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Exclusive

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Iran FM says suspension of Leader social media accounts 'illegal and unethical'

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has slammed the decision by Meta to suspend the Instagram accounts of the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

In an interview with the Middle East Eye news website on Friday, Amir Abdollahian reacted to Meta Company's move to close the Leader's Instagram and Facebook accounts.

He stated, "The mottos of freedom of expression by some Western claimants are hollow and showy slogans and a cover for their illegitimate political goals."

Iran's top diplomat also stressed that "blocking the media accounts of the Leader of the Revolution is not only a violation of freedom of speech, but also an insult to millions of followers of his positions and news."

Abdollahian also accused the "Silicon Valley Empire" of trying to censor a prominent supporter of the Palestinian cause.

Amir Abdollahian condemned the anti-freedom of speech action by the Meta company in blocking the media accounts of the Leader of the Revolution and said, "His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei is the most prominent supporter of the oppressed people of Palestine and Gaza in the world, and the Silicon Valley Empire cannot prevent this voice from reaching the public opinion of the world." ▸ Page 2

Iran urges removal of Israeli regime from UN women's rights commission

TEHRAN- Following hundreds of Palestinian women's deaths and injuries in Israel's ongoing genocidal attack on Gaza, Iran's top human rights official has demanded that Israel should be expelled from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

On the occasion of International Women's Day on Friday, Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, made the comments in three identical letters to the UN secretary general, the president of the UN Economic and Social Council, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Alluding to Israel's ruthless crimes in Gaza, Gharibabadi said "What is more deplorable... is the situation of women and girls."

He pointed out that seventy percent of the victims of the Israeli murderous onslaught on the besieged strip are women and children.

Gharibabadi mentioned several UN reports that demonstrated the terrible effects of the conflict on Gazan women and girls in his letters.

"Unfortunately, this regime, with such a dark history, is a member of the [UN] Commission on the Status of Women that -according to the declared objective- was formed to establish gender equality ▸ Page 3

Yemeni army strikes U.S. vessel, destroyers

The Yemeni military says it has targeted a U.S. vessel and several destroyers with naval missiles and drones in the Red Sea in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, amid the Israeli genocidal war on the besieged territory with the U.S. support.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, the spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces, said in a video statement that Yemeni forces implemented "two qualitative military operations" targeting an American ship and a number of warship destroyers in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden with a "number of naval missiles and 37 drones."

"The first operation targeted the American ship 'Propel Fortune' in the Gulf of Aden with a number of suitable naval missiles, while the second operation targeted a number of US destroyers in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with 37 drones," Saree stated.

"The two operations successfully achieved their goals," he added.

The spokesman also thanked Yemeni people for their two million-strong demonstrations on Friday in the capital Sana'a and in other governorates and districts in confirmation of their firm position in support of the Palestinian people.

U.S. seeks military presence near Gaza

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- A United States plan to construct a port in Gaza with the purported aim of getting more humanitarian aid into the Palestinian territory by sea has been greeted with deep skepticism.

During his State of the Union address on Thursday, President Joe Biden ordered the U.S. military to conduct the mission.

Biden said the port will involve a temporary pier to transport supplies from ships at sea to the shore.

Following the speech, the Pentagon press secretary said the construction process requires 1,000 American troops and will take up to two months.

"Simply put, they'll establish a temporary offshore maritime pier that allows for shipping vessels to transfer cargo to smaller vessels to transport and offload cargo to a temporary causeway for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza," Patrick Ryder said.

Washington's plan to establish the maritime corridor was rolled out days after the U.S. military began airdropping food into Gaza which turned deadly on Friday. Several people were killed in the Al-Shati refugee camp in northern Gaza by an aid airdrop package when one parachute failed to properly deploy and a parcel fell on them.

Hamas: 'Israeli occupation won't rest in Gaza'

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN- The military spokesman for the al-Qassam brigades has spoken about the genocidal Israeli war on Gaza, events on the battlefield, and the escalation of resistance in the month of Ramadan.

Abu Ubaida also touched on issues regarding negotiations, the Israeli captives in Gaza, and the weakness of the international community to implement any humanitarian laws in the enclave.

In a 15-minute televised speech, the man that Tel Aviv has listed as among the regime's three most wanted individuals inside the Gaza Strip, addressed Palestinians, the region and the world as the Israeli war on the people of Gaza enters its sixth month.

Justice and rights

Abu Ubaida affirmed that the al-Aqsa Storm Operation and the ongoing resistance against the Israeli military invasion of Gaza has opened a new chapter at the global level, emphasizing that justice will only be obtained through strength and arms.

He underscored that Gaza faces an unprecedented U.S.-Israeli aggression, stating that the occupation had been planning for decades what it is currently implementing in Gaza, the occupied West Bank, and occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem).

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Tehran Intl. Animation Festival announces winners

TEHRAN-The 13th edition of Tehran International Animation Festival (TIAF)came to an end on Friday, honoring the winners in different categories.

In the international section of the festival, the title of best animated film was bestowed upon "Tony, Shelly and the Magic Light," a collaborative production of Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, directed by Filip Pošivač.

This stop-motion adventure film centers around Tony, an 11-year-old boy born with a unique glowing ability. Despite his parents' attempts to shield him from the outside world, Tony befriends Shelly, a mysterious girl who introduces him to a fantastical realm inside his pillow fort. Together, they embark on a quest to uncover the source of dark wisps stealing sunlight from their home. ▸ Page 8



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Protesters in London denounce Israeli massacres in Gaza

Several thousand protesters gathered in the center of the British capital London calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

The protesters condemned the Israeli massacres in the besieged Palestinian territory. Demonstrators chanted "Free Palestine", "What do we want? Ceasefire; when do we want it? Now".

Others waved Palestine flags and carried banners which read "Stop the war on Gaza" and "Ceasefire now".

The demonstration was organized by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC).

It was the tenth pro-Palestinian march in central London since Israel started its brutal onslaught on the Gaza Strip in early October.

Iraq adopts Iran's policy to build health centers

TEHRAN – Following Iran's policy of expanding health centers, Iraq has embarked on building such centers to provide basic medical services to people, Hani Musa Badr al-Aqabi, the Iraqi deputy health minister, has said.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Health Minister Bahram Einollahi in Tehran on the sidelines of the first International Family Health Congress, which was held on March 5-6.

"Public health and family health are the main concerns of the Health Ministry of Iraq, and we will use Iran's experiences in this field," IRNA quoted Al-Aqabi as saying.

While announcing readiness for joint production of medicine and medical equipment, he said many Iraqi doctors and people know Iranian medicines well and take them for treatment. ▸ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

An absurd humanitarian gesture

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

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its note to the fake gesture of the Westerners in support of women and wrote: In a thought-provoking move, the Western media, including foreign Persian-language media, declared that a group of employees of several embassies based in Tehran in a common message congratulated the International Women's Day and encouraged the addressees to try to advance women's rights and eliminate gender inequality. The aim of these seemingly humanitarian gestures and claims was that they could introduce the West as the focus and center of support for women.

While Western countries and celebrities who claim human rights have not taken any action to counter the cruelty of the Zionist regime and are satisfied with expressing regret, they object to what is called the rights of a woman in other countries. In fact, for them, women and their rights have no value, and it is only the benefits they get in return. They are supporters when they can use women to create chaos and division in countries, and they are silent in a place like Gaza where Zionist interests are important, and even the martyrdom of 9,000 women has no value or importance for them.

Etemad: Western accusations against Iran's nuclear activity

Etemad wrote about Western claims against Iran's nuclear activities: Western diplomats have claimed that Iran's nuclear activities are reaching "new provinces" because the country continues to enrich uranium. Also, in a statement, America threatened Iran with punitive measures and stated that Washington and the West cannot allow Tehran to continue with its current pattern of behavior.

Iran always considers such accusations unproductive and says that the goals of its nuclear program are completely peaceful and it has the right to enrich for civilian purposes even to high levels.

Iran and other members of the JCPOA, after the expression of desire by the United States to return to the agreement and remove illegal sanctions, entered into negotiations to provide conditions under which the United States would return to the JCPOA and implement its obligations in this agreement, but due to lack of political will on the American side that has not yielded results yet.

Shargh: Taking revenge after the failure of the Iranophobia project

In a commentary, Shargh dealt with the report of the UN fact-finding committee on last year's protests and quoted Kanaani, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as saying: Iran has strongly condemned the report published by the international fact-finding committee. Repeating baseless claims in this report is based on false and biased information and is illegal.

The so-called fact-finding committee was created after the failure of the internal destabilization project of Iran with the ridiculous show of human rights by some Western countries, especially Germany, and with the money donated by them in December 2022. By publishing a report containing an organized series of distortions of facts and lies they not only did not find the truth, but they also purposefully made the facts look upside down.

They intend to take revenge on the Iranian nation. These countries are advised to deal with human rights violations in their countries instead of pursuing inappropriate interference in Iran, and especially if they have honesty and compassion towards human rights and women's rights, they should pay attention to the violation of the rights of thousands of Palestinian women and children and do not support the continuation of genocide and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Javan: Anti-Iranian resolution was not issued in the meetings of the Board of Governors

In an analysis, Javan addressed the meetings related to Iran in the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency and wrote: Despite all the false claims, propaganda, threats and political campaigns of Western countries, these meetings ended without issuing a resolution against our country's nuclear program.

This is the fifth consecutive round that the efforts to revive the failed project of securitization of Iran's nuclear file were resultless in the Board of Governors. Not only no resolution was issued, not even a consensus was formed to issue a non-mandatory statement against Iran.

In this meeting, the Western countries with specific motivations and positions against the Islamic Republic of Iran tried to show the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program upside down by combining the alleged safeguards issues with Iran's compensatory measures in the JCPOA and the actions taken within the framework of the Parliament's strategic law. But this time they did not succeed again.

Iran FM says suspension of Leader social media accounts 'illegal and unethical'

From page 1 ▸ He added that one of the signs of the collapse of morality and the moral system of the world is the unreasonable behavior of American platforms in censoring the words of Ayatollah Khamenei and the supporters of the displaced people of Gaza and more than 30,000 Palestinian martyrs in the last 5 months, and this company must answer for its illegal and unethical behavior.

He branded the suspension "illegal and unethical" and said it was indicative of the "collapse of morality and the moral system of the world."

Meta stirred controversy by abruptly removing Instagram and Facebook accounts belonging to Ayatollah Khamenei who had a substantial following of 5.1 million users. The decision, made without prior notice, underscores the company's pro-Israeli stance.

In 2023, the Instagram account KHAMENEI.IR ranked among the top 10 accounts of world leaders. Remarkably, posts on his Farsi-language account garnered over one hundred million views in the past three months. This account, active for twelve years, boasts a staggering nine thousand posts that received eighteen million comments.



Formerly known as Facebook, Meta now owns a quartet of platforms: Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger. Headquartered in Menlo Park, California, Meta provided a scant explanation for its actions, citing violations of its Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy as justification for the account removals.

This move coincided with Ayatollah Khamenei's support for oppressed Palestinians and condemnation of the genocidal warfare in the Gaza Strip, a stance he has steadfastly maintained since October 7th. Meta's actions raise fundamental questions about the role of social media platforms in regulating political discourse and the expression of support for contentious causes.

The incident highlights the delicate balance between freedom of speech and the enforcement of platform policies, particularly concerning influential figures like Ayatollah Khamenei. While Meta's subsidiary platforms profess to foster an environment of free expression and diversity of opinion, their practices often align closely with U.S. laws and policies, potentially stifling dissenting voices that challenge mainstream narratives.

The removal of Ayatollah Khamenei's accounts signals two significant realities.

Firstly, it casts doubt on Western claims of upholding freedom of expression, revealing a willingness to silence expressive and influential voices without hesitation.

