Straight Truth

WWW.TEHRANTIMES.COM

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 45th year | No. 14728 | Thursday | March 7, 2024 | Esfand 17, 1402 | Shabān 26, 1445



IRNA/ Mehdi Bolourian

Inaction Kills

Israel is not losing any sleep after the second Muslim gathering since Oct. 7

Gaza children who survived bombardment may not survive famine: WHO chief

The World Health Organization's chief has called for more aid to enter Gaza, amid reports of children dying from malnutrition in the besieged territory.

"Children who survived bombardment but may not survive a famine," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X. "Allow more aid for Gaza. Ceasefire."

Earlier, the Palestinian Health Ministry said the death toll from malnutrition and dehydration in Gaza has risen to 18, according to Al Jazeera.

"The famine is deepening and will claim thousands of lives if the aggression is not halted and humanitarian and medical aid is not immediately brought in," the ministry said in a statement.

It added that Israel was "deliberately" starving thousands of hungry people in northern Gaza and called on the international community and the UN to halt the war and avoid a "health catastrophe".

Warmongers working hand in glove

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- American and British leaders are facing growing domestic pressure over their failure to bring an end to Israel's brutal onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip.

In the United States, a large number of Democratic primary voters have recently voted "uncommitted" to vent their anger at President Joe Biden's support for Israel.

Biden won almost all the Democratic nominating contests on Super Tuesday. However, a sizeable protest vote in some states including Minnesota against his backing for the regime's war on Gaza once again highlighted uncomfortable questions for his reelection campaign.

Around 20% in Minnesota marked their ballots "uncommitted" to show their dissatisfaction with Biden's pro-Israel policies.

In six other Super Tuesday states, namely North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Colorado, Massachusetts and Iowa the "uncommitted" vote was on the Democratic ballot.

Tel Aviv stalling Gaza peace talks

By Ali Karbalaei

Amid global demands on the Israeli regime to end its barbaric attacks on Palestinians in Gaza where many are on the brink of famine, Tel Aviv has stalled negotiations despite reasonable grounds to end its genocidal assault.

In a press release published on Wednesday, Hamas declared "the required flexibility to reach a comprehensive agreement aiming to cease the aggression against our people."

"The occupation continues to evade the commitments of this agreement, especially those ensuring a permanent ceasefire, the return of refugees, the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and meeting the needs of our people."

The statement added, "The movement will continue negotiations through intermediary channels to achieve an agreement that fulfills the demands and interests of our people."

Senior Hamas leader Osama Hamdan says that over the past days the group presented its vision and held positive engagements in Cairo, responding to the proposals from Egypt and Qatar.

▸ Page **5**

The West's media mirage

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- Western media outlets have consistently employed a rhetoric of double standards when it comes to portraying Iran's foreign policy initiatives.

This approach, characterized as Iranophobia policy, has become a central feature of Western media framework.

While these media platforms readily scrutinize Iran's foreign policy endeavors, they conveniently overlook similar or even more concerning actions by other global players, particularly the United States. Despite the U.S.'s extensive involvement in arms dealing and its ubiquitous military presence across the world, Western media outlets seem to turn a blind eye to these aspects. Instead, they focus disproportionately on portraying Iran's actions as inherently perilous to the interests of nations worldwide.

This glaring disparity in coverage not only perpetuates a skewed narrative but also undermines the credibility of Western media outlets in providing unbiased and comprehensive analysis of international affairs.

Media outlets must adopt a more balanced and objective approach in their coverage of international issues, moving away from the propagation of double standards and biased narratives. ▸ Page **2**

Tehran, Tashkent explore avenues of economic cooperation

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – During the visit of Uzbek Energy Minister Jurabek Mirzamakhmudov along with an accompanying delegation to Iran, the official met and held talks with several Iranian officials to pursue the expansion of ties between the two countries in a variety of areas.

He met with First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, Oil Minister Javad Oji, Head of the Trade Promotion Organization Mehdi Zeyghami, Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, and Energy Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrabian to name a few.

Iran ready to export technical, and engineering services to Uzbekistan

In the meeting with Oji, the Iranian Oil Minister voiced Iran's readiness to export technical and engineering services to Uzbekistan, Shana reported.

Oji said the Iranian companies and manufacturers are ready to participate in Uzbekistan's oil projects.

Iran is currently cooperating with 42 countries in the oil, gas, and petrochemical sectors, said the oil minister, adding Iran's oil industry has become self-sufficient despite unilateral U.S. sanctions and the country's oil and gas fields are developed by domestic knowledge-based companies. ▸ Page **4**

Rahimov: Iran is a developed country in Paralympic Movement

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN – The International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) President Ilgar Rahimov praised the Iranian Para athletes and considered the country as a developed nation in the Paralympic Movement.

The Azerbaijani top official said that IBSA has friendly ties with Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) and Sports Federation for the Blind and Partially Sighted.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Rahimov said that the Iranian athletes are an active part of the entire Paralympic movement. ▸ Page **3**



IRNA/ Mohammadreza Alimadadi

Iran's military achievements on full display at Doha defense expo

TEHRAN – Iran showcased a diverse array of domestically designed and manufactured weapons at the Doha International Maritime Defense Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX 2024).

Iranian Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, who was present at the exhibition, emphasized the nation's dedication to regional stability and its willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue with neighboring countries.

Iran actively participated in DIMDEX, exhibiting a range of maritime defense products, including naval vessels, weaponry, maritime communication facilities, and expertise in naval defense and related fields. ▸ Page **2**

Climate change is undeniable threat to entire civilization

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –The phenomenon of climate change on the planet has caused extreme weather conditions posing a real and undeniable threat to the entire civilization.

The consequences of climate change will be even more detrimental unless actions are taken now.

Climate change has already had many harmful effects on our country. Due to the climate change, the air temperature has increased. Warmer temperature increases the rate of evaporation, a good example of which is the Caspian Sea's reduced volume of water.

On the other hand, there has been a noticeable decrease in the amount of snowfall in the country ▸ Page **7**

TEHRAN PAPERS

The multiple functions of the Peace Pipeline between Iran, India and Pakistan

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

In an analysis, Etemad discussed the possibility to establish a peace pipeline between Iran, Pakistan, and India and its importance and said: The first issue is that this pipeline can provide the basis for the development of gas and energy resources exports of Iran to India because India can become a powerful economic competitor for China and America in the coming decades. Secondly, in the next stages, this pipeline can provide the basis for the development of gas exports to Iran's energy sources to Pakistan, which can play an important role in the improvement of economic and security conditions in Iran. If the Peace Pipeline is built, this issue can lead to an increase in Iran's sanctions exemptions in the short term. Moreover, India, as one of the allies of the United States, which also has relations with Iran, can act as a mediator in reducing tensions between Iran and America.

Shargh: There is no end to baseless statements against Iran

Shargh pointed out the recent claim of the British Defense Minister and wrote: The British Defense Minister claimed in an interview that the UK has information about Iran providing surface-to-surface missiles to Russia but he refused to go into details. Reuters reported in February that Iran had supplied Russia with a large number of ballistic missiles. The report prompted a quick warning from the United States which warned that Iran would face a tough response from the international community. While the Western authorities accuse Iran of sending weapons to Russia, they have supplied tens of billions of dollars of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine in the last 2 years as part of NATO's military-security agreement. Iran has denied sending weapons to Russia for use in the Ukraine war, but the military authorities of Iran and Russia have repeatedly emphasized that they have close military cooperation with each other in the form of bilateral defense and military contracts.

Ettelaat: The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has no right to comment on Iran's territory

In an article, Ettelaat dealt with the statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council regarding the three Iranian islands and the Arash oil and gas field. It said: According to Kanaani, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran strongly condemns the provisions related to Iran's territorial integrity in the final statement of the 159th meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Cooperation Council of Persian Gulf. Issuing these unilateral and one-sided statements negates the existence of a positive atmosphere. The truth is that the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater and lesser Tunbs are an integral and eternal part of Iran's soil, and their statement has no legal value. Iran has repeatedly asserted its sovereignty over the three Iranian islands based on the accepted principles and rules of international law. Iran exerts its sovereignty over its territory, and the Cooperation Council is not in a position to comment on Iran's sovereign actions and the statements of Iran's top officials about Abu Musa and the trips of Iranian officials to an island that belongs to Iran's territory forever.

Sobh-e-No: In the world, regulations and international laws are only applied to Easterners

In an interview with Mohammad Marandi, an expert on American issues, Sobh-e-No discussed the comments of the spokesperson for the U.S. Secretary of State and interference in the political affairs of our country. It wrote: Miller repeated his past claims and claimed that we do not have an accurate assessment of the level of participation of the Iranian people in the parliamentary elections. America has had a political crisis over the issue of Russia's interference in its elections for years, but now it entitles itself to give the right to interfere in our internal affairs by supporting hostile Persian-language media and terrorist groups. While the Americans criticize and blame Iran, the participation rate in the Iranian parliament elections is higher than the average of the American congressional elections. However, other countries are not allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of our country, and this is against international laws and regulations. In the world, international rules and laws are only applied to Eastern countries, and Western countries can do whatever they want, attack other countries, impose sanctions, use drones to kill people, and impose international and commercial laws for their benefit, and yet they consider themselves above the law.

The West's media mirage

From page 1 ▸ **Western media bias: Iran-Sudan cooperation**

On March 3, the Wall Street Journal released a report titled "Iran Tried to Persuade Sudan to Allow Naval Base on Its Red Sea Coast," alleging Tehran's attempts to establish a military presence in the Red Sea region by proposing the construction of a naval base in Khartoum. However, these claims have been vehemently refuted by Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali al-Sadiq Ali, who dismissed the accusations made by WSJ regarding Iran's purported efforts to establish a permanent naval base in Northeast Africa.

Speaking to the Arabic service of Russia's Sputnik news agency during the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2024 in Turkey on March 2, Ali unequivocally denounced the Wall Street Journal article as "false and fabricated." He emphasized that during his recent visit to Iran, no discussions regarding the establishment of a military base were raised. "I just visited Iran, but no one brought up this matter to me there," clarified Ali, dispelling any notions of Iran soliciting Sudan for such a base.

In light of recent Iran-Sudan developments, it is crucial to scrutinize the veracity of such claims made by certain media outlets and to approach them with a critical eye. Accusations of this nature not only have the potential to strain diplomatic relations but also to exacerbate tensions. Therefore, it is imperative to exercise caution and discernment when consuming and disseminating information, particularly when it pertains to



delicate geopolitical matters.

Red Sea ruse: Western media's Iran-Yemen narrative

Western media outlets have attempted to implicate Tehran in the unrest in the Red Sea by linking the operations of the Yemeni resistance to Iran.Following the retaliatory actions taken by Yemen's Ansarullah against Israeli-affiliated vessels in recent months, Western media narratives have strayed from the true motivations behind these attacks. Instead, they propagate the notion that Tehran is supplying arms to Sana'a to disrupt global trade.

Contrary to these assertions, Yemeni officials have consistently emphasized that these operations are direct responses to Israeli war crimes and the ongoing genocidal war in Gaza, which is bolstered by support from the American military. Meanwhile, Iranian diplomatic channels have also echoed these sentiments, stressing that resistance groups such as Ansarullah operate independently and are not under Tehran's command.

Moreover, the autonomy of these resistance groups is evident in the widespread demonstrations held in Yemen's capital, Sana'a. These gatherings vehemently condemn Israeli aggression and express solidarity with the Yemeni Army's efforts against Israeli-affiliated vessels. Such voices by Yemeni nation support the genuine nature of Yemen's resistance movements and rebuff attempts to depict them as being under Tehran's command.

Media manipulation: West's agenda against Iran-South America cooperation

On July 20, the Defense Ministries of Tehran and La Paz inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening defense cooperation to combat drug trafficking and terrorism along the Bolivian borders. However, certain Western media outlets chose to frame this agreement as a perilous development for Argentina, propagating a narrative of fear and suspicion.

Amidst the challenges of arm and drug trafficking plaguing its borders, La Paz finds itself in a precarious position. However, there exists a potential solution within its grasp through a strategic partnership with Tehran.

