see how do we benefit from the experience of the resistance and its weapons? How do we strengthen the Lebanese army?"

Former US Ambassador to Lebanon David Hale has told The Hill, "For the history of American-Lebanese relations is one strewn with inflated expectations and deflated ambition. And not a few corpses. This time, it could be different."

Hale warned, "If Lebanese officials do not keep their side of the ceasefire and disarm Hezbollah, the Israel [Occupation] Forces will likely do it for them, at a price to the authority of the state and its leaders. It will not just be a humiliation to those leaders, but a tragedy for all concerned if they fail to grasp the opportunity to regain full sovereign control of their state."

Hale's words indeed provide a summary of Barrack's mission, which is based on setting a timetable for disarming Hezbollah, although the matter does not seem that simple, because one cannot rely on Western estimates, let alone illusions.

The U.S. Special Envoy to Lebanon and Syria, who has previously called on the Lebanese to follow the example of interim Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa, will hear from Lebanese officials that all of Sharaa's reassuring statements toward Israel have not protected him.

Various Lebanese figures have even become more convinced of the need for national consensus on a comprehensive defense strategy that protects the interests of Lebanon, with all its sects, especially following Israeli Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir's statement on Sunday in which he said the "Druze massacre" in Sweida (as he claimed) proves once again that "those who cannot defend themselves, in the Middle East, will not enjoy security."

Here, it is useful to recall a statement by Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem who said, "The defense strategy is not related to disarming the resistance, voluntarily or by force."

Rather, it is a comprehensive defense policy at diplomatic, economic, and military levels.

cially since the Israeli enemy has not committed to implementing the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon.

Aoun will explain to the US envoy the nature of the Lebanese complications related to what is happening in Syria.

According to these sources, Aoun will insist that the resistance's weapons cannot be confiscated until the Israeli enemy withdraws from the positions it has occupied, guarantees that its attacks will cease, and Lebanese prisoners are handed over.

Reportedly, Barrack will meet with a number of ministers at a dinner hosted by the US embassy on Monday evening.

He will also meet with political figures at a dinner hosted by MP Fouad Makhzoumi on Tuesday evening.

Observers expect Barrack to be surprised by a relative change in the public mood regarding Hezbollah's weapons, especially since most sects are sensing the imminent danger and consider these weapons necessary for their security.

US high commissioner in Beirut again: What's new?

From page 1 ► In parallel, the Druze community's senior cleric, Sheikh Sami Abi Al-Muna, received calls from the Grand Mufti of the Republic, Sheikh Abdul Latif Derian, and from Speaker Nabih Berri, to ease tensions.

Besides, a major Druze-Sunni meeting was held at the Bekaa Fatwa House, where Druze MP Wael Abu Faour emphasized that "it is unacceptable to spread internal strife between the Arab tribes and the Bani Ma'ruf [i.e., the Druze]. Our solidarity can positively impact the situation in Syria."

Thomas Barrack's visit coincides with the anniversary of Hezbollah's deterrent and successful attack on positions of the terrorist al-Nusra Front in areas near the Lebanese-Syrian border on July 21, 2017, with the cooperation of the Lebanese army as well as the Syrian military under the leadership of Beshar al-Assad.

Informed sources affirmed to the Tehran Times that President Joseph Aoun will insist, this time, on Lebanon's right to effective international guarantees, espe-

Iranian police seize 3,000-year-old artifacts

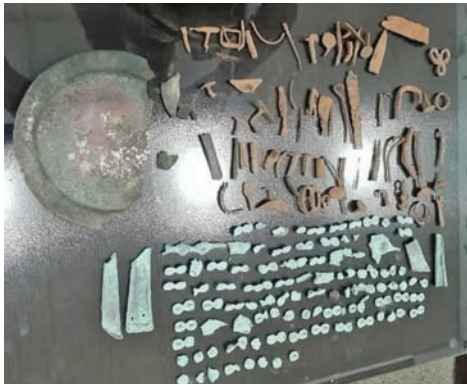
TEHRAN – Iranian police have recovered 28 ancient bronze artifacts estimated to be over 3,000 years old during a traffic stop in Khorramdarreh, Zanjan province, local authorities said on Monday.

According to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the objects were discovered in a vehicle traveling from northwestern border regions toward Tehran. The operation was conducted jointly by Khorramdarreh's criminal investigation police and the provincial heritage protection unit.

The artifacts were found during a routine inspection of a Peugeot 405 vehicle on a main transit route. Officers became suspicious of the vehicle and conducted a detailed search, said Colonel Nasser Habibian who presides over the provincial heritage protection unit.

"A total of 28 bronze artifacts, believed to be over three millennia old, were seized along with a professionally concealed metal detector," Habibian said.

Authorities also arrested several suspects in connection with the smuggling attempt.



They were referred to judicial authorities for further legal proceedings, Habibian said.

"Investigations into the case remain ongoing," added.

The police commander said police and cultural heritage officers remain committed to preventing the illicit trade of antiquities. "Safeguarding Iran's cultural heritage is a national duty," he said, urging citizens to report suspicious activity related to historical artifacts.

Restoration operations of Taj-ul-Molk dome of Isfahan Jame' Mosque start

TEHRAN—Director General of Isfahan Cultural Heritage Department Amir Karamzadeh gave news of start of restoration operations of Taj-ul-Molk dome of Isfahan Jame' Mosque.

According to Miras Arya (CHTN), he said that following restoration operations of Isfahan Jame' Mosque, the restoration of Taj-ul-Molk dome began.

He explained that the restoration operations include strengthening and restoring the outer shell of the dome with a credit worth 10 billion rials (\$11,111), adding that given the anticipations, it is expected that the operations will be completed within two months.