Secondly, it exposes a broader pattern of support for the Israeli regime, which has faced widespread condemnation for its violent actions against Palestinians. Meta's actions are just one facet of a larger trend of political and media support for Israel, highlighting the West's willingness to sacrifice principles for geopolitical alliances.

As such, it prompts a broader discussion about the power dynamics inherent in digital platforms and their impact on global conversations surrounding geopolitics and social justice."We have removed these accounts for repeatedly violating our Dangerous Organizations & Individuals policy," a Meta spokesperson purportedly told Middle East Eye following the accounts' removal.

Mark Zuckerberg, the CEO of Facebook, has long displayed a pro-Israeli stance, a position that has come under increased scrutiny, especially in light of the recent Israeli aggression and onslaught in Gaza. Even before Meta's recent actions, Zuckerberg's intolerance towards viewpoints contrary to his own was evident.

Iranian border guards thwart terrorist infiltration attempt



TEHRAN - General Ahmad Ali Goodarzi, the border commander of the police force, has reported a recent clash with a terrorist group attempting to infiltrate the country for sabotage purposes.

General Goodarzi revealed that significant amounts of explosive materials were seized from the terrorists during the encounter.

"The border guards of the Nehbandan border regiment, through their vigilance and adept use of intelligence along the borders of South Khorasan Province, intercepted a terrorist group's intent to enter the country and carry out destructive activities," he stated.

He further emphasized that the courageous border guards remained vigilant and successfully secured the identified areas, engaging in an armed conflict with the terrorist group, ultimately dealing a decisive blow and thwarting their entry into the country.

General Goodarzi added that during the operation, several members of the terrorist group sustained injuries and fled to the territory of a neighboring country.

He noted the discovery of significant quantities of explosive equipment, including war mines, TM metal mines, remote control transmitters and receivers, war ammunition, night vision cameras, and other related items, which were confiscated from the apprehended group.

Back in February 17, the police spokesperson General Montazer-al-Mahdi announced the arrest of two individuals suspected of terrorist activities in the northern province of Golestan.The operation, carried out through a combination of technical expertise and intelligence gathering, thwarted potential acts of sabotage planned by these terrorists, General Montazer-al-Mahdi stated.

The suspects, identified as a man and a woman, were swiftly apprehended by security forces. Upon their arrest, police discovered that the suspects owned explosive materials.

General Montazer-al-Mahdi confirmed that legal proceedings against the suspects are underway, with plans to hand them over to judicial authorities for further investigation and trial.

Also in February 16, the police spokesman disclosed the arrest of two terrorists in southern Iran, highlighting the operation's execution through meticulous technical and intelligence monitoring.The Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran, formerly known as the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran or Disciplinary Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, commonly abbreviated as Faraja, spearheaded the operation. General Montazer-al-Mahdi emphasized that the apprehension of these two terrorists occurred promptly in a city within Sistan and Baluchestan province, facilitated by swift and decisive action.

Furthermore, the general stated that a firearm and various equipment were seized from these two terrorists.General Montazer-al-Mahdi concluded by affirming that four terrorists associated with the terrorist group responsible for the Rask attack had been previously arrested.

Back in late December, Iran's police chief announced that the country would target terrorists "wherever" it sees fit after 11 police forces were killed in a terrorist attack in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan made the remarks while visiting the city of Rask, where the terrorist attack took place recently.

"Among the 11 police forces that were martyred, there were several Sunni individuals. This shows that the enemy does not distinguish between religious sects and different ethnicities. It wants to deal a blow to everyone in the Iranian nation," Radan explained.

Sistan and Baluchestan is home to a large part of Iran's Sunni minority. Different foreign forces have been trying to spark religious conflicts between Shias and Sunnis in the past decades, despite the Iranian people's centuries of peaceful coexistence.The Police chief also called on Iran's neighbor Pakistan to take the fight against terrorism more seriously.

"I want to assure the people of Iran and our colleagues across the country that the terror act will not go unpunished. We are working with intelligence forces and other armed units to bring all the terrorists to justice," the official stated.

The Jaish-ul-Adl terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack, which was one of the deadliest in years for the region sitting close to Iran's border with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran's interior minister has pointed the finger of blame at Israel, saying the regime was the one to recruit and train the terrorists.

Iran censures U.S. lack of commitment to lifting sanctions

TEHRAN- The Iranian foreign minister criticized the U.S. for its inconsistent actions and lack of commitment within the framework of diplomatic efforts to remove sanctions on Iran.

During a phone call with his Omani counterpart, Sayyid Badr Al-Busaidi, on Friday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian lambasted the United States for acting inconsistently and for breaking agreements made during the sanctions lifting talks.

He also recognized the Sultan of Oman's unwavering efforts and initiative in achieving that goal.

Following that, Amir Abdollahian greeted the Sultan of Oman on behalf of the Iranian president, stating that their significant meetings in Tehran and Muscat had a beneficial impact on bilateral ties, according to the Foreign Ministry's website.

For his part, the Omani minister greeted the Iranian president with heartfelt regards from Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman.

The two high-ranking diplomats also praised Tehran and Muscat's improving relations while talking about a number of regional concerns, including as the West Bank and Gaza crises.

Amir Abdollahian and Albusaidi cited the recent resolution passed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's emergency ministerial meeting in Jeddah as evidence of the necessity for coordinated efforts by the Muslim world to promptly put an end to the Israeli regime's genocide and provide humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

Last year, Amir Abdollahian held talks with senior Omani officials in Muscat, discussing a wide variety of issues, including bringing political stability to Yemen and establish lasting peace in the country.

Amir Abdollahian and Albusaidi discussed a wide range of topics, including the implementation of the agreements signed during the Sultan of Oman's recent visit to Tehran as well as the promotion of cooperation between the two nations in the banking, communication, and technology sectors, as well as the consular, judicial, and customs affairs.

Additionally, the Iranian foreign minister spoke with Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, the royal office minister of Oman.

The two ministers talked about the current events in the region, notably in Yemen.

Both of them highlighted the necessity of teamwork to alleviate Yemeni people's suffering and support political processes, stability, and long-term peace.

National authority key to safeguarding rights: military advisor

TEHRAN- A military advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces has emphasized the indispensable role of national authority and strength, asserting that in dealing with corrupt powers, it is imperative to speak the language of power.

Addressing a gathering of high-ranking Army officials, Brigadier General Amir Hatami underscored the pivotal role of power and national authority in safeguarding the nation.

He credited the progress and resilience witnessed in Iran to the Islamic Revolution, highlighting advancements in various sectors despite facing sanctions.

General Hatami praised the commendable readiness of the Air Force, noting significant advancements such as the integration of night vision equipment and deployment of long-range missiles, attributing these achievements to the determined efforts of the military leadership.

Emphasizing the Air Force's historical role as guardians of Islam and defenders of Iran's values, General Hatami commended their unwavering commitment to peace and security, particularly in times of threat and peril.

Regarding the ongoing crisis in Gaza, he criticized the disregard for human rights exhibited by certain nations and emphasized the necessity of responding with strength and national authority to defend Iran's interests.

Quoting the Islamic Revolution's Leader, General Hatami stressed the importance of bolstering strength to ensure national security and protect the Islamic Revolution's ideals and achievements.In discussing the components of power, the general highlighted the military's pivotal role in safeguarding economic, political, and cultural aspects.

Reflecting on history, General Hatami warned against the consequences of a nation's inability to defend itself, citing past instances where Iran suffered due to weakness and dependency on foreign powers.

Highlighting Iran's strategic importance in West Asia, he referenced past aggressions and emphasized the nation's resilience in the face of external threats, particularly during the Iran-Iraq War.In conclusion, General Hatami stressed the importance of adapting to technological advancements while commending the strategic leadership for enhancing the Army's combat capabilities and preparedness.

Tehran's new ambassador to Brazil starts mission

TEHRAN - In preparation for his upcoming diplomatic mission to Brazil, Abdollah Nekounam, the recently appointed ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Brazil, met with Hossein Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The discussions involved Nekounam presenting an overview of the current status of his mission and articulating strategic plans for the future expansion of collaborations.

Amir Abdollahian underscored the substantial importance of Iran-Brazil relations across multiple dimensions. This encompasses political, economic, and international cooperation, placing a noteworthy emphasis on collaboration within the BRICS framework. The top Iranian diplomat emphasized the imperative need for continuous development and reinforcement of relations across diverse fields of cooperation.

The newly appointed envoy, in the meantime, briefed the foreign minister on the plans he is to pursue during his diplomatic mission in Brazil.

Nekounam, boasting a history of diverse roles, shared his valuable experiences. Notably, he served in the prominent role of Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Munich, Germany, and as the Consul General in Hong Kong and Macau.

As Iran joined BRICS as a full member on January 1st, the country's areas of focus within the BRICS framework – including politics and security, economics and investment, and humanitarian aid – intensified with the other members of the geographical bloc such as Brazil.

Trump ordered attacks on Iran without Congress' knowledge

Ex-president allegedly believed Congress wasn't to be consulted on 'important' issues

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – In June 2019, when Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he had canceled planned attacks on Iran just 10 minutes before they were set to occur, clueless Democrats seemed to dismiss his claims as mere bluffs.

However, new information obtained by the Tehran Times shows that the former president had indeed prepared for these attacks and was ready to proceed with them, were it not for a legal advisor's eleventh-hour intervention.

A senior Republican has told the Tehran Times that Trump along with former National Security Advisor John Bolton and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had decided to launch heavy attacks on Iranian soil without notifying Congress.

"In the meetings we had they said it was better to keep Congress uninformed about the attacks as the body would have most probably disagreed with their plans. Trump boasted that he could make 'important decisions' on his own," said the source.

As Trump had mentioned in his tweets, the attacks were supposed to target three military sites on Iranian soil in response to the country's downing of a sophisticated U.S. drone – Global Hawk – above its territorial waters. Two cyber-attacks were



also to hit Iran's infrastructure.

Shortly after the unmanned reconnaissance aircraft incident, the ex-president, Bolton, and Pompeo met with Congressional leaders. During the meeting, the then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi urged them to seek an AUMF (congressional approval for military action) before moving forward with any plans for striking Iran.

Despite having already readied themselves for the attacks, all three agreed to Pelosi's request, as disclosed by the senior Republican. "Trump did not believe in democracy whatsoever. He thought he was above the law and that nobody was allowed to challenge him as the president."

The former president decided to call off the strikes only 10 minutes before they were planned to happen after one of his legal advisors warned about their disproportionateness. This move allegedly angered Bolton and Pompeo who believed the decision was being "thrown up in the air" based on incorrect assessments. As per the advisor's analysis, proceeding with the strikes could have resulted in the loss of at least 150 Iranian lives in a dangerous escalation of tensions between Tehran and Washington.

Trump's critics have been warning that the former president is a "threat to America's democracy". Their main basis for this argument is the January 6, 2021, United States Capitol attack, which happened after Trump's supporters refused to recognize election results announcing Joe Biden as the new U.S. president. Trump initially advocated for overturning the results instead of asking his supporters to back down.

"Military officials had given Trump a list of 700 targets within Iran. Trump said he would attack more places out of that list if Iranians decided to respond. He kept suggesting hitting an oil refinery without understanding the consequences of such a move. Bolton always emboldened him," the source explained. The Tehran Times has obtained access to this list.

Furthermore, additional details indicate that the highly classified list and other confidential documents concerning Iran have been accessed by several individuals who were not authorized to view them. Trump was allegedly the one that showed them "what he was planning to do to Iran."

Trump has been accused of mishandling classified documents before. Last year, CNN obtained a 2021 audio recording of Trump telling his aides that he was holding onto classified Pentagon documents about a potential attack on Iran despite not being in office anymore. The conversation reportedly took place in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Trump is currently under prosecution for 37 counts related to the alleged mishandling of classified documents kept at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

"Trump just doesn't understand what classified means. He treats confidential documents as if they are his own property," the source told the Tehran Times.