By enhancing defense cooperation with Iran, La Paz stands to significantly bolster its security measures. This collaboration could offer invaluable support in combating the persistent threats posed by trafficking activities, providing the country with the resources and expertise necessary to safeguard its citizens and borders effectively.Regardless of the region where Iran extends its foreign policy initiatives, these media platforms consistently engage in sensationalist coverage, fueling an Iranophobic narrative and portraying Iran as a looming global threat.

Echoes of deception: investigating the integrity of Western media

Western media outlets persistently attempt to tarnish Iran's foreign policy through the dissemination of fake news. However, they conveniently overlook the United States' extensive arms deals and military presence across the globe, which serve as significant contributors to escalating tensions, particularly in West Asia.

The United States maintains approximately 750 military bases in at least 80 countries, with the actual number potentially even higher due to incomplete data published by the Pentagon, as noted by Al Jazeera.

Reports from the Chicago Policy Review magazine highlight how American defense contractors, including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, and Raytheon, profit immensely from weapon sales, which often exacerbate conflicts and human rights abuses worldwide.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's military achievements on full display at Doha defense expo



From page 1 ▸ Among the featured weapons was the 20mm Oerlikon Cannons, well-suited for close-range operations where missiles might be ineffective. Additionally, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) named 'Gaza' was among several Iranian weapons on display. Gaza, a medium-altitude, low-endurance (MALE) UAV, boasts a payload capacity of 500 kilograms, satellite communication capabilities, and a maximum flight altitude of 35,000 feet.

This event, which started from Monday, March 4, marked the eighth edition of the region's premier defense and maritime exhibition. Iran has seen remarkable growth in its military industry over the past decades, with ownership of various domestically produced precision-guided missiles, drones, and defense systems. Iranian military experts and engineers have achieved significant breakthroughs in manufacturing a wide range of indigenous equipment in recent years, contributing to the self-sufficiency of the armed forces.

Military advisor calls for 5,000-kilometer expansion of strategic depth

TEHRAN- A military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has advocated for expanding Iran's strategic reach to a distance of 5,000 kilometers, citing the Mediterranean Sea as a crucial aspect of strategic defense.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, speaking at a conference, emphasized the significance of deepening Iran's strategic depth, referencing the IRGC's historical role during the imposed war in the late 1980s. He highlighted the IRGC's connection with the Iranian people as a key factor in its development. He credited the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for strengthening the resistance front over the past 34 years, noting the utilization of IRGC capabilities by General Soleimani.

Emphasizing the importance of enhancing Iran's defense and security, Safavi reiterated the Mediterranean Sea as a vital part of Iran's strategic defense, advocating for an extension of strategic depth to 5,000 kilometers.

In conclusion, he underscored the strategic significance of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, emphasizing the need for the IRGC's naval and air forces to focus on these areas in anticipation of future sea and air-based conflicts.

Raisi highlights impending wave of global youth anger over Israeli crimes

TEHRAN- Ebrahim Raisi, the President of Iran, has cautioned about an imminent surge of "indignation" among global youth due to the ongoing Israeli offenses against Palestinians.

Raisi made the remarks in an interview with Algeria's national television, which was published on Wednesday, during his recent visit to the North African country.

"Today, the Zionist regime's oppression has exhausted the patience of not only the people of the region but also the people of the world," he said.

"I think that if this situation persists, the anger of the youth of all nations, whether in the U.S. and Britain or other countries in different continents, will be vented in another form," he further commented.

Raisi pointed to the recent self-immolation of an active-duty member of the U.S. Air Force in protest over Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip and the mass rallies held in European countries in support of Palestinians, expressing regret that their call for an end to Israel's crimes has fallen on deaf ears.

The U.S. and UK governments do not want to hear the voices of their own people and the world nations, therefore, they seek to expand the scope of the Gaza war, he explained.

Israel waged its brutal U.S.-backed war on the besieged Gaza in October after the Palestinian Hamas resistance group carried out its historic operation against the occupying regime in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

So far, the Tel Aviv regime has killed at least 30,631 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 72,043 others.

Raisi urges global unity to rid region of 'cancerous tumor'

Additionally, the Iranian chief executive urged all countries to unite against the usurping entity and "remove the cancerous tumor from the region."

"We believe that the pure blood of the Palestinian martyrs and the oppressed will mark the end of the Zionist regime," he added.

Raisi further said that the Israeli crimes against humanity and its war crimes in Gaza do not conform to any international law or convention.

"The current situation in Gaza ... is a great scandal for the West, which unmasks the true face of the U.S.," he asserted.

Raisi slams Western hypocrisy on Iran's nuclear activities

The Iranian president also lashed out at nuclear-armed Western countries for their double standards.He said they express concerns about Iran's peaceful nuclear program while keeping mum on the Israeli regime that has hundreds of atomic warheads in possession, pointing to a threat in November 2023 by Israel's so-called heritage minister Amichai Eliyahu to use atomic bombs against Gaza.

By raising alarm at Iran's nuclear activities, Western countries are seeking to exert pressure on the Islamic republic, which is powerful and self-reliant and has developed an indigenous nuclear industry, Raisi said.

"When the Zionist regime assassinated Iranian nuclear scientists, it thought that our nuclear industry would be grounded. However, the nuclear industry keeps working as it has become indigenous in our country," he noted.

Israel is estimated to possess 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, making it the sole possessor of unconventional arms in West Asia.

It has refused to either allow inspections of its nuclear facilities or sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Army Air Force to reveal major achievements next year: general

TEHRAN - Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi, commander of the Army Air Force, announced on Wednesday that the force will unveil its latest achievements next year.

In his statement on Wednesday, General Vahedi highlighted the relentless efforts of Air Force personnel who are tirelessly working day and night to fulfill the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, aiming to bolster the force›s standing.

General Vahedi emphasized the significant strides made by the Air Force across various domains, attributing these advancements to the collective efforts of industrialists, scientists, personnel, and knowledge-based enterprises.

Regarding the independence of the force, he underscored that all advanced training programs for pilots and technical staff are exclusively conducted within the Air Force›s training centers. He expressed satisfaction in the absence of dependence in this critical aspect.

In the end, General Vahedi stressed the readiness of the force to promptly carry out the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

South Africa's ambassador to Iran outlines benefits of BRICS expansion

TEHRAN - The BRICS enlargement will give Iran access to major markets and provide new opportunities for trade between the member countries of the association. This was stated by South African Ambassador to Iran Francis Molloy."BRICS countries play an important role on the world stage. The expansion of the alliance will open access to major markets for us," said Molloy, TV BRICS reported on Wednesday.

He also noted that South Africa and its people have looked at Iran's cultural, sporting and economic issues differently after Iran's accession to BRICS, adding, "We look forward to sending students from South Africa to Iran."

In addition, according to the South African ambassador to Tehran, there is a special department at the embassy to help South African businessmen to work in Iran, as well as to provide Iranian businessmen with advice and assistance on doing business in South Africa. Discussions are underway to set up a bilateral economic council so that businessmen from the two countries can get to know each other better. Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined BRICS on January 1, 2024. At the XV summit in August 2023, BRICS leaders decided to approve the applications of these states to join the association.

Former AEOI head urges prioritization of nuclear safety collaboration

TEHRAN — The former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) urged the AEOI to collaborate with relevant organizations concerning Iran's accession to international nuclear safety conventions, emphasizing the importance of ensuring Tehran's interests.

Addressing a seminar on Tuesday, Ali Akbar Salehi referenced three significant nuclear incidents worldwide— Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima. He highlighted Japan's efforts to anticipate events such as high-power earthquakes and tsunamis, noting Tokyo's prediction of an eight-meter tsunami. Salehi noted that despite the Fukushima accident in March 2011, the safety systems at the power plants were robust enough to mitigate extensive radiation effects.

He emphasized that no deaths resulted from radiation or pollution caused by the plant explosion, attributing fatalities to the earthquake and tsunami.Quoting Ali Maleki, the head of Iran Radioactive Waste Management Company, Salehi underscored the country's efforts over the past several years to simulate the Fukushima accident for waste management purposes. He praised the expert reports on radiation protection presented by Iranian specialists and organizations. Highlighting the nuclear industry's sensitivity and public opinion, Salehi stressed the need for staying updated. He emphasized the international community's emphasis on standardization in nuclear waste disposal, stating that every country engaged in nuclear activities must adhere to global standards.

Salehi noted the International Atomic Energy Agency's responsibility to enhance standards and oversee nuclear safety worldwide.

He criticized the country's failure to approve the nuclear safety convention, citing the necessity of membership due to the presence of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. He concluded by reaffirming that as a nuclear nation with a nuclear power plant, Iran must be a member of such conventions.

Inaction kills

Israel is not losing any sleep after the second Muslim gathering since Oct. 7

By Mona Hojat Ansari



TEHRAN - As Israel's vainglorious patina of invincibility shattered on October 7, the Palestinian question was put back at the top of the agenda among Arab states that had already formed ties with the regime and were looking to further enhance them under the so-called Abraham Accords.

Muslim countries' first reaction to Israel's deadly retaliation against Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was seen as paltry and unconstructive: Tens of leaders convened in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in November to attend the Arab-Islamic summit. What came out of the meeting was a raft of strongly worded statements and some quixotic solutions. Iran's call for a cessation of ties with Israel fell on deaf ears, as most Muslim states had misgivings about coming out of the aegis of Washington over the loss of human lives in Gaza.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Arab League then embarked on a tour around Asia, Europe, and America to help assuage the unfolding crisis in Gaza. Several meetings were held with Chinese, Russian, and American officials, all of which did not bear any concrete outcomes that could be helpful to the Palestinians.

What happened behind the diplomatic stage was also ineffably lackluster. Saudi Arabia, seen as one of the major pillars in the Islamic world, bestrode attempts to keep Israel a potential future partner. Riyadh initially told the press that it would follow up with a normalization deal if the regime allowed the formation of a Palestinian state. That plan seemed to have been scuppered when Reuters later reported that the Kingdom was willing to accept a political commitment from Israel on the issue, rather than anything more binding.

Some shocking news also emerged on Muslim cooperation with the regime. "Ships coming from China and India unload containers in the ports of Bahrain and Dubai, and then the cargo is loaded onto Jordanian trucks and is transferred overland to Israel via the King Hussein border crossing with Jordan, where Israeli trucks await the goods," reported the Times of Israel, explaining how Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan had come to the regime's rescue amid Yemeni attacks on Israeli ships in the Red Sea.

The same went on in Turkey. Behind President Erdogan's harsh rhetoric against Israel and his proclamations of being a 'defender' of Palestinians, military, diplomatic, and economic cooperation with the regime continued unscathed. In fact, a container ship named Turkon Istanbul is expected to soon reach the port of Haifa, after leaving Izmir on March 1.

After a long period of impotence and inaction, the world saw a glimpse of hope with the OIC announcing that it was holding an extraordinary meeting on the situation in Gaza. People began to wonder whether Muslim leaders had finally decided that enough was enough, and were looking to take concrete steps to help the Palestinians.

March 5th, however, seems to have gone down as yet another day of Muslim indifference towards the heart of Islam.

Iran's Foreign Minister showed up in Jeddah to repeat his country's demand for a halt in ties with Israel. "As we witness the inaction of the United Nations Security Council against Israeli crimes, it becomes urgent and necessary for Islamic countries to find practical solutions and to take more serious actions in support of the people of Palestine," he said, only to face inaction for the umpteenth time.

As Muslim leaders struggle to muster up courage to pressure Israel, the regime continues to scourge and murder Palestinians. But the starving population in Gaza cannot wait for us to come to our senses. Once Israel decides that it's done with Gaza, lighting up candles might be all that will be left to do for Palestinians.

Iran orders confiscation of oil cargo from seized U.S. tanker



TEHRAN – An Iranian court has ordered authorities to confiscate crude from an American tanker that was seized in the Sea of Oman back in December.

The ruling followed a lawsuit by Iranian patients suffering from epidermolysis bullosa (EB), who argued that Washington's unilateral sanctions against Iran have been preventing them from receiving adequate medical care. They said the sanctions have caused them "severe physical and mental harm."

EB is a rare genetic skin disorder characterized by extremely fragile skin that blisters and tears from minor friction or trauma. It is often referred to as the "butterfly skin" disease due to the delicate nature of the skin.