Taj-ul-Molk Dome has a special position in the field of culture and art of Islamic Iran. The bricks and geometric decorations and motifs that have been worked on this dome are very artistic and beautiful and have a lot of value. This dome changes from a square shape to an octagon and then to a hexagon and is built on a cylinder. Its dimensions are 10.5 meters in diameter and 19.5 meters in height, respectively.

The dome of Taj-ul-Molk has two shells, and

its outer shell is covered with beautiful bricks, which adds to the beauty and glory of the building. Inside the dome, there is a historical inscription, the date of its construction goes back to 481 AH/1101 AD, and its founder is introduced as Tajul-Molk. Some archaeologists also believe that this building may have been built as a tomb, canopy, fountain or library. But none of these theories have been definitively confirmed.

The inscription on the dome of Taj-ul-Molk is written in a simple Kufic script and is written with bricks. The name of the founder of this dome, Abu al-Ghanaim, Marzban bin Khosrow, Firoz Shirazi (nicknamed Tajul-Molk) and the date of its construction in 481 A.H. are highlighted. Also, inside the Taj-ul-Molk dome, there are other inscriptions in simple Kufic script on raised bricks, which have verses from Surah Isra and Al-Imran.

In general, the Taj-ul-Molk dome is considered a unique work of art and cultural value in Islamic Iran, which is very attractive to visitors, with the use of artistic architecture and beautiful decorations.

Trenching operations begin in Paleolithic site of eastern Iran

TEHRAN—Head of South Khorasan Cultural Heritage Department Ahmad Barabadi gave news of start of conducting archaeological trenches in the Paleolithic site in Sarayan county, east of Iran.

According to IRIB, he said the trenching operations have been started with permission of the Cultural Heritage Ministry's Research Institute.

Based on former studies, this site contains a sequence from the Upper Paleolithic to the Middle Paleolithic eras, he pointed out.

He also said, "According to the preliminary evaluations, this Paleolithic site which extends over 100 hectares, can significantly change our understanding of the first inhabitants of this part of Iranian plateau."

Barabadi continued that with the end of studies of Carleton Stevens Coon, American anthropologist, no trenching operations had been conducted in Paleolithic sites of eastern Iranian plateau until the middle of the 20th Century.

This is the first time in recent seven decades that studies of this kind have begun in South Khorasan, he said, expressing the hope that with implementation of this project, the precincts of the Paleolithic site are defined, preventing more destructions.

Also, Ali Sadraei, caretaker of the study team, said that unlike some key sites on the central Iranian plateau, which are of the Nebka type, the Paleolithic sites in the east of the country generally have a different morphology and are more comparable to the open sites on the southern coast of the Pars Basin, an is-



sue that adds to the complexity of these sites.

He added: "In this regard, and in order to achieve an accurate understanding of the site's condition, in the first step, we will systematically survey the site's surface and record the general distribution area of stone tools. Part of this operational phase has been completed so far, and this part of the operation will be carried out mainly without removing stone tools in order to minimize the amount of damage to the site."

"This method helps us to have better understanding of the concentration of the settlement in the Paleolithic site and the diversity of the available stone industries. It will also prepare the roadmap for continuing the trenching operations with the least damages."

He expressed that hope that by continuing this operation and subsequent studies, they will achieve an accurate chronology of this site, which will help them end the tragedy of the lack of absolute antiquity from sites in eastern Iran and gain a precise understanding of the status of hominins in eastern Iran.

Archaeologists consider another excavation at Qal-e Kord Cave, one of Iran's oldest known human settlements

TEHRAN – A number of local officials and university experts held a coordination meeting on Monday to plan the sixth season of archaeological excavations at Qal-e Kord Cave, marking the continuation of work at one of Iran's oldest known human settlements located in Avaj county of Qazvin province.

The session was attended by Hamed Vahdatinasab, scientific advisor to the project and leader of previous excavation seasons, alongside Milad Hashemi, a faculty member at Tarbiat Modares University and head of the upcoming excavation team. They met with Seyyed Mehdi Hosseini, the provincial tourism chief, to discuss the start of the new excavation phase scheduled for early August.

Vahdatinasab briefed attendees on findings from the prior five excavation seasons. He noted the readiness of the excavation team to resume work aimed at uncovering further evidence of early human habitation.

Hosseini expressed the department's support for the new season and highlighted the rich cultural heritage and tourism potential of the Avaj region. He emphasized that promoting tourism and increasing visitor engagement remain priorities for the current year.

Qal-e Kord is considered the oldest human settlement in Iran, according to preliminary archaeological results that indicate an



age of more than 400,000 years based on deposits found there, according to Vahdatinasab.

"Knowing that Qal-e Kord was inhabited by Neanderthals, we are seeking to obtain a chronology of these cave dwellers. We are also looking for animal remains and the foods they consumed... As we go down, we discover older layers."

The archaeologist said stone tools obtained from this cave indicate that it was a residence of other humans who lived before Neanderthals; species such as the Heidelberg man or possibly a type of upright man.

As mentioned by Vahdatinasab, archaeologists have so far succeeded in identifying two

types of extinct prehistoric horses, deer, brown bear, and rhinoceros in animal remains in this cave.

In November 2018, the first season of the joint Iran-France archaeological exploration led to the discovery of over 6,000 cultural pieces in the area. It also yielded bone remains of horses, deer, bears, and many stone tools belonging to the Middle Paleolithic period (between 200,000 and 40,000 years ago).