Iran slams UN for politically motivated reporting on 2022 riots



TEHRAN – Iran has condemned the United Nations for releasing baseless and biased information as facts, while it continues to turn a blind eye to the devastating situation of women and children in the besieged Gaza Strip.

A so-called fact-finding mission established by the UN Human Rights Council has concluded that Iran committed "crimes against humanity" when responding to violent riots that led to the demise of over 200 people, including over 70 security personnel in the fall of 2022. The mission was established by Germany, the U.S., and Britain which have been backing Israel's genocidal war against Gazans in the past months.

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman said on Saturday that the report is manipulating and distorting facts to fulfill the political goals of Western states. "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers this report, which was designed by the Zionist regime, the United States, and some Western countries, as a clear example of the misuse of noble human rights concepts and values for advancing selfish political purposes and deems it devoid of any legitimacy or legal effect," Nasser Kanaani stated.

The evidence the FFM has based its reports on seems to have been provided by anti-Iran figures and organizations outside the country who claim that they have spoken to "unidentified victims" inside Iran. It's important to note that these individuals and entities have been backing Western sanctions against the Iranian people for the past years, while repeatedly calling on Western nations to launch heavy attacks on Iranian soil.

"Countries that violate the rights of other nations and are complicit in all the crimes of the Zionist regime, especially in the massacre of unarmed civilians, particularly women and children, cannot sit in judgment or claim to be judges of the human rights situation in another country; rather, they should be accountable for their own human rights violations," Kanaani added, referring to Western states' untrammeled backing of Israel's deadly campaign in Gaza which has so far killed over 30,000 civilians and forced the rest of the 2.3 million displaced population of Gaza to grapple with famine.

The spokesman also condemned Canada for sanctioning the head of Tehran's Metro system as well as a female member of the Iranian parliament. "Canada's actions are also taken with political and propaganda motives and are part of this country's selective approach towards human rights issues in Iran," Kanaani stressed.

He further added that if Canadian authorities are truly concerned about the status of women's rights worldwide, then they should break their deadly silence on the genocide and ruthless massacre of over 30,000 Palestinian citizens, more than 70% of whom are women and children.

"They should be accountable and take steps to halt the biggest human tragedy in the world in Gaza by cutting their support for the criminal Zionist regime."

Tehran urges removal of Israeli regime from UN women's rights commission

From Page 1 ▸ and empower women, and whose one of its important tasks is to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs of women all over the world."

Gharibabadi said Israel's "continued membership [of the commission] is a mockery of human rights principles and international humanitarian law, and a humiliation to the [UN] Commission on the Status of Women and its objectives and missions", calling on the three senior UN officials to oust this regime, which he described as "criminal, child-killer and murderer of women and girls", from the commission.

After the Palestinian resistance movement, Hamas, carried out the unexpected Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying force in reaction to the Israeli regime's decades-long campaign of bloodletting and devastation against Palestinians, Israel declared war on Gaza on October 7.

In addition, the Tel Aviv regime has placed a "complete siege" on the region, depriving the more than two million Palestinian residents of food, water, fuel, and power.

The upspring regime has murdered at least 31,000 Palestinians and wounded 72,402 others since the war began.

Under the debris in Gaza, many more people are reported missing and feared dead.

Also, on the occasion of World Children's Day, Iran's top human rights official attacked governments and international organizations for failing to protect children in Gaza, where the Israeli regime has killed thousands of children.

"If they consider the children in Gaza to be part of the world's children, it would be good for them to recognize the right of these oppressed children to a childhood, to continue to live and to grow," wrote Gharibabadi in a post in Farsi on the X platform.

Gharibabadi serves as the secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, a subsidiary of the Iranian judiciary.

During the Gaza conflict, the body has been active in a campaign to expose human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli regime.

During a weekly news conference, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said that the international community's growing dissatisfaction with the conflict and desire for its end is seen by the mounting resistance to Israeli crimes in Gaza and the U.S. government's support of the regime's wrongdoings.

He also said that the U.S. and Israel have been forewarned by the resistance groups in the region that they would not stand idly by while the Israeli regime carrying out its atrocities on the Palestinian people in the beleaguered Gaza Strip.

"The actions of the Zionist regime spark a reaction by the resistance groups in the region. They (the groups) had repeatedly warned the U.S. and the Zionists that if these attacks continue, they will not remain silent," he said.

"The U.S. and the Zionist regime must understand that they can escape the situation only by stopping the war completely and immediately, allowing the dispatch of humanitarian aid [to the coastal enclave], and ending the forced displacement of the people of Gaza."

Additionally, the Iranian diplomat asked the U.S. administration to cease supporting Israeli atrocities in Gaza and focus on international security and peace rather than putting pressure on others to take action.

SPORTS

Volleyball expert Afshardoost urges fan to not rush to 'hasty judgement'

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - Iranian volleyball expert Mahmoud Afshardoost believes that the appointment of Mauricio Motta Paes as the head coach of the Iranian national volleyball team requires patience and has urged people to not rush to any 'hasty judgement' about the Brazilian coach.

"The Volleyball Federation has been striving for the past two to three months to bring a world-class coach to Iran by valuing the opinions of Iranian volleyball experts and fans. Initially, the names of 14 renowned coaches were considered, each facing some obstacles in coming to Iran," he said in an interview with Tehran Times.

Afshardoost, a former secretary of the Volleyball Federation and one of the five candidates for the presidency of the Volleyball Federation of Iran in the upcoming elections, emphasized, "It was clear from the beginning that choosing a head coach would be challenging, as none of our options were available."

Brazilian coach Mauricio Motta Paes has been appointed as the new head coach of Iran's men's national volleyball team, as announced by the Iranian Volleyball Federation.

"Iran Volleyball Federation narrowed down its options to five and then to two, Alberto Giuliani and Motta Paes. Since Giuliani showed little inclination to come to Iran, the federation reached an agreement with Paes," he added.

"Paes' resume includes coaching in national teams of France and Brazil and assistant coaching roles with big coaches. While his name may not be widely recognized among top-level coaches globally, he is not an inexperienced coach and has worked with various national and club teams. He can contribute to the Iranian national volleyball team, and I hope this will happen very soon," he added.

Addressing criticisms of the Paes' appointment, Afshardoost said, "I understand the criticisms, but we must also understand the Federation's conditions and the current difficulties in finding great coaches who are not employed. We should give Paes a chance, and hopefully, he will achieve good results with the Iranian national team. If not, we should consider another coach for the national team.

"The process of selecting the national team head coach has concluded, and now is the time for all members of the volleyball family to assist and provide accurate information to Paes so that he can start his job with strength and full awareness," Afshardoost concluded.

Paes will lead Team Melli until the conclusion of the 2024 Olympic Games, with the possibility of extending his tenure for an additional two years. Paes has most recently served as the coach of Ukraine's Epicentr-Podolyany team.

Iran's Greco-Roman champion of 2024 Vehbi Emre

TEHRAN – Iran's Greco-Roman team won the title of the wrestling tournament 2024 Vehbi Emre. The Iranian wrestlers won four gold medals, five silvers and three bronzes.

Pouya Dadmarz beat Georgia's Giorgi Tokhadze 5-2 in the final bout of 55kg.

Mohammad Hadi Saravi defeated his compatriot Mehdi Bali 5-1 in the final of 97kg.

Saeid Esmaeili collected a gold medal, beating Mahmud Bakhshilloev from Uzbekistan 1-0 in the 67kg final.

In 77kg final, Amin Kavianinejhad defeated his countryman Ali Oskoo 5-3 and Iran's Amir Abdi defeated Uzbekistan's Dilshod Omongeldiyev 3-2 to win the bronze medal.

Amin Mirzazadeh also won a silver medal in the 130kg after pulling out against Finland's Elias Kuosmanen due to knee injury. Fardin Hedayati seized the bronze in the class.

Rasoul Garmsiri lost to Stanislav Shantarenko from Belarus 5-3 and Abbas Mehdizadeh won the bronze medal in the weight category.

Amir Reza Deh Bozorgi lost to Kyrgyzstan's Zholaman Sharshenbekov 5-0 in the final bout of 60kg.

Iran water polo team runners-up at 2024 Asian Age Group

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Japan 17-13 in the final match of the 2024 Asian Age Group Championship on Saturday.

Earlier in the day, Kazakhstan finished in third place, beating China 7-4.

The Persians also secured their berth in the 2024 World Aquatics Men's U18 Water Polo Championships, to be held in Argentina.

The Iranian team headed by Ali Pirouzkhah, defeated Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Kazakhstan and China in the tournament.

The 11th Asian Age Group Championships included four aquatic disciplines, namely swimming, diving, water polo, and artistic swimming.

The competition was held from Feb. 26 to March 9 at the New Clark City Aquatics Center in Capas, Tarlac, the Philippines.

More than 1,000 athletes from 25 countries competed at the tournament.

Asghar Nazemi elected head of Iran Polo Federation

TEHRAN – Asghar Nazemi was elected as head of the polo (known as 'chogan' in Persian) federation of Iran on Saturday for a four-year term till 2028.

In the elections held at Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Nazemi secured 26 of 29 votes cast.

UNESCO has recognized the team sport of polo, played on horseback, as Iran's intangible cultural heritage during a session held in South Korea in 2017.

Polo is one of the ancient Iranian sports that has become a world sport nowadays. This sport is known as the game of kings due to its popularity among kings and nobles. The name polo is derived from the name of the wood used in it.

This game was originally a military title, where there were more wars and battles. Iranian cavalry showed the talent of their war horses.

The beginning and origin of this sport belong to ancient times, according to historical documents, this sport dates back to 525 BC.

Iranian women crowned Asian rafting champions

TEHRAN – Iran's women's team claimed the title of the 2024 Asian River Rafting Championships.

Team Melli finished in first place at RX race held in Himachal Pradesh, Northern India.

In the women category, the perfect 300 points line has been drawn by Iranian paddlers Saba Fadaei, Faezeh Ronasi, Sahar Ghasemi Toudeshki, Melina Ebrahimian and Setareh Homayoon Fard.

Iran prevailed over the hosts and took home the RX and overall gold medal.

Second RX place, that granted also the overall silver, goes to India 3, with 262 points. RX bronze to India 2, that was not enough for the overall third step of the podium, taken by India 3 with 242 points.

Koohpayehzadeh elected head of Iran's Federation for Disabled

TEHRAN – Jalil Koohpayehzadeh was elected as head of Iran's Sports Federation for the Disabled for a four-year term till 2027.In the elections held at Iran's Academy Olympic in Tehran, Koohpayehzadeh secured 33 of 57 votes cast.

Mohammadreza Mirzaei and Abbas Baghestani came second and third with three and two votes, respectively.

A total of 17 voters opted to cast an empty ballot.Koohpayehzadeh replaced Shervin Asbaghian in the position.

Iran's second-largest carmaker reports decline in output

TEHRAN - Iran's second-largest automaker, Saipa, has reported a six percent decline in the number of passenger cars it has produced in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023- February 19, 2024).

In its report to Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), Saipa said that it produced 265,000 sedans during the aforementioned period.

The output shows a six-percent decline compared to the same period last year when the company produced 282,000 vehicles.

According to Mehrdad Khosravi, the director general of the Iranian Industry Ministry's Auto Industry Office, the country's automakers produced about 1.23 million vehicles in 11 months of the current calendar year.

The carmakers managed to manufacture about 1,230,000 vehicles in the mentioned 11 months which shows a six growth compared to the same period last year.

During the mentioned period, some 1,040,000 passenger vehicles were produced, which shows a six percent growth compared to the 980,000 vehicles produced in the same period last year, he added.

Khosravi stated that in the mentioned period, 152,000 vans were manufactured in the country, which has grown by 34 percent compared to the same period last year.

