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If Israel repeats its folly:

Next Step Will be Fiercer

Iran punished Israel with hundreds of drones, missiles in response to the attack on its embassy



File photo

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Iran eyeing observer status in Eurasian Economic Union

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – A few months after signing a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali has announced the Islamic Republic is seeking to gain observer status in the union soon.

Jalali made the remarks at a conference on Iran-Russia cooperation dubbed the International Russia-Iran Cooperation in the Changing World Conference, which was held in the presence of a group of Iranian and Russian experts in the Russian capital Moscow on Thursday.

He also expressed hope that a free trade agreement, which Iran and the EAEU signed in late December, will be implemented as soon as possible following approval by parliaments of the member states of the EAEU.

The Ambassador further pointed out the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), noting that this mega-project can benefit EAEU members economically and would help boost security and peace in the region.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jalali referred to the Israeli regime's crimes in Gaza, calling them a clear example of injustice, noting that Iran is highly critical of the current world order that is based on unilateralism. ▸ Page 5

Israel incites settler violence to ethnically cleanse West Bank

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Brutal settler violence has sharply escalated in the occupied West Bank since Israel launched war on the Gaza Strip on October 7.

The latest deadly setter attack took place in the Palestinian village of Al-Mughayyir located in the east of Ramallah.

Hundreds of armed Israeli settlers stormed the village on Friday and set fire to Palestinian homes and cars.

One Palestinian man was killed by gunfire. More than two dozen others were injured in the rampage.

The deceased Palestinian has been identified as 26-year-old Jehad Abu Alia. It is not yet clear whether he was shot by settlers or Israeli forces who were present at the scene.

The head of the village's council estimated that up to 1,200 settlers surrounded the rural area and around 500 stormed it.

Amin Abu-Alia told CNN that the settlers raided homes and fired guns at residents.

He added that the Israeli military arrived at the scene but did not stop the settlers from attacking the village. ▸ Page 5

China denounces attack on Iran embassy, calls on U.S. to act responsibly

TEHRAN- China has demanded that the U.S. take "a constructive role" in the West Asian region, and denounced the Israeli attack on Iran's diplomatic facilities in Syria.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi "expressed China's strong condemnation" of the terrorist attack by Israel on Iran's diplomatic premises in the Syrian capital of Damascus on April 1 during a phone conversation with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken on Thursday, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry Mao Ning said on Friday.

According to the spokesperson, the senior Chinese diplomat stressed the "inviolable" right to diplomatic facility security as well as the necessity of respecting Syria's and Iran's sovereignty.

"China will continue to play a constructive role in resolving the Middle East issue and help deescalate the situation," Mao said.

"The U.S. in particular needs to play a constructive role," she added.

Will Iranian restraint prevent a 'wider war'?

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN - In the past few days, as Israel has been awaiting a retaliation from Tehran in response to its April 1 attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, Western media outlets have become deranged in trying to "keep the situation calm" in West Asia.

A brief review of the headlines from prominent news channels and websites in the West shows Israel's stenographers deliberately omit how tensions have risen to unprecedented levels in the first place. Titles like "Oil flares up over Iran attack fears", "Flights rerouted amid Iran fears", and "The Middle East is on the precipice of the wider war no one wants" all talk about the fact that Tehran is poised to attack Israeli positions, without really mentioning why it is being forced to take such action. An article appearing on Deutsche Welle, titled "Iranian embassy attack has Israel, Middle East on edge" might even make you think that Iran could have prevented Israel's strike by not having an embassy in Syria.

IRGC seizes Israel-linked ship near Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN – The Special Naval Forces of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) executed a significant operation on Saturday, seizing the Israel-linked MSC Aries container ship near the Strait of Hormuz, according to the official news agency IRNA.

The interception involved a meticulously planned heliborne operation by the Sepah Navy Special Force (SNSF), with commandos descending onto the ship's deck from helicopters. The vessel has since been redirected towards Iranian territorial waters.

Operated under the management of Zodiac Maritime, one of the world's largest shipping companies, the MSC Aries is a container ship flying the Portuguese flag. It's noteworthy that the vessel is owned by Eyal Ofer, an Israeli tycoon known for his involvement in real estate, energy, technology, and shipping sectors. Zodiac Maritime, a subsidiary of Ofer's Zodiac Group, oversees the operations of the vessel.

Born in Haifa in 1950, Ofer ranks among the wealthiest individuals in Israel, boasting a fortune nearing $10 billion. He is also featured on Forbes' list of the wealthiest people worldwide.

▸ Page 2

Nomadic echoes: tracing Iran's tribal heritage back to millennia

TEHRAN - Due to its unique geographical location, Iran has long been considered one of the most significant nomadic regions in the world.

The earliest historical references to the presence of nomadic tribes in the country date back to the first millennium BC, although the term "Iran" at that time does not refer specifically to Iran with its current defined borders.

According a recent report by ISNA, early nomadic tribes were initially pastoralists and were involved in horse breeding upon their arrival in Iran. "Discoveries in southwestern Iran indicate a history of nomadism in the country dating back over 8,000 years." ▸ Page 6



Protesters in London urge UK to stop arming Israel

Pro-Palestinians have held another rally in the British capital calling for an end to Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

Protesters in London demanded an immediate ceasefire.

The demonstrators asked the British government to stop arming Israel.

Carrying Palestinian flags, they chanted slogans such as "Free Palestine" and "Stop the genocide".

There was a heavy Metropolitan Police presence in London with close to 1,000 officers being deployed to several different events taking place across the city.

Pneumococcal, rotavirus vaccination to target high-risk provinces

TEHRAN –The vaccination program against pneumococcal and rotavirus will focus on tropical and southern regions of the country, an official with the health ministry has said.

The immunization initiative will begin in the coming weeks in provinces that are most vulnerable to these diseases, IRNA quoted Pedram Pak-Aein as saying.

Rotavirus vaccination program will target tropical, southern, and southeastern provinces, while pneumococcal vaccination will be extended to southern provinces as well, he added.

The nationwide implementation of the vaccination program will commence as soon as needed pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines are provided, Pak-Aein further noted. ▸ Page 7

If Israel repeats its folly: Next Step Will be Fiercer

TEHRAN - Iran has launched retaliatory attacks against the occupied territories, after the Israeli regime struck the country's embassy in Damuscas on April 1, killing 7 high-ranking military officials.

Israeli reports say Iran has already fired three waves of drones at Israeli positions, as well as a number of cruise missiles. Footage captured by citizens in Iraq, suggest Iran's famous Shahed-136 drones are among the UAVs launched at the occupied territories.

The initial announcement regarding the launch of the Iranian attacks came from the Israeli military. Daniel Hagari, the army's spokesperson, stated that the drones would take some hours to reach their destination, while emphasizing Israel's readiness for the situation.

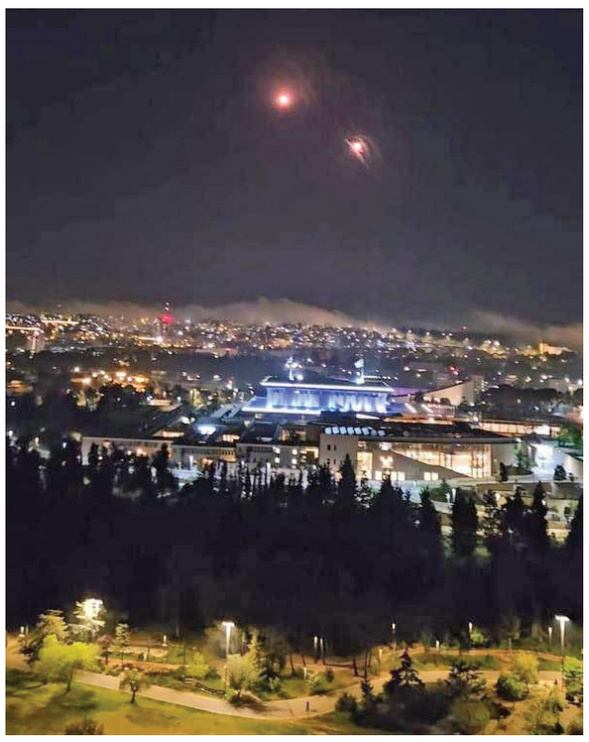
During a briefing with the press, Hagari highlighted that Israel has defensive and offensive measures in place and maintains close cooperation with the U.S. and regional partners.

Iran also confirmed it has begun its retaliation against Israel through a TV announcement.

"In response to various crimes of the Zionist regime, including the attack on the Iranian consulate section in Damascus and the martyrdom of some of our country's military commanders and advisors in Syria, the IRGC's Air Force targeted specific objectives inside the occupied territories by hitting them with dozens of missiles and drones," a news anchor said, reading a statement by the Islamic Revolution Gaurd Corps (IRGC).

ABC News has quoted American officials claiming that 400 to 500 drones are currently making their way towards Israel after being launched from Iran's territory.

Before the direct Iranian attack on Israeli targets, Hezbollah initiated a significant rocket barrage targeting the northern areas of occupied Palestine and the Golan Heights.



A cyber attack also plunged vast areas of the occupied territories, including Tel Aviv, into darkness.

Further Information indicates that both the Lebanese group and the Ansarullah movement in Yemen have initiated drone attacks on the occupied territories concurrently with Iranian strikes.

No one allowed to act against Iran

Following the attacks, Tehran cautioned regional nations that any assistance enabling Israeli aggression would make them potential targets for Iran.

"We will decisively respond to any country that opens its airspace or territory for attacks against Iran," Iran's Defence Minister told Iranian media.

Reports show that so far some of Iran's missiles and drones have successfully hit various targets across the occupied territories.

Iran urges Italy to work toward putting stop to Israeli massacre in Gaza

TEHRAN- Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has urged Italy to work toward putting an end to Israel's war crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

Amir Abdollahian said as much over the phone with Antonio Tajani, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, on Friday.

According to the senior Iranian official, Tehran has always contributed positively to regional advancements while also bearing a heavy financial burden for the sake of peace and security in the region.

Amir Abdollahian further stated that Tehran is willing to strengthen its ties with Rome because of their shared past.

Regarding the anticipated reaction to Israel's terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital of Damascus earlier this month, Tajani, for his part, urged Iran to exercise moderation. He asked Amir Abdollahian as well, "for moderation."

"We cannot risk escalation at such an extremely volatile stage. All regional actors must show



responsibility," the top Italian diplomat said.

In a statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry also quoted Tajani as stating that Italy and the European Union denounced Israel's attack on Iran's diplomatic facility in Damascus.

Tajani agreed that there should be no attacks against diplomatic locations. The senior Italian diplomat emphasized the need of maintaining Red Sea maritime security and urged Iran to keep up its constructive role in easing tensions and advancing sustainable peace in the region.

Tajani's appeal was made in the midst of worries that Tehran would strike back following the April 1 Israeli missile attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, which resulted in the deaths of five people, including Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, the senior commander of Iran's Quds Force, and his deputy, General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei declared that the Israeli regime "must be punished and will be punished" for its murderous attack on the Iranian diplomatic grounds during a speech in Tehran on Wednesday following the Eid al-Fitr prayers.

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "The evil Zionist regime committed another mistake ... and that was the attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria. The consulate and diplomatic missions in any country are considered to be the territory of that country. When they attack our consulate, it means they have attacked our soil."

Despite the West's lack of condemnation of Israel and its efforts to dissuade Tehran from retaliating, it has become evident that Iran's response is on the way. Some reports suggest the country could directly strike the occupied territories within the next 24 to 48 hours, with a range of advanced drones and missiles.