A 2019 study published in the Journal of Human Evolution suggests that Neanderthals were roaming at the Iranian Zagros Mountain sometime between 40 to 70 thousand years ago.

Until the late 20th century,

Neanderthals were regarded as genetically, morphologically, and behaviorally distinct from living humans. However, more recent discoveries about this well-preserved fossil Eurasian population have revealed an overlap between living and archaic humans.

Neanderthals lived before and during the last ice age of the Pleistocene in some of the most unforgiving environments ever inhabited by humans. They developed a successful culture, with a complex stone tool technology, that was based on hunting, with some scavenging and local plant collection. Their survival during tens of thousands of years of the last glaciation is a remarkable testament to human adaptation.

Lighting upgrade begins at majestic Chehel Sotoun Palace

TEHRAN – Authorities have started modern lighting installation at the Chehel Sotoun Palace complex in Isfahan, provincial cultural officials announced on Sunday.

The 17th-century palace/pavilion is located inside Bagh-e Chehel Sotoun, which, along with several other Persian gardens, has been registered in the UNESCO World Heritage list under the title the Persian Garden.

"The lighting enhancement operation at the Chehel Sotoun Palace pavilion has officially started, using an advanced lighting technology," the provincial tourism chief Amir Karamzadeh said.

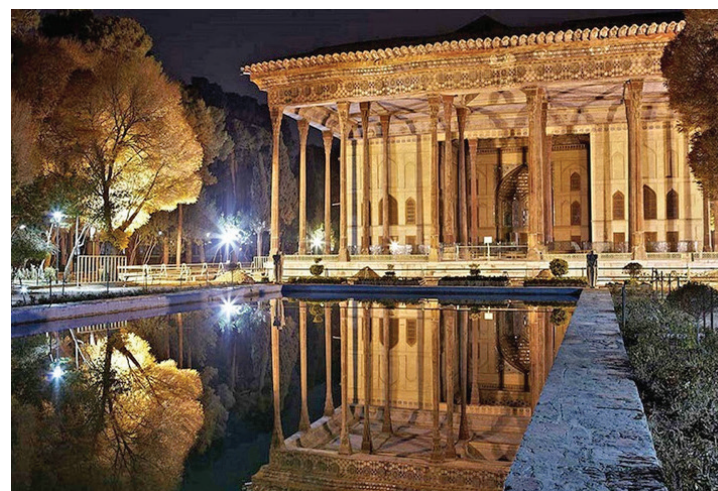
"According to the current schedule, we expect the project

to be completed by the end of September this year."

Chehel Sotoun, meaning "Forty Columns," is a Safavid-era Persian pavilion built by Shah Abbas II. The palace was used historically for entertainment and hosting dignitaries and ambassadors on its terrace or in grand reception halls.

The pavilion's name derives from its twenty wooden columns, which, when reflected in the pool in front of the building, appear as forty.

The palace features intricate architectural and decorative designs, including wall and ceiling patterns known as Lachak Toranj, combining painting, tiling, and other elements. It is consid-



ered a prime example of Safavid Persian architecture.

Today, the site functions as a museum displaying artworks from various periods of Iranian

history.

The lighting upgrade is part of ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance the site for cultural and tourism purposes.

Isfahan saqqakhanehs, treasures forgotten in history

TEHRAN—Saqqakhanehs are not only the traditional structures for providing drinking water to the passersby, they also have served as living symbols of the connection between art, religious belief, and social responsibility in heart of Isfahan's historical texture.

They have had a special status in social structure of the city. Due to their ritual and aesthetic functions, they have formed an independent and cultural identity in mind of citizens, Mehr news agency wrote.

Saqqakhanehs used to be built in congested spaces such as bazaars, main passages and old districts. They gradually turned into places for ritual gatherings, vows, and supplications, where collective memory and local identity were tangible.

They used to be the major elements of Isfahan's social texture, but they have fallen into oblivion. Their revival is tied to a cultural reinterpretation.

The trend of urban expansion, institutional neglect and gradual forgetting of the historical role of these elements have caused many saqqakhanehs to be destroyed or lose their authenticity. In the current situation, the importance of addressing saqqakhanehs not only as historical elements, but also as manifestations of local architecture, religious rituals, and the cultural memory of the city is an undeniable necessity.

Mansour Dadmehr, a cultural heritage researcher, said the main duty of saqqakhanehs has been to provide water to the thirsty pass-

ersby, but they played social and even political roles at certain times in history. For example, a protest movement took place around one of Tehran's drinking establishments in Qajar era, which is due to its respect by the people.

In a year that people faced water shortage, they resorted to Touqchi saqqakhaneh in Isfahan. They believed that this place could address their water shortage, he said. These beliefs led to some water houses enjoying special respect and status, he added.

He continued that usually, benevolent people and rich families were custodians for construction of water fountains. They used to devote a part of their building with the intention of quenching the thirst of passersby, he added.

Dadmehr explained that saqqakhanehs were gradually located en route of mourning groups. This led to saqqakhanehs are taken into consideration as a place for donations during Muharram rituals, he pointed out.

Dadmehr explained that providing water to the thirsty people and presence of a person who distributes the water, is reflecting the beliefs pertaining to Ashura and the role of Hazrat Abbas (AS) in providing water to the tents of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions in Karabla, Iraq.

He continued that many saqqakhanehs have been destroyed or are not in good conditions. Unfortunately, during the restoration process, measures have been done which have distorted the identity of these buildings,

he said.

"The Cultural Heritage Ministry should preserve the ancient saqqakhanehs and prevent construction of modern saqqakhanehs. Preserving the historical models of saqqakhanehs will help the future generations become familiar with water providing culture and respecting the water resources."