As there are currently no treatments for the disease, patients rely on special bandages and dressings to cope with its debilitating symptoms. EB patients in Iran, however, have been unable to manage their wounds as Mölnlycke Health Care – a Swedish medical equipment company based in Gothenburg and one of the only places manufacturing the dressings– has been refusing to sell them to Iran due to U.S. sanctions.

Washington reinstated crippling sanctions against Iran in 2018, after unilaterally withdrawing from a United Nations-endorsed nuclear agreement with Tehran and five other nations. Though the U.S. claims its sanctions do not target food and medicine, companies around the world have been refraining from engaging with Iran out of fear of getting affected by the same measures.

The move has especially deprived EB patients of essential medical items, killed many of them, and inflicted serious physical injuries such as amputation to some of the patients.

The confiscated oil cargo is believed to be worth 50 million dollars. A Marshall Islands-flagged tanker named Advantage Sweet was responsible for transporting it in the Persian Gulf. It was seized by Iran's Navy following the court order.

Iranian, Turkish FMs advocate for enhanced relations

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has met his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan on the sidelines of the extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers from member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Amirabdollahian expressed contentment with the meeting and the ongoing consultations with Turkey. He underscored the recent successful visit of Iran's President to Ankara and the eighth Supreme Council meeting between the two nations, emphasizing the importance of translating the agreements reached during these events into tangible actions.

The Iranian Foreign Minister highlighted the pivotal role of the foreign ministries of both nations in executing the agreements made during the President's visit to Ankara. He stressed the necessity of activating joint committees in various domains to strengthen cooperation between Iran and Turkey. Amirabdollahian emphasized the importance of easing truck travel to boost commercial ties and noted Tehran's willingness to revive rail cooperation with Ankara.

Given the mutual stance on counterterrorism, Amirabdollahian emphasized the continuation and reinforcement of cooperation in this area. He expressed deep concern about the situation in Palestine and Gaza, articulating Iran's stance on the issue.

Fidan, expressing satisfaction with the meeting, acknowledged the significance of President Ebrahim Raisi's successful visit to Turkey and expressed satisfaction with its outcomes. He extended congratulations to Iran on successfully conducting parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

Highlighting the enduring and warm relations between the two countries, Fidan emphasized Turkey's commitment to enhancing ties across various sectors with Iran as a primary objective. Fidan emphasized the importance of revitalizing rail transport cooperation and fostering people-to-people interactions, aligning with the shared commitment to bolster economic and commercial relations.Both ministers discussed the situation in Palestine and explored avenues to address the conflict in Gaza perpetuated by the Zionist regime.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Navy acquires new, cutting-edge military equipment

TEHRAN - In a recent development, the naval forces of the Iranian Army have successfully integrated 42 new strategic defense achievements.

In a ceremony unfolded in the presence high-ranking military officials and commanders in southern port city of Bandar Abbas, Iran marked the official inclusion of these cutting-edge military advancements into its naval fleet.

The ceremonial integration witnessed the seamless inclusion of 42 defense achievements into the strategic naval forces of the Iranian Army. The extensive readiness and integration efforts encompassed eight fleets of surface and subsurface combat swimmer units, in addition to aerial fleets featuring missile-launching ships like 'Neyzeh' and 'Khadang.' Noteworthy additions included two 'Azarakhsh' surface and subsurface combat swimmer fleets and a rocket launcher fleet.

Additionally, the ceremony unveiled the latest equipment of the 'Sahand' destroyer, now featuring the first medium-range 'Sayyad 3' air defense system and 'Kamand' precision missile defense system.

Among the equipment unveiled on Wednesday were also the improved versions of the tethered drone 305, the 12-launcher 'Sanjar' drone, and the 'Bavar 5' which were added to Sahand destroyer.

The number of cruise missiles launchers for 'Alborz' destroyer were also increased.

Iran Army maintains intelligence dominance over enemies: chief army commander

Iran's Army Chief Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, who was present in the ceremony, recognied the significant progress made by the Iranian Army in the military industry during the recent years.

He expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts of the government, Defense Ministry, universities, and knowledge-based companies that contributed to these achievements, fostering a sense of pride among the Iranian people.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran to host next meeting of Gas Exporting Countries Forum: oil minister

TEHRAN –Iran will host the next ministerial meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), according to a statement from Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji.

Addressing reporters during a cabinet session on Wednesday, Oji underscored Iran's leading position in flare gas recovery, emphasizing a remarkable 5% growth in natural gas production, surpassing the 2.5% average observed among all Forum members, despite facing sanctions.

The Iranian minister noted that the decision to entrust Iran with hosting the future summit was a unanimous agreement during this year's GECF meeting in Algiers. He emphasized that discussions during this year's summit encompassed various topics, including technical and engineering services, gas field development, among others, involving collaboration with fellow member countries.

Oji took the opportunity to showcase Iran's prowess in the oil and gas industry, unveiling innovative contract formats in gas fields designed to attract foreign investments. He placed particular emphasis on the nation's capabilities in providing technical and engineering services, marketing gas products, and effectively managing pressure lines.

Oji elaborated, stating, "Our energy infrastructure is well-prepared for efficient transmission from north to south and east to west. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi contributed valuable suggestions for energy transmission during the summit."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Rahimov: Iran is a developed country in Paralympic Movement

From Page 1 ▶ **First of all, I would like to know your opinion about blind sports in Iran. Do you follow the sports news of this West Asian country?**

A: I first thank you for your interest in interviewing me. It is very important for me to convey the positions and ideas of IBSA to all countries and athletes. From this point of view, communication through the press is one of the effective methods of disseminating information about the reforms that have begun in IBSA. Of course, as the head of such an authoritative international sports federation as IBSA, I also need to have information about the sports of blind and visually impaired people in different countries. Otherwise, we will not be able to effectively build our activities.

Q: How do you evaluate the stance of Iran in IBSA at the moment and the country has been successful in Paralympics and Asian Para Games?

A: Iran is a developed and advanced country in the world of sports, especially in the Paralympic movement. The sport of blind and visually impaired athletes is also developing very strongly in your country. We actively cooperate with the Iranian Paralympic Committee, as well as with the Iran Sports Federation for the Blind and Partially Sighted, which is an official member of the IBSA. I would tell you that we not only collaborate with the leaders of these organizations, we also have friendly ties with Ghafoor Karegari and Mohammadreza Mazloumi, whom I greatly respect and appreciate for their contribution to the development of sports among the disabled. We meet periodically at various forums and competitions to discuss problems.

Please tell us about the Iranian officials on the world stage and have their performance been satisfactory so far?

A: Representatives of your country carry out their activities in various sports committees of the IBSA, are international judges, and international medical classifiers. For example, Nezam Dodel is the chairman of the IBSA powerlifting committee. The committee he heads includes many Iranian representatives. Fariba Mohammadi is a member Women's Development of the IBSA Goalball Committee. Morteza Najafi is one of the most qualified IBSA classifiers. We all work on the same team. Therefore, I am very aware of the development of sports in Iran and of course I follow sports news from this country.

Q: As you know, Iranian blind football won the silver medal in Rio 2016 and athletes in other sports are also attracting attention so far. In your opinion, as IBSA Mr. President, what is the most famous sport for the blind in Iran?

A: IBSA sports are developing very strongly in Iran. Athletes of your country always perform effectively at all IBSA competitions, be it competitions in various sports or be it IBSA multi-sport competitions. In addition, blind and visually impaired athletes from Iran win many awards at competitions held under the auspices of the IPC. Therefore, it is very difficult to single out any particular sport. Your teams perform equally successfully in competitions in blind football and goalball, in IBSA judo competitions, powerlifting and others. Iranian teams are always at the forefront in terms of results of competitions and games.

The next Paralympic Games in Paris are of course approaching. IBSA will be represented at these games by three sports - judo, football and goalball. It is already known that the Iranian men's team will be represented in goalball competitions. In judo competitions, many para judokas from your country are in high places in the rankings and this will allow them to also participate in the games in Paris. I wish all athletes from your country to represent Iran well at these games.

Who is the most influential athlete among Iranian visually impaired athletes at the Paralympic Games?

A: I would not like to single out any of the athletes separately. I know many of them personally. I know how much they support their country and want to win every competition. Sport is their life. This is an opportunity to establish yourself in society. And each of them is a hero with a capital letter.

Q: Let us know your opinion about Iranian female athletes. Which sport or athlete do you think lived up to expectations?

A: Iranian athletes are an active part of the entire Paralympic Movement. There are many famous names among them. Not only Iranian girls, but also many athletes from other countries look up to them and their successes. It is enough to name such names as Zahra Nemati, she is a legend of all world sports. Sareh Javanmardi, Hashemieh Motaghiyan and others. I can also highlight the rapidly developing women's goalball team. Like other countries there is still work to be done but the attention being paid to the development of sports in Iran will allow new names of Iranian female athletes to shine in the near future.

The question arises about the classification of blind people in sports. For example, we see a judoka or a football player may even drive a car. Tell us in more detail how the classification occurs?

A: Classification is one of the most important and unique aspects of all Para sports and is something which constantly evolves with new research, knowledge and technology becoming available.

Specific to IBSA, and before my election, in 2021 a new classification system was launched in judo after many years of research and collaboration with experts and the wider community. For blind football and goalball, a similar process is being undertaken.

When I was elected IBSA President seven months ago, I made it my top priority to initiate the latest review of classification and the systems within it in all sports in IBSA. All International Federations and the Paralympic Movement as a whole recognize that, like all systems, classification can – and should – be under constant review so that everyone can have confidence in the process. This is crucial.

Are you satisfied with the work of your organization?

A: It is under a year since my election but so far, I believe it has been possible to lay the groundwork for a new era for IBSA.

When I was elected, I promised IBSA Members that the new Board would be responsive to their needs – and those of their athletes - in the ever-evolving environment we are all operating in.

In a short time, we have been able to strengthen the athlete voice and prepare for a comprehensive review of IBSA's activities. We have also brought in new expertise in operations, anti-doping and communications to professionalize these functions with further plans for finance and classification.

There is still much work to do but I believe we are on the track.

Young cyclist Valinejad dies

TEHRAN - Ariana Valinejad, a young Iranian cyclist, tragically lost her life after a week-long battle with severe injuries sustained from a gas leak explosion at her home.

Valinejad, aged 20, was active in both Track Cycling and Road Cycling disciplines. She had achieved numerous titles in domestic women's cycling competitions.

Rasoul Asadi, head of the Iran's Cycling Federation, expressed condolences for the passing of Valinejad, a talented young cyclist and a promising figure in Iranian cycling, stating "Today, the Iranian cycling community witnessed a bitter and sorrowful event. On behalf of the great family of Iranian cycling, I offer my condolences to the esteemed family of Valinejad, a morally upright and talented cyclist of our country."

Ariana was regarded as one of the future talents in women's cycling in Iran, leading to her participation in the Female Junior Road Camp of the 2023 World Cycling Center in South Korea.

An official from the federation told Tehran Times "Ariana was not only technically skilled but also morally excellent as an athlete. We considered her as one of the future members of the Iranian women's senior team. She made special efforts to advance in cycling and possessed great talent. We are deeply saddened by the loss of such a phenomenon in Iranian cycling."

Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth, Kioumars Hashemi, also expressed condolences for the passing of this young cyclist in a message of sympathy.

Tehran Times extends its heartfelt condolences to her grieving family and the Iranian cycling community during this challenging time.

Her funeral ceremony will be held on Thursday in Khorramabad city.

Tehran, Tashkent explore avenues of economic cooperation

From page 1 ▶ Oji said Iran is drilling oil and gas fields at a depth of 6,000 meters in the absence of foreign experts.

The Uzbek energy minister said he has closely observed Iran's capabilities and achievements in international energy exhibitions, which displayed its modern oil and gas equipment.

He said Uzbekistan's officials have adequate information about the Iranian companies' great experiences in oil and gas exploration, extraction, transmission, and refining sectors, calling for Iran to share its expertise and technical know-how with his country.Mirzamakhmudov, who visited Tehran to follow up on the agreements signed by Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi, said the Uzbek government is keen to expand relations, particularly in the oil sector, with Iran.

Iran calls for strong economic ties with Uzbekistan

In his talks with Mokhber, the Iranian side underlined the need for strengthened relations with Uzbekistan, saying political interactions remain stable with strong economic support.