This official with the Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry in his remarks added that in 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year, some 34,000 types of heavy vehicles (trucks, mini trucks, and tractors) were produced with a growth of 10 percent.

The reports by the director general of the Iranian Industry Ministry's Auto Industry Office show that in the 11 months of the current Iranian year, some 280,000 cars were produced by the private sector, which shows a 61 percent increase compared to the production of 173,000 cars in the same period last year.

Agro-food exports rise 23% in 11 months on year



TEHRAN – The value of Iran's exports of agricultural and foodstuff products increased by 23 percent in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2023-February 19, 2024), the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian producers managed to export about $5.6 billion worth of the mentioned products in the said 11 months, Mehr News Agency reported.

As reported, agro-food products accounted for 12.5 percent of the country's total non-oil exports in the mentioned 11 months.

Iraq was the top destination for Iran's agro-food products in the mentioned period importing $1.784 billion worth of the said items. The Arab neighbor accounted for 32 percent of the total exports of food and agricultural products from Iran.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood in second place, importing $675.783 million of the mentioned products, followed by Russia with $464.572 million.

The value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached $138.8 billion in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year, according to Mohammad Rezavinifar, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The value of the Islamic Republic's trade with the partners in the mentioned 11 months increased by 2.7 percent compared to the same period last year.

The official put the country's non-oil exports, excluding exports of electricity, crude oil, and techno-engineering services, at 124.7 million tons worth $44.8 billion which shows an 11.42 percent rise in terms of tonnage and an 8.87 percent decline in terms of value.

He said that Iran's foreign trade, including oil exports, has registered a $19 billion surplus while seeing a $15 billion deficit without petrodollars.

Iran exported $32.59 billion of crude oil and $1.9 billion of technical engineering services in the first 11 months of this year, according to Rezvanifar.

During this period, liquefied natural gas with $3.0 billion, liquefied propane with $2.8 billion, and methanol with $2.0 billion were Iran's top exported items.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with $12.7 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with $8.6 billion, the UAE with over $5.9 billion, Turkey with $3.8 billion, and India with $2.0 billion.

The country's top five sources of imports in the first 11 months of the current year were the UAE with $18.6 billion, China with $16.8 billion, Turkey with $6.8 billion, Germany with $1.9 billion, and India with $1.8 billion worth of imports.

Corn, mobile phones, soybeans, automobile parts, sunflower seeds, and safflower were the five main items imported by the Islamic Republic.

Wastewater management projects worth $240m to go operational in Tehran

TEHRAN – The managing director of the Water and Sewerage Department of Tehran Province has said wastewater projects worth 120 trillion rials (about $240 million) are going to go operational in the capital soon, IRNA reported.

According to Abasali Moserzadeh, the projects includes a monitoring center for buildings control, a wastewater monitoring and control center, the construction of the largest sewage relief post building in the capital, the largest and third biomass power plant in Tehran which will be inaugurated with the presence of President Ebrahim Raisi in the near future.

TEDPIX falls over 1,900 points on Saturday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 1,994 points (0.09 percent) to 2,163,757 on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

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

In late January, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) stressed the need for diverse financing tools in the country, noting that such tools are currently being provided by the stock market."To reduce the speculative and profit-seeking activities of dealers in the country, financing tools should be diversified," Mohammad Shirijian said.

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production in an efficient manner. Now, to accelerate the process of resource transfer and high productivity, the financing should be directed to the enterprises," the official explained.

Raisi inaugurates major projects in southwestern Iran

TEHRAN - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi inaugurated several major projects during his provincial visit to Khuzestan in the Southwest of the country on Friday, IRNA reported.

Official operation of two oil fields, namely Sepehr and Jofeir, in West Karun region, a sponge iron factory in Ahvaz and 28 water and energy projects were among the projects inaugurated by President Raisi during his visit to Khuzestan.

Raisi issued an official order to commence operations at the Sepehr and Jofeir oil fields via video conference, with Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji in attendance.

The inauguration ceremony, a significant part of Raisi's visit, highlighted the importance of the Sepehr and Jofeir oil fields, which currently contribute over 50,000 barrels per day (bpd) to Iran's oil production.



The goal is to extract 74,000 bpd of oil from these fields over a 20-year period, with an investment exceeding $2.8 billion.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony, Oil Minister Javad Oji said oil production in southwestern province of Khuzestan has jumped one million bpd since the 13th (incumbent) administration took office in August 2021.

"The volume of oil extracted from Khuzestan's fields amounted to 1.7m bpd when the 13th administration took over while the figure now stands at 2.7m bpd," he said.

According to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) managing director West Karun is home to 86 percent of the country's shared oil reserves.

Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr said the contracts signed for the development of nine oil fields in West Karun are worth more than $20 billion.

Additionally, President Raisi inaugurated the Zamzam 3 sponge iron factory in Ahvaz, which is the largest producer of sponge iron in West Asia and the second-largest globally after India.

The mentioned 28 water and electricity projects also included several power transmission lines, irrigation systems and drinking water supply projects to rural areas.

Transport Ministry outlines 3 major strategies of PMO in upcoming year

TEHRAN – Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash has outlined three major strategies for the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) to pursue in the next Iranian calendar year, which begins on March 20.

As reported by the portal of the ministry, the development of maritime-based economy, the development of maritime transit, and logistics management are the main strategies that the PMO is going to pursue in the upcoming year.

According to Bazrpash, with the implementation of these three strategies in the next year, the role of commercial ports will become more effective in the country's economy.

Pointing to the multiplicity of decisions regarding port affairs in the country and its harmfulness in the service implementation process, the minister said: "According to the announcement of the president, the Ports, and Maritime Organization will be in charge of the coordination of all the ports authorities in the next year; so decision-making and management of communication among port authorities should be a priority of the organization in the coming year."

He further called on the PMO to focus its efforts on attracting investment in the country's ports, and added: "Activities in the ports and coasts of the country have always been attractive for domestic investors, so in a different and motivating approach, certain investment packages should be provided for domestic investor institutions and companies."

Another priority of the Ports and Maritime Organization in the coming year should be the development and organization of local wharves and the promotion of employment in the southern coasts of the country, he added.

Referring to the importance of marine tourism and the promotion of sea trips on the coasts and islands of the country, Bazarpash emphasized: "The renovation of passenger vessels and promotion of marine tourism also needs a more suitable platform to attract investors."

Chinese ministers answer questions regarding social issues in press conference

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING - China's ministers of education, human resources and social security, housing and urban-rural development, as well as the director of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration answered the questions raised by the media regarding education, employment, social security, housing, healthcare, and disease control in a press conference on Saturday.

The press conference was held at the Media Center in Beijing.

China's Minister of Human Resources and Social Security Wang Xiaoping, Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Ni Hong, Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng, and Chief of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration Wang Hesheng spoke on people's livelihood for the second session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), and answered the questions raised by domestic and foreign media.

It is worth mentioning that China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) arranged a program for journalists from around the world and took them to the Beijing Media Center to take part in the press conference on Saturday.

CIPCC, under the China Public Diplomacy Association (CPDA), has initiated a program to build a platform for the media from countries around the world, especially developing countries, to observe China and study development in this country.

The program aimed at media exchange was halted in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 epidemic.



Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Ni Hong (2nd L), Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng (3rd L), Minister of Human Resources and Social Security Wang Xiaoping (3rd R), and Chief of the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration Wang Hesheng (2nd R)

In each edition of the program, journalists from all around the world gather together to get familiar with modern China and exchange their experiences in the field of journalism.

In 2024 edition of the program, scheduled to be held from late February until late June, over 100 journalists from more than 90 countries are participating.

Iran self-sufficient in producing passenger plane spare parts

TEHRAN - Iran is now self-sufficient in supplying airplane spare parts, and there is almost no need to send airplanes to foreign countries for any kind of repair, an official told Mehr News Agency.

Regarding commercial and passenger airplanes, Iran used to be highly dependent on the purchase of airplane parts from foreigners and the sanctions imposed on the country caused a challenge in this regard, Deputy of the Scientific Department of Knowledge-based Economy Development Javad Mashayekh said in an interview for Mehr News Agency.

After the imposition of sanctions against Iran, some of the Iranian knowledge-based companies tried to produce homegrown car spare parts and repair and maintain aircraft engines.

Saying that there is no longer a need to not send planes to foreign countries for repairs and maintenance, he added that even some countries, which were also sanctioned for various reasons and are unable to supply spare parts and maintenance services, come to Iran and seek help from Iranian specialists.

For example, Russia has faced many sanctions in the aviation sector due to the crisis in Ukraine, and for this reason, it has concluded favorable contracts for maintenance services with Iranian knowledge-based companies, Mashayekh stressed.

This shows that domestic knowledge-based companies have progressed to the extent that some empowered countries seek to cooperate with Iranian knowledge-based companies, he concluded.

Back in May 2023, Iranian industrial specialists tested an airplane engine with great success which was made of domestically-made parts.

In honor of International Workers' Day, President Ebrahim Raisi visited the Iranian energy and infrastructure company MAPNA.

The power component and engine management system of the airplane were put to the test during the visit by the specialists of MAPNA, renowned as the largest Iranian contractor for steam, gas, combined cycle, and renewable power plants.

The reverse engineering process was used by the domestic experts at MAPNA to completely develop and produce the engine and its control system.

The president also went to a display of technical advances in a number of industries, including water industry, oil and gas production, train transportation, aircraft engines, and the production of renewable and thermal energy.

The president also saw the exhibition's high-tech F-class Iranian gas turbine and the domestic MAP 24 locomotive.

Raisi also went to the MAP24 locomotive, a product made by the MAPNA Group's experts.

During his visit, the president emphasized the need of satisfying the country's locomotive needs with a focus on local manufacture, as well as utilizing the capability of this company's locomotive training center.

Raisi then toured the electric vehicle drive system, which included buses, passenger cars, and freight vehicles developed and manufactured by MAPNA Group.

U.S. seeks military presence near Gaza

Ulterior motives lurking behind port project

From page 1 ▸ Aid groups have criticized the U.S. plan to build the maritime corridor. They say it is time-consuming and inefficient compared with providing humanitarian assistance through land crossings.

The United Nations has warned that the roughly 2.3 million people in Gaza now face near-famine conditions as Israel maintains a total siege on the territory. The regime has strictly limited the entry of food, water, medicines and other supplies as Gazans, in particular children, face starvation. Israeli forces have also killed hungry Palestinians who wait for deliveries of food from aid trucks.

"Children in Gaza cannot wait to eat. They are already dying from malnutrition and saving their lives is a matter of hours or days - not weeks," Save the Children said.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, UNRWA, has also raised questions about the effectiveness of U.S. initiatives to get aid into Gaza.

The spokesperson of the UN agency told Al Jazeera that the focus on airdrops or maritime corridors neglects a simpler, more efficient way to deliver assistance.

"That is via the road, using the crossings," Juliette Touma said.

She added, "This is what we used before the war in Gaza when there was a regular flow of about 500 trucks per day, including commercial supplies."

Her comments come as Israel has barred many aid trucks at the Rafah crossing on the Egyptian border.

Doctors Without Borders has also



condemned the plan to get aid into Gaza by sea as a "glaring distraction" from Israel's "indiscriminate" and "disproportionate" military assault on the territory.

"The food, the water and medical supplies so desperately needed by people in Gaza are sitting just across the border. Israel needs to facilitate rather than block the flow of supplies," the executive director of MSF USA said in a post on X.

"This is not a logistics problem; it is a political problem. Rather than look to the U.S. military to build a work-around, the U.S. should insist on immediate humanitarian access using the roads and entry points that already exist," Avril Benoit added.

Transporting aid by sea and airdrops is a poor substitute for deliveries by land. Undoubtedly, sending assistance through land corridors is a cheaper, viable and working alternative.