He named Haj Aqa Shoja Saqqakhaneh as one of the beautiful models which has remained from the old times.

Also, Ali Atrian, architect and university professor, said that Isfahan is a city located on the edge of the desert, and access to drinking water has been very important to the people in the past. Unlike desert cities that required water reservoirs, in Isfahan, due to the relatively high groundwater level, drinking water supply was possible through shallow wells and there was no need for extensive water reservoirs, he said.

For this reason, instead of expanding reservoirs, saqqakhanehs have been built in abundance in Isfahan, he added. The morphological structure of the land and the relatively easy access to water have caused saqqakhanehs to be scattered at different scales throughout the city's fabric and form part of the city's social architecture, he pointed out.

Atrian also said that due to popularity of special tileworks, stone carvings and wooden knotworks in Isfahan, special decorations have been used in saqqakhanehs.

WFP releases June report on Iran

TEHRAN – The World Food Program (WFP) has released a report, expounding on activities in Iran over the month of June.

In June, WFP food assistance reached 33,292 beneficiaries, which included Afghan and Iraqi refugees as well as Iranian teachers. Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket, which includes fortified wheat flour (12 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (810 ml per person per month).

Under cash-based transfers, following the revision of WFP's Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) conducted in November 2024, the Centre for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (CAFIA) confirmed adjustments to cash transfer values starting in January.

In June, WFP continued to provide the increased cash transfers to better support essential living costs. The amount doubled from IRR 2.5 million (US\$3.6 million) to IRR 5 million (US\$7.2 million) for men-headed households and from IRR 3 million (US\$4.4 million) to IRR 6 million (US\$8.7 million) for women-headed households.

WFP provided 2,628 refugee girls with a monthly cash incentive of IRR 2 million (US\$2.9) transferred to their bank accounts. This is a part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.

By June, WFP Iran helped ease the financial burden associated with the gluten-free dietary needs of 52 refugee celiac patients from WFP's beneficiaries by providing



them with an extra cash amount of 9.7 million rials (US\$14.13) per person as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.

WFP's school feeding program reached 9,234 refugee students and their teachers in June, with daily snacks consisting of milk, date bars, and/or fortified biscuits.

WFP supported 388 refugees with disabilities in June across nine settlements, each receiving an additional monthly cash support of IRR 3 million (US\$4.3), on top of their regular aid. In June, assistance covered Kerman, Lorestan, West Azerbaijan, Fars, Khuzestan, Markazi, Khorasan Razavi, and Semnan provinces after initially being introduced to two refugee settlements across two provinces.

To enhance the economic resilience and self-sufficiency of 326 refugees (49 percent women) in June, WFP continued its support for 24 income-generating initiatives across 18 settlements. Activities

included welding, tailoring, baking, and farming, among others.

In 2024, WFP provided a combination of in-kind and cash assistance to address the food needs of over 33,000 vulnerable refugees in Iran. As a result, 70 percent of them were able to consume food at an acceptable level, a figure that remains nearly stable compared to the previous year.

Since August, WFP has successfully increased the value of the cash transfer entitlement by 25 percent, actively helping to mitigate the immediate economic challenges reported by refugees.

WFP has maintained a presence in Iran since 1987, primarily focused on addressing the food security needs of refugees, mainly from Afghanistan. Iran has hosted refugees for over four decades. Most refugees, along with those in refugee-like conditions, reside in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, often

integrated with host communities. However, the most vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements across 13 provinces face a precarious food security situation that necessitates continued humanitarian assistance by the WFP.

WFP provided food assistance, educational support, and livelihood opportunities through in-kind food distributions, unconditional cash transfers, and capacity-strengthening initiatives to eligible refugees who live in settlements.

Given the economic situation in Iran in recent years, Afghan refugees have also faced many challenges, including reduced income opportunities and diminished purchasing power, which have impacted their food security and well-being, particularly among those in settlements. In response, WFP adjusted its Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP 2023-2027) to align with the need by modifying cash entitlements and food rations, adjusting the number of beneficiaries, and extending the duration of the ICSP by two years to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF 2023-2027), ensuring uninterrupted assistance.

WFP implemented activities under the ICSP to sustain its support to these refugees and address their increasing humanitarian needs. There are around 35,000 most vulnerable documented refugees who live in 20 settlements across 13 provinces in Iran and are benefiting from WFP-provided food assistance.

World Brain Day: brain health for all ages

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN – World Brain Day is observed on July 22 every year to raise public awareness of brain diseases; this year, the theme of the Day is 'brain health for all ages.'

It highlights brain health as a fundamental aspect of individual and societal wellbeing, and the importance of supporting brain health at any stage of life.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), brain health is the ability to function well in cognitive, emotional, sensory, and physical areas, enabling individuals to live fulfilling, independent lives while managing health conditions.

Brain health requires the management of physical, environmental, and social aspects of your life that improve not only mental and physical health but also societal and economic prosperity.

Brain disorders such as epilepsy, Alzheimer's, stroke, and headaches are highly prevalent, and factors such as stress, social crises, and delayed diagnosis contribute to the exacerbation of these diseases.

Around 50 million people suffer from epilepsy worldwide, and in Iran, about 1,400 million people are affected by this neurological condition.

Epilepsy is characterized by recurrent seizures, which are brief episodes of involuntary movement that may involve a part of the body or the entire body, and are sometimes accompanied by loss of consciousness and control of bowel or bladder function.

Disorientation and absence, a temporary lack of awareness, are other types of epilepsy.

Delayed and inappropriate treatment due to misdiagnosis can lead to behavioral disorders and negatively impact the patients' intelligence, the health ministry's website reported.