Referring to the government's policy of reaching out to neighboring countries, he said that Iran and Uzbekistan can cooperate in different industrial, energy, electricity, transportation, and knowledge-based areas.

He underlined that a



preferential trade agreement can help the expansion of relations between the two countries.The Iranian vice president also called for using national currencies in financial and banking settlements.

In the meantime, the Uzbek minister referred to an earlier meeting between the presidents of the two countries, noting that the two presidents have underlined the need for increasing the volume of bilateral trade from the current $500 million to $1 billion and then to $2 billion in the near future.

Tehran, Tashkent to sign comprehensive transportation document soon

Transport Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, in his talks with the Uzbek delegate, emphasized the need for the formation of a joint transport committee, the drawing of a transit road map, and the preparation of a comprehensive transport document between the two countries.

Referring to various meetings between Iran and Uzbekistan officials in the field of transportation, he said: "We consider ourselves committed to implementing the memorandums signed between the two countries, including the agreement signed on the development of the East-West Corridor."

Bazrpash also called for an increase in the number of flights between the two countries and voiced Iran's readiness for participation in Uzbekistan's transportation projects.

Exports to Uzbekistan up 20% in 10 months

According to TPO, the country's export of non-oil goods to Uzbekistan registered a 20-percent hike in the 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023 to January 22, 2024).

The head of the Russia and Caucasus Office of the TPO, Akbar Godari, pointed to the visit by the Uzbek minister of energy and his accompanying delegation to Iran and expressed hope that this visit will bring about positive results for the expansion of the trade ties between the two countries.

Godari referred to the achievements of a visit by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Abbas Aliabadi to the Republic of Uzbekistan last month and said the two sides agreed to pursue the implementation of the agreements inked between the two sides earlier.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Godari pointed to Iran's export of products to Uzbekistan and added that various types of polymer compounds, cables, aquatics, steel profiles, etc. were exported from Iran to Uzbekistan in 2023.

In return, Iran imported cotton thread, potassium, cereals, legumes, pinto beans, and silk thread from the Republic of Uzbekistan last year, he added.

The official put the value of the trade exchanges between Iran and Uzbekistan from March 21, 2023, to January 22, 2024, at more than $370 million.

Iran exported more than $270 million of non-oil goods to Uzbekistan, showing a 20 percent growth compared to the same period a year earlier.

According to the statistics, Iran imported about $100 million of products from the Republic of Uzbekistan in this period, he added.

Iran's proposal to launch swift analogue added to BRICS agenda

TEHRAN - BRICS has put on the agenda the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s proposal to set up the group's own equivalent to the SWIFT payment system and create an organization to fight money laundering and terrorist financing that would be similar to intergovernmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

"The proposals of the Iranian central bank on the creation of a system for exchanging financial messages between members of the organization (similar to SWIFT), combating money laundering and financing of terrorism (similar to FATF) and international credit rating institutions for BRICS members were accepted by the organization on the agenda," the CBI deputy governor, Mohsen Karimi said.

The BRICS member states, as the largest emerging economies, need to establish a settlement mechanism to achieve a unified financial system, in which "the Iranian side can play a huge role," he added.

Iran has long sought the creation of an international payment system alternative to SWIFT, he noted.

Russian banks, which have been disconnected from SWIFT following the outbreak of the Ukraine war in February 2022, are also interested in an alternative system. Since then, the two countries have been making efforts to find alternatives or create them, the report added.

Back in January, Russian Central Bank Head Elvira Nabiullina said that Russia was discussing with other BRICS countries the interaction of national financial message transmission systems, and 159 foreign participants from 20 countries had already joined the Russian platform.

Iran, Saudi FMs call for facilitating economic cooperation



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian (L) and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan have urged facilitating economic cooperation on par with increasing political ties between the two countries.

Amirabdollahian, who arrived in the Saudi port city of Jeddah on Tuesday to participate in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) extraordinary meeting on Gaza, met and held talks with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan.

Infrastructure provided to transit gas through north-south, east-west corridors: Oji

TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji said the country has the necessary infrastructure to transit natural gas via the North-South and West-East corridors passing through the country, Shana reported.

"The infrastructure of Iran's gas industry is completely ready for transit or transfer of energy [natural gas] from the north to south and from west to east," Oji told the reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Despite sanctions, 2 EU members imported Iranian oil in 2023: Eurostat

TEHRAN – The latest data released by the European Union's statistics office (Eurostat) show that the Islamic Republic exported oil to two European countries in 2023 despite the U.S. sanctions, IRNA reported.

According to Eurostat, despite the sanctions on the Iranian oil industry by the European Union, Bulgaria, as an official member of this union, imported oil from Iran in 2023. In 2022, Bulgaria imported only 168 tons of oil or oil products from Iran, but in 2023, the import of oil or oil products from Iran increased six times to 1058 tons.

Although the amount of Bulgaria's oil imports from Iran in 2023 is not a significant figure, it indicates the willingness of EU members to ignore the sanctions against Iran.

Eurostat statistics also show that Georgia, as an observer member of the European Union, imported 4,438 tons of oil or oil products from Iran last year. Georgia's oil import from Iran has grown by six percent compared to the previous year.

Georgia had imported 4,161 tons of oil or oil products from Iran in 2022.

Non-oil exports to Oman reach $916m in 10 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported commodities valued at $916 million to Oman during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023-January 20, 2024), according to the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Ruhollah Latifi said that, among the neighbors of the Islamic Republic, Oman was the sixth top export destination of the Iranian products during the mentioned 10-month period.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely UAE, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Expanding trade with the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

In last December 2023, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi said the value of trade between Iran and Oman is targeted to become $5 billion.Saying that signing a preferential trade agreement with Oman is being followed up, the minister said: "Our trade with Oman is targeted to be $3.5 billion first and then $5 billion."

Iran and Oman have signed two memorandums of understanding (MOU) to boost bilateral cooperation and emphasize the importance of using their national currencies in mutual trade instead of the dollar.

The mentioned MOUs were signed during the two countries' 20th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on December 6, 2023.One of the MOUs was signed by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Abbas Ali-Abadi, and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais Mohammed Al Yousef on supporting joint investment by the two sides.

Iran's Ministry of Industry and Oman's Chamber of Commerce also signed an MOU to boost cooperation in technology as well.

The two sides have also exchanged views on ways of expanding cooperation in the field of fishery and agriculture, deciding to hold a joint fishery exhibition soon.

During the joint committee meeting, Ali-Abadi announced Iran's readiness to jointly implement key industrial projects with Oman including the construction of an industrial park, the establishment of power plants as well and cooperation in maritime transport projects among others.

The Omani minister on his part emphasized the importance of boosting economic and trade relations between Tehran and Muscat.During his stay in Tehran, Mohammed Al Yousef also met with the Head of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Mohammad-Reza Farzin, and stressed the importance of using Iranian and Omani national currencies in mutual trade.

The Omani official said his country wants to have a strong presence in establishing the required infrastructure for banking and monetary transactions in Iran, implementing joint projects, as well as making investments in industrial and mineral projects. Omani investors are also keen to participate in energy projects and to develop Iran's gas fields, he added.The top Iranian banker also said that his country welcomes any measure that helps boost monetary and banking cooperation between the two countries.

Farzin stressed the importance of using national currencies by the two countries in their mutual trade instead of the dollar as well.

Aiming to expand economic ties, Iran and Oman signed four cooperation documents in various areas including energy, investment, and free zones during the official visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq al-Said to Tehran in late May.

The document on the energy sector was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Oji and Omani Minister of Energy and Minerals Salim bin Nasser al-Aufi.

The two countries also signed three other documents to cooperate in the economic, investment, and free zones sectors.

Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Secretary of Iran's Free Zones High Council Hojatollah Abdolmaleki signed the mentioned documents with the ministers of economy and commerce of Oman.

Meanwhile, in mid-July, 2023, the former head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for promoting joint investment between the private sectors of Iran and Oman in order to boost the trade exchanges between the two countries.

Hossein Selahvarzi made the remarks in a meeting with Omani Ambassador to Tehran Ibrahim bin Ahmed Almuaini.

During the meeting, Selahvarzi expressed the readiness of the private sectors of Iran and Oman for joint investments, as well as, using transit capacities of the two countries for re-exports if the necessary infrastructure is provided by the governments of the two countries.

Referring to the 40 percent growth of trade exchanges between the two countries in the previous year, the official said: "Although this positive trend is significant, the ICCIMA is trying to increase the volume of exchanges as much as possible."

He pointed out that the Joint Economic Committee meeting of Iran and Oman will soon be held in Tehran, noting that the ICCIMA is ready to discuss ways of facilitating the trade between the private sectors of the two countries in the mentioned meeting.

Also, in early May, a Joint Iran-Oman Business Forum was held at the place of ICCIMA in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman.

The forum aimed at consolidating bilateral business relations, conducting strategic partnerships to augment the volume of investments and business activity, and accessing new economic fields.

Several B2B meetings were held during the forum between Omani and Iranian businesspeople. The meetings targeted striking business and investment deals. As many as 250 Iranian firms took part in the event.

Prior to the forum, ICCIMA former Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie met with his Omani counterpart to discuss avenues of mutual cooperation between the two countries' private sectors.

In this meeting, while emphasizing the need to remove trade obstacles, Shafeie said: "Attention should be paid to multilateral cooperation and joint investments so that the markets of the two countries can take advantage of each other's business opportunities in any situation."

Tehran, Hanoi mulling over preferential trade agreement

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mehdi Zeighami has said that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Vietnam have expressed hope to reach an agreement on preferential trade.

During a meeting with Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Minh Hang on Tuesday, Zeighami pointed to the importance of the Vietnamese market for Iran, saying that Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi emphasizes the development of economic ties with East Asian countries, and Vietnam is among the 15 countries that Iran prioritizes for trade.

Zeighami invited Vietnamese government officials, private sector representatives, and businesspersons to participate in the Iranian international trade event, the 2024 Iran Expo exhibition.

Iran has signed preferential trade agreements with many countries, he said, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran is willing to sign preferential trade agreements with the Vietnamese side, which would help



to develop trade between the two nations.

Nguyen Minh Hang, for her part, called for strengthening economic and trade ties with Iran, expressing Vietnam's willingness to hold a joint commission between the two countries to discuss further opportunities for collaboration.

She also emphasized Vietnam's goal of developing a roadmap for trade with Iran, including the possibility of signing preferential tariffs with Iran, given that Vietnam has already signed tariff-free agreements with many other countries.

TEDPIX falls 6,000 points on Wednesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 6,490 points on Wednesday to stand at 2,165,738.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are the Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

Warmongers working hand in glove

US, UK speak out against Israel to appease opposition to Gaza war

From page 1 ▶ Arab and Muslim American voters, who are outraged over Washington's support for Israel's war on Gaza, played a key role in helping Biden win the 2020 presential election. If they stay away from the November polls, Biden might land in hot water.

Besides, Biden's allies are intensifying pressure on him over his failure to rein in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu whose regime has killed over 30,000 Palestinians and blocked the entry of food and medicines into the Gaza Strip.

Biden's closest confidant in Congress, Chris Coons, is among those who have demanded the White House get tougher on Netanyahu.

Over the past days, Coons has called on the Biden administration to cut military aid to Israel if it launches a ground onslaught on Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah, according to the Associated Press.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population have fled to the city under the Israeli military order. However, the regime continues to carry out deadly strikes in Rafah.

The AP also revealed that Jack Reed, head of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has appealed to Biden to deploy the American Navy to get humanitarian aid to Gaza.



Elsewhere, Bernie Sanders, an independent senator from Vermont, once again urged the White House to stop arms shipments to Israel.

"There should be no more money for the Netanyahu war machine," Sanders said on X.

It stands out a mile that Biden and his Democratic allies, who are complicit in Israel's atrocities, are mainly concerned about the erosion of their political clout due to public discontent over Israel's genocidal war in Gaza.

In the UK, public discontent over Israel's crimes in Gaza and London's support for Tel Aviv has raised concerns within the Rishi Sunak government.

Earlier this month, George Galloway, who was running on a pro-Gaza platform, made a triumphant return to the House of Commons after securing a thumping by-election victory.