U.S. covert plans

The U.S. is capable of exerting pressure on Israel to allow aid into Gaza. But Washington continues to supply weapons to Israel and provide it with unwavering political support. This has emboldened Israel to prolong its war of genocide on Gaza and impose restrictions on entry of food into the territory.

In the meantime, U.S. officials are expressing concerns over the suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza. However, their actions expose their hypocrisy.

The establishment of the port is also in line with their hypocritical approaches.

As the Pentagon press secretary outlined plans for establishing the port, he stressed that none of the American forces will enter Gaza at any time, including to deliver aid.

"The concept that is being planned involves the presence of U.S. military personnel on military vessels offshore but does not require U.S. military personnel to go ashore," Ryder said.

The Pentagon official was echoing Biden's words, who said during his State of the Union speech that, "No U.S. boots will be on the ground."

Usurpingly, Israel welcomed the U.S. plan.

The U.S. has always been seeking to expand its military presence in West Asia and beyond. The construction of the temporary port for getting aid into Gaza will provide Washington with an opportunity to use it as a military base.

Consequently, the U.S. can provide increasing military support for Israel under the disguise of involvement in humanitarian aid operations.

Likewise, Israel can also deploy its forces to the port to be immune from attacks carried out by resistance groups.

PFLP warning

Such ulterior motives drew a reaction from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The PFLP warned the U.S. plan is "suspicious and dubious" and goes beyond the goal of aiding the Palestinian people. It said the move could open the door to executing other alarming objectives, such as forced displacement plans under humanitarian and other pretexts.

It also said the U.S. presence would be a legitimate target for the resistance.

Anti-U.S. sentiment is already high in West Asia over Washington's support for Israel's brutal onslaught on the Gaza Strip.

Undoubtedly, the presence of American military personnel near Gaza will lead to the spillover of the ongoing conflict to the entire region and U.S. soldiers will have to pay the price for such military adventurism.

Hamas: 'Israeli occupation won't rest in Gaza'

Al-Qassam chief addresses key points as war on Gaza enters sixth month

From page 1 ▸ "This reached its peak with attempts to Judaize the al-Aqsa Mosque and defeat and provoke the sentiments of all Muslims."

In the absence of any international measures over a long period of time to protect the oppressed Palestinians, Abu Ubaida said this is what culminated on October 7.

"Our people and Resistance understood this equation early on. Hence, our people's resistance and ongoing revolution culminated in the October 7 epic, responding to the continuous aggression that has spanned for many decades," Abu Ubaida underlined.

"The international community and its frail laws are designed to protect injustice, oppression, and aggression conducted by the tyranny of ruthless power, led by the U.S. administration."

Israeli Nazism

The military spokesman said the al-Qassam brigades and other resistance factions are fighting against a regime that has committed war crimes in Gaza, which resembles the Nazis style brutality.

"They (Israelis) have gone beyond the brutality of the Nazis by imposing intentional starvation, where the world is witnessing the killing of fathers seeking to provide (food) for their children...," Abu Ubaida said.

Elsewhere in his speech, the Hamas military chief added that "by killing and starving our courageous nation and destructing our homes and infrastructure, the Israeli occupation has shown its disdain for international humanitarian law by engaging in Nazism and genocide against the Palestinian people."

Occupation won't rest in Gaza

Abu Ubaida confirmed that the Palestinian resistance fighters will continue to confront the Israeli genocidal war on all fronts from the north of the Gaza Strip to the south, dealing significant losses to the occupation's officers, soldiers, mercenaries, and vehicles.

He announced that the al-Qassam Brigades and other Palestinian resistance factions carried out several qualitative operations over the past few weeks, vowing more and stronger operations as long as the aggression continues.

"The occupation will not rest on our land, and it will not succeed in bringing security to itself until our people obtain their rights."

Ramadan

Abu Ubaida called on all freedom-seeking people around the world to turn the month of Ramadan into a wider movement of confrontation and protest on all fronts inside and outside Palestine to highlight Israeli war crimes.

He specifically called on the Palestinian people in occupied al-Quds, the West Bank, and the occupied territories of 1948 to mobilize towards al-Aqsa Mosque, stand firm, and not allow the occupation to impose its restrictive measures against freedom of worship at Islam's third holiest site.

"Al-Aqsa Mosque is a part of our creed, and for its sake, this battle has been waged, with our people giving everything they have," the spokesman said, adding, "It is the duty of every free person to unite with the sacrifices of the people of Gaza and its resistance."

Negotiations

Abu Ubaida touched on the negotiations for a ceasefire, emphasizing that the resistance will never compromise on its demands for a full cessation of the Israeli aggression and the complete withdrawal of occupation forces from the Gaza Strip.

Additionally, he stressed the importance of providing humanitarian relief to the starving people of Gaza, facilitating the return of displaced individuals, and initiating reconstruction efforts.

He touched on the positive approach of the resistance leadership towards mediators while highlighting the deceptive tactics of the Israeli side in the negotiations.

Israeli captives

Abu Ubaida condemned Israeli leaders for neglecting their own captives, accusing the regime's officials of manipulating the world and the Israeli public, effectively saying these tactics will eventually see the captives "return in coffins" as a result of the indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes and blockade of Gaza.

"We affirm that this famine has cast its shadows over all segments of our people in Gaza, including



Israeli captives who experience the same levels of hunger and deprivation as our people. They suffer from a lack of food and medicine, and some of the enemy's captives are experiencing malnutrition, dehydration, and emaciation like our people."

"Disease now threatens the lives of some of them due to the unavailability of proper medication and food. Additionally, they are exposed to bombings and killings in incidents we have repeatedly announced," Abu Ubaida explained.

"If the families of these captives are concerned about their lives, they should be aware that their government and war council are playing with the lives of their children. They insist on receiving them in coffins. The ball is in their court to save them," he underlined.

U.S. double standards

He also pointed out that the Biden administration laments over a limited number of Israeli captives "while tens of thousands of our children have been killed or remain under the rubble ... this reflects the double standards from the White House, which disregards human rights."

Abu Ubaida affirmed that international laws are manipulated by the U.S. in service of injustice, oppression, and aggression.

He stated that the Palestinian people understand this equation, realizing that the Israeli occupation won't be deterred by critical statements, condemnation, conferences, summits, or international resolutions.

The Israeli regime has killed and starved to death more than 100,000 Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip, the majority of whom are women and children, while a rising number of infants are dying from famine.

Hezbollah says attacks Israeli troops with heavy-caliber Burkan missile

The Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says it has struck Israeli troops near the border with southern Lebanon in response to the regime's ongoing genocidal war in Gaza, and in support of Palestinian fighters facing off a relentless offensive.

Lebanon's Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network, citing a brief Hezbollah statement, reported that the group launched a heavy-caliber Burkan (Volcano) missile at the Israeli al-Baghdadi military outpost on Saturday, and that the projectile precisely struck the designated target.

The development came a day after the resistance fighters targeted a gathering of Israeli troops near the al-Raheb military site with a barrage of artillery shells, Press TV reported.

Israeli forces stationed at the al-Sammaqa and Ruwaisat al-Alam outposts in the occupied Kfarchouba Hills also came under separate rocket attacks.

Hezbollah fighters also used a surface-to-surface Falaq-1 (Dusk-1) missile to directly pound Israeli soldiers close to the Jal al-Alam military site.

Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes on Saturday bombed a house in the southern town of Majdal Zoun, totally destroying it. Emergency crew and paramedics rushed to the area to save those trapped under the rubble, Lebanon's official National News Agency said.

Earlier in the day, an Israeli drone fired a missile at an empty house in the southern border town of Blida.

The Israeli regime has been attacking southern Lebanon off and on since October 7, when it launched the devastating campaign of death and destruction in Gaza.

In retaliation, Hezbollah has launched near-daily rocket attacks on Israeli positions.

At least 280 people have been killed on the Lebanese border, most of them Hezbollah fighters but also 44 civilians.

Israel says at least ten of its troopers and six settlers have been killed in the area.

WORLD HEADLINES

Yemeni army strikes U.S. vessel, destroyers

From page 1 ▸ "The Yemeni Armed Forces will continue to carry out their military operations in the Red and Arab Sea until the aggression stops and the siege on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is lifted," Saree underlined.

Earlier on Saturday, top Yemeni official Mohammed Ali al-Houthi warned the U.S. against the continuation of its hostile moves in the Red Sea, saying the Yemeni Armed Forces are fully aware of the "loopholes" of American aircraft operations in the strategic waterway.

"The heroes in the armed forces know about the loopholes that can be exploited while the take-off or landing of American aircraft on the ships," Houthi wrote in an Arabic-language post on his X social media account on Saturday.

"I advise the United States and its allies to issue a decision not to fly at all."

UNRWA chief: UN Palestinian refugee agency at risk of death

The United Nations Palestinian refugee agency is at "risk of death" after a string of donors suspended their funding over Israeli allegations some staff took part in the October 7 attacks by Hamas in southern Israel, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said.

"The agency is at risk of death, it is risking dismantlement," Lazzarini told Swiss broadcaster RTS in an interview.

"What is at stake is the fate of the Palestinians today in Gaza in the short term who are going through an absolutely unprecedented humanitarian crisis."

ICRC: War on Gaza has ruptured any sense of a shared humanity

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said the war in Gaza has "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity."

ICRC head Mirjana Spoljaric urged a ceasefire to allow for meaningful assistance to reach the people in need," Al Mayadeen reported.

She added that the ICRC must be "notified" of any Palestinians detained by "Israel" and must be permitted to visit them, highlighting that "Israel" had a duty to treat them "humanely" and allow them to "communicate with family".

The ICRC head stated that providing a stable and essential flow of majorly needed aid into Gaza was "only part of the solution."

Turkish president likens Netanyahu to infamous dictators

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan compares Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the world history's worst dictators: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Benito Mussolini.

"Netanyahu and his administration, with their crimes against humanity in Gaza, are writing their names next to Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, like today's Nazis," he said.

Erdogan also reiterated his support for Hamas.

"Turkey is a country that speaks openly with Hamas leaders and firmly backs them."

"We will continue to do what is necessary to hold Israeli officials accountable for the massacres committed in Gaza in accordance with international law," Erdogan said.

Palestinian Foreign Ministry: Intl. community falls for Israeli blackmail

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has accused the international community of falling for Israeli "blackmail" as it buys time to carry out the "extermination" and forced displacement of the Palestinian people.

In a statement issued on X, the ministry said Israel, as an occupying power, was not respecting its duties under international law to protect the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

Instead, the ministry said it was clear that Israel was "using starvation as a weapon of war" and attempting to empty the Gaza Strip of Palestinians.

The ministry accused the international community of "complicity" and "duality" for failing to pressure Israel into delivering aid and allowing it to continue "the extermination of our people."

Bernie Sanders slams Congress over 'absurd' hypocrisy on Gaza

Senator Bernie Sanders has slammed U.S. lawmakers over the "absurd" hypocrisy of expressing concern over the suffering of Palestinians while continuing to support Israel's war in Gaza.

In withering remarks directed at his colleagues in Congress, Sanders said lawmakers were engaging in the "fiction" that they are powerless to stop the death and suffering, Al Jazeera reported.

"It is absurd to criticize Netanyahu's war in one breath and provide another $10bn to continue that war in the next. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about this disaster is the fiction we tell ourselves here in Congress, and that is that there is nothing, just nothing that we can do," Sanders said.

"Everybody knows what is happening," Sanders added.

"We see it every day in the news and see the pictures of the emaciated children, of people bombed while they sleep. And yet Congress pretends as if we are powerless to stop it."

Human rights group urges India to cease military ties with Israel

The Indian government should cease all ties with Israel that implicate it in the "ongoing genocide" in Gaza, an Indian human rights group has said, referencing a recent report that an Indian company had sent combat drones to Israel for potential use in Gaza, according to Middle East Eye.