The growing calls for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip come as more than six months of brutal Israeli aggression has killed at least 33,634 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 76,214 others.

Israel launched the onslaught on October 7 after the Hamas resistance group carried out Operation Al-Aqsas Storm against the usurping entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people.

Will Iranian restraint prevent a 'wider war'?

From page 1 ▸ Western media outlets advocate for restraint, just like the various foreign ministers that called for reserve on phone calls with their Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Thursday and Friday. However, these same figures and media platforms were nowhere to be found in the past six months when Israel was carrying out assassinations of military personnel across West Asia. Additionally, they remained silent during a Security Council meeting regarding the regime's assault on the Iranian embassy. Concerns about the potential for a full-scale war in West Asia only emerged once it became evident that Iran was prepared to take action in response to the attacks.

A think tank which, as described on its website, is supposed to "prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world" has also acquired the same rhetoric. If you rummage through articles the International Crisis Group has published in the past year, you won't be able to find any warnings about the risks of Israel's repeated assaults on Syrian soil or its assassination of military officials.

The think tank suddenly expresses grave concern on April 13, warning about the "devastating" consequences of a direct confrontation between Iran and Israel.

"An attack by Iranian forces on Israel, especially a direct one, is likely to invite an escalatory response in the form of Israeli reprisal. Israeli officials have made clear that Israel would reciprocate in kind to a direct targeting of its territory. Washington is unlikely to sit idly by, either, regardless of its disagreements with Israel over Gaza. In other words, Iranian action, even if conceived in Tehran as calibrated in nature and limited in scope, could quickly spark a wider confrontation involving each side's respective allies," the entity wrote.

What each of these officials and analysts fails to point out is that a lack of response from Iran in this particular case does not actually resolve the issue. Even if Iran does not retaliate this time, there is no guarantee a wider war is not on the way.

Israel has been acting outrageously for a long time. Only a change of the dynamics is going to rein in this rogue regime. The West doesn't look to be willing to pull the plug on Israel, so that leaves Iran with limited choices. Iran can either let the regime continue its aggression out of fear of a "wider war" or decide that enough is enough. Israel should be put in its place, otherwise, it will plunge the whole region into a conflagration even without an imminent Iranian attack.

China denounces attack on Iran embassy, calls on U.S. to act responsibly

From page 1 ▸ According to the U.S. State Department, Blinken requested that his Chinese counterpart utilize Beijing's clout to discourage Tehran from attacking Israel.

One of the seven Iranian martyrs of Israel's missile attack on the consular section of the Iranian embassy in Damascus on April 1 was Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, along with his deputy General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei declared that the Israeli regime "must be punished and will be punished" for its murderous attack on the Iranian diplomatic grounds during a speech in Tehran on Wednesday following holding the Eid al-Fitr prayers.

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "The evil Zionist regime committed another mistake ... and that was the attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria.

The consulate and diplomatic missions in any country are considered to be the territory of that country. When they attack our consulate, it means they have attacked our soil."

Ayatollah Khamenei strongly criticized Western governments for their role in the months-long Israeli onslaught against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

He expressed his dismay at the actions of Western nations, particularly in their support for the Israeli regime, which has led to a devastating toll on innocent civilians in the enclave.

According to Iran's UN mission, the UN Security Council's criticism of Israeli strike on its consular office in the Syrian capital may have thwarted reprisal in a post on the social media platform X on Thursday.

"Had the UN Security Council condemned the Zionist regime's reprehensible act of aggression on our diplomatic premises in Damascus and subsequently brought to justice its perpetrators, the imperative for Iran to punish this rogue regime might have been obviated," it said.

"This round of escalation is the latest spillover of the Gaza conflict," the Chinese spokesperson said, adding, "The pressing need now is to bring an end to the conflict as soon as possible."

She reiterated Beijing's calls on parties to the conflict to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2728 and put in place an immediate ceasefire.

U.S. reviewing process of Iranian sanctions exemptions

TEHRAN- A spokesperson for the U.S. State Department announced that Washington is reviewing the process of Iranian sanctions exemptions following the expiration of waivers under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal framework.

The conservative news website Washington Free Beacon reported on Friday that the Biden administration has not extended the sanctions waivers that allowed Iran to engage in nuclear cooperation with international parties under the JCPOA framework.

The Biden administration has allowed a set of sanctions waivers that permitted Iran and Russia to engage in joint cooperation to expire, but it does not commit to enforcing those sanctions.

Washington had last extended these waivers until the beginning of 2024 in August 2023, and these waivers have now expired.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller did not provide a reason for the expiration of such sanctions waivers, but told Washington Free Beacon that officials are still "reviewing the waivers as part of a regular review process," and public commentary will be provided after a decision is made as part of that review.

The sanctions exemptions for Iran are issued under the JCPOA framework, and the U.S. government's officials were obligated to renew them every 6 months.

According to the JCPOA text, signatory countries were committed to engaging in peaceful nuclear cooperation with Iran, including in research reactor projects in Arak and Fordow facilities.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, these exemptions were canceled due to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, but Joe Biden announced after entering the White House that these exemptions would be reinstated.

Iran, following the signing of the JCPOA in 2015 with the aim of lifting unfair sanctions, fulfilled its responsibilities flawlessly and this was confirmed in 16 reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

However, after Donald Trump took office in January 2017 and eventually unilaterally and unlawfully withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018, secondary sanctions against Iran were reimposed.

The imbalanced implementation of the agreement on one side and pressures resulting from the unilateral and intensified sanctions by the U.S. on the other side led to the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran making decisions to halt the gradual implementation of voluntary nuclear commitments, providing a 60-day opportunity for diplomacy, a year after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA.

Iran adhered to all its commitments under this agreement for a year after the U.S. exit from the JCPOA to give European countries, which promised to compensate for Washington's withdrawal, a chance to fulfill their promises.

However, as European countries did not fulfill their promises, Iran gradually reduced its commitments under the JCPOA in accordance with the nuclear deal provisions.

The Democratic administration of Biden condemned the previous administration's unilateral action to exit the Iran deal with the P5+1 group but has so far fallen short of taking valid actions to rectify past wrongdoings.

The Biden administration has adopted the maximum pressure policies of the Trump administration and has imposed sanctions in coordination with its Western allies under the guise of human rights to support unrest in Iran, stating clearly that instead of focusing on negotiation and diplomatic approaches, it has been concentrating on Iranian unrest but claims not to seek regime change in Iran.

IRGC seizes Israel-linked ship near Strait of Hormuz



From page 1 ▸ It was confirmed there were 25 crew members on board the ship, according to the ship's operators.

A government official from Portugal informed CNN that they have initiated contact with Iranian authorities after the incident.

The IRGC released video footage capturing the operation, depicting commandos descending onto stacks of containers on the ship's deck. In the video, crew members can be heard instructing others to remain inside, indicating the tension and control exerted during the operation.

The MSC Aries had been last tracked moving from Dubai towards the Strait of Hormuz before the interception. Notably, the ship had deactivated its tracking system, a measure commonly observed among vessels associated with Israel when traversing the region.

Following Iran's seizure of MSC Aries, the Foreign Minister of Israel urged the European Union to designate the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as "terrorist" in their sanction list.

In a post on his social media X account, Israel Katz accused Iran of "pirate operation in violation of international law," without mentioning the terrorist operation of Tel Aviv targeting Iran's consulate in Damascus.Previously, the Israeli regime's army reacted to Iran's seizure of another vessel associated with the regime in the Persian Gulf.

In a statement, the Israeli regime's army asserted that Iran would "bear the consequences of escalating tensions." Israel issued these threats despite its own warmongering in the region, which has led to heightened tension, disrupted peace and stability, and resulted in ruthless aggression against the people of Gaza.

The ongoing aggression in Gaza initiated by Israel has resulted in the death of at least 33,634 Palestinians, predominantly women and children, with 76,214 others injured, according to the latest statistics from the Gaza health ministry.

The Israeli regime's army, in this statement, also failed to acknowledge its inability to confront the Resistance fighters of Palestine, despite engaging in over six months of aggressive warfare and maintaining a weak stance against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Nevertheless, they stated, "We are in a high state of alertness and have increased our readiness to protect Israel against Iranian aggression."Additionally, the Israeli regime's army declared, "We are prepared for all scenarios and will take necessary actions with our allies to protect Israelis."

This development unfolds against the backdrop of heightened tensions between Israel and Iran.

Israel launched a terrorist attack on the Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital on April 1, using six missiles that resulted in the deaths of seven individuals, including high-ranking Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and his deputy General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

In response, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, vowed that Iran would retaliate against Israel and ensure that the malevolent regime regrets its actions of assassinating Iranian military advisors in Syria.

According to the Iranian Fars news outlet, the seizure of the Israeli-linked ship has nothing to do with Iran's response to the embassy attack.

The Israeli burden weighs on American shoulders

DC hawks risk dragging war-averse U.S. to possible Iran-Israel confrontation

By Alireza Akbari



TEHRAN- While the American public opinion clearly dislikes wars, certain warmongers in Washington DC are pushing for robust American support for Israeli adventurism in the West Asia region.

America stands firm with Israel but at the same time it wants to avoid head-on clash with Iran.

In the wake of the Israeli attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus and the subsequent loss of Iranian military advisors, Tehran swiftly pledged a retaliatory response against Tel Aviv. Concurrently, hawkish American senators have intensified their pressure on the Biden administration, urging for a more resolute stance and unwavering support for Israel.

Senator Tom Cotton, on April 11, took to Twitter to declare, "Israel is under threat of imminent attack by Iran. President Biden needs to warn the ayatollahs immediately that the United States will back Israel to the hilt and the joint American-Israeli retaliation for any attack will be swift and devastating." Later that day, he sharply criticized the Biden administration's policy, asserting that it had resulted in "three years of weakness on the world stage."

Cotton's stance sparked diverse reactions on Twitter. One questioned, "Why should America back Israel? What has Israel ever done for the USA?" Another voiced, "This is a matter between Israel and Iran. Leave us out of it." Yet another user challenged Cotton's stance on Tel Aviv, asking, "Could you care to explain why it's in America's interest to send our kids to die for a country the size of New Jersey, thousands of miles away, with zero strategic benefit for us?"

In contrast to Cotton, Senator Marco Rubio aimed to mount a psychological operation against Iran's response to Israel. He suggested that Tehran's retaliation would inevitably lead to "armed conflict." Rubio asserted, "Iran wants to launch a large scale attack from their own territory against Israel... Israel will respond instantly with an even more severe counterattack inside of Iran." He warned of the potential for rapid escalation and the difficulty of containing a new armed conflict.

Similarly, Senator Lindsey Graham affirmed his unequivocal support for Israel, pledging to provide whatever weapons and resources they require. However, his warmongering rhetoric on Twitter was met with intriguing comments. One user expressed concern, "I hope Americans don't want to die for Israel," while another accused Graham of "loving war."

These statements underscore a complex dynamic in U.S. foreign policy, where voices advocating for unwavering support of Israel clash with those questioning the rationale and consequences of such commitments.

As tensions escalate in West Asia, it is imperative for policymakers to weigh the potential costs and benefits of their actions carefully, considering both the interests and implications for regional stability.

Feeling the pressure from hawkish U.S. senators, President Joe Biden, in his address to Tehran on Friday, adopted an imperative rhetoric, expressing his anticipation of an Iranian attack on Israel "sooner, rather than later," and cautioned Tehran against such action.