Epilepsy most commonly begins in childhood or in older adulthood, in patients older than 60.

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. In most people with Alzheimer's symptoms appear later in life. It negatively impacts the life of patients, making family caregivers and society face social, economic challenges.

People assume forgetfulness is the same as Alzheimer's. It can be a symptom of the disease, but it is also due to many other factors such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

Global statistics show that every three seconds, a new case of Alzheimer's is diagnosed. In Iran, new cases are diagnosed each week.

Routine visits and clinical examinations will help identify a maximum of 20 percent of people with Alzheimer's. However, targeted screening will help diagnose cases earlier. Currently, eight percent of the individuals aged over 60 in the country have Alzheimer's disease.

Stroke, also known as a brain attack, usually happens when the blood supply to a part of the brain is disrupted. In this case, either the vessels are blocked or they bleed; in both cases, there is an interruption of blood to any part of the brain.

There is a key concept in stroke treatment known as time is brain, highlighting that any minute that goes untreated, more brain cells die.

Regular physical activity, a healthy diet, and avoiding tobacco and alcohol are among the most important ways to prevent strokes. In case one is taking blood pressure and diabetes medications, they should take them regularly to prevent a stroke.

The rate of stroke prevalence in Iran is 1.5 times higher than the world average. That is, if there are fewer than 100 strokes per 100,000 people in the world, according to the studies, this rate is 150 cases in Iran.

Stroke, the second leading cause of death in the country, is preventable through raising awareness, improving lifestyle, timely screening, and accessing proper medicines.

Headaches are sometimes symptoms of a problem, and sometimes the problems like migraine or tension-type headaches.

Migraine is a health condition that is more than just a bad headache. The symptoms of the disease are different from person to person, but often include headaches that keep coming back. They can also include nausea, vomiting, changes in mood, extreme tiredness, and sensitivity to light, noise, and smells.

Tension-type headache is another common type of headache that is triggered by anxiety; it can be treated by taking pain relievers.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

‘City-friendly schools’ scheme launched in Tehran

The “city-friendly schools” scheme was launched in the capital to promote environmental protection and urban development issues among students, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Daneshvar, director general of citizenship education at Tehran Municipality, said that the project covers more than 550 schools, consisting of 160,000 students.

It aims to familiarize students with the rights and duties of citizens, the environment, waste, transportation and traffic, safety and security, crisis management, he explained.

The training programs will be in the form of workshops, role plays, cultural and educational camps, production of educational content such as books, brochures and posters, he concluded.

آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» با هدف آشنا کردن دانش آموزان با حقوق و تکالیف شهروندی، محیط زیست و پسماند، حمل و نقل و ترافیک، و ایمنی و مدیریت بحران در مدارس منتخب شهر تهران آغاز شد. به گزارش ایسنا مجتبی دانشور، مدیرکل آموزش‌های شهروندی شهرداری تهران، گفت این طرح بیش از ۵۵۰ مدرسه شامل ۱۶۰ هزار دانش‌آموز را در بر می‌گیرد.

برنامه‌های آموزشی این طرح در قالب برگزاری کارگاه‌های آموزشی، تولید محتوای آموزشی در قالب کتاب، بروشور و پوستر، اجرای نمایش و برگزاری اردوهای فرهنگی و آموزشی خواهد بود.

Iranian researchers prove practicality of drones in managing mangrove forests

TEHRAN – An innovative study done by Iranian researchers has confirmed the practical use of drones as cost-effective tools for monitoring and managing mangrove forests.

Mangrove forests are rich ecosystems that support the planet and humanity in unique ways by providing conditions for fish growth, storing carbon, and fighting floods. They are able to store about 6 to 8 tons of carbon per hectare of soil per year.

The results of the study, conducted by Ali Karimi, Behrooz Abtahi, and Keivan Kabiri, have been published in the international monthly journal 'forests' on July 20.

According to the research, drones can provide reliable estimates of blue carbon (BC) through non-invasive means—eliminating the need to harvest, cut, or physically disturb individual trees—supporting their application in mangrove monitoring and ecosystem service assessments, even under challenging field conditions.

Accurate, scalable, and cost-effective methods for estimating carbon stocks in these environments are essential for conservation planning.

The study was conducted in the Melgonze mangrove forest along the southern section of the Mond Protected Area, in south-western Iran, along the northern coast of the Persian Gulf.

The study included 30 field-measured trees and 30 drone-measured trees, which, while informative, represent a small sample size and should be interpreted accordingly. Nevertheless, drone-based estimates closely matched field-based ones at the individual level.

The strong correlations between tree height and crown diameter support the use of drones for mangrove monitoring. Although drone-derived tree heights significantly differed from field measurements, the final estimations of AGB and BC based on both height sources showed no significant difference.

Thousands of deported Afghans get health services at border terminal

TEHRAN – Some 36,000 illegal Afghan refugees have benefited from medical services offered on the Dogharon border terminal in Taybad, north-eastern Khorasan Razavi province, while returning to their home country, an official with the health ministry has said.

They were visited by physicians and received nursing services. They were also educated about proper hygiene practices and ways to avoid communicable diseases. Also, suspicious cases received testing, IRNA quoted Soudabeh Nekouhi as saying.

Heatstroke, food poisoning, and high blood pressure were among the main reasons to visit the health center, she added.

From the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21), medical products worth one billion rials (almost 1.150 dollars) have been distributed among undocumented refugees in Dogharon. Moreover, 22,492 Afghans who have legally entered the country were screened, and 10,753 individuals were vaccinated as part of the prevention program, Nekouhi said.