In a statement, the Human Rights Forum (HRF) said it was outraged by both India's feeble diplomatic response to Israel's campaign in Gaza as well as its willingness to continue trading military hardware that may contribute to the devastating scenes unfolding in the besieged territory.

"We demand that the Indian government cancel, with immediate effect, all such deals with Israel. We are daily witness to the deliberate slaughter of Palestinians, many of them women and children," the statement read.

Messier marathon brings amateur astronomers to Iran's central desert edge



TEHRAN – On March 17 and 18, tens of amateur astronomers gathered under a dark starry sky on the edge of Iran's central desert to observe the annual Messier marathon, famed as the country's biggest astronomical event.

The event took place at the Chah-e Jam tourist area on the northern edge of Shahrud, Semnan province, CHTN reported.

"The competition is the largest and most important national astronomy event held in the country," Shahrud's tourism chief said on Saturday.

Morteza Nazari further mentioned that with the coordination of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Shahrud and the National Astronomy magazine, this year's Messier marathon took place in the Chah-e Jam tourist area of Shahrud.

Participants and enthusiasts, according to Nazari, gained fresh observational experience in the field of astronomy without prior knowledge or telescopes in the educational section of this event.

Highlighting the presence of top astronomers from across the country, Nazari added that the event hosted 180 astronomers and judges in two sections: education and competition.

The official also emphasized that the dark skies of the Chah-e Jam area are among the most beautiful and accessible dark skies in the country. "This event, aimed at promoting astronomical tourism, was held in (near) Shahroud for the first time."

A Messier marathon is an endeavor, often coordinated by amateur astronomers, aimed at spotting as many Messier objects as possible within a single night. The Messier catalog, compiled by French astronomer Charles Messier during the late 18th century, comprises 110 relatively bright deep-sky objects, including galaxies, nebulae, and star clusters.

The number of Messier objects observable in one night varies based on several factors, such as the observer's location, the duration of daylight and nighttime, and the season, given the varying positions of Messier objects relative to the Sun throughout the year.

Incomplete Messier marathons can be undertaken at other times of the year, with the number of visible objects depending on the season and location. There is a brief period around the autumnal equinox when most objects can be seen.

Marathons are often arranged by local astronomy organizations or societies as special star parties, usually held annually. Some clubs offer certificates or awards for participation or for reaching a predetermined number of objects.

What happens to the coins tossed into Rome's Trevi Fountain

As visitors' coins splash into Rome's majestic Trevi Fountain carrying wishes for love, good health or a return to the Eternal City, they provide practical help to people the tourists will never meet.

For hundreds of years, when in Rome, visitors have flocked to the fountain to make a wish, following a storied ritual.

Today, coins pile up for several days before they are fished out and taken to the Rome division of the worldwide Catholic charity Caritas, which counts the bucketfuls of change and uses them to fund a food bank, soup kitchen and welfare projects.

In 2022 Caritas collected 1.4 million euros ($1.52 million) from the fountain and it expects to have gathered even more in 2023. Rome is one of the world's most visited cities with 21 million tourists.

Extracting the coins is a spectacle and involves workers from regional utility ACEA balancing on the edge of the vast Baroque fountain, using long brooms and suction hoses.

The coins are then given to Caritas, where they are dried with hairdryers and cutlery dryers and sorted and counted.

Signs around the fountain explain that the change will go to charity - a thought that pleases many of the tourists posing by the landmark.

"I wanted to make a wish which is dear to my heart," said Yula Cole from Brazil after throwing in a coin. "But I also know that this coin is not just staying there but will help needy people. I made a wish but hopefully this money will help other people's wishes too."

Day and night, throngs of people crowd around the fountain posing for photos. Legend says that if you throw a coin by the right hand over the left shoulder into the fountain, you will return to Rome. People eagerly add their own personal wishes.

"I am tossing a coin as they say if you toss a coin you come back to Rome and also because I want to make the wish to find love," said Carola from Chile.

The Trevi Fountain, completed in 1762, covers one side of Palazzo Poli in central.

Twice a week, up to four workers collect the coins, said Francesco Prisco, a manager at ACEA. The fountain is drained for cleaning twice a month.

"The collection and cleaning operations are carried out as quickly as possible to try to reduce the downtime of the fountain," he said.

After the coins have been swept into a long line by a long-reach broom, they are sucked up by hoses and taken to Caritas' office.

Signs by the fountain warn not to steal the coins.

Over the decades the coins have been targeted, sometimes with magnets attached to a pole.

(Source: Reuters)

Media influences from China tour Silk Road heritage in Semnan province

TEHRAN – A delegation of Chinese media influencers recently visited cultural heritage sites along segments of the ancient Silk Road situated within Iran's Semnan province.

It was the first-ever Silk Road familiarization tour being conducted for such media personnel from China, CHTN reported.

The Silk Road (aka Silk Roads), an ancient network of trade routes connecting the East and West, holds profound historical and cultural significance. It served as a conduit for the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures between civilizations spanning thousands of miles.

The fam tour, including stopovers at Garmsar, Semnan, Damghan, Shahrud, and Mashhad at the end of the journey, was arranged to paint a portrayal of both precious historical and cultural features within the region.

"Each of the invited influencers has about three million followers on popular Chinese platforms such as TikTok, Red, and Weibo," the chief said.

As stated by officials, a total number of 60 million Chinese are following these 20 social media influencers, which bring to light the wide extent of impact with the intention of absorbing foreign tourists.



As participants engaged with local experts and historians, they gained insights into the profound impact of the Silk Road on shaping the cultural, economic, and social dynamics of the region.

The tour not only fostered a deeper understanding of Iran's rich cultural heritage but also strengthened the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the people of Iran and China.

Semnan, with its strategic location along the ancient trade routes, provided the perfect backdrop for this immersive experience. From the majestic caravanserais that once hosted weary travelers to the awe-inspiring landscapes that captivated the imaginations of explorers, every stop on the tour offered a glimpse into the rich tapestry of the Silk Road's history.

Millions of Chinese get to know Iran through cellphones

Four Fam Tours, each framed in a special theme, have been arranged to fascinate 20 Chinese influencers with a total of 60 million followers on different social media platforms as a means to prospering inbound tourism in Iran.

Before the present time, three fam tours targeting Chinese influencers (users on social media who have established credibility in a specific industry) are conducted as Iran sees the arrival of the fourth and last group coming to explore its capacities in the culinary tourism field.

According to the related officials, the first group with a slogan of "climate diversity and nature" paid visits to Tehran, Hormozgan, and Kerman with a focus on enchanting natural places of interest.

Detailing the first group's trip, the Foreign Tourism chief pointed to experiencing both freezing weather in Tochal Ski Resort located in the northern capital, and sweltering weather on the Persian Gulf's shoreline.

Moslem Shojai also elucidated the second familiarization tour which aimed to showcase the cultural and historical capacities of the country with stops at Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd, Shiraz, and Tehran.

"Set out to draw attention to the rich history and valuing the attested cultural bonds," the official stated, "the third tour framed with a centerpiece of Silk Road."

The significance of picking out the Silk Road slogan comes into play considering the path as networks of roads contributed to the exchange of goods and ideas among diverse cultures dating back more than a thousand years.

Shojai also outlined the readiness to welcome the last but not least team consisting of Chinese influencers with a main focus on culinary tourism.

He further detailed the fourth planned fam tour, stating that stops include, Qazvin, Gilan, Zanjan, and East Azarbaijan to introduce a part of numerous traditional recipes cooked in different areas of the country.

Samanu festival celebrated in Bojnourd

TEHRAN - In a vibrant celebration of culinary heritage, the Samanu festival was held in Bojnourd in collaboration with the municipality and the Cultural Heritage Department of North Khorasan province on Friday.

The festival, hosted at the Bojnourd Citizens' Cultural Center, witnessed a remarkable turnout from the local community, eager to partake in the festivities.

Several skilled Samanu chefs from the city of Daraq showcased their expertise in preparing this traditional delicacy, engaging attendees in the art of Samanu-making.

Alongside the preparation of Samanu, various other dishes such as Aash Reshteh (noodle soup), Dolmeh (stuffed vegetables), and Qottqab (a type of dessert) were also cooked and served, adding to the gastronomic delights of the event.

In addition to the culinary experiences, the festival featured an array of regional performances including traditional music and local dances, enhancing the festive atmosphere.

Daraq, popularly known as the capital of Samanu in Iran, boasts a reputation for producing Samanu of exceptional quality, renowned for its longevity and lasting flavor.

The festival, called Samanu-Pazan by the locals, as a cherished spiritual tradition, holds a special place in the hearts of Iranians, particularly during the Nowruz festivities, symbolizing renewal and the arrival of spring.

Samanu is one of the items included in Haft-Seen, an arrangement of seven symbolic items traditionally displayed in the Iranian New Year, Nowruz.

Setting a "Haft-Seen" spread for Nowruz is a custom that is being observed by almost all Iranians worldwide.

Seven items on the table start with 'S' in Persian, in addition to goldfish, colorful eggs, the holy Quran, candles, and a mirror.

The seven items include Sabzeh (wheat, barley, mung bean, or lentil sprouts growing in a dish), Samanu (sweet pudding made from wheat germ), Senjed (wild olive fruit), Seer (garlic), Seeb (apple), Sumac (a spice) and Serkeh (vinegar).

120-year-old fig tree, coastal gem join Iran's national heritage list

TEHRAN – As a notable step intending to conserve natural treasures, two precious wonders located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province have been enshrined in the natural heritage list.

Mentioning the registration approval as an outcome of the national registration committee's meeting, the deputy of cultural heritage at the provincial administration underscored the special value of the two identified properties.

Mojtaba Sa'adatian highlighted that the natural scenic site of "Rig Khur Tang" situated in the coastal town of Konarak along with the ancient tree aged about 120 years in Koopan-Sar of Chabahar county are the two valued wonders secured as national heritage.

The official also added that Rig Tang, accessible through Khur, stands out as a unique coastal attraction, consistently drawing tourists to the Makran shores.

Sa'adatian further noted that the ancient fig tree in Koopan-Sar, aged between 100 and 120 years, is recognized as one of the country's prominent trees.

With its extensive canopy, it is the second-largest identified tree in Iran, gaining national heritage status with the approval of the National Registration Council. The registration aims to preserve and promote the natural and touristic significance of these sites in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Archaeological study in China sees surge in female participation

TEHRAN - Hunching over with shovel in hand, Zhu Yingpei, 30, was working in a newly excavated tomb in Xianyang in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, along with a group of other female archaeologists.

Pointing to bones and relics in a coffin, Zhu said the tomb belonged to an ordinary person in the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-25 CE). "We cannot find the tomb owner's name, but we can catch a glimpse into the daily lives of people from over 2,000 years ago."

Digging soil, carefully brushing away dust, revealing the appearance of ancient artifacts, and meticulously documenting findings constitute the daily tasks of the Jinghe River archaeological team from the Shaanxi Academy of Archaeology.

For Zhu, the team leader, archaeological work intertwines seriousness with a sense of romance. She vividly recalls excavating a tomb adorned with pottery figurines frozen in dancing gestures, as well as discovering pottery wares like kitchen utensils and vessels for alcohol.

"Like modern people, our ancestors also used to dance and entertain themselves," she said, adding that archaeology and research is like reading a book.

Timeless art of making traditional felt hats: enduring legacy of Iran's nomadic culture

By Elahe Seyfodin

As the first light of dawn graces the sky with hues of gold, a familiar scene unfolds in an old neighborhood of Isfahan. In a modest workshop, the master artisan Aliakbar awakens to begin his daily ritual. His hands, weathered by years of dedication, deftly navigate the intricacies of Kolah Namadi making, a craft passed down through generations.

The journey begins with the careful selection of the finest wool, sourced from sheep roaming the verdant pastures. These fibers, soft as whispers, undergo a meticulous process of carding and combing to ensure uniformity before being dyed. The dyeing process is an art in itself, requiring a delicate balance to achieve the perfect shades of black and white that characterize Kolah Namadi hats.