Biden's message was succinct: "Don't," as he emphasized Washington's unwavering commitment to defending Israel.

"We are dedicated to Israel's defense. We will support and assist Israel in its defense, and Iran will not succeed," he affirmed.

Simultaneously, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla arrived in Israel on April 11. Israel's military chief, Herzi Halevi, stated on Friday that the Israeli army, in close coordination with CENTCOM, was prepared for a potential Iranian retaliatory strike.

Military photographs depicted General Michael Erik Kurilla participating in a situational assessment meeting in Tel Aviv alongside Halevi and other senior Israel Defense Forces (IDF) commanders on Friday.

The stances of American figures in support of Tel Aviv were widely criticized by people across the United States, questioning the benefits of such support for Washington. Many criticized the White House, asking why U.S. interests were being sacrificed to support Tel Aviv. They argued that Tel Aviv should be held accountable for its actions and questioned why taxpayers should foot the bill for Israel's warmongering.

Decoding Washington's strategy

American figures' stance on supporting Tel Aviv appears to be part of a psychological operation aimed at dissuading Tehran from responding to Israel's recent actions. However, the retaliatory missile strike by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) targeting the U.S.-run Ain al-Asad base in Iraq demonstrated Tehran's resolve in responding to any acts of terrorism by adversaries.

On January 8, 2020, the IRGC launched a wave of missile attacks on the U.S.-run Ain al-Asad base in Iraq's western province of Anbar in retaliation for the assassination of General Soleimani, characterizing it as a "first slap." The Pentagon reported that over 100 American forces suffered "traumatic brain injuries" during the missile strike.

According to AXIOS news website, Iran has warned U.S. to stay out of fight with Israel or face attack on troops. This American news website has stated that Iran sent a message to the Biden administration through several Arab countries earlier this week: if the U.S. gets involved in the fighting between Israel and Iran, U.S. forces in the region will be attacked.

Western media outlets, amidst speculation over Iran's potential response to Israel, have also engaged in their own psychological operations by highlighting the economic aspects of Iran's market, suggesting that Tehran's retaliation could lead to increased inflation and economic hardships for the Iranian people.

This action aims to sow discord between the Iranian government and its populace, suggesting that the nation could face heightened economic challenges if Tehran chooses to retaliate against Tel Aviv's actions.

The evident fear among American figures of Iran's potential response has driven them to employ various tactics to shield Israel from Iran's legitimate retaliatory response.

In summary, while the U.S. is poised to fully support Israel, particularly by providing intelligence about Iran's potential attacks through U.S. military bases in West Asia, it is unlikely to directly engage in military action against Iran due to the anticipated costs and consequences for the White House.

MP stresses Iran's position to retaliate against Israel

TEHRAN - In a recent statement, Deputy Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, Mojtaba Zolnouri, asserted the importance of maintaining the right to retaliate against the Zionists amidst escalating tensions.

Addressing a meeting with elected members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly on Saturday, Zolnouri highlighted Iran's pivotal role in global resistance movements. He criticized Western policies in the West Asia, noting their failure to achieve desired outcomes despite substantial investments.

Commenting on the recent terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, the senior Iranian lawmaker suggested that the Zionist regime's resort to direct confrontation with Iran was driven by a desire to escape international isolation and regain support.

Zolnouri reaffirmed Iran's commitment to providing spiritual support to Gaza while asserting its right to retaliate against aggressors. He warned of a robust response if provoked, echoing sentiments expressed by Imam Khomeini regarding the ultimate demise of the Zionist regime.

Zolnouri also underscored parliament's influence in guiding governmental policies, particularly in addressing interconnected issues such as security, economy, and culture. He urged officials to heed the message conveyed by recent electoral trends, highlighting the significance of people's votes in shaping national direction.

Israel launched a terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital on April 1, using six missiles that resulted in the deaths of seven individuals, including high-ranking Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commander Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi and his deputy General Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

In response, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, vowed that Iran would retaliate against Israel and ensure that the malevolent regime regrets its actions of assassinating Iranian military advisors in Syria.

Echoing this sentiment, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi affirmed that Israel's aggression against Iranian military personnel in Syria would not go unanswered.

Turkmenistan president extends warm Eid wishes to Raisi



TEHRAN - Turkmenistan's president has conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

Serdar Berdimuhamedov, the President of Turkmenistan, has sent a cordial message to President Raisi, extending warm wishes for Eid al-Fitr.

In his message, Berdimuhamedov expressed sincere hopes that this auspicious occasion would serve to bolster mutual understanding, unity, and tranquility within the Islamic Ummah.

Berdimuhamedov also conveyed his best wishes for the happiness and continued success of the Iranian people.

He expressed optimism that Eid al-Fitr, a celebration steeped in centuries of tradition symbolizing profound spiritual values such as compassion, generosity, and moral integrity, would further enhance solidarity and peace across the Islamic world.

Back in June 2022, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei met with Serdar Berdimuhamedov.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei called for deepening relations in the interest of both countries. "The policy of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to expand relations with neighboring countries, and this is a completely correct policy," he said.

He stressed that overcoming the obstacles depends on the serious determination of the two countries to expand relations. "Of course, friendly relations between Iran and Turkmenistan are opposed by regional and international opponents, but obstacles must be overcome," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized, "The Joint Cooperation Commission between the two countries should be seriously active and the agreements should be finalized with continuous follow-up."

The meeting was also attended by Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

SPORTS

Iran look for 13th title at AFC Futsal Asian Cup

By Farrokh Hesabi

TEHRAN - The 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup is set to kick off in Thailand on Wednesday, with the Iran national futsal team, led by head coach Vahid Shamsaei, are in Group D alongside Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

With 12 titles, Iran is the most honored team in Asia, whereas Japan hold the second position with four championships.

In the latest FIFA Futsal World Rankings, Iran ranked sixth with 1597 points, surpassing Kazakhstan. Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Kuwait, Iran's rivals in the group stage of the Asian Cup, are ranked 49th, 75th, and 44th, respectively.

Iran face tough competition in the group stage. Afghanistan, Iran's first opponent, have qualified for the Asian Cup for the first time and have shown significant progress since Iranian coach Majid Mortazavi took over the team. Some of Afghanistan's national team players compete in Iran's Futsal Super League and are familiar with the Iranian players, making them difficult opponents for Shamsaei's side.

If Iran top the group stage, they will face the second-placed team from Group C, which includes Japan, Tajikistan, South Korea, and Kyrgyzstan, in the quarterfinals.

A notable difficulty for the Iranian futsal team ahead of the 2024 Asian Cup has been the inclusion of foreign-based players and their availability.

Four foreign-based stars, namely Hossein Tayyebi (AE Palma), Saeid Ahmadabbasi (Vina Albali Valdepenas), Moslem Oladghobad (AE Palma), and Salar Aghapour (AE Palma), are the top choices of Vahid Shamsaei.

Nonetheless, there has been considerable discourse recently about whether they are present or not. While Aghapour and Ahmadabbasi can freely participate in the Asian Cup, the same cannot be said for the other two.

The previous tournament's top scorer, Tayyebi, who plays for AE Palma, had to skip the Asian Cup after injuring his quadriceps muscle in a game against Barcelona. His absence poses a major challenge for Shamsaei to find his replacement.

Moslem Oladghobad, the futsal player of the year, who also plays for Palma in Spain, is another injured star of Team Melli, and his presence or absence in the Asian Cup is uncertain.

In the previous tournament, Iran secured the runners-up position with a 3-2 loss to Japan. This time around, the objective is to regain the championship title, which adds to the challenge for Shamsaei and his men.

Freestyle team win 2024 Asian Wrestling C'ships

TEHRAN – Iran freestyle team won the title of the 2024 Asian Wrestling Championships on Friday for the sixth time in seven years.

Team Melli came first with 190 points. Japan finished second with 130, followed by host Kyrgyzstan with 121, three points ahead of neighbor Kazakhstan.The Iranian freestyler won five gold medals and three bronzes in the competition held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Amirmohammad Yazdani (70kg), Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg), Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg) and Amirhossein Zare (125kg) won five gold medals.

Also, Hossein Abouzari (74kg), Hadi Vafaeipour (86kg) and Mohammadhossein Mohammadian (97kg) claimed three bronze medals.

Esteghlal, Persepolis victorious at 2023-24 PGPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams edged their rivals at the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) on Friday.

PGPL leaders Esteghlal beat Aluminum 1-0 in Arak thanks to a goal from Gustavo Blanco in the 45th minute.In Tehran, Persepolis earned a vital win over plucky Malavan at the Azadi Stadium. Issa Alekasir found the back of the net with a header in the 49th minute.

Third-place Tractor suffered a home 4-1 loss against Zob Ahan in Tabriz, Sepahan were held to a goalless draw by struggling Nassaji in Isfahan, Esteghlal Khuzestan defeated Sanat Naft 2-1, Shams Azar edged past Foolad 1-0 in Qazvin, Havadar defeated Gol Gohar 1-0 in Tehran and Mes and Paykan shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw in Rafsanjan.

Esteghlal lead the table with 50 points, one point above Persepolis.

Zahedi scores third goal in J-League

TEHRAN – Iranian striker Shahab Zahedi scored his third goal for Avispa Fukuoka in J-League.

He was on target against Sanfrecce on Saturday.

The match ended 1-1 at the end at the Best Denki Stadium. Zahedi had scored against Urawa Red Diamonds and Kashima Antlers.

He joined the J-League team from Iran's Persepolis in the January transfer window.

Jahanbakhsh thrilled to reach milestone in Feyenoord

TEHRAN – Iranian international winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh is happy after making his 100th appearance for Feyenoord.

He came off the bench in the match against Ajax as Steven Berghuis's replacement.

Feyenoord won the match 6-0 at the De Kuip Stadium."We celebrated in dressing room for the win because it was a great result against a great team. It was a special match for me," Jahanbakhsh said in an interview with the club's site.

"I scored a goal after coming off the bench but unfortunately it was disallowed. I didn't know it was my 100th match for Feyenoord," he added.

"I have a good relationship with our fans and I am very happy for that and I hope we can keep going. I have always done my best in training since I joined Feyenoord but it's not what I expected," Jahanbakhsh stated.

Feyenoord have previously announced that it would not renew Jahanbakhsh's contract.

Iran to send 11 boxers to Kyrgyzstan tournament

TEHRAN – A total of 11 boxers will represent Iran at the Duisenkul Shopokov Memorial Tournament.

The tournament will be held for the elite boxers in Kyrgyzstan's capital in Bishkek on April 17-22.

The event was named after Duisenkul Shopokov, the Kyrgyz hero of the Soviet Union who died during the Great Patriotic War at the Battle of Moscow in December 1941.

The new Duisenkul Shopokov Memorial Tournament will serve as a preparation event for the 2nd World Olympic Boxing Qualifying Event.

Iran lose to Netherlands at 2024 IWBF Men's Repechage

TEHRAN – Iran were defeated by the Netherlands 61-53 at the 2024 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) Men's Repechage on Saturday.

Team Melli will meet Canada on Sunday in Pool A.Iran had lost to France 63-62 in their opening match. Pool B is comprised of Colombia, Germany, Morocco, and Italy.

The top-four teams in the eight-country tournament earn tickets to the 2024 Paralympic Games set further north in Paris from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8.

Iran's oil price, output surge in March 2024: OPEC



TEHRAN - The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in its latest monthly report has said that Iran's oil production volume increased by 28,000 barrels per day (bpd) in March 2024.