All the Afghan nationals, 85 percent of whom are men, are screened and tested for 16 different diseases, she further noted.

Authorized refugees won't be deported

Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has said the country is not planning to deport documented and authorized refugees.

“We are only deporting the two million Afghans who are illegally residing in Iran,” he said.

“Iran is not an anti-immigrant country, as it is hosting six million foreign nationals. Since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21), some 800,000 out of the two million undocumented refugees left the country,” ISNA quoted Momeni as saying on July 18.

“These are honorable people who have contributed to the country's production. Based on regulations, unauthorized refugees must leave the country. If they wish to live here, they have to follow legal procedures,” the official further



These results highlight the viability of drone data for accurate carbon estimation in similar ecological contexts.

Drones offer several advantages, including cost and time efficiency, as well as access to otherwise impassable environments—such as muddy, tidal zones—thus reinforcing their value in coastal management programs.

Mangrove forests in Iran mostly consist of the Avicenna marina, known as Hara, named after the 11th-century great Iranian scientist Avicenna, or Abu-Ali-Sina.

The mangrove tree, as a wonder of the marine environment, offers many benefits to various species, including birds, fish, crustaceans, and even some terrestrial animals, and stabilizes the soil, as well.

Mangrove forests contribute to the creation of a complete ecosystem. Above water, mangrove trees provide a habitat for birds while amphibians and small fish live on their roots. Mangroves play a crucial role in preserving the beach soil and protecting it from erosion. Mangrove trees play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of sea coasts.

Mangrove ecosystems in the northern Persian Gulf are facing a range of environmental pressures, like increased salinity levels, human-induced threats, such as the construction of a nonstandard road and bridge, and climate change, like rising temperatures and sea levels.



noted.

From March 21 to June 27, a total of 717,658 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan; more than 80 percent of them have left the country voluntarily.

According to the head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, there has been no change in the residency and the kind of services provided to documented Afghans residing in the country.

On the contrary, they will benefit from more services as illegal nationals leave the country, IRNA reported.

“The majority of these nationals are employees or students; we normally consider employment as a foundation for residency in our long-term planning,” IRNA quoted Yar-Ahmadi as saying.

The official went on to say that the presence of illegal migrants in any country poses many challenges, and in critical situations, they will be the main suspects. Their presence negatively impacts the economy, social, and security sectors.

Global experience has shown that migrants at most can account for three percent of the population of any country. With Iran's population estimated to reach around 90 million next year, the figure will amount to three million migrants. Currently, there are more than 6.1 million nationals living in the country, which should gradually decrease, Yar-Ahmadi added.



JULY 22, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others with his tongue and hands.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:37 Dawn: 3:25 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:05 (tomorrow)

“Ban This Book” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN – “Ban This Book” by American young adult's book writer Alan Gratz has been published in Persian.

Peydayesh is the publisher of the book translated by Shouka Karimi.

Published in 2017, “Ban This Book” is a children's novel that explores themes of censorship, free expression, and activism through the story of a young African-American girl's fight against book bans. Inspired by a viral internet story from the mid-2010s, the novel was well-received critically and became a beloved addition to middle-grade literature. However, its journey took a controversial turn when, in May 2024, it was banned in a Florida school district, highlighting ongoing battles over book censorship in American schools.

The story centers around Amy Anne Ollinger, a fourth-grade student from North Carolina who loves reading. Her favorite book is “From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler” by E. L. Konigsburg. One day, when she visits her school library to borrow it, she learns from the librarian, Mrs. Jones, that the book has been banned. The ban was enacted by the school's PTA president, at the request of a classmate's parent, reflecting the growing influence of parental challenges to library content.

Frustrated by the censorship, Amy Anne responds by creating the “Banned Books Locker Library,” a secret space where students can access banned books. Her initiative, however, is discovered, leading to her suspension and the firing of Mrs. Jones. Despite the consequences, Amy Anne and her classmates—including the PTA president's son—become active advocates against book censorship, sparking conversations about the importance of intellectual freedom. The

novel also features a cameo appearance by Dav Pilkey, author of the “Captain Underpants” series, adding a layer of pop-culture relevance.