The firebrand veteran British politician, who represents the hard-left, fringe Workers Party of Britain, took the constituency of Rochdale with nearly 40% of the vote.

His decision to campaign on opposing Israel's onslaught on Gaza and to call out Britain's staunch support for the regime helped him secure a resounding victory.

Growing support for Gazans and opposition to the UK's backing for Israel has prompted British officials to speak out against the regime's deadly war in the Palestinian territory.

Foreign Secretary David Cameron said on Tuesday that Israel needs "a whole series of warnings" over the amount of aid reaching Gaza, according to British media.

Cameron has also said there is "dreadful suffering" in Gaza, with people dying of hunger and preventable disease.

He has also called Israel the "occupying power", saying the regime is "responsible" for the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

British officials like Americans are concerned about losing power and their pro-Palestine stance is nothing more than a charm offensive.

Both the United States and Britain have been engaged in warmongering. They have carried out several rounds of air strikes against Yemen over the Ansarullah movement's targeting of Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea. The movement says it hits ships affiliated with the regime in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

Washington and London are Tel Aviv's main allies and have provided the regime with weapons that are used in the Gaza war.

The U.S. and Britain are warmongers and Israel's partners in crime. They have only sharpened criticism of Israel to appease domestic opposition over the regime's genocide in Gaza. As the saying goes "there is honor among thieves".

Tel Aviv stalling Gaza peace talks

Palestinians offered high level of flexibility for a ceasefire

From page 1 ▶ He emphasized that at this rate, what the Israeli occupation failed to achieve militarily, it won't attain through negotiations.

Hamdan stressed that negotiations won't continue without addressing the ongoing Israeli war of hunger and genocide against the Palestinians, asserting flexibility in negotiations is matched by the group's readiness to defend the Palestinian people and their sacred sites.

Speaking to reporters in Beirut, he noted Hamas rejects any solution that doesn't halt aggression and lift the blockade, affirming the resistance's commitment to sacrifices and accomplishments.

The Hamas leader called on the Islamic world to make Ramadan an opportunity to exert pressure and work towards saving the Palestinians from starvation.

He also called on Arab and Islamic countries to take serious action and implement the decisions of their recent summit to break the siege on Gaza.

Hamdan reiterated the call for countries that are facilitating food convoys to the Israeli regime through their territories to cease such actions.

Additionally, he noted the U.S. administration can end the crisis by halting the supply of weapons to the Israeli occupation and to stop using its veto power in support of Tel Aviv.

He highlighted the hypocrisy of the U.S. administration that claims to stand by humanity, freedom, and justice but is directly complicit in the Israeli onslaught, which unveils the true face of America. It has done nothing to prevent the war crimes in Gaza.

Regarding the aid dropped from the air, Hamdan stated that it only represents a tiny portion of what Gaza needs, calling for aid to be brought in through land crossings and emphasizing that "American aid from the air will not improve Washington's bloody image."

The senior Hamas leader also demanded the dismissal of a UN official who presented a "false report without evidence, claiming incidents of sexual violence by the resistance" on October 7 attacks on southern Israel.

Touching on the UN Security Council statement on the Israeli massacre on February 29 that killed and injured at least 800 Palestinians in the Gaza City neighborhood where they had gathered to collect flour, Hamdan said the statement "does not reflect the gravity of the crime."

Meanwhile, a source with the Palestinian factions has shed further light on the negotiations, saying the resistance has relayed a clear position to mediators that offers a high level of flexibility to achieve a ceasefire.

Speaking to the Al Mayadeen channel, the source underlined that the resistance provided everything necessary for the success of mediation efforts, yet the "occupiers consistently obstructed our endeavors, hindering any progress in negotiations".

Regarding negotiation demands, the Palestinian resistance leadership reiterated key points: withdrawal of occupation forces, return of displaced individuals to their areas, opening of crossings, and the entry of aid.

"The position of the resistance leadership reflects national consensus, and the occupation leaders should be well aware of this."

The source concluded that there will be no backtracking in the talks and no release of Israeli captives except by a decision from the leadership of the resistance and through a comprehensive prisoner exchange deal.

The final response of the resistance is in the hands of the mediators as well as the Israeli occupation, which the source said is refusing to comply at the moment.

As the latest phase of negotiations to end the genocidal campaign in Gaza reportedly enters its fourth day, there are growing signs of division among the Israeli leadership that could explain the Israeli refusal to end its indiscriminate war on Gaza, where 80% of the huge death toll are women and children, according to the Pentagon.

Opposition leader and war cabinet minister Benny Gantz has left Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu furious by holding talks with top U.S. and British officials without the Israeli premier's authorization.

Amid the fractures in the Israeli hierarchy, an increasing number of dead Palestinian children are officially being registered as "starved to death" at Gaza's hospitals.

How Israel quietly crushed early American Jewish dissent on Palestine

The Israeli government covertly meddled into American Jewish politics from the 1950s to 1970s, and they did so to quash Jewish criticisms of the 1948 Nakba — the mass dispossession and expulsions of Palestinians during Israel's founding — and Israel's oppression of Palestinians. Israeli diplomats who oversaw the furtive campaign were at one point assisted by Wolf Blitzer — today the host of CNN's primetime show "The Situation Room."

These are some of the findings of "Our Palestine Question," an explosive new book by Emory University scholar Geoffrey Levin that offers historical perspective on today's crisis in Gaza, especially as it plays out today among American Jews.

Since the October 7 attacks by Hamas against Israel, and Israel's overwhelming retaliatory attacks against Palestinian civilians in Gaza, American Jews have organized dramatic protests. They have demanded everything from a ceasefire and to an end to U.S. military funding for Israel.

This diverse group of American Jews opposed to Israeli policy, and, at times, Israel itself, is drawing on a history of activism in the U.S. that has long since faded into obscurity — and they are bringing it from history into the present day.

Many of these activists explicitly cite earlier political movements as their inspiration. One was the socialist, anti-Zionist General Jewish Labor Bund, founded over a century ago in Eastern Europe, but which had been defunct for generations. The others are a post-1980 agglomeration of U.S. groups including the now-defunct New Jewish Agenda and liberal J Street, which is still around and lobbying politicians, albeit with fewer resources than the Zionist right. These smaller groups were formed after avowed Zionists and anti-Zionists stopped talking to each other, except to scream.

What few activists remark upon, however, is a time within living memory, in the 1950s, when the biggest Jewish organization in the U.S. — the American Jewish Committee, or AJC — was publicly critiquing the Nakba and pushing Israel to afford full civil and human rights to Palestinians. Less noted and lesser known is how this remarkable status quo was erased: From the 1950s to the late 1970s, Israel orchestrated the back-channel attacks on influential individuals and groups, including the AJC, who were pushing for Palestinian rights.

"Our Palestinian Question" pries the lid from this suppressed tale.

American Jewish McCarthyism

Levin picked up the scent of this hidden history a few years ago. He was a Hebrew and Judaic Studies doctoral student then, sifting through Jewish history special collections in Manhattan as well as the Israel State Archives in Jerusalem, when he dug up evidence of the sub rosa American Jewish McCarthyism. He was the first researcher to discover how the Israeli government, through its diplomats and a spy in the United States, pressured American Jewish institutions to ghost a prominent journalist, fire a brilliant researcher, and discredit an organization of Jews who were critiquing Israel's treatment of Palestinians and trying to open channels for discussion with Arabs.

Take the case of journalist William Zukerman. A respected Yiddish- and English-language writer in the 1930s and 1940s, with clips in Harpers and the New York Times, Zukerman started his own biweekly, the Jewish Newsletter, in 1948. It was highly critical of Jewish nationalism and its destructive effects in the new state of Israel and beyond.

In one story, Zukerman reported about a Holocaust survivor who had recently resettled in Israel, in the former home of an Arab family. The survivor became "openly obsessed" about her morality, Zukerman wrote, after her children found some of the evicted family's possessions. "The mother was suddenly struck by the thought that her children were playing with the toys of Arab children who were now exiled and homeless," Zukerman continued. "Is she not doing to the Arabs what the Nazis did to her and her family?"

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

Palestinian Foreign Ministry: Israel seeks to depopulate northern Gaza

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry says Israeli occupation is attempting to depopulate the northern Gaza Strip by intensifying its attacks and escalating famine.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates condemns in the strongest terms the war of genocide that Israel is carrying out against our people in the Gaza Strip," the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported.

"The ministry confirms that more than 500,000 people live in northern Gaza under the most horrific acts of genocide: constant bombardment, deepening famine, and creating strife and chaos."

WFP: Israel turned back food convoy

According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP), a 14-truck food convoy – the first by the WFP since it paused deliveries to northern Gaza on 20 February – was turned back by the Israeli army after a three-hour wait at the Wadi Gaza checkpoint.

Carl Skau, WFP's deputy executive director, said although the convoy did not make it to the north to provide food to the people who are starving, the UN body continues to explore every possible means to do so.

With the 14-truck food convoy being turned back, the WFP turned to airdrops.

PA denounces plans for new Israeli settlement units

Israel has advanced plans for more than 3,400 new units in settlements in the occupied West Bank.

About 70% of the units will be built in Maale Adumim, east of Jerusalem, with the rest in nearby Kedar and Efrat, south of Bethlehem, the BBC reported.

The Palestinian Authority's foreign ministry condemned the plans.

The ministry said settlements are illegal, illegitimate and "are a call for the cycle of violence to persist".

"The ministry calls for swift international sanctions that would deter Israel from building more settlements and to include [National Security Minister Itamar] Ben-Gvir and [Finance Minister Bezalel] Smotrich as well as any other Israeli official who plays a role in deepening and funding illegal settlements," it said in a statement.

Israel has built about 160 settlements housing some 700,000 Jews since it occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem - land the Palestinians want as part of a future state.The vast majority of the international community considers the settlements illegal under international law.

Starbucks lays off workers after pro-Palestine boycott

Starbucks' West Asia franchisee has fired 2,000 of its staff after suffering huge losses owing to boycott campaign led by Palestinian supporters during Israel's war on Gaza.

The Persian Gulf's retail giant AlShaya Group, which owns the rights to operate Starbucks in the Middle East (West Asia), announced the one-tenth staff downsizing decision citing "challenging trading conditions over the last six months".

"As a result of the continually challenging trading conditions over the last six months, we have taken the very sad and very difficult decision to reduce the number of colleagues" in Starbucks stores in the region, the Kuwait-based family business, Alshaya Group said.

"Our thoughts are with the green apron partners who will be leaving, and we want to thank them for their contributions," a Starbucks spokesperson told Reuters. The baristas downsizing comes amid the American multinational coffeehouse chain headquartered in Seattle, has seen billions of dollars worth of losses throughout the months due to global Palestine solidarity boycotts, according to Press TV.

Its sales were significantly hampered in West Asia and the U.S. after consumers started demonstrating a boycott campaign against it and several other multi-national brands over their direct or indirect support to Israel.

Russia: West plays with fire

The Western countries are playing with fire when discussing the possibility of sending their troops to Ukraine, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

He described as dangerous the very fact such an idea was mentioned by French President Emmanuel Macron, Tass news agency reported.

Peskov said Moscow is hearing "many contradictory statements" from the West about sending NATO troops to Ukraine, but "the very fact of this discussion is dangerous."

He pointed out that Macron's statements to the effect that a discussion should begin on this score came amid speculations that the West wants to see Russia suffer a strategic defeat.

"They are all playing with fire," Peskov warned. He added that together with German officers' discussion of strikes on Russia all this leads "to a further degradation of the situation."

"Of course, this is extremely irresponsible behavior," Peskov stated.

He pointed out that Moscow was keen to achieve its goals and that "Russia is open to political and diplomatic ways of achieving them."

China: U.S. using the Philippines as a pawn

China urged the United States to refrain from using the Philippines as a pawn to destabilize the South China Sea, Xinhua reported.

The Philippines also needs to refrain from being manipulated by the United States, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Mao Ning made the remarks at a daily news briefing when answering a query on the inappropriate remarks made by the U.S. side concerning the recent collision between Chinese and Philippine boats in the South China Sea.

Mao noted that Ren'ai Jiao is part of China's Nansha Qundao. China has indisputable sovereignty over Nansha Qundao and its adjacent waters, including Ren'ai Jiao.