The Islamic Republic's heavy oil price also increased by $3.0 in the reported month, the report said.

Iran's oil production volume reached 3.188 million bpd in March 2024, showing a 28,000 barrels hike compared to a month earlier.

The OPEC total crude oil production volume reached 26.604 million bpd in March 2024, showing a 3,000 bpd hike compared to a month before.

According to this report, the price of each barrel of Iran's heavy crude oil in March 2024 reached $83.48, showing a $3.14 hike compared to a month earlier.

The average oil price of OPEC in March 2024 reached $84.22, showing a $2.99 growth compared to a month before, the report added.

Back in January, a report released by the U.S. Department of Energy stated that Iran has been the top OPEC member in terms of production increase in 2023, with an increase of 330,000 bpd.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) affiliated with the Department of Energy mentioned in its latest report that the total oil production of Iran was estimated at 2.87 million bpd at the end of 2023.

According to the mentioned entity, Iran's oil production stood at 2.54 million bpd in 2022.

The figures show that total OPEC oil production was 26.89 million bpd in 2023 which shows 630,000 barrels fall year on year. OPEC produced 27.52 million bpd in 2022.

This report has put Iran's oil production in the last month of last year at 3.17 million bpd. Iran was the third-largest OPEC producer after Saudi Arabia and Iraq in December 2023.

The 330,000-bpd increase in Iran's 2023 oil production indicates that sanctions have been ineffective on Iran's oil industry.

Earlier in June 2023, Bloomberg reported that the production and export of Iranian oil in 2023 reached record highs since the country came under U.S. sanctions more than five years ago.

The report published in late June 2023 stated that Iran was shipping the highest amount of crude in almost five years despite U.S. sanctions.

Bloomberg cited energy analysts as saying that Iran's oil exports have surged to the highest level since the U.S. unilaterally re-imposed sanctions on the country in 2018.

A Reuters report, also said in June last year, that Iranian crude shipments continued to rise in 2023 with higher shipments to China, Syria, and Venezuela. The report quoted consultants, shipping data, and a source familiar with the matter.

A large chunk of Iran's crude oil goes to China which is the world's major importer of energy. Several European customers including Germany, Spain, and Bulgaria also imported oil from Iran.

Iran has not released official figures about its oil exports over the past years amid efforts to evade Washington's illegal sanctions.

Iran's fishery output to reach 206,000 tons in 2 years

TEHRAN – The Head of Shrimp and Marine Aquatic Affairs of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) Ghobad Mokarami has said the country's fishery production is expected to reach 206,000 tons in the next two years.

"If we double the number of breeding pools in the next two years, we will reach more than 206,000 tons of fishery production, which is a significant number," Mokarami said.

Iran's fishery exports in the last Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19) increased by three percent and exceeded $310 million, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

In its latest report, the IRICA said the weight of exported fishery products in the last Iranian fiscal year was 149,000 metric tons, which shows a 12 percent increase compared to the previous year.

During the last Iranian fiscal year, shrimp exports also reached $98.5 million, accounting for 32 percent of the total export value among Iran's fishery products.

Russia, the United Arab Emirates, and China were the main destinations for Iran's exported shrimp during the mentioned period, showing a decrease of 26 percent in terms of value compared to the previous year.

According to the report, fisheries exports account for less than 70 percent of Iran's total exports, with the UAE, China, Russia, and Iraq being the largest markets for Iran's fishery products.

Iran imported 24,000 metric tons of fishery products worth $72 million last year, indicating an increase of 121 percent in terms of weight and an increase of 113 percent in terms of value.

The growth and development of Iran's aquaculture industry has reached the point where the country has become a model for the countries of the region and the world.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) believes that Iran plays a responsible and central role in the fishing and aquaculture industry in the region, and for this reason, it can be considered a model for the countries of the region.

Now the world markets have become the target of the export of the country's fishery products, so that, the value of fishery exports also increased by 67 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1400 compared to the preceding year.

In addition to the executive role of the IFO, the role of research and knowledge-based activities in this field is very important, and the entry of young specialists and knowledge-based experts in various sectors of the fishery industry has made the sanctions ineffective.

TEDPIX falls nearly 54,000 points on Saturday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 53,919 points to 2,207,980 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.

Iran eyeing observer status in Eurasian Economic Union

From page 1 ▸ Iran and the member states of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Armenia, signed a free trade agreement (FTA) in a ceremony in St. Petersburg on December 23.

Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Abbas Aliabadi signed this agreement, which was the result of more than two years of negotiations and expert work, on behalf of Iran.

On behalf of the EAEU, the deputy prime ministers of the member countries signed the agreement.

This agreement needs to be approved by the parliaments of six countries (Iran and EAEU five member states) to become a law and become operational.

Based on the mentioned agreement between Iran and the EAEU, the parties will eliminate tariffs for 87 percent of goods in their trade exchanges.

In the meantime, each of the parties prepares a negative list



that includes goods that are considered sensitive goods for one of the parties and it is not possible to remove the tariff.

Earlier in December 2023, EAEU Minister in Charge of Trade Andrey Slepnev said in a meeting with Jalali that Iran will become one of the most important trade partners of the Eurasian Economic Union with the signing of an FTA between the two sides.

The official also called the agreement the most important cooperation document between the two sides.

Jalali, for his part, said the free trade agreement is the result of intensive negotiations and the will of the two sides to develop their relations.

In 2018, Iran and the EAEU inked a preferential trade agreement (PTA), which came into effect on October 27, 2019.

The two sides later began negotiations to upgrade the PTA to an FTA after the success of the former.

Also in August 2023, Slepnev said that the EAEU is ready to boost its annual trade with Iran to $30 billion.

The official said the preferential trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU resulted in the trade between the two sides doubling and it is expected that by signing the free trade agreement the trade between the two sides will be doubled once again.

"The signing of the comprehensive agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Union will provide suitable conditions for mutual access to the markets for both sides," Slepnev said.

"We know very well that the volume of trade with a large country like Iran is still not very high, and therefore, it seems that targeting 30 billion dollars of annual trade is a good way to develop trade between our countries," he noted,

The Eurasian Economic Union was established in 2015 at the initiative taken by Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. Afterward, the Republic of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined the Union.

Hydropower plants ready for summer peak period: IWPCO



TEHRAN – Iran's hydroelectric power plants are completely ready to supply electricity during the summer peak consumption period, an official with Iran Water & Power Resources Development Company (IWPCO) said.

Jaber Mousavi put the current capacity of the hydroelectric power plants operated by IWPCO at 3,465 megawatts (MW), noting that the mentioned power plants are going to be operational at full capacity during the summer, IRIB reported.

Earlier this month, IWPCO announced that the country's hydroelectric power plants produced more than 250,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

"Hydropower plants were fully prepared to produce clean and renewable energy during Nowruz (Iran's New Year holidays)," IWPCO Deputy Head Vahid Izadi said.

Hydropower, also known as water power, is the use of falling or fast-running water to generate electricity or to power machines. This is achieved by converting the gravitational potential or kinetic energy of a water source to produce power.

hydroelectric is a method of sustainable energy production. Hydropower is now used principally for hydroelectric power generation and is also applied as one-half of an energy storage system known as pumped-storage hydroelectricity.

Hydropower is an attractive alternative to fossil fuels as it does not directly produce carbon dioxide or other atmospheric pollutants and it provides a relatively consistent source of power. Nonetheless, it has economic, sociological, and environmental downsides and requires a sufficiently energetic source of water, such as a river or elevated lake.

International institutions such as the World Bank view hydropower as a low-carbon means of economic development.

According to the latest data provided by Iran's Energy Ministry, currently, 55 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 12,169 MW are operating across the country.

The mentioned power plants every year generate 27,696 GWh of electricity on average.

Based on the provided data, 16 of the mentioned 55 power plants are located in the Caspian Sea basin, while 25 are located adjacent to the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, one is near Urmia Lake, and finally, 13 are located in central Iran.

Currently, 17 new hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 3,517 MW are also being constructed across the country, according to the Energy Ministry.

China's Fujian province high quality development discussed in press conference

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING- The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China held a press conference on high-quality development in the southeastern Fujian province on Monday (April 8).

The press conference, which focused on pursuing high-quality development as overarching task and advancing Fujian's methods for Chinese modernization, was participated by the Chinese and also a number of foreign journalists.

Zhao Long, deputy secretary of the CPC Fujian Provincial Committee and governor of Fujian Province, delivered a keynote speech in the press conference, and along with four other officials answered the questions raised by the media.

Fujian Province, positioned as a manufacturing and digital hub in East China, is ramping up efforts to boost local businesses, to be supported by government initiatives as it pushes into an era of high-quality development, the provincial officials said during the press conference, the Global Times reported.

Fujian is a major province for private businesses in China. In Fujian, the private economy accounts for 90 percent of all business entities in the province, contributing approximately 70 percent of its economic output, over 70 percent of tax revenue, some 70 percent of technological innovation achievements, over 80 percent of local employment, Guo Ningning, vice governor of Fujian, said.

Globally, one out of every three pieces of automotive glass comes from Fujian, and one out of every five pairs of sport shoes is also "Made in Fujian," Guo said. Additionally, the province holds the top market share in the global new-energy vehicle battery market.

Jinjiang city has been a good example of how the province is supporting private economic development. Zhao Long, governor of Fujian, said at the press conference that in today's Jinjiang, on average, there is one entrepreneur for every seven people.

Despite Jinjiang's land area accounting for only a small slice of the entire province of Fujian, it generates one 16th of the province's total economic output, making it a well-known hub for brands both domestically and internationally, Zhao noted.

Many popular brands such as Anta Sports and enterprises like Panpan Foods all hail from Jinjiang. Without reforms and opening-up policies, the developmental achievements of Jinjiang today would be unimaginable, Zhao added.

With the robust development of private companies, the province has seen the acceleration in the development of its modern industrial system. For example, the province



is now home to 38 out of 41 major industrial categories. The proportion of value-added manufacturing in GDP ranks fourth nationwide, according to the press conference.

The scale of pillar industries, such as advanced equipment manufacturing and modern textile and apparel making has surpassed trillions of yuan in output value. Leading enterprises like CATL and Fuyao Glass based in the province, now enjoy a global reputation.

Building upon these accomplishments, the province is committed to fostering a world class business environment by upholding the principles of market, rule of law as well as globalization, said Guo.

Among all the measures, the provincial government pledged to persist in promoting fair competition among all market entities, safeguarding the property rights of private enterprises, and protecting the rights and interests of all entrepreneurs in accordance with the law, according to Guo.

It is worth mentioning that the foreign journalists present in the press conference on Fujian development attended that meeting as a part of their four-month program arranged by China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC).

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.

In each edition of the program, journalists from all around the world gather together to get familiar with the 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.

Israel incites settler violence to ethnically cleanse West Bank

From page 1 ▶ "Instead, Israeli soldiers allowed them to raid homes, prevented Palestinian residents from moving around and blocked ambulances from reaching the injured," he said.

An Israeli rights group confirmed that the settlers shot and set houses on fire in the village.

Yesh Din posted videos on social media that showed dark clouds of smoke billowing from burning cars as gunshots rang out.

It said the settlers were searching for a missing male teen from their settlement.

According to Israeli media, 14-year-old Benjamin Achimeir had disappeared after leaving the settler outpost of Malachei Shalom early on Friday.

The Israeli army said on Saturday that it had found the missing boy's body.

Following Friday's fatal attack on Al-Mughayyir, Israeli settlers and soldiers have resorted to violence against Palestinians in some other villages and towns in the West Bank.