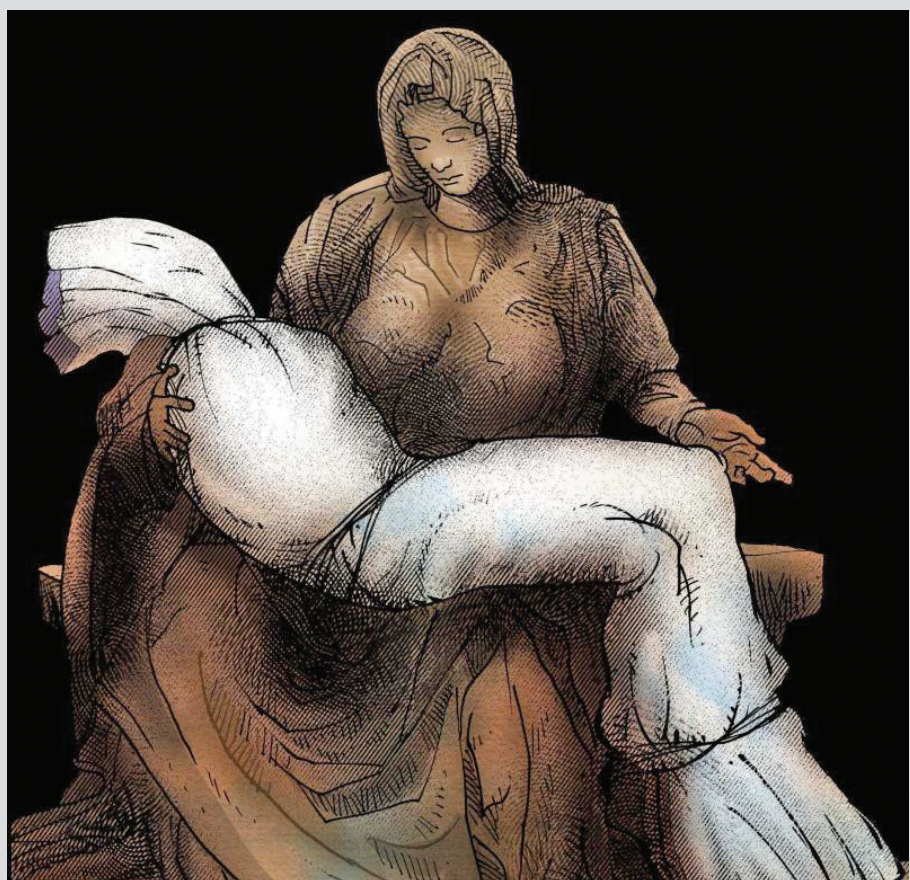
Upon its release in August 2017, “Ban This Book” received positive reviews. Critics praised it as a compelling and timely story. Booklist's Jennifer Barnes called it an “inspiring story about ‘good trouble,’” emphasizing its value for middle-grade readers. School Library Journal contributor Laurie Slagenwhite Walters recommended it for school libraries, noting its relevance to current issues about censorship.

Publishers Weekly highlighted Gratz's ability to craft a “book lover's book” that celebrates children's power to effect change at a grassroots level. Kirkus Reviews acknowledged the book's references to real titles challenged or banned in various districts, describing it as “contrived at some points, polemic at others, but a stout defense of the right to read.” The School Library Journal later included “Ban This Book” in a 2022 list of titles addressing censorship, reaffirming its significance.

Despite its positive reception, the book became embroiled in controversy. In May 2024, the Indian River County school district in Florida voted 3–2 to ban “Ban This Book” after a challenge from a member of the conservative group Moms for Liberty. The district's decision overturned the recommendation of its own book review committee, sparking widespread criticism.

Gratz expressed his dismay, noting the irony that the very themes of the book—challenging censorship and defending free expression—were the reasons for its ban.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Fares Garabet from Germany

TMoCA to hold exhibition by modern Iranian women artists

TEHRAN – Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA) will host the exhibition “In Women's Words,” which is dedicated to showcasing 121 works by modern Iranian women artists, from Wednesday.

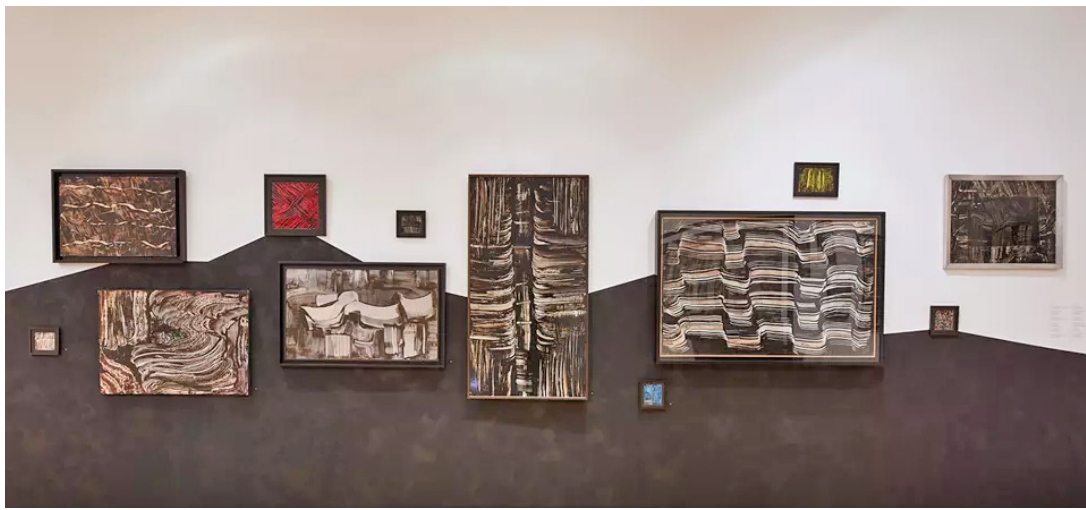
Curated by Afsaneh Kamran, Toka Maleki, and Sajjad Baghban Maher, the exhibition will put on show works by artists such as Monir Farmanfarmaian, Behjat Sadr, Iran Darroudi, Parvaneh Etemadi, Farideh Lashai, and Leyly Matin Daftari, IRNA reported.

At a press conference for the exhibition, held on Sunday at the site of the museum, director of TMoCA Reza Dabirinejad said: “In this exhibition, we have tried to present a cohesive narrative of the presence of modern women artists in contemporary art from among the works collected at the museum's treasured collection”.

“In the museum's collection, 270 works by 65 modern women artists have been identified, and a selection of these, according to the space available, will be displayed in the ‘In Women's Words’ exhibition,” he added.

“Today, women artists play an important role in Iran's contemporary art scene. They are present at art auctions and exhibitions inside the country and at the international level. Since the establishment of the museum, we have never had a female director; therefore, Toka Maleki has been chosen as the honorary director of the museum for the official opening of the exhibition,” Dabirinejad noted.