Chile cancels Israeli participation in Latin America's largest aerospace fair

Chile has decided to exclude Israeli firms from Latin America's biggest aerospace fair, to be held in Santiago in April.

"By decision of the Government of Chile, the 2024 version of the International Air and Space Fair (FIDAE), to be held between 9 and 14 April, will not have the participation of Israeli companies," a defense ministry statement said.

The government of leftist President Gabriel Boric has been critical of Israel's deadly war on Gaza.

Chile, which has the largest Palestinian population outside the Arab world, recalled its ambassador to Israel in late October to protest Israel's "unacceptable violations of international humanitarian law" in Gaza.

Museum of ancient salt men reopens after restoration

TEHRAN - The Archaeology Museum of Zanjan, famously known as the salt men museum for its collection of ancient mummies discovered in an ancient salt mine, has reopened its doors to visitors following a comprehensive two-month restoration project.

"The Archaeology Museum of Zanjan, renowned for its unique artifacts such as the mummies of the salt men has reopened its doors to enthusiasts after two months of meticulous restoration," Zanjan province's deputy tourism chief said on Tuesday.

Mohammadreza Mohammadpour announced the completion of the restoration work, which was carried out based on modern museum principles.

During the restoration project, various aspects of the museum were refurbished and upgraded. This included insulation installation for doors and windows, flooring renovation on the second floor, electrical system enhancements, as well as new painting and lighting for the displays of the Salt Men and historical objects.

Mohammadpour emphasized the importance of proper lighting in museums, stating that it is one of the most influential factors in creating a conducive environment for visitors to appreciate the exhibits fully.

He further explained, "The walls of the museum required fresh painting, which was executed according to museum standards. Now, the museum space boasts sufficient color and radiance to highlight the Salt Men and their associated artifacts."

Regarding the electrical infrastructure, Mohammadpour mentioned that outdated wiring systems were replaced with fire-resistant wires, and the electronic security system was updated. He assured that the museum's electronic security is now up to standard, eliminating any deficiencies or shortcomings in the museum space.

The prolonged duration of the restoration process was attributed to the unique nature of the salt men artifacts, the historical significance, and the registered status of the Zoalfaghari Mansion, where the museum is housed.

What was a catastrophe for the ancient miners has become a sensation of science. Sporting a long white beard, iron knives, and a single gold earring, the first salt mummy was discovered in 1993. He is estimated to be trapped in the mine in ca. 300 CE. In 2004, another mummy was discovered only 50 feet away, followed by another in 2005 and a "teenage" boy mummy later that year.

In 1993, miners in the Douzlakh Salt Mine, near Hamzehli and Chehrabad villages, accidentally came across a mummified head. The head was very well preserved, to the extent that his pierced ear was still holding the gold earring. The hair, beard, and mustaches were reddish, and his impressive leather boot still contained parts of his leg and foot, according to the Ancient History Encyclopedia.

The first mummy dubbed the "Saltman" is on display in the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. He still looks very impressive. The third, fourth, and fifth "saltmen" were also carbon-dated. The third body was dated and placed in 2337 BP, the fourth body in 2301 BP, and the fifth mummy was dated to 2286 BP, placing them all in the Achaemenid period.

The isotopic analysis of the human remains revealed much information about the salt mummies. Besides, the archaeological finds, such as animal bones found within the context of the saltmen, showed that the miners might have eaten sheep, goats, and probably pigs and cattle, as well. The archaeobotanical finds recorded showed different cultivated plants were eaten, indicating an agricultural establishment in the vicinity of the mine.

The wealth of fabric and other organic material (leather) worn by the saltmen have allowed a thorough analysis to be undertaken, detailing the resources used to make the fabrics, the processing, the dyes used to color the fibers of the garments, and not least they offer an excellent overview of the changes in cloth types, patterns of weaving, and the changes of the fibers through time.

Archaeologists in Egypt unearth section of large Ramses II statue

A joint Egyptian-U.S. archaeological mission has uncovered the upper part of a huge statue of King Ramses II during excavations south of the Egyptian city of Minya, Egypt's tourism and antiquities ministry said on Monday.

The limestone block is about 3.8 meters (12.5 feet) high and depicts a seated Ramses wearing a double crown and a headdress topped with a royal cobra, Bassem Jihad, head of the mission's Egyptian team, said in a statement.

The upper part of the statue's back column shows hieroglyphic writings that glorify the king, one of ancient Egypt's most powerful pharaohs, he said.

Also known as Ramses the Great, he was the third pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt and ruled from 1,279 to 1,213 BC.

The size of the statue when combined with its lower section, which was unearthed decades ago, would reach about 7 meters.

The city of El Ashmunein, on the west bank of the River Nile, was known in ancient Egypt as Khemnu and in the Greco-Roman era was the regional capital of Hermopolis Magna.

Studies have confirmed that the upper part of the statue is a match for the lower section discovered by German archaeologist Gunther Roeder in 1930, said Mustafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

The mission has begun cleaning and preparing the block ahead of modelling what the statue would look like when the two sections are combined, Waziri said.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran in frames



Off the beaten track; a solo British cyclist heads towards the Alborz mountains in an undated photo. Riding a trail bike 3,000 miles across Iran took Lois Pryce through spectacular scenery, but it was the warm hospitality she encountered along the way that made her fall in love with the country. Pryce is a female travel writer and author of three books about solo motorcycle adventures in Iran, Africa, and the Americas.

Cultural heritage alert: Taj al Molk dome at Isfahan's Jameh Mosque in critical condition

TEHRAN - A researcher specializing in the restoration of historical monuments has cautioned that the Taj al Molk dome chamber within the Jameh Mosque of Isfahan, also known as Atiq Mosque, is on the verge of destruction due to excessive moisture.

The risky condition of the dome chamber and its supporting load-loading walls is believed to be worsened by the excavation of a metro tunnel located about 100 meters away from the UNESCO-listed mosque.

The Taj al Molk dome, situated on the northern side of the mosque, is an architectural marvel. The intricate brickwork and geometric designs adorning the dome have contributed significantly to its cultural significance and prestige.

Speaking to IRNA, Maedeh Kalantari, the researcher, highlighted that the Taj al Molk dome, a thousand-year-old architectural wonder, is approximately 45 meters away from the path of Line 2 of the metro, facing a critical issue of upward moisture seepage.

The rising moisture, caused by water penetration into the foundation walls, follows the capillary action, moving upwards against gravity.

Kalantari emphasized that if this critical issue is left unaddressed, without proper restoration, pavement repairs, and provision for drainage to mitigate underground moisture, the pace



of its deterioration will escalate significantly.

Furthermore, Kalantari warned that unless the decayed bricks and mortar are replaced, the commencement of Line 2 of the metro will further accelerate the destruction of the Taj al Molk dome.

She pointed out that the streets surrounding the dome have been repaved by the municipality in the last decade. However, due to inadequate drainage, moisture remains trapped beneath the asphalt, causing it to rise and affect the adjacent historical structure.

The researcher elaborated on the harmful effects of moisture on the mortar between the bricks, causing it to lose its adhesive properties and structural integrity over time. "This issue compromises the load-bearing capacity of the structure, leading to disintegration and instability."

Kalantari highlighted that the ongoing amount of moisture could lead to widening cracks over time, leading to the eventual collapse of the structure's walls and dome.

She also cited a recent incident where a nearby old house collapsed due to moisture-induced decay, underscoring the urgency of addressing the issue.

Previously, the CEO of Isfahan Metro had informed IRNA that technical considerations regarding the passage of the metro alongside this historical monument were being meticulously examined by the University of Science and Technology. Seyyed Mohsen Vaezifar stated that the university would assess the level of vibrations induced by the metro's proximity to the historical site and devise solutions to mitigate potential problems in accordance with international standards.

He added several options were considered for the metro crossing that line, but the one that was deemed more favorable in terms of cultural heritage and minimizing the likelihood of damage to historical artifacts was the option of passing the metro beneath Imam Ali Square.

The Jameh Mosque of Isfahan has a history spanning over a thousand years and is believed to have been constructed upon the foundations of an ancient fire temple.

UNESCO has it that the mosque can be seen as a stunning illustration of the evolution of mosque architecture over twelve centuries. The complex, covering more than 20,000 square meters, is also the first Islamic building that adapted the four-courtyard layout of Sassanid palaces to Islamic religious architecture.

Throughout history, the mosque complex has evolved into its current condition as extensions have been added. Therefore, this building cannot be attributed to any particular historical era.

Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. Now, it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. The ancient city is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards.

Eying a UN label, Bisheh to host festival dedicated to nature lovers

TEHRAN – Iran's Bisheh, which is nominated for UN Tourism's list of the best tourism villages, is set to host a special festival intended to promote its tourist appeal for nature lovers.

The event named "River and Rail" is scheduled for April 18, Lorestan province's tourism chief said on Wednesday.

"Last year, despite submitting the necessary documents for the global registration of Bisheh, only Kandovan was successfully registered due to the time constraints," the official noted.

Speaking at a local meeting dedicated to tourism, Ata Hasanpour announced forming a committee to organize the festival with an eye toward Bisheh's global registration, given its inclusion on the World's Best Villages list.

Bisheh is situated on the outskirts of the national railway from Tehran to the south, adjacent to a captivating waterfall, approximately 70 kilometers from Khorramabad. The location's description brings to light the name "River and Rail" for the upcoming event.

Pointing to the necessity of providing infrastructure, safety, and hygiene regarding a potential UN label, he emphasized prioritizing measures as also the countdown has started to welcome Nowruz (Persian New Year) holidaymakers.

The official outlined the need for installing bilingual Persian and English guide signs along the routes to the village.

Mentioning the significance of preserving various sources within the village, Hasanpour underscored the pivotal rule of coordination between related organizations.

Lorestan' Khorram Abad Valley seeks UNESCO label

Hasanpour added that efforts are underway to facilitate the global registration process for the Khorram Abad Valley which was submitted to UNESCO on February 1.

Furthermore, the official discussed the potential of five ancient caves, one of them boasting roots back to 54000 years, which sheds light on their capacity to be introduced at an international level.

Regarding the time limitation, he highlighted that a UNESCO assessor is expected to arrive in the province before June 21, which is our possible opportunity to showcase the potential within the province.

Lorestan boasts 5000 historical sites and monuments along with 80 natural tourist attractions, of which 2,500 are already recorded on the national heritage list. The village's strategic location, combined with its rich historical and natural treasures, makes it a compelling destination for travelers exploring the beauty of the region.

It's noteworthy that last July, Iran nominated eight rural villages comprising Kandovan in East Azarbaijan province, Meymand in Kerman, Soheili in Hormozgan, Qasemabad in Gilan, Kandelus in Mazandaran, Palangan in Kordestan, Abyaneh in Isfahan, and the village of Bisheh in Lorestan as final candidates for "Best Tourism Villages".

Eventually, Kandovan village found its way onto the list of 54 best tourist villages announced by the World Tourism Organization.

Explore twin lakes in western Iran

TEHRAN – In the heart of Iran's picturesque Ilam province lies a hidden gem for nature lovers, the twin lakes of Siyah Gav in the city of Abdanan.

This natural wonder, situated 35 kilometers northeast of Abdanan, western Iran, captivates visitors with its breathtaking scenery and unique features.

Bounded by rocky hillsides, the lake has become an attractive tourist attraction with bird music and the symphony of the wind breeze. As can be found out from its name, the lake consists of two parts. The water of the first lake flows into the other as a result of the difference between their levels. The water of the second lake then exits it and flows as a river and feeds the agricultural fields of Abdanan.

The two lakes are linked by a canal, which is eight meters wide and four meters deep, formed with a length of seventy meters.

The water of this lake is so clear that one can easily see the fish swimming around in it. The water of the Siyah Gav Lake is a vital resource for many villages, and life in the countryside depends on the existence of the water in this river.

Fed by pristine natural springs, the lakes have cool and clear waters during the summer, offering a refreshing escape, while the winter months bring a gentle warmth.

To reach Lake Siyah Gav, travelers can start their journey in Abdanan, passing through Anfal Forest Park and Hazarani. A walking path leads to the lakes, providing a scenic approach to the destination.

Ilam is located on the foothills of the Zagros Mountains in the western region of Iran. Unlike The north and northwest parts of this province, which are mountainous, the west and southwest are flat. It is a suitable place for nomad life since the geographical conditions are favorable for summer and winter relocation.