In the first 10 months of last year, the United Nations recorded at least 1,038 incidents of setter violence. This is an average of three attacks per day. The same figure has nearly tripled since Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza in early October.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says Israeli forces or settlers have killed more than 460 Palestinians in the West Bank since the Gaza war erupted.

According to an Israeli watchdog, settlers killed at least 10 Palestinians and torched dozens of homes in the West Bank last year. Yesh Din says this marked 2023 "the most violent year in settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank in both the number of incidents and their severity."

Israel has built about 160 settlements since it occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. Some 700,000 Jews live in these settlements.

All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law.

European countries including the UK and France have denounced settler violence in several statements but they have fallen short of taking any practical measures to halt assaults against Palestinian people.

The recent sanctions against individual violent settlers imposed by the U.S., UK, France and other states are just a smokescreen to divert attention from Israel's atrocities in Gaza.

Settler violence is a central part of Israel's policy. The regime seeks to ethnically cleanse the occupied West Bank and displace Palestinian people to establish full sovereignty over it and enable settlement expansion.

Israeli officials have openly incited settlers to commit violent acts against Palestinians.

In 2023, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called for the Palestinian town of Huwara to be wiped out.

Barbaric and brutal violence against Palestinians will continue to occur as long as settlers enjoy widespread impunity in the wake of Western countries' inaction.

Germany faces fresh lawsuit over arms to Israeli military

ECCHR calls on the Berlin government to revoke all arms sale licenses to Tel Aviv

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Rights lawyers have filed a new lawsuit against a German government decision to approve the shipment of thousands of weapons to the Israeli occupation forces.

The latest case comes on the backdrop of rising outcry and outrage over the level of death and destruction the Israeli military has unleashed against civilian targets in the Gaza Strip.

The controversial supply of weapons from Berlin to Tel Aviv has been under strong domestic scrutiny. It lays the foundation for what will be the second hearing this month on similar grounds.

The latest case has been filed by lawyers from the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), representing Palestinians on the ground in Gaza, which calls on the government to revoke all arms licenses to Tel Aviv, including the government's latest approval of 3,000 anti-tank weapons.

The hearing Is set to be held on Thursday.

ECCHR is also warning that an export permit for 10,000 rounds of ammunition to the Israeli military is being considered by the German government.

Last week, human rights lawyers launched an urgent appeal to suspend the exports of German-made weapons to the occupation regime of Israel that is committing genocidal war in Gaza. They cited strong reasons that the Israeli military was violating international humanitarian law in the blockaded Gaza Strip with the arms provided by Germany.

"Germany cannot remain true to its values if it exports weapons to a war in which serious violations of international humanitarian law are obvious," ECCHR Secretary General Wolfgang Kaleck said in a statement.

Support in Germany for an arms embargo against Tel Aviv has grown over the past several months amid UN warnings that the occupation regime is violating international law while engaging in multiple war crimes, including collective punishment, against the Palestinian civilian population.

In February, a group of German lawyers representing families in Gaza also filed a criminal complaint against the German government for "aiding and abetting genocide" against the Palestinian people in the enclave by sending weapons to the Israeli occupation forces.

A court decision is expected within four to six weeks. Should the case be rejected, the lawyers say they will launch an appeal to the Federal Constitutional Court, Germany's highest legal body.

Last year, Germany approved arms exports to the Israeli military worth at least $353.70 million, according to data from the economy ministry.

This figure is a ten-fold increase in comparison with 2022.

Germany is widely believed to be the second largest supplier of weapons to the occupation regime after the United States.

This lethal support hasn't gone down well with the German public who have voiced their anger on the streets in protest against government officials involved in the transfer of arms.

On April 6, protestors took part in a large pro-Palestinian demonstration in the capital Berlin.

The latest legal action is directed against the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, the department responsible for export licenses of weapons.

The domestic legal hearings are not linked to the international case brought by Nicaragua, which last week laid out its argument in front of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague that Germany was in defiance of the Geneva conventions by continuing to supply arms to the Israeli regime.

Lawyers representing Nicaragua asked the ICJ to order Germany to suspend arms shipments to the Israeli occupation as well as the resumption of funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

They say that in the absence of such measures, "Germany is facilitating the commission of genocide and is failing in its obligation to do everything possible to prevent the commission of genocide."

Nicaragua says Berlin has violated the 1948 Genocide Convention and international law by supporting the Israeli regime with arms, while Germany was very much aware there was a strong risk of genocide being committed in Gaza.

Lawyers at the ICJ also argued that German arms sales to the Israeli military make it complicit in Israeli war crimes.

Calling on Berlin to halt arms sales to Israel, Alain Pellet, a lawyer for Nicaragua, told ICJ judges "Germany was and is fully conscious of the risk that the arms it has furnished and continues to furnish to Israel" could be used to commit genocide.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

German support for Israel is damaging its international standing

It's loud on the terrace of the German embassy in Tel Aviv. The noise from passing cars combines with the shrieking of sirens to make it difficult to hear German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. But she refuses to be distracted by the din. Baerbock is in Israel for the sixth time since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, before Easter, she has a message to send. A message of exasperation.

There are "1,000 arguments from different actors" for why too little food is finding its way into the Gaza Strip, says Baerbock, a member of Germany's Green Party. She doesn't care, she says, "who might when be right where." There's no time for such debates, she says. "The only thing that matters," says Baerbock, "is that we get the aid into Gaza, and now."

Her tone is severe, admonishing. And demanding. The fact that Baerbock, a self-proclaimed "friend" of Israel, is speaking with such force shows that something has shifted in Germany's relationship with the country.

When German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was in Jerusalem a week-and-a-half before his foreign minister, he too was unusually critical. In the press conference with Benjamin Netanyahu, Scholz sought to distance himself from the manner in which the Israeli prime minister is waging this war. Israel's fight against Hamas is certainly legitimate, Scholz said. But, he added, "as important as the goal may be, is it enough to justify the horrifically high cost? Or are there other pathways to reach your aim?" It was a warning disguised as a question.

A stress test for Germany

"Israeli security is part of Germany's reason of state ." It is a key statement, made by Olaf Scholz's predecessor Angela Merkel, for Germany's understanding of itself. Scholz repeated it when he spoke to the German parliament, the Bundestag, on October 12, five days after the Hamas attack on Israel. He also said: "At this moment, there is only one place for Germany: at Israel's side."

"At this moment." From today's perspective, that promise seems to have a temporary element to it. It's almost as if Scholz already suspected the dilemma into which lasting hostilities in Gaza would plunge Germany. Are cracks now forming in Germany's reason of state?

Following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, Berlin's solidarity was vast. No other European government sent representatives to Jerusalem as frequently. In international institutions, Germany placed its diplomatic heft at Israel's service. And delivered weapons as well.

But Israel's reaction is proving to be a test for the resilience of Germany's support. The longer the war lasts, the stronger the trend toward disengagement has become. So far, any movement in that direction has largely been rhetorical – the sharpness of Baerbock's tone, the doubt in Scholz's words. But what if the suffering in Gaza grows even worse? What if Israel goes ahead with its planned ground offensive in Rafah, where 1.4 million people are packed in? Would Germany continue to stand by Israel's side?

Some in the German government are growing skeptical, both out of concern for the civilian population in Gaza but also out of concern for Germany's international reputation. Embassies around the world are reporting back to Berlin that Germany's standing is suffering. Israel is in the process of isolating itself globally. Is Israel's ally Germany facing the same fate?

Changing attitudes

Percentage of those surveyed in Germany who find Israel's operation in the Gaza Strip to be justified or not justified

As the situation in Gaza continues to worsen, the priorities of Germany's Middle East diplomacy are shifting. The recent Israeli attack on vehicles belonging to an aid organization, in which seven aid workers were killed, has increased doubts about the proportionality of Israel's response. During previous visits, Baerbock focused on the fate of the Israeli hostages in Gaza, of which there are still around 130. This time, though, she concentrated on the suffering of the Palestinians.

According to official numbers from agencies under Hamas control, more than 33,600 people in the Gaza Strip have been killed since the beginning of the war. The World Bank and the United Nations have estimated that more than half of the 2.3 million people living in the Gaza Strip are "on the brink of famine." More than a million people have lost their homes.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WORLD HEADLINES

British Palestinian doctor: Germany trying to 'silence' witnesses

Ghassan Abu-Sittah, a British Palestinian doctor who volunteered in Gaza hospitals during the first weeks of Israel's war, says he was denied entry to Germany after being interrogated at the airport and banned from participating in a conference where he was scheduled to give testimony of his experience in the Strip.

"Upon arrival, I was stopped at the passport office, escorted to the basement of the airport and questioned for around 3.5 hours," Abu-Sittah told the Middle East Eye.

Abu-Sittah said that following the interrogation, German authorities said he was not allowed to enter the country and warned him of a fine or up to one year in prison should he have tried to link via Zoom or Facetime with the event.

"This is exactly what accomplices to a crime do. They bury the evidence, and they silence or harass or intimidate the witnesses," Abu-Sittah said.

New York protesters demand end to Gaza war



Protesters have marched through the streets of New York in a demonstration calling for an end to the war in Gaza.

The event was organized by the activist group, Within Our Lifetime, Al Jazeera reported.

The protesters denounced the U.S. administration for supporting Israel's war on Gaza.

They held banners describing President Joe Biden as "Genocide Joe".

The term "Genocide Joe" is a reference to the Biden administration's complicity in Israel's crimes in Gaza.

Police arrested a number of people.

UN: waterborne illnesses spread in Gaza due to unsafe water

Waterborne diseases are spreading in Gaza due to the lack of clean water and rising temperatures, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Gaza said on Friday, Reuters reports.

"It is becoming very hot there," Jamie McGoldrick told reporters via video link from Jerusalem. "People are getting much less water than they need and, as a result, there have been waterborne diseases due to lack of safe and clean water and the disruption of the sanitation systems."

"We have to find a way in the months ahead of how we can have a better supply of water into the areas where people are currently crowded at the moment," he said, after making his final visit to Gaza at the end of his three-month assignment.

Contaminated water and poor sanitation are linked to diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery and hepatitis A, according to the World Health Organization.

Since mid-October, following the assault on Gaza in response to deadly attacks in southern Israel by Hamas, WHO has recorded more than 345,000 cases of diarrhoea, including more than 105,000 in children under 5.

Six dead in mass stabbing at Sydney shopping center

A man stabbed six people to death at a busy Sydney shopping center Saturday before he was fatally shot, police said.

Multiple people, including a small child, were also injured in the attack, AP reported.

The suspect stabbed nine people at the Westfield Shopping Centre in Bondi Junction, which is in the city's eastern suburbs, before a police inspector shot him after he turned and raised a knife, New South Wales Assistant Police Commissioner Anthony Cooke told reporters. Six of the victims and the suspect died.

Cooke said he believed that the suspect acted alone, and he was "content that there is no continuing threat." He said officials didn't know who the offender was. "This is quite raw," he said, and a "lengthy and precise" investigation was just beginning.

UK general: Ukraine could face defeat in 2024

The former commander of the UK's Joint Forces Command has warned that Ukraine could face defeat by Russia in 2024.

General Sir Richard Barrons has told the BBC there is "a serious risk" of Ukraine losing the war this year.

The reason, he says, is "because Ukraine may come to feel it can't win".

"And when it gets to that point, why will people want to fight and die any longer, just to defend the indefensible?"

Ukraine is not yet at that point.