Under the gentle warmth of the sun, the dyed wool begins its transformation into dense, pliable felt. With rhythmic precision, Aliakbar pounds layer upon layer, shaping the material into its distinctive form. Each strike resonates with the echoes of tradition, a testament to the artisan's skill and dedication.

Once the felt reaches the desired thickness, Aliakbar meticulously cuts intricate patterns that define the hat, his hands guided by years of experience. It is a labor of love, each cut imbued with the story of its maker. Finally, as the day fades into twilight, Aliakbar assembles the hat, carefully molding it on a wooden block.

The result is more than just headwear; it is a testament to the enduring traditions of Iran. In Isfahan, the art of Kolah Namadi lives on, cherished by skilled artisans who preserve a legacy that spans generations. Through their craftsmanship, they honor the spirit of Iran, ensuring that its rich heritage continues to thrive.

The significance of the Kolah Namadi transcends mere aesthetics, symbolizing honor and pride among Iranian men throughout history. From ancient Persia to the early twentieth century, the hat has been a cherished emblem of identity, adorning the heads of warriors and leaders alike.

Across Iran's diverse landscape, the Kolah Namadi has found resonance among various tribes and communities. From the vibrant colors favored by the Lors and Bakhtiaris to the regal crowns of the Qashqais, each iteration reflects a unique cultural identity.

As the ages pass, the Kolah Namadi remains a steadfast symbol of Iranian heritage, woven into the very fabric of the nation's identity. Through the hands of artisans like Aliakbar, its legacy endures, a timeless tribute to the nomadic spirit.



African envoys visit cancer specialty hospital

TEHRAN –A group of African ambassadors and chargé d'affaires visited Barkat cancer hospital in Tehran on Friday.

The envoys were from Burkina Faso, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe.

The officials became familiarized with the hospital's medical equipment, facilities, and services and then held a joint meeting with the head of the hospital, IRNA reported.

The two sides discussed ways to cooperate in different fields such as constructing and designing hospitals, treating patients, health tourism, and training medical staff in African countries.

The participants in the meeting also announced readiness to sign a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation.



Africa welcomes Iranian medical equipment, medicine

In July 2023, Iranian knowledge-based companies concluded contracts for exporting medical equipment and medicine to Africa.

Amir-Hossein Mir-Abadi, an official with the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, said the African market is an attractive opportunity for Iranian knowledge-based companies, IRNA reported.

Referring to the visit of President Ebrahim Raisi to Africa in July 2023, Mir-Abadi said works are underway for exporting 50 types of medical equipment and 10 medicines to Africa.

He also pointed to the establishment of a medical and pharmaceutical equipment exhibition with the presence of more than 10 Iranian knowledge-based companies in Kenya.

In this exhibition, two Iranian companies succeeded in concluding contracts, he added.

> The two sides are ready to sign a memorandum of understanding to further develop cooperation.

The process of registering more than 50 medical devices and two drugs for export to Kenya has been done, and the registration and process of exporting more than 10 other drugs to this country is in the implementation phase, he explained.

He listed agriculture, food, and livestock industries as among the fields that were highly regarded and needed by African countries.

In Uganda, an exhibition for knowledge-based products was opened, and in practice, an infrastructure has been created for boosting the export of knowledge-based products and the display of Iranian capabilities, the official added.

"The products presented there were mostly in the field of the food industry, agricultural industry, medicine and medical devices, chemical products and catalysts, building materials and products related to the field of livestock and poultry, as well as medicines and herbal supplements."

In January 2021, Iran opened its house of innovation and technology in Kenya and the first center in Africa.

The center serves as a base for the creation of innovative ideas, the commercialization of these ideas, and the export of Iranian knowledge-based products and services to the East African market.

Exporting technological products of Iranian knowledge-based companies is one of the important and key programs of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, and in this regard over the past years, with the support of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the Iranian houses of innovation have been set up in several countries to develop the global market for knowledge-based products.

These centers have already been set up in countries such as Russia, Turkey, China, Syria, Kenya, Armenia, Iraq, and Uzbekistan.

By supporting innovative ideas, and holding technological and innovative events, the centers will be a platform for the development and promotion of Iranian knowledge-based companies, startups, and creative industries.

More 200,000 out-of-school children identified

TEHRAN – More than 200,000 out-of-school children have been identified in the current academic year, beginning on September 23, 2023, and measures are being taken to help them continue their education, Education Minister Reza-Morad Sahraee has said.

The number of out-of-school children identified in the country reached 900,000 by the end of the last [academic] year, IRNA reported.

School dropouts have always been one of the challenges in the education system of many countries. Each country follows a specific strategy to deal with the problem.

According to Article 30 of the Constitution, the government must provide all citizens with free education up to secondary school and must expand free higher education to the extent required by the country for attaining self-sufficiency.

Therefore, students should be prevented from dropping out of school and careful planning is needed to bring them back to school. Out-of-school children should be organized.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education is trying to implement the law of free education for all citizens by building and developing state-run schools, recruiting as many teachers as possible to educate students in all parts of the country, and finally developing a positive culture to maximize the attendance of students in classrooms.

Despite the efforts, there are still some children who are missing out on education in all parts of the country, including Tehran.

Growth of literacy

The growth of literacy rate, especially among women, and per capita educational space are among the most important achievements of the country after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The Islamic Revolution was a cultural revolution based on the slogans of independence, freedom, and rejection of domination by hegemonic powers. The current academic achievements can be observed specifically in public education and the eradication of illiteracy.

The extensive efforts of educational authorities over the past four decades have realized the goal of public education and expansion of educational spaces thanks to which Iran has been placed among the top five countries in the international Olympiads.

Statistics show that before the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the literacy rate of people aged 10 to 49 was 47 percent, which means 53 percent of the people were illiterate.

One year after the Islamic Revolution and due to the importance and necessity of literacy, Imam Khomeini ordered the establishment of the Literacy Movement Organization to eliminate illiteracy in the country.

Promoting cultural independence, and educational justice, were among the most important goals in the formation of the literacy movement.

Now, some 16.5 million students are studying in schools across the country to play key roles in the country in the not-too-distant future.

The literacy rate of people aged 10-49 has reached 98 percent and the educational coverage of primary school students has reached 99 percent.

In the last 45 years, the growth of literacy was about 18 percent in the world, while in the same period, this figure was 50 percent in Iran. In other words, the literacy growth rate in Iran has been 2.5 times the world average.

Also, the results of the census conducted between 1976 and 2016 show that the gender gap in literacy rate decreased from 23.4 percent in 1976 to about 6 percent in 2016.

Also, based on censuses, the gap between literacy in urban and rural areas decreased from 34.9 percent in 1976 to 11 percent in 2016. The literacy index in deprived areas of the country increased from 65.4 percent to 90.8 percent.

ENGLISH IN USE

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'Organ donation rate grows 60-fold in 18 years'

Organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years, though the growth is not considerable compared to the global scale, head of the transplantation and treatment of diseases department at the Ministry of Health has announced.

Some countries including China have grown 122-fold in terms of organ donation over the past 10 years, ISNA quoted Mehdi Shadnoush as saying on Monday.

Although, Iran ranks 26 in organ donation in the world, it can claim better ranks given some plans being implemented in this regard, he highlighted, adding, we will achieve better results certainly by the next year (March 2019-March 2020), as many barriers have been removed last year.

واکسن نورا مرحله پایانی فاز اول تست انسانی را طی می کند

تهران – رییس دانشگاه علوم پزشکی بقیه الله گفت: تزریق دز اول واکسن نورا به تمام داوطلبان انجام شد و دز دوم هم به نیمه تزریق رسیده است.

دکتر حسن ابوالقاسمی روز شنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا، روند فعالیت کارآزمایی بالینی واکسن نورا را مطلوب ارزیابی کرد و افزود: این واکسن به نحو مطلوبی درحال طی کردن فاز اول تست انسانی است.

وی با یادآوری اینکه طبق برنامه ریزی انجام شده طول دوره مرحله اول تست انسانی ۲ ماه است، ادامه داد: تاکنون بیش از یک ماه از این دوره سپری شده است.

وی بر لزوم ادغام مراحل تست انسانی واکسن نورا تاکید کرد و گفت: این کار باید صورت گیرد و بسیاری از کشورهای تولید کننده واکسن هم از این ظرفیت بهره بردند.

Tehran, Moscow to cooperate on AI ethics

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to cooperate on ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The agreement was signed on Saturday by Behrooz Minaei, the secretary of Iran's Artificial Intelligence and robotics development headquarters, and Andrey Neznamov, the chairman of the Russian Commission on Ethics in AI, ISNA reported.

Exchanging ideas, Islamic ethics, and information in AI based on the principles of equality and cooperation are the main objectives.

The cooperation also aims at exchanging experiences in the implementation of the ethical principles of AI between the two countries in various fields of application of AI and holding short-term advanced AI training for AI and Robotics development headquarters in Iran with the presence of experts of the Russian Commission on Ethics in AI.

Plans to develop AI

By allocating 50 trillion rials (some $100 million), the public and the private sector will develop the infrastructure for artificial intelligence operators in the next calendar year, which starts on March 21.

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

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

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

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



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

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

"Iran ranks 17th in artificial intelligence in terms of scientific production and publication of articles in the world, while ranks 78th in terms of its application in the world," Firouzabadi said in July 2023.

The Vice Presidency has prepared three comprehensive plans to develop artificial intelligence in different sectors.

Firouzabadi said artificial intelligence is the priority for the development of technology and is pursued with three programs.

Artificial intelligence is a comprehensive technology and affects all other areas of technology, he highlighted.

"The plans in the field of artificial intelligence include scientific development programs that are mostly pursued in universities. The second plan is technology development programs that are pursued in companies that work in the field of artificial intelligence. And the third plan is the creation of a national technology hub in the field of artificial intelligence."

Iraq adopts Iran's policy to build health centers

From page 1 ▸ "We have signed memorandums of understanding with the ministry of health of Iran on pharmaceutical production, health tourism, and technology transfer. Soon we will observe the valuable achievements in these fields," Al-Aqabi noted.

Einollahi, for his part, highlighted the importance of the expansion of cooperation in health tourism, medicine, medical equipment, and health care as well.

"We are ready to share our experiences in the field of health, including public health coverage, with the Iraqi Ministry of Health," he added.

The relations between the two countries have improved, especially in the field of health including medicine, and medical equipment.

> Iran is ready to share experiences in the field of health, including public health coverage.

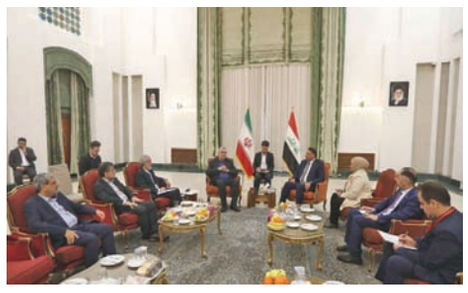
"Iran is ready for the joint production of medicine and medical equipment, as well as the export of joint pharmaceutical products to other countries.

Also, we are ready to implement a joint program in the field of family health with the Iraqi Health Ministry and introduce the program to the world," Einollahi further noted.

"Soon the first health attaché will be dispatched to Iraq, and it will help further improve health ties between the two countries."

Iraq seeking to boost health co-op with Iran

On January 19, the Iraqi cultural and academic advisor in Tehran called for the expansion of health and medical cooperation with Iran.



"We are very pleased that memorandums of understanding in the field of health and higher education have been signed between Iran's Ministry of Health and Iraq's ministries of health and higher education," Yasser Abdulzahra, said.

He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran with Health Minister Bahram Einollahi.

"While adhering to these agreements, we want to expand cooperation between Iran and Iraq in all areas," the Iraqi official stressed.