The common handicrafts of this province include carpet, rug, drugget, felt, and coarse blanket weaving. The majority of the people in Ilam are Kurds, Laks, and Lurs. They speak in Laki, Kurdish, and Luri. Based on the archeological excavations, the civilization of this province dates back to the New Stone Age circa 8000 BC.

The land which is called Ilam now was a part of the ancient Elamite civilization that was formed circa 3000 BC and was destroyed by Assyrian King Ashurbanipal in 640 BC.

Elam was an ancient pre-Iranian civilization centered in the far west and southwest of what is now modern-day Iran, stretching from the lowlands of what is now Khuzestan and Ilam provinces as well as a small part of southern Iraq.

Last Stone Age hunter-gatherers avoided inbreeding

A genetic study of some of western Europe's last Stone Age hunter-gatherers has revealed a possible strategy in ancient societies to avoid inbreeding.

It is the first time the genomes of several Stone Age hunter-gatherers who lived near new Neolithic farming communities have been analyzed.

Researchers sequenced and analyzed the complete genomes of 10 individuals found in modern-day France. The ancient people lived between about 8,300 and 6,760 years ago. They were found in 3 burial sites: Champigny in north-east France, and Teviec and Hoedic in the north-west.

They lived during the late Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) – a period of human cultural development which in parts of France persisted until about 6,500 years ago.

The beginning of the Mesolithic came about after the end of the last Ice Age. Mesolithic humans were still hunter-gatherers, but more temperate climate conditions saw significant changes in human society. This included new settlement patterns and technologies as well as the emergence of subsistence toward its end, leading to farming and animal husbandry during the age known as the Neolithic (New Stone Age).

New research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences shows bloodlines and kinship were not the only factors involved in shaping these ancient communities. And different families living together might have been a strategy to avoid inbreeding.

"This gives a new picture of the last Stone Age hunter-gatherer populations in Western Europe," says senior author Professor Mattias Jakobsson from Uppsala University, Sweden. "Our study provides a unique opportunity to analyses these groups and their social dynamics."

With the emergence of Neolithic farmers, their relationships and interactions with the last hunter-gatherer groups is relatively unknown.

Global bodies show double standards in helping Iran deal with disasters

TEHRAN –International organizations have failed to support the crisis management organization and crisis-affected areas in the last few years, showing a double standard toward Iran, the head of Crisis Management Organization has said.

Referring to the frequent meetings with the representatives of international organizations, Mohammad-Hasan Nami said, "Although Iran is considered to be one of the disaster-prone areas of the world, we have not received any help from international organizations," IRNA reported.

He went on to state that international organizations are known to have good capacities in the field of crisis management, but the performance of these organizations is affected by the domination system so their claims do not match



their behavior.

He emphasized that international organizations and institutions, like Western countries, display double standards and ignore all their duties in practice.

Zero foreign aid

Within recent decades, Iran has been grappling with many different crises such as earthquakes, floods, storms, and droughts, but the international assistance in times of crisis has gradually decreased over the past several years, reaching zero now, Nami further said.

There are many institutions for alleviating deprivation, managing crises, and helping people in disaster-hit areas in Iran, and international institutions can fulfill their duties via these local mechanisms.

Iran's potential in dealing with natural disasters

In 2022, Stefan Priesner, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iran, said, "Iran has the potential to deal with natural disasters broadly and the United Nations is willing to document these valuable experiences."

In case of natural disasters, the United Nations is ready to provide services by forming a permanent working group with representatives of the UN, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Crisis Management Organization, IRNA quoted Priesner as saying.

Iran, Armenia hold meeting to address Aras pollution



TEHRAN –The first meeting of the heads of delegations and expert groups of Iran and Armenia to address the problem of pollution in the border Aras River was held from March 4-6 in Jolfa, northwestern East Azarbaijan province.

The meeting was in line with the 25th meeting of the representatives of the two countries, which was held in Yerevan on November 15 -16 last year, IRNA reported.

Stretching to 1,072 kilometers, Aras River is one of the largest rivers in the Caucasus, and one of the most important rivers in Iran which besides attracting tourism and positive ecosystem effects, has important potential for fishing.

The river has become a source of pollution posing threats to people's lives residing northwestern part of the country due to the flow of heavy metals out of the Armenian factories over the past decade.

Iraj Heshmati, the deputy head of the Department of Environment, and Gayane Gabrielyan, the Armenian deputy environment minister, headed the meeting.

Highlighting Armenia's determination to solve the environmental problems emerging from Armenian mines, Gabrielyan announced that the two sides will jointly solve the problem.

Heshmati, for his part, referred to the joint actions taken by the two countries in the past years, especially the approval of the road map to prevent pollutants from entering the Aras River.

He also presented a report on the measures taken so far, such as establishing a national working group and holding regular meetings.

MOU signed to remove Aras pollution in a year

During the November meeting, Iran's ambassador to Armenia, Mehdi Sobhani, and Armenia's head of the Department of Environment, Hakob Simidyan, were also present.

The two countries announced their readiness for cooperation and technical consultation to completely stop the discharge of industrial wastewater into the river.

Accordingly, the officials agreed to take action to resolve the issue of mineral and industrial pollution and completely stop the flow of pollution into Aras River within a year.

The two parties also agreed to conduct several joint investigations by three expert groups, including the joint expert group on mines, particularly copper and molybdenum, the joint expert group for monitoring the water quality of Aras River, and the joint monitoring and supervision expert group.

Tehran, Dushanbe agree on joint pharmaceutical production



TEHRAN –Health Minister Bahram Einollahi and his Tajik counterpart Jamaluddin Abdullahzadeh, in a meeting on Tuesday discussed ways to deepen health ties, especially on launching joint pharmaceutical production lines.

The officials met on the sidelines of the first international congress on family health, which was held in Tehran on March 5-6, the Health Ministry's website reported.

During the meeting, Abdullahzadeh lauded Iran's achievements in the pharmaceutical industry, calling for joint production of pharmaceutical products.

"We can also benefit from Iranian professors and experts in the field of education," he added.

Einollahi, for his part, highlighted forming a joint working group to expand cooperation.

Exchanging professors and students, holding joint scientific conferences, and conducting research programs are among the most important topics of cooperation.

"We are ready to export medicines and medical equipment to Tajikistan. We are also willing to share experiences on family health."

Referring to Iran's progress in the field of cancer treatment, he said that the two countries can cooperate in research and therapeutic fields.

Moreover, people of Tajikistan who visit Iran as tourists can further benefit from the country's medical facilities, he noted.

Importing Iranian medicine, medical equipment

In July 2023, Abdullahzadeh said importing medicine and medical equipment from Iran is a necessity.

"Holding retraining courses for our specialists by Iranian professors and importing medicine and medical equipment from Iran are among our needs," he said in a meeting with Einollahi in the city of Dushanbe.

"Currently, the medicine required by Tajikistan is supplied by 11 Iranian pharmaceutical companies," Abdullahzadeh said, adding that the capacity of herbal and medicinal plants of Tajikistan can also be provided to Iranian pharmaceutical specialists, the Health Ministry's website reported.

"My trip to Iran brought many experiences in the field of health, healthcare, and treatment, especially dental and laboratory equipment were worthy of attention in Iran."

In October 2022, the officials inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand medical and health cooperation.

Einollahi stated that one of our major goals is a broad and strong relationship with the neighboring countries, especially Tajikistan, to develop practical cooperation.

Highlight: Exchanging professors and students, and conducting research programs are among the main objectives.

Climate change is undeniable threat to entire civilization

From page 1 ▸ and a change in the pattern of precipitation from snow to rain can be seen. But the total amount of rainfall has decreased as well.



According to World Health Organization, climate change is impacting health in a myriad of ways, including by leading to death and illness from increasingly frequent extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, storms, and floods, the disruption of food systems, increases in food-, water- and vector-borne diseases, and mental health issues.

As an example, climate change and the floods that hit the southeastern neighboring country two years ago, have jeopardized the malaria eradication program and caused the cases of malaria infection to spike from less than 1,000 to around 10,000.

Neglecting climate change and the preservation of the environment have posed serious and emerging challenges for all countries of the world.

These challenges disrupt the balance of nature, threaten the life of biological species, increase poverty, and threaten food security and human health.

To raise awareness among the community of climate change and propose possible concrete actions to preserve the planet and guarantee a sustainable future for new generations, World Meteorological Day is observed all over the world, on March 23 every year.

This day also shows the contribution of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Service to the safety and well-being of the society, so many different activities and events are held on this day.

The World Meteorological Organization known as WMO is an international organization in the category of specialized organizations affiliated with the United Nations in the areas of climate, hydrology, applied climatology, and geophysical sciences, which was established on March 23, 1950, in Geneva, Switzerland.

According to the latest reports by 2023, the World Meteorological Organization has 193 members including 187 countries and 6 territories that provide their meteorological services.

One of the goals of the WMO is to facilitate global cooperation to create a network of stations to observe meteorology, hydrology, geophysics, and other related issues.

It aims to establish and maintain systems for the rapid exchange of meteorological and other related information, foster standardization of Meteorological observations, and ensure uniform publication of observations and statistics.

Promoting the application of meteorology to aviation, shipping, water issues, agriculture, and other human activities; fostering activities in operational hydrology and close cooperation between different meteorological and hydrological services; and encouraging research and training in meteorology and other related fields are among the other goals of WMO.

The organization chooses a theme every year to reflect topical weather, climate, or water-related issues. The theme of World Meteorological Day 2024 is "At the Frontline of Climate Action."

If we do not take steps to find solutions to mitigate the effects, adapt ourselves to the consequences of this phenomenon, and observe environmental principles, in the future, more dangerous consequences will surely plague the world and make the conditions more unfavorable for human, animal, and plant species.

Measures taken

Climate change with all its dimensions and consequences has caused serious challenges to life on the earth. One of the consequences of climate change, which has increased in intensity and occurrence, is the phenomenon of SDSs with severe harm to the world's biological and economic resources.

Holding the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, in line with the implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/171, in Tehran in September 2023 with the cooperation of the United Nations, is an example of the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to draw the attention of the international communities to the importance of these shared challenges and the necessity to find shared solutions to cope with these challenges

The conference, with the assistance of multilateral financial organizations and the United Nations, and the affected countries tried to compile, review, and implement sub-regional, regional, and global action plans to deal with dust storms and follow up on the creation of a regional fund for the West Asia region and the establishment of a regional center along with a network of countries affected by dust storms to investigate and follow up effectively.

In this regard, consulting with a group of interested countries and seeking the cooperation and support of UNEP and specialized funds, programs and agencies affiliated with the United Nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a draft resolution to the current session of the UNEA to take another step for collective action and develop appropriate regional and international mechanisms to deal with dust storms as one of the important hazards threatening our world and future.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Special plan prepared to attract overseas researchers

The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has prepared a special plan to attract scientists and researchers living abroad, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

The project aims to promote "supporting technological activities and startups", "postdoctoral facilities", "supporting employment in innovation centers and accelerators as a trainer and consultant", "providing facilities for opportunity studies", "providing housing facilities", "supporting employment in reputable domestic companies", "support for lectures and specialized workshops" and "support for cooperation as invited and appointed professors".

It is estimated that about one percent of all Iranian students are studying abroad, which is not above the international average of around 3 percent.

طرح ویژه برای جذب پژوهشگران ایرانی مقیم خارج

جذب محققان و پژوهشگران خارج از کشور یکی از اولویت‌های کشور محسوب می‌شود و در این راستا معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری طرحی ویژه پیشنهاد کرده است.

به گزارش ایرنا، معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری، این طرح شامل «حمایت از فعالیت‌های فناورانه و ایجاد شرکت‌های نوپا»، «تسهیلات پسا دکتری»، «حمایت از اشتغال در مراکز نوآوری و شتابدهنده‌ها به عنوان مربی و مشاور»، « تسهیلات دوره فرصت مطالعاتی»، «تسهیلات مسکن»، «حمایت از اشتغال در شرکت‌های معتبر داخلی»، «حمایت از برگزاری سخنرانی و کارگاه‌های تخصصی» و «حمایت از همکاری به عنوان اساتید مدعو و معین»است.