But its forces are running critically low on ammunition, troops and air defenses. Its much-heralded counter-offensive last year failed to dislodge the Russians from ground they had seized and now Moscow is gearing up for a summer offensive.

So what will that look like and what are its likely strategic objectives?

"The shape of the Russian offensive that's going to come is pretty clear," says Gen Barrons.

"We are seeing Russia batter away at the front line, employing a five-to-one advantage in artillery, ammunition, and a surplus of people reinforced by the use of newish weapons."

Ireland says moving closer to recognizing Palestinian State

Ireland is close to formally recognizing a Palestinian State and would like to do so in concert with Spain and other like-minded countries, new Prime Minister, Simon Harris, said on Friday after meeting his Spanish counterpart, Middle East Monitor reports.

Spain and Ireland, long champions of Palestinian rights, last month announced, alongside Malta and Slovenia, that they would jointly work toward the recognition of a Palestinian state. The efforts come as a mounting death toll in Gaza from Israel's offensive prompts calls globally for a ceasefire and lasting solution for peace in the region.

"Let me, this evening, say our assessment is that that point is coming much closer and we would like to move together in doing so," Harris said after meeting Sanchez, the first premier to visit Dublin since Harris became prime minister this week.

Nomadic echoes: tracing Iran's tribal heritage back to millennia

From Page 1 ▶ For the time being, a considerable portion of Iranians live a tribal and nomadic lifestyle, typically associated with the concept of migration with its distinct set of cultures, customs, and traditions.

Although this way of life is gradually fading, Iranian tribes along with their livestock migrate to find new grazing grounds. It is a natural aspect of pastoralist systems and reflects a harmonious way of life with nature.

However, the nomadic lifestyle comes with its challenges and risks; nevertheless, various tribes such as Turks, Lurs, Kurds, Arabs, and others continue to live in this manner.

There are two major types of migration in Iran: vertical and horizontal. Vertical migration involves the movement of tribes from plains to highlands or vice versa. During their stay in warmer regions, they engage in limited cultivation, harvesting crops either early to coincide with their departure or later upon their return. This type of farming typically serves the family's needs rather than being driven by economic motives.

Horizontal migration, on the other hand, is different. It predominantly involves nomadic tribes inhabiting vast, flat, and arid lands, with camels forming a significant part of their livestock. This type of migration is more common in Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan.

The timing of migration is directly influenced by temperature fluctuations. Therefore, it's challenging to pinpoint an exact time or day for migration.

Other factors, such as the condition of agricultural crops, the growth and depletion of grazing resources, tribal conflicts, etc., also play a role in determining the timing of migration.

The flourishing of nomadic life and the increasing power of these groups helped the formation of great empires in the country. Nomadic influences have been significant in the fate of governments such as the Seljuks, Timurids, Safavids, Afsharids, Zands, and Qajars.



However, various factors, including unmet basic needs in nomadic life, have gradually led to the decline of this lifestyle in Iran to the extent that currently, the proportion of the nomadic population in the country is much lower compared to the settled population.

One prominent characteristic of nomads is their practice of selling surplus products, such as handmade crafts like carpets, kilims, felt, and mats, in exchange for goods they need.

The social structure of tribes and nomads is based on a patriarchal system. Marriage among nomads and tribes usually occurs among relatives, but marriages outside the tribe (to other tribes) also happen for reasons such as resolving conflicts or strengthening the position of a tribe.

Iranian nomads mainly live in the provinces of Fars, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Isfahan, and some other provinces. They usually change between their winter quarters in steppes (Qishlaq or warmer areas) and summer quarters in green mountainous regions (Yeylaq or cooler countryside).

Sightseers may visit nomads at different times of the year. However, the best seasons are spring and summer. There are several nomadic tribes you can meet or stay with, each of them having its own unique lifestyle, culture, customs, foods, and musical performances.

Protesters in Spanish Canary Islands on hunger strike over mass tourism

Activists have begun a hunger strike on the island of Tenerife, in protest at what they see as the destructive growth of tourism on the Canary Islands.

Protesters are calling for a halt to the construction of a hotel and a beach resort in the south of the island.

They also want a moratorium on all tourism development projects.

The small group of hunger strikers began their protest on Thursday night after a deadline for local authorities to discuss the matter expired.

The move is part of a wider protest movement across the islands, calling itself Canarias Se Agota, or The Canaries Have Had Enough.

"Either [the local authorities] listen or these people are going to put their lives at risk," Rubén Pérez Flores, a spokesman for Canarias Se Agota, told local media.

A series of protests are being organised across the archipelago next weekend.

A total of 13.9 million tourists visited the Canary Islands in 2023, according to local chamber of commerce figures, 13% more than the year before. That is about six times more than the islands' population of 2.2 million.

The biggest tourist markets for the islands are the UK and Germany, although they are also a popular destination for mainland Spaniards.

The building of the La Tejita hotel and the Cuna del Alma resort, which have been the targets of campaigners' anger, have been beset by legal issues.

Work on both projects was interrupted due to environmental concerns before resuming.

(Source: BBC)

Iran in frames



Day-trippers visit the Saint Stepanos Monastery, a centuries-old Armenian place of worship situated approximately 15 km northwest of Julfa city in the province of East Azarbaijan, northwestern Iran. It is a significant element of the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, listed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Iran's rural tourism: eight villages vie for UN recognition

TEHRAN – As this year's UN Tourism deadline to submit applications for the best tourism villages evaluation draws near [April 24], Iran has nominated eight most qualified villages to vie for global recognition.

On Saturday, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the deputy tourism minister, stated that the initiative proposed by the UN tourism organization, titled "Best Tourism Villages," aims to harness the existing capabilities in the tourism industry to bring about transformation, rural development, and enhance community well-being.

Shalbafian emphasized that the plan aims to preserve the identity and nature of villages, safeguard their cultural diversity and values, and enhance educational systems in rural areas to increase awareness among villagers.

Outlining the prerequisites for candidate villages, including a population of fewer than 15,000, location in naturally distinctive areas, engagement in traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishing, as well as possessing a cohesive community with a shared culture, lifestyle, and values, the deputy minister pointed to the assessment process.



The official delineated that village assessments are based on nine relevant indices aligned with sustainable development goals (SDGs), covering cultural and natural resources, economic stability, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, tourism potential, value chain integration, governance and prioritization of tourism, infrastructure and connectivity along with health and security.

Underscoring the importance of a justification form in village applications, the official pointed to the requirement of villages to elucidate their motivations and initiatives to become global destinations.

Moreover, he mentioned the benefits for selected villages, including the award of a diploma or plaque signed by the Secretary-General of the UN Tourism.

Awarded villages also gain international recognition as outstanding examples of developed rural tourism destinations, according to Shalbafian.

Referring to Iran's participation since 2021 [the very first year of the best village evaluation], he noted that 130 villages were identified countrywide based on UN criteria.

The official further detailed the figure, stating that following consultations in national rural tourism forums and collaboration with executive and supporting institutions, several villages are annually nominated, with Kandovan being the first Iranian village to achieve global registration in 2023.

"In 2024, Iran can submit eight applications," Shalbafian noted, "with villages such as Abyaneh (Isfahan province), Kandolus (Mazandaran province), Palangan (Kurdistan province), Bisheh (Lorestan province), Meymand (Kerman province), Fahraj (Yazd province), Esfahak (South Khorasan province), and Ghaleh Bala (Semnan province) being highlighted."

The official also added that Soheli village (Hormozgan province) and Qasemabad (Gilan province) are on the supporting roster.

"Currently, field assessments of these villages are underway," Shalbafian added, "with strategic tourism development committees being formed in provinces."

In his concluding remarks, the deputy minister pinpointed that the village's motivation files are being prepared in collaboration with provincial departments, scheduled for submission to the UN Tourism organization, by the deadline of April 24.

Iranian handicrafts eyeing Chinese market

TEHRAN - In a bid to expand the market for Iranian handicrafts, Farzad Owjani, who presides over the tourism ministry's department for marketing and commercialization of handicrafts, has highlighted China as a potential major destination for exports.

Owjani emphasized China's cultural proximity, vast population, and the significant percentage of affluent individuals as factors that could make it the largest and most lucrative market for Iranian handicrafts, ILNA reported on Saturday.

While acknowledging other potential markets such as Turkey, Algeria, Germany, Pakistan, and Qatar, Owjani stressed the need for strategic coordination to empower the private sector in the handicraft industry.

The official pointed out the private sector's strength in production but emphasized the necessity of a robust private marketing sector to maximize the industry's potential.

Owjani revealed that efforts have been underway for a year to establish a strong company, comprising both sectoral and non-sectoral stakeholders, to contribute to the strategic goals in the handicraft sector.

Regarding the process of commercializing handicrafts, Owjani highlighted the importance of creating value chains and intergenerational links, underscoring the potential economic impact and added value of handicraft exports.

Highlighting the versatility of Iranian handicrafts, Owjani noted that they have the potential to penetrate any market globally, owing to their diverse range, from leatherworks to wooden products and rugs.

Responding to a question about Iran's current major export destinations for handicrafts, Owjani listed countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Germany, where Iranian handicrafts, including glassware, ceramics, and rugs, are in high demand. He also mentioned the Persian Gulf littoral states as significant destinations for exports of precious and semi-precious stones.

Owjani announced the upcoming expo of handicrafts scheduled from April 27th to May 1st at the Tehran International Exhibition Center, adding that another exhibition will be held in late summer to further showcase Iranian handicrafts.

At present, a total of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts". The World Crafts Council is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that was founded in 1964 to promote fellowship, foster economic development through income-generating craft-related activities, and organize exchange programs, workshops, conferences, and exhibitions.

Early humans lived on Iranian Plateau for 20,000 years after leaving Africa, study suggests

TEHRAN - Following the exodus from Africa around 70,000 years ago, early humans established a significant presence on what is now known as the Iranian Plateau, according to a new study.

As Homo sapiens migrated out of Africa, they left minimal evidence of their movements until resurfacing in Eurasia 20,000 years later. This leaves a puzzling question: where did they reside during this interval? The study suggests that early Homo sapiens made their home on the Persian Plateau during this enigmatic period.

"A study proposes that Homo sapiens outside of Africa made their home on the Persian plateau between 70,000 and 45,000 years ago.... The Persian plateau, which the researchers defined includes most of modern-day Iran as well as the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia," Live Science reported.

Fossil records indicate Homo sapiens migrations extending back at least 210,000 years ago, while genetic studies pinpoint a major migration event around 70,000 years ago, which significantly influenced the genetic makeup of present-day non-African populations.

The study suggests that between 60,000 and 45,000 years ago, Homo sapiens fossils are notably absent across Eurasia, prompting researchers to investigate their whereabouts during this period.



CAPTION: An undated photo of Iran's Pebdeh Cave, which was occupied by hunter-gatherers as early as 42,000 years ago.

South Khorasan shines bright with rural destinations

TEHRAN – Situated in the eastern part of Iran, South Khorasan holds 14 approved target destination villages, which makes the province a delightful station for travel lovers.

Providing insight into the diverse array of approved destinations, South Khorasan's director-general of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts pinpointed that Afin, Furg, Khvor, Karimo, Baghestan, Khorv, Esfahak, Ezmeyghan, Nay band, Sorond, Malvand, Pirhajat, Makhunik and Chensht are the target villages across the province.

Hadi Shahverdi on Saturday emphasized that being enshrined in the national target destination villages is only possible if the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts approves a destination's capacity.

The official further detailed the process, stating that the selected target villages boast diverse sources and attractions, featuring historical spots, cultural aspects, distinguished handicrafts, novel traditions along astonishing natural beauties.