“During the exhibition, the book of the women's exhibition will also be unveiled. Additionally, we will hold research sessions and



Works by Behjat Sadr at an earlier exhibition at the TMoCA.

screen documentary films as side events of the exhibition. Their content will be published in various formats and made available to the public. We will also pursue virtualizing the exhibition,” he asserted.

Also speaking at the session, Toka Maleki, writer, researcher, and one of the exhibition's curators, emphasized the importance of women's position in Iranian visual arts, especially modern art and said: “Writing the history of art without considering women's perspectives is impossible. The viewpoints of women artists, and the angles from which they have looked at life, certainly complete the history of art”.

“We must also examine their similarities with the artistic behaviors of male artists. This does not mean gender segregation or exaggerating the role of women or hiding them, but rather re-reading the qualities that each artist's work possesses, and without acknowledging them,

this art history would undoubtedly remain incomplete,” she added.

Regarding the exhibition's structure, she said: “The works of women artists in this event are divided into several sections; from pioneering women of modern art such as Shokouh Riazi, to portraiture, abstract art — with examples by Behjat Sadr and Monir Farmanfarmaian — and nature painting, which holds a special place among women painters. Overall, contemporary Iranian women's art is presented in formats such as portrait, abstract nature, everyday life, neo-traditionalism, and social themes, in the mediums of painting, sculpture, photography, and video art”.

Afsane Kamran, writer, university lecturer, and another curator of the exhibition highlighted the importance of research in the field of visual arts, particularly the work of women artists and said: “In the side programs of this exhibition, various research sessions have been planned, aiming

to examine the works of women artists from political, social, and interdisciplinary perspectives. I believe with this exhibition, the approach to studying the works of visual artists will shift from mere representation. We tried to address four thematic axes: the historiography of women's art and their challenges, methods and media, experiences with media for women, and women artists, their profession, and their income”.

Further in the session, Sajjad Baghban Maher, museum curator and another curator of “In Women's Words,” said: “In this event, 121 selected works by 65 artists will be shown, some of which have never been exhibited before. In addition, 14 exhibitions and events in the side programs will be held, featuring contemporary women artists' works not present in the museum's collection”.

The exhibition “In Women's Words” will run for two months at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

Cinema Museum to host commemoration for innocent victims of Israeli aggression on Iran

TEHRAN – The Cinema Museum of Iran will host the “Remembrance of Iran's Blood” ceremony in Tehran on Wednesday, with the participation of cultural figures, artists, media representatives, and the general public.

This event is organized to honor the memory of innocent victims of the recent inhumane aggression by the Zionist regime against Iranian soil, and to pay tribute to those who lost their lives during the twelve-day war, Mehr reported on Monday.

It is a cultural and artistic commemoration centered on promoting peace, solidarity, and collective conscience, the report added.

The program aims to keep alive the memory of individuals who departed silently and defenselessly, yet remain eternal in Iranian hearts.

Key segments of the event include a spe-



cial performance themed around peace and human suffering, traditional music concerts, speeches by prominent cultural and artistic figures, visual clips narrating this human tragedy, and candle lighting in remembrance of the fallen.

The ceremony will be open to the public.

Kafka's “A Report to an Academy” on stage at Homa Theater

TEHRAN – Homa Theater in Tehran is hosting the solo performance “A Report to an Academy” by Franz Kafka.

Maedeh Tahmasebi has directed the play and Farhad Aesh is the only performer of the one-hour show, which remains on stage for a month.

A short story by Franz Kafka, written and published in 1917, “A Report to an Academy” is about an ape named Red Peter, who has learned to behave like a human. The ape presents to an academy the story of how he effected his transformation.

In the play, the narrator, speaking before a scientific conference, describes his former life as an ape. His story begins in a West African jungle, in which a hunting expedition shoots and captures him. Caged on a ship for his voyage to Europe, he finds himself for the first time without the freedom to move as he will. Needing to escape from this situation, he studies the habits of the crew, and imitates them with

surprising ease. Throughout the story, the narrator reiterates that he learned his human behavior not out of any desire to be human, but only to provide himself with a means of escape from his cage.

Upon arriving in Europe, the ape realizes that he is faced with a choice between the “Zoological Garden” or the “Music Hall,” and devotes himself to becoming human enough to become an able performer. He accomplishes this, with the help of many teachers, and reports to the academy that his transformation is so complete that he can no longer properly describe his emotions and experiences as an ape. In concluding, the ape expresses a degree of satisfaction with his lot.

The story's references to the protagonist's “apish past” have led some literary theorists to associate the story with evolutionary theory.

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) was a German language Czech writer and novelist born in Prague, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.



Widely regarded as a major figure of 20th-century literature, his work fuses elements of realism and the fantastique, and typically features isolated protagonists facing bizarre or surreal predicaments and incomprehensible socio-bureaucratic powers.

The term Kafkaesque has entered the lexicon to describe bizarre situations like those depicted in his writing. The domain of mystical parables overlaps with the alienating experience of urban life's indecipherable complexities in these stories. His best-known works include the novella “The Metamorphosis” (1915) and the novels “The Trial” (1924) and “The Castle” (1926).

Though the novels and short stories that Kafka wrote are typ-

ically invoked in his précis, he is also celebrated for his brief fables and aphorisms. Like his longer fiction, these sketches may be brutal in some aspects, but their dreadfulness is frequently funny.

Kafka's impact is evident in the frequent reception of his writing as a form of prophetic or premonitory vision, anticipating the character of a totalitarian future in the nightmarish logic of his presentation of the lived-present. These perceptions appear in the way that he renders the world inhabited by his characters and in his commentaries written in diaries, letters and aphorisms.

Homa Hall is located at Ziba Dead-End, Nofel Loshato St., Hafez St.