He went on to say that over 80,000 Iraqi students are studying in Iran, and more than 40 Iraqi chancellors participated in the Science Week conference held in Mashhad in October 2023, which signifies the close academic relations between Iran and Iraq. "We hope to be able to implement the road map prepared by the Ministry of Health of Iran."

Einollahi for his part said that cooperation between Iran and Iraq in the field of health should be unlimited.

"We emphasize these interactions to extend and include Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, the Ministry of Health website quoted Einollahi as saying.

He went on to say that Iran is ready to cooperate with Iraq at all levels including academic training or short-term training courses and hopes that cooperation will lead to meeting the needs of the health sector in Iraq including specialist, subspecialist, and fellowship.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you are greeted then return the greetings more warmly. If you are favored, then repay the obligation manifold; but he who takes the initiative will always excel in merit.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:14 Evening: 18:26 Dawn: 4:57 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:20 (tomorrow)

Tehran cinematheque to screen "In the Mood for Love"



TEHRAN- The Cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen a restored version of Hong Kong film director and screenwriter Wong Kar-wai's acclaimed drama "In the Mood for Love" on Monday.

The screening will be followed by a review session by Iranian critic Mohsen Azarm.

"In the Mood for Love" is a visually stunning and emotionally complex film that delves into the lives of two individuals, Chow Mo-wan and Su Li-zhen, who find themselves drawn to each other after discovering that their spouses are having an affair. Despite their growing feelings for each other, Chow and Su make a pact to remain faithful to their partners and uphold their own moral standards. The film portrays their deepening connection through subtle gestures, longing glances, and intimate conversations, as they find solace in each other's company amidst the betrayal and heartbreak they are facing.

Through Wong Kar-wai's masterful direction, "In the Mood for Love" explores themes of memory, nostalgia, and the passage of time. The film is visually arresting, with its lush cinematography, evocative production design, and mesmerizing score creating a dreamlike atmosphere that reflects the characters' inner turmoil and unspoken desires. The use of slow motion, recurring motifs, and fragmented narrative structure infuse the film with a sense of emotional intensity and yearning that lingers long after the credits roll.

Chow and Su's quiet yet profound relationship unfolds against the backdrop of 1960s Hong Kong, a time of societal change and cultural flux. As they navigate the complexities of their own emotions and the constraints of societal expectations, they grapple with the universal themes of love, loss, and longing. "In the Mood for Love" is a poignant and captivating exploration of the human heart, a timeless tale of missed connections and unfulfilled yearning that resonates with audiences around the world.

Wong Kar-wai is known for his distinctive visual style, poignant storytelling, and exploration of themes such as love, loneliness, and memory. His films often feature complex characters grappling with their emotions and relationships in the bustling urban landscapes of Hong Kong. Wong's unique narrative structure and non-linear storytelling create a dreamlike atmosphere that captures the fleeting moments of human connection and the inherent fragility of relationships. His films are characterized by their intimate portrayal of emotions, evocative cinematography, and mesmerizing use of color and music.

Wong Kar-wai rose to international prominence with films like "Chungking Express," "In the Mood for Love," and "2046," earning critical acclaim and numerous awards for his work. His innovative approach to filmmaking, blending elements of romance, drama, and mystery, has garnered him a dedicated fan base and solidified his reputation as one of the leading voices in contemporary cinema. Wong's distinctive visual style, marked by his use of slow motion, close-ups, and atmospheric lighting, creates a rich and immersive viewing experience that transports audiences into the emotional worlds of his characters. With his unique storytelling and masterful direction, Wong Kar-wai continues to capture the complexities of human relationships and evoke powerful emotions that resonate with viewers worldwide.

Cartoon of Day



Women in Gaza
Cartoonist: Morad Kotkot from Palestine

Tehran Intl. Animation Festival announces winners

From Page **1** ▸ In the short film category, "The Turnip," co-directed by Piret Sigus and Silja Saarepuu from Estonia, claimed the top spot, with runner-up positions going to "Bestia" by Hugo Covarrubias from Chile and "Dog Apartment" by Priit Tender from Estonia.

"The Turnip" adapts a Slavic fairy tale from a peasant's perspective, providing an underground view of the story and exploring themes of property, collaboration, and betrayal.

Inspired by the life of Íngrid Olderöck, a police major and DINA agent during the Chilean military regime, "Bestia" delves into her hidden life, fears, and the societal fractures witnessed in the wake of human rights violations.

"Dog Apartment" narrates the story of an elderly ballet dancer amidst a rainy wasteland, grappling with his mundane routine. Tender's surreal stop-motion animation draws parallels to a poem by Andres Ehin, portraying a tale of monotony and consumption.

The title of best student animation was awarded to "My Name Is Edgar and I Have a Cow," a joint project between Czech Republic and Slovakia directed by Filip Diviak.

The animation is about Edgar, who leads an utterly predictable life. He spends his days nurturing his favorite plant, saving up for a new car and keeping his mother company, as he loves her very much. One day, when visiting an abattoir, he witnesses the birth of a calf. After that, nothing is the same.



A scene from "Tony, Shelly and the Magic Light" by Filip Pošivač

"The Legend of the Lemmings" by Cédric Lachenaud from France secured the best animated series award, while "Insurance for Housewives" by Alireza Pour Shakouri from Iran took home the best commercial accolade.

A special jury award was granted to "When I am Sad" by Lilit Altunyan from Armenia, a short animation depicting a smile's journey through realms of sorrow, with a touch of love bringing it full circle.

Additionally, honorable mentions were awarded to "Harvey," a collaborative project between Canada and France, directed by Janice Nadeau, and "In the Shadow of Cypress" by Hossein Molayemi and Fatemeh Shirin Sohani from Iran.

"Harvey," adapted from a graphic novel of the same title, tells the story of a young boy who vividly recounts the day his life changed dramatically. Through the imaginative eyes of a child, this radiant film by Janice Nadeau, accompanied by Martin Léon's elegant music, explores grief and the process of coping with the loss of a parent.

"In the Shadow of Cypress" portrays an aging sailor grappling with PTSD. Living with his daughter in a modest seaside home, their relationship has grown distant. Despite the old captain's desire to reconnect with his daughter, their lives take an unexpected turn one morning.

The Tehran International Animation Festival, organized by the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), is biennial and aims to foster a platform for the exchange of ideas and techniques in animation.

It serves as a hub for curating and showcasing works, discovering talent, and encouraging newcomers to explore their creativity and innovation in the field of animation. The festival also strives to enhance skills, introduce new techniques, and promote a higher standard of quality in animation productions.

1st Qeshm Oud Festival concludes at Portuguese Castle in Persian Gulf

TEHRAN-The closing ceremony of the 1st Qeshm Oud Festival was held on Friday at the Portuguese Castle in Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, and winners of different sections received their awards.

Organized by the Tourism and Cultural Department of Qeshm Free Zone Organization, the festival aimed at improving the cultural level related to the music of the region with regard to the popularity of the oud among the tribes living in the southern coasts of Iran, ISNA reported.

The oud is a traditional musical lute-type instrument played in Iran and Syria. Crafting and playing the oud was added to the UNESCO list jointly for Iran and Syria in 2022.

The musician places the short-necked instrument on their leg, fretting with one hand and plucking the chords with the other. In both countries, the oud consists of a pear-shaped sound box made of walnut, rose, poplar, ebony or apricot wood. Crafting an oud takes up to 25 days, during which the wood is left to dry and harden and is then treated with water and steam for about 15 days to build its durability.

Ouds are crafted in different sizes for different-sized bodies and decorated with wooden carvings and mosaic patterns. They typically have five twin strings, though a sixth string can be added. With its bass and baritone ranges, the instrument can produce melodic and harmonic tones. The oud is played solo or in ensembles and is accompanied by traditional songs in a wide range of events. Its practice is transmitted through apprenticeships and in musical centers, colleges, and universities in urban areas. Crafters are mostly men, although in recent years young women have developed an interest as well.

The beautiful Qeshm Island overlooks the Strait of Hormuz and is the entrance to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. This island, which is the largest island in the Persian Gulf,



is one of the most strategic islands of Iran. It is world-renowned due to its proximity to the Indian Ocean, oil and gas resources, petrochemical and refinery units, offshore equipment, and port facilities for large ships as well as for its refueling services for ships crossing the international waterway and its energy and biotechnology parks. Moreover, the natural and historical features of the island have made Qeshm one of the main tourist destinations in Iran.

Iranian short film "Sampo" wins first award at Malaga Film Festival

TEHRAN - Iranian short film "Sampo" written and directed by Marzieh Riahi has won an award at the 27th Malaga Film Festival in Malaga, Spain.

The film grabbed the Biznaga de Plata Award for Best Fiction in the Affirming Women's Rights section of the festival, ISNA reported.

A typical Malaga summer flower, biznaga is one of the symbols of the city of Malaga. The meaning of the biznaga comes from the Arabic period (Al-Andalus) and means "gift of God". The biznaga is also the main award of the Malaga Film Festival. Every year, the winners of various sections of the festival are awarded with a biznaga figurine made of silver or gold.

On Wednesday, the Malaga Festival held the awards ceremony for the Affirming Women's Rights section, which this year celebrates its 17th edition. The event brought together the winners of the section, as well as the winners of the Women in Film, who also received their awards.

As Riahi was not present at the event, the award was collected on behalf of the director by the young Iranian scientist Shiva Shirani, a post-doctoral researcher in the field of X-ray Imaging at the University of Malaga.

A friend of the film director, Shirani read Riahi's message to the audience after receiving the award, in which she appreciated the festival organizers and jury's selection and expressed joy over winning the first award for "Sampo" from the Affirming Women's Rights section of the Malaga Film Festival as a majority of the cast and crew of the film are women.

Offering congratulations on the occasion of the International Women's Day, March 8, in the message, Riahi added: "I hope to witness the gradual strengthening of women's position in the realm of world cinema".

A production of 2023, the 13-minute flick shows a girl and her mother, a single worker, who reside in a low-income area of Tehran. The girl constantly wishes that her mother would get a job at the memorial service, where the employees are treated kindlier.

Linda Kiani, Maryam Boubani, Hilda Kordbacheh, and Hannan Azizi comprise the cast of "Sampo" that has so far been screened at several film festival in Canada, the US, Australia, Sri Lanka, and Bulgaria.

A graduate in film direction from the Iranian Youth Film Society (IYCS), Riahi is the editor-in-chief of Short Film News, Asia's first website specializing in short films and documentaries. Her first short film, "Driving Lessons," was nominated for an Oscar in 2020. She is a member of the Network for the Promotion of Asian and Asia Pacific Cinema (NETPAC), and a member of the Iranian Film Writers and Critics Association (ISFCW).

Affirming Women's Rights is a project that has emerged from festival, Mabel Lozano (documentary filmmaker and collaborator of the festival), and the Equal Opportunities Area of Malaga City Council as a protest tool. This section is created with the aim of exploring and dealing with issues that contribute to social awareness of women's rights each year.

This section was born in 2008. The project is conceived with a double purpose: to inform about the injustices that women still suffer in this century for the mere fact of being women, and to encourage and support the cinematographic work created by women.

The Malaga Film Festival was founded in 1998, and in each of its editions, it has sought to achieve a series of objectives, among which favoring the dissemination and promotion of Spanish cinema, becoming a national and international reference in the field of cinema, and contributing to the development of Malaga as an open and cultural city.

The festival contributes powerfully to the development of cinema in Spanish by presenting its best documentaries, short films, etc., in addition to paying tribute to different personalities from the film industry and organizing numerous cycles, exhibitions and parallel activities. A broad panorama of cinematographic culture is what the Malaga Festival wants to present and promote, so it always pays attention to training, creativity and innovation, framed in an activity that stands out for its dynamic character in continuous evolution and transformation.

This year's edition of the festival started on March 1 and will conclude on March 10, awarding the winners of the main competition section.