"There are high-capacity villages across the province," Shahverdi noted, "two of which are registered at international and national levels in the handicrafts' sphere."

Citing an example of potential destinations, the official mentioned a hamlet that was a candidate for the global touristic village.

Furthermore, he demanded funding infrastructure with an eye toward advancing tourism provincewide.

"Rural tourism has a prime position in our decision-making," Shahverdi stated in his concluding remarks, "applicable measures are underway to exploit the villages' capacities in a bid to foster tourism."

Situated in eastern Iran, South Khorasan is bounded by the UNESCO-registered Lut Desert on its south edge. It is home to many historical and natural attractions, such as Birjand Castle, Dragon Cave, Furg Citadel, and Polond Desert. The province is also known for its handmade rugs, as well as its saffron and barberry, among several other agricultural products.

The province has long been a destination for sightseers and researchers willing to visit centuries-old windmills, locally known as Asbads, such as ones located in the oasis city of Tabas-e Masina and Khansharaf village.

Khorasan — meaning the "Land of the Sun" — is a historical region and realm comprising a vast territory now lying in northeastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan, and northern Afghanistan. The historical region extended along the north, from the Amu Darya (Oxus River) westward to the Caspian Sea and, along the south, from the fringes of the central Iranian deserts eastward to the mountains of central Afghanistan.

Iran seeks to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 27 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

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WFP releases February report on Iran



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

In February, WFP food assistance reached 33,144 beneficiaries, which included Afghan and Iraqi refugees as well as Iranian teachers.

Of those assisted, 28 percent were women, 29 percent were men, 21 percent were girls, and 22 percent were boys.

Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket which includes fortified wheat flour (12 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (900 ml per person per month), while students and their teachers receive a date bar, and/or fortified biscuits. WFP stopped providing milk-in-school snacks in January 2024 due to funding gaps.

In addition to this in-kind food assistance, WFP provides cash assistance to 7,297 Afghan and Iraqi refugee households each month.

In February, households headed by refugee men received Iranian Rials (IRR) 2 million (US$ 5.1, according to the UN Operational Rate) per person.

Households headed by refugee women received a slightly higher monthly cash allocation, amounting to IRR 2.5 million (US$ 6.3) per person due to limited access to working opportunities, leading to higher food insecurity.

To maintain beneficiaries' purchasing power amid deteriorating economic conditions, since June 2023, WFP has increased its cash assistance to vulnerable refugee women and men facing serious risks over their food security and well-being.

In February, a total of 9,071 students and their teachers received snacks.

Also, WFP provided 2,734 refugee girls with a cash incentive of IRR 500,000 (US$ 1.3) transferred to their bank accounts.

This is a part of WFP Iran's efforts to promote education for refugee girls by providing them with cash for each month of regular school attendance.

By February 2024, WFP Iran helped ease the financial burden associated with the glutton-free dietary needs of 48 refugee celiac patients from WFP's beneficiaries by providing them with an extra cash amount of 7.7 million rials (US$ 20) per person as a replacement for their usual food entitlement.

In February, a total of 21 WFP-supported livelihood activities including welding, tailoring, baking, farming, bag making, and suit making, remained functional and sustained their operations supporting 356 refugees (59 percent women and 41 percent men).

Following WFP's Disability Inclusion Workplan 2023, WFP implemented a pilot initiative in two settlements, Shahid Naseri of Markazi and Mohajerin of Semnan provinces, providing refugees with disabilities a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US$ 2.6) on top of their regular entitlement. In February, the program successfully reached 101 beneficiaries targeted for assistance.

On April 3, WFP released its 2023 report on Iran based on the interim Country Strategic Plan (2023-2025).

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been hosting millions of Afghan refugees over the past four decades.

According to the report, there are roughly 4.5 million Afghans currently living in Iran.

Around 33,000 of the most vulnerable documented refugees live in 20 settlements in 13 provinces of Iran.

WFP's response in Iran focuses on addressing the food security needs of the most vulnerable refugees living in settlements.

WFP provides food, education, and livelihood assistance through a hybrid modality of in-kind food, unconditional cash, and capacity strengthening to refugees.

In 2023, WFP Iran was able to secure more than 75 percent of its funding and address the daily food requirements of around 33,000 vulnerable refugees.

In addition to the unconditional assistance provided to around 33,000 refugees inside settlements, WFP also provided conditional support for students attending primary schools and junior high schools.

Through WFP's school meals program, around 8,620 refugee school children (49 percent girls) at primary schools and junior high schools and their 610 Iranian teachers (30 percent women) received nutritious school snacks throughout the scholastic year.

The snacks included fortified milk and either a date bar or whole grain biscuit for every day of school attendance to support their education and nutrition.

Under the same program, around 2,900 girls at primary schools and junior high schools also received cash incentives to support their education in line with girl's empowerment.

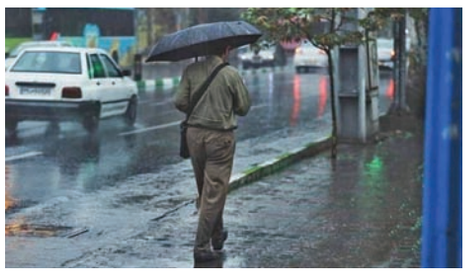
Following the successful establishment of bakeries in some settlements in the past years, WFP supported equipping a bakery in 2023 in one settlement to improve the efficiency of the baking process and the quality of the bread for around 1,400 inhabitants of the settlement.

WFP's commitment to supporting the government of Iran's assistance response for crisis-affected populations was further reinforced by WFP 's provision of locally procured emergency family food packs to around 9,780 Iranian people affected by an earthquake in Khoy City in May, through its cooperating partner, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

WFP continued to play an active role in the interagency fora such as the United Nations Country Team, the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), and Interagency Cash, Livelihood, Education, and Protection Working Groups.

WFP also continued its cooperation with its non-governmental partners, including UNHCR, IRCS, and International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as Relief International and Norwegian Refugee Council, Cooperazione e Sviluppo (Cesvi) across different forums and scopes such as conducting joint Post Distribution Monitoring with UNHCR and attending various interagency working groups.

Rainfall drops by over 20% in long term



TEHRAN –Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2023), the country has received 150.2 mm of rainfall representing a 20.7 percent decrease compared to the long-term average of 189.3 mm, according to Metrological Organization.

The amount of received rainfall last week, which ended on April 11, was equal to 7.7 mm. Compared to the long-term average of 6.2 mm, the amount of precipitation has surged by 24.5 percent.

Since the beginning of the current month, March 20 to April 11, the recorded rainfall was 26 mm, slightly below the long-term average of 27.8 mm, showing a 6.4 percent decline in the amount of received rainfall.

Some provinces including West Azarbaijan (12.9 percent), Ardabil (2.9 percent), Khuzestan (2.4 percent), Kurdistan (4.6 percent), Kermanshah (8.8 percent), and Hamadan (9.1 percent), have recorded more rainfall than the long-term average.

Tehran province is one of the provinces that has faced a significant decline in precipitation. While Tehran's long-term average rainfall stands at 207.4 mm, this year it has only received an average of 129.9 mm, which indicates a 37.3% decrease.

The average temperature of the country has been 13.3 °C since the beginning of fall, September 23, which compared to the three-year period figure,11.3 °C, shows the temperature has increased by 2 °C over time, Ahad Vazifeh, head of the national center for drought and crisis management, said on March 11.

Since the beginning of winter, the temperature has been 9.1 degrees, while it had been 7.1 degrees in long-term average. The last two months of the fall this year were the hottest months on record in the past 50 years, Vazifeh added.

Pneumococcal, rotavirus vaccination to target high-risk provinces

From page 1 ▸ The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in February after being missed from the immunization schedule for a decade.

The program was officially launched in the city of Bandar Khamir, southern Hormozgan province, IRNA reported.

On February 19, Pak-Aein said, "The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal has been added to the country's immunization program."

It will be implemented in several phases, with the priority given to underdeveloped areas, he added.

Some 3.5 million doses of pneumococcal vaccine have been imported. In the first phase, the vaccines will be distributed in deprived areas of the southern provinces of the country, the official explained.

The vaccine prevents not only the death of at least 1,500 children every year but also protects thousands of other children against bacterial infection caused by the virus, he further noted.

> The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in February.

Pak-Aein went on to say that vaccination against rotavirus will start in the calendar month starting February 20 aiming to prevent the hospitalization of 10,000 children per year.

Knowledge-based companies and domestic manufacturers will soon produce both pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines and present them to the market within the next few months.

Vaccination against rotavirus, pneumococcal

A national vaccination plan aiming to combat rotavirus and pneumococcal, which most notably cause diarrhea and pneumonia respectively, was said to be added to the country's immunization program on January 21.

Rotavirus can cause severe watery diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain. Children who get rotavirus disease can become dehydrated and may need to be hospitalized.

Babies can get three doses of vaccine at the 2nd, 4th, and 6th months of life. The vaccine is administered by putting drops in the child's mouth, IRNA quoted Mohsen Zahraei, the head of the preventable diseases department of the Ministry of Health, as saying.

The pneumococcal vaccine helps protect



against some types of bacterial infections that can cause serious illnesses like meningitis (an infection in the brain and spinal cord) sepsis (a life-threatening reaction to an infection) pneumonia (an infection in the lungs).

Zahraei further noted that pneumococcal vaccine can be injected when babies are 2, 4, and 12 months old.

"We hope to be able to develop these two vaccines soon. Once the vaccines pass the quality control trials, and obtain the Food and Drug Organization approval, we will be able to use the domestic products in the national vaccination program," Zahraei said.

"Since the development of a vaccine is a complex process and takes a lot of time, the vaccines are imported now.

Annual vaccination worldwide prevents the death of two and a half million children, which shows the very high effectiveness of vaccines," he added.

Iran receives pneumococcal vaccines with UNICEF support

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has supported the delivery of 564,000 doses of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) for the prevention of pneumococcal-related infections and deaths among children in Iran.

The measure has been adopted in support of the introduction of PCV in the national childhood immunization program in the country, the UNICEF website reported on March 17.

The consignment is the first shipment of PCV to the country, using Iran's financial resources left over from the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, through UNICEF procurement services. The shipment arrived from India and landed at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on Sunday, March 17.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education intends to introduce two new vaccines into the national childhood immunization program namely, PCV and Rotavirus vaccine. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health throughout the introduction and delivery phases of these two new vaccines targeting pneumonia and diarrhea among children, the two infections that cause substantial childhood illness and deaths.

ENGLISH IN USE

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COVID-19 diagnostic kits to be released within month

Iran will commercialize domestically-made COVID-19 diagnostic kits by the Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 22), secretary of biotechnology development of Vice Presidency for Science and Technology announced.

Following a call by the headquarters for the production of COVID-19 diagnostic kits, a contract was signed with five knowledge-based companies and manufacturing process began, ISNA quoted Mostafa Qane'ei as saying on Monday.

Diagnosis is the most important part of coronavirus treatment, he highlighted.

Patients suspected to coronavirus are currently being identified by diagnostic kits that have entered Iran in the form of assistance and purchases by the World Health Organization, China and UNICEF, he said.

کیت‌های ایرانی تشخیص کووید ۱۹ ماه آینده روانه بازار می‌شوند

دبیر ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری گفت: کیت‌های تشخیصی کووید ۱۹، فروردین ماه وارد بازار می‌شوند.