بر اساس برآوردها نزدیک یک درصد از کل مجموع دانشجویان ایرانی در خارج از کشور تحصیل می‌کنند. این رقم در مقایسه با میانگین بین‌المللی که حدود ۳ درصد است، رقم بالایی محسوب نمی‌شود.



ISNA / Taraneh Bazdari

A school in the heart of mountains

A Conex box is used as a classroom in a remote village in a mountainous area in the western province of Lorestan.

Underprivileged but talented students study here despite all the hardships with an eye to a bright future.

TEHRAN TIMES

www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

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

Tehrantimes79

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

MARCH 7, 2024

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

That knowledge which remains only on your tongue is very superficial. The intrinsic value of knowledge is that you act upon it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:15 Evening: 18:23 Dawn: 5:01 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:25 (tomorrow)

New Year screening begins across Iran



TEHRAN-Seven movies scheduled for Nowruz (Persian New Year) screenings hit Iranian cinemas on Wednesday, two weeks ahead of the turn of the year and beginning of spring on March 20.

The newly released films include "Parviz Khan" directed by Ali Saqafi, "Alligator Blood" by Javad Ezzati, "The West Sky" by Mohammad Asgari, "Nowruz" by Soheil Movafagh, "Bodiless" by Morteza Alizadeh, "Projectionist" by Qorbanali Taherfar, and "Iliya, Search of Hero" by Ali Mousavinejad, Honaronline reported.

"Parviz Khan" is a biographical film centered on the late Iranian football player and coach Parviz Dehdari (1935-1992), who served as the head coach of Persepolis F.C., Homa F.C., and the national football team during his coaching career.

Distinct from typical sports narratives, the film delves deeper into the social dimensions of Dehdari's influential career. It won the first feature film award at the 42nd Fajr Film Festival in Tehran last month.

Notable actors such as Saeed Poursamimi, Maryam Saadat, Hamidreza Pegah, and Behnam Tashakkor are in the cast among others.

Produced by the Owj Arts and Media Organization, the movie unfolds the narrative of prominent national team players who made the decision to resign from the national team at the time it was coached by Dehdari.

The comedy "Alligator Blood," Ezzati's directorial debut, presents a narrative featuring Abbas Jamshidifar, Saeed Aqakhani, Elnaz Habibi, Behzad Khalaj, and Shabnam Qorbani, as well as Ezzati.

A prominent actor, known for both his comedies and dramas, Ezzati won the award for the best debut director at the 42nd Fajr Film Festival last month. The film is the story of a man and a woman, played by Ezzati and Habibi, who inadvertently enter into a bet that causes many incidents.

"The West Sky" is a tribute tohelicopter pilot Ali Akbar Shiroudi (1955-1981) who was martyred during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. It recounts the early wartime bravery of martyr Shiroudi.

A production of Soureh Cinema Organization and Farabi Cinema Foundation, the film has Milad Keymaram, Amir Hossein Arman, Nader Fallah, and Nasim Adabi in the cast among others.

It becomes the second artistic tribute to martyr Shiroudi, following the "Simorgh" series, and marks the first cinematic portrayal of his courageous story.

Shiroudi was one of the pilots of his time who had the highest number of flights in the world. He defended the Iranian territories during the initial years of Iran-Iraq war era. In 1982, after damaging several Iraqi tanks in Ghare Balagh located in Zahab desert, his helicopter was shot by the enemy and he was martyred.

"Nowruz" is a journey for young minds, which depicts Iranian myths, legends, customs and traditions to the children and teenagers.

With a cast featuring Ali Nasirian, Mehdi Hashemi, Shabnam Moqaddami, Afshin Hashemi, and Mahtab Servati, the film promises a captivating historical and fantasy atmosphere.

Ali Nasirian plays the role of the Amu Nowruz, who goes to the Nane Sarma's house to find Hajji Firuz. However, he has an accident on the way. The film talks about Iranian legends on the victory of spring over winter. Mavafaq, who is the writer of the film, has tried to introduce Iranian children to their traditional and ancient rituals with this film.

The crime movie "Bodiless" is a loose adaptation of several real judicial cases, including the criminal case of the murder of Ghazaleh Shakur by Arman Abdul Ali.

Elnaz Shakerdoost, Navid Pourfaraj, Gelareh Abbasi, Sorush Sehhat, and Pejman Jamshidi are in the cast among others.

"Projectionist" is an adaptation of a book of the same name whose story takes place in 1980s — the period of Iraqi imposed war against Iran. It narrates the story of a simple painter who is in love with cinema and wishes to make his first feature film, so he takes up a heroic path.

Touraj Alvand, Fatemeh Masoudifar, Reza Naji, Houman Barghnavard, Omid Rouhani, and Alireza Ostadi perform in the directorial debut of Taherfar.

"Iliya, Search of Hero" is a first feature animation by Mousavinejad that won the jury's special award at the 35th International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan last year.The main character of the animated film is a teenager named Arash, who is one of the top four gamers in the world. While entering a global online game, he gets himself and his family involved in an international police case.

Tehran cultural center to screen Woody Allen's "Coup de Chance"



A scene from "Coup de Chance" by Woody Allen

TEHRAN- "Coup de Chance" ("Stroke of Luck"), a 2023 comedy-drama thriller film written and directed by the acclaimed filmmaker Woody Allen, will go on screen at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Wednesday.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian critic Kurosh Jahed.

"Coup de Chance" depicts the lives of Fanny and Jean, who appear to be the ideal couple living a successful life in Paris. Their world is turned upside down when Fanny unexpectedly encounters Alain, an old friend from high school. Sparks fly as they rekindle emotions from the past, with Alain openly professing his long-standing love for Fanny. Meanwhile, as Fanny attends her husband's societal events, she begins to question his business motives, which revolve around enriching the already wealthy.

Fanny and Alain embark on a passionate extramarital affair, leading Fanny to contemplate leaving her husband. Suspecting her infidelity, Jean hires criminals to eliminate Alain. After Alain's disappearance, Fanny, believing he has abandoned her, seeks solace in her husband and plans to start a family with him.

However, Fanny's mother, Camille, uncovers suspicious details regarding a former colleague of Jean who died under mysterious circumstances. Despite Fanny's disbelief, Camille suspects foul play and tries to warn her daughter. Realizing his mother-in-law poses a threat to his secrets, Jean orchestrates a dangerous scheme during a hunting trip to eliminate Camille.

While Jean and Camille are in the woods, Fanny uncovers a revealing manuscript in Alain's apartment that raises questions about his sudden disappearance. As a tense confrontation ensues between Jean and Camille, a tragic accident occurs, leading to unexpected consequences for all involved. The film delves into themes of betrayal, manipulation, and the consequences of deceit in relationships.

Starring Lou de Laâge, Valérie Lemercier, Melvil Poupaud, and Niels Schneider, the film was premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival. The film has garnered generally positive reviews from critics.

Woody Allen, a prolific filmmaker, actor, and comedian, has had a storied career spanning over six decades. Known for his unique blend of comedy and introspection, Allen has captivated audiences with his witty dialogue, complex characters, and astute observations on human nature. Starting his career as a comedy writer in the 1950s, Allen quickly rose to fame with his stand-up routines and comedic sketches. He soon transitioned into filmmaking, where he carved out a niche for himself as a filmmaker unafraid to delve into existential themes while maintaining a signature comedic touch.

Throughout his career, Allen has explored a myriad of genres, from romantic comedies to psychological dramas, earning critical acclaim and numerous accolades along the way. His distinctive storytelling style, characterized by self-deprecating humor, intellectual references, and New York City settings, has left an indelible mark on the world of cinema. Despite controversies and personal setbacks, Woody Allen's dedication to his craft and his unwavering commitment to exploring the complexities of human relationships have solidified his place as a cinematic icon.

Iran-Bosnia friendship week kicks off in Sarajevo

TEHRAN-Iran-Bosnia children's friendship week officially kicked off in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo on Monday, marking the start of a five-day event aimed at fostering cultural exchange and friendship between the two nations.

Organized by the Iranian cultural attaché office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in collaboration with Art Bureau in Iran as well as the cultural and educational centers for children and teenagers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the event features various programs designed to introduce Bosnian children and teenagers to the rich cultural heritage of Iran.

Throughout the week, Iranian artists will be hosted in four cultural centers, where they will showcase puppet shows, storytelling of Iranian heroes, animations, and traditional arts. Workshops on making Iranian dolls and woodblock printing will also be offered, giving participants a hands-on experience of Iranian artistry.



The event is a celebration of the deep-rooted historical connections between Iran and Bosnia, and serves as a platform for building lasting friendships among the younger generation.

The friendship week will conclude on Friday.

DEFC to produce animations on Gaza

TEHRAN- The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) is set to produce five short animations on Gaza genocide, the director of the center has said.

The DEFC tries to support the production of new works, especially the projects of young filmmakers, as this center is one of the most important centers active in the field of artistic short animations, ISNA quoted Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam as saying on Wednesday.

On October 7, Israel started a deadly war on Gaza after the territory's Palestinian resistance group, Hamas, launched a surprise retaliation strike against the occupying regime, codenamed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

The Israeli regime's offensive has claimed the lives of nearly 30,000 individuals in Gaza, with a significant majority being women and children.

Israeli officials, including the prime minister, have made public statements endorsing or pledging to carry out acts of genocide against Palestinians throughout the course of this conflict. These alarming declarations have raised serious concerns regarding the protection of human rights and the safety of the Palestinian population.

Tel Aviv has also imposed severe restrictions on essential resources such as water, power, and gasoline in one of the world's most densely populated areas. This deprivation has resulted in a scarcity of medical supplies and food, leaving 2.3 million Palestinians at risk of starvation.

Cartoon of Day



Starvation in Gaza

Cartoonist: Mahmoud Rifai from Jordan

International Prize for Arabic Fiction shortlist includes incarcerated Palestinian author

One of the six contenders for the 2024 International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) is Palestinian novelist Basim Khandaqji's most recent book "A Mask, the Color of the Sky". Khandaqji is currently incarcerated.

The central theme of the book is Nur's life as an archaeologist living in a Ramallah refugee camp. The narrative centers on Nur's finding of an Israeli citizen's blue ID card concealed in an old coat pocket. Intrigued, Nur adopts the identity of the card's owner in order to access West Bank excavation sites and learn more about his captor, the Literature Today reported.

"This is the first time in the history of the Prize that a novel from (literally) behind the walls of an Israeli jail reaches out to readers on the other side," Professor Yasir Suleiman, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said after unveiling the shortlist.

Born in Nablus, Khandaqji, 40, was arrested in 2004 by Israeli authorities on terrorism charges and convicted of three life sentences for his participation in the planning of a suicide bombing that killed three people in Tel Aviv.

Khandaqji finished his education in prison and has since written at least six books, including four novels and two collections of poems.

In an interview with the IPAF organizers, Khandaqji's brother said that "A Mask, the Color of the Sky" was written between June and November 2021, "in difficult circumstances."

He added, "Basim was inside various prisons, moving from one prison to another because of the arbitrary measures taken by the prison service administration. Occasionally he would lose some of the information he had collected because a prison guard destroyed it."

With regard to his writing rituals, his brother answered: "Writing rituals? No rituals apart from writing from 5 to 7 a.m., that is what Basim told me on one of the monthly visits that last only 45 minutes. He writes before the prison administration counts the prisoners, and before the prison guard starts making a racket, which he is adept at finding new ways of doing. In these two hours, Basim writes approximately two pages, and very often the papers are taken from him and destroyed by the guard. Here of course I don't mean that this happens only to Basim. It happens to all the prisoners who are writing while in detention".

Given that Khandaqji's family stated in January that they haven't been able to get in touch with him recently, it's possible that the author isn't even aware of his nomination.

The International Prize for Arabic Fiction, sometimes known as "the Arabic Booker," was founded in 2007 with the goals of fostering a worldwide readership for Arabic literary works and recognizing quality in modern Arabic literature. It is currently recognized as the most prominent literary award in the Arab world.The winner, who will be revealed on the eve of the Abu Dhabi Book Fair late April, will receive an additional $50,000 in addition to the $10,000 paid to each of the six finalists. The winning novels' English translation expenses are also covered by the prize.