مصطفی قانعی، اظهار داشت: به دنبال فراخوان این ستاد برای ساخت کیت‌های آزمایشگاهی تشخیص کووید ۱۹، با پنج شرکت دانش‌بنیان برای ساخت این کیت‌ها قرارداد منعقد شده است. به گفته او، تشخیص، مهم‌ترین راه ورود به درمان بیماری کرونا است.

در حال حاضر بیماران مبتلا به کرونا به وسیله کیت‌های تشخیصی که در قالب مساعدت و خرید از طریق سازمان بهداشت جهانی، کشور چین و یونیسف وارد ایران شده‌اند شناسایی می‌شوند؛ اما ستاد توسعه زیست‌فناوری معاونت علمی و فناوری ریاست جمهوری با انتشار فراخوانی از دانش‌بنیان‌های توانمند دعوت کرد تا به حوزه ساخت این کیت‌ها ورود کنند.

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ISNA / Soheil Farajı

Lake Urmia festival held to celebrate revival

A cultural and recreational festival was held on Friday on the shores of Lake Urmia with the participation of people from all walks of life to celebrate the relative revival of the Lake thanks to recent precipitations.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Love children and be kind to them and keep your promises to them since they only know you as their providers.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:05 Evening: 18:56 Dawn: 4:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:31 (tomorrow)

Arts center in Gaza destroyed in Israeli hospital siege

A renowned visual arts center in Gaza has been destroyed by Israeli forces during a two-week raid on a nearby hospital.

The center, Shababeek for Contemporary Art, contained more than 20,000 works. It suffered irreparable damage in late March as the Israel-Hamas war raged on, the Smithsonian Magazine reported on Friday.

The attack was the Israeli military's second siege of Al-Shifa Hospital, previously the largest health care provider in Gaza. Officials have long insisted that Hamas used the hospital as a command center—a claim that's been the subject of extensive debate throughout the war.

Shababeek for Contemporary Art was located next to the hospital. During the earlier siege in November, the center had suffered some damage to its third floor, but last month's operation leveled the entire building.

For 15 years, Shababeek for Contemporary Art had been an important hub for artists in Gaza. (Shababeek means "windows" in Arabic.) In December, Israeli forces destroyed the only other established visual arts venue in the territory, called Eltiqa Group for Contemporary Art.

Shababeek was created in the early 2000s, when three artists—Shareef Sarhan, Basel El Maqosui and Majed Shala—began organizing events, and they formally launched the center in 2009 when they rented a house in Gaza City.

Running the arts center had its challenges. When Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, Israel and Egypt imposed a strict blockade on the territory's borders, making it challenging to get basic necessities, let alone art supplies. Still, the center hosted seminars, exhibitions and workshops. It also offered arts-focused mental health programming to support children growing up amid the wars and blockades.

In 2018, the center received funding from the Swedish government by way of the Al-Qattan Foundation, allowing it to expand its offerings. With the money, Shababeek launched Gaza's first artist residency program. Over the years, the center has worked with more than 500 artists.

At the time of its destruction, the venue was full of sculptures, paintings and photographs. Among them were about 5,000 pieces created by co-founder Sarhan, representing 30 years of work.

"All my artwork, my archives, all my memories are in this place," he said. "My wife called it my second home, but actually it was my first home. Every day, from morning until night, I was there."

Sarhan and his family were in Istanbul when the conflict began. For the past six months, they've watched it from afar.

The Israel-Hamas war broke out when Hamas carried out a surprise invasion on southern Israel on October 7. In response, Israel declared war on Hamas and launched an ongoing invasion of the Gaza Strip. The death toll in Gaza is now at more than 33,000.

"Sometimes when I see the photos, I can't believe that I've lost everything—even the little brush that I've used for ten years," Sarhan said.

Meanwhile, one of the other co-founders, El Maqosui, has been living in a tent in Rafah, the city in southern Gaza next to the Egyptian border. While there, he's been hosting art workshops for women and children, transforming his dwelling into "Little Shababeek" in the process. "Shababeek is not just a place," Sarhan added. "It is an idea."

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, over 76,000 have been wounded in Israel's ongoing bombardment of Gaza. Moreover, at least 7,000 people are unaccounted for, presumed dead under the rubble of their homes throughout the Strip.

Palestinian and international organizations say that the majority of those killed and wounded are women and children.

The Israeli aggression has also resulted in the forceful displacement of nearly two million people from all over the Gaza Strip, with the vast majority of the displaced forced into the densely crowded southern city of Rafah– in what has become Palestine's largest mass exodus since the 1948 Nakba.

Cartoon of Day



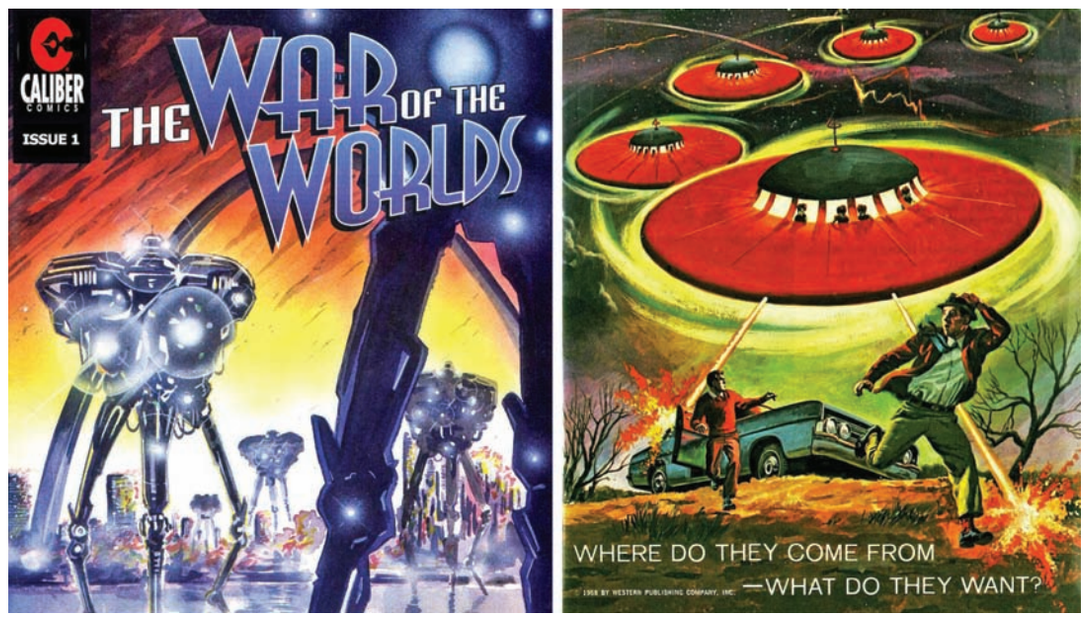
Moral High Ground
Cartoonist: Tjeerd Royaards from the Netherlands

Science Fiction: a fanciful way to tell stories of colonialism

By Ali Hamedin

Part 1

TEHRAN- Throughout history, humans have harbored a fascination with envisioning the world of tomorrow and its potential appearance, a concept that has been imaginatively translated into literature through the genre of science fiction. Unlike utopian visions, sci-fi narratives frequently paint a future that is far from peaceful and perfect, often portraying scenarios involving alien invasions, malevolent empires, authoritarian dystopias, and the exploration and colonization of new territories – which can sometimes more closely resemble the past than the future.



Alien Others

'Other' has always been one of the constant elements of Sci-Fi; They are often non-human beings such as robots and aliens who play the role of villains. The encounter with the 'Other' in the pages and on the screens of Sci-Fi texts and films, reveals yet another way to understand the genre's relationship with imperialism.

In an interview with Tehran Times, Muslim-American author and analyst Kevin Barrett said Hollywood's use of aliens to represent 'Other' nations and cultures reflects the American historical experience. "The U.S. was founded by Northern Europeans, mainly Protestants, who viewed the 'red-skinned savages' and 'primitive negroes' as radically different from themselves."

He stated that the taboo against miscegenation reflects that 'Othering'.

In her book "Science Fiction Cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality", Christine Cornea points out: "the alien, monster or robot of science fiction may provide an example of Otherness, against which a representation of 'proper' human subjectivity is established, interrogated and, on occasion, problematized."

In postcolonial studies, the 'Other' is not only situated as the aberrant of the imperialist norm, but significantly by the denial of the 'individuation' that is the right of the norm only. In Sci-Fi ideas about human subjectivity and identity have traditionally been established in a comparison between self (human) and Other (non-human) characters.

This dichotomy can be seen in contemporary Hollywood Sci-Fi cinema, not least in the depiction of the Na'vi aliens in Cameron's "Avatar" (2009) and the prawns in Blomkamp's "District 9" (2009), but also in the inhabitants of the planet Nibiru in Abrams' "Star Trek: Into Darkness" (2013).

Barrett explained as the U.S. expanded to become a globe-straddling empire, it kept encountering foreign peoples and cultures who needed to be 'Othered' so as to justify killing and exploiting them and stealing their resources.

"This extreme 'Othering' in the U.S. national character largely explains Hollywood's use of aliens as tokens of other human nations and cultures," the author noted.

Dreams of conquest, nightmares of invasion

Sci-fi, especially, has expressed narratives centered on imperialism and colonialism. John Rieder in his book "Colonialism and the Emergence of Science-Fiction" noted that most scholars believe that "the period of the most fervid imperialist expansion in the late nineteenth century is also the crucial period for the emergence of the genre (Sci-Fi)."

"Science fiction comes into visibility first in those countries most heavily involved in imperialist projects—France and England— and then gains popularity in the United States, Germany, and Russia as those countries also enter into more and more serious imperial competition," he added.

Early Sci-Fi is often inescapably entangled with Euro-American imperial fantasies. It articulates imperial fantasy through dreams of conquest and nightmares of invasion and destruction. representations of encounters between European travelers and non-Europeans—such as Thomas More's "Utopia" (1516) and Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" (1726)—form a major part of the genre's prehistory.

Vampires and Martians, critics of colonialism

Evolutionary theory and anthropology, both profoundly intertwined with colonial ideology and history, are especially important to early Sci-Fi from the mid-nineteenth century on. They also serve as frameworks for the Social Darwinian ideologies that pervade early Sci-Fi.

As Rieder points out, England was among the colonial countries from which Sci-Fi began to emerge. The iconic example of colonialism-inspired Sci-Fi is that most important of Sci-Fi stories, H.G. Wells's "War of the Worlds" (1898). At the outset of novel, Wells asks his English readers to compare the Martian invasion of Earth with the Europeans' genocidal invasion of the Tasmanian natives, thus demanding that the colonizers imagine themselves as the colonized.

"Before we judge them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?"

Here the Martian conquest is presented as analogous to, and even as just retribution for, Britain's colonial genocide. As has been visited on them, so shall it be visited on us.

Barrett believes that H.G. Wells seems to have made his aliens conspicuously non-human in appearance and inhuman in behavior as a critique of the inhumanity of British colonialism.

"The 'stiff upper lip' British went out of their way to avoid meeting their colonial subjects on a basis of human equality." He explained that to many 'natives,' the British must have seemed rather like the Martians depicted in "War of the Worlds".

Bram Stoker's "Dracula" (1897) is one of the other stories that metaphorically presents and criticizes British colonialism. Dracula is a symbolic foreigner who is more racially virile than his victims; his vampirism functions as a predatory racial alchemy that threatens the presumed supremacy of white racial identity.

Stephen Arata's essay "The Occidental Tourist," argues that Dracula can be read as a critique of British imperialism, particularly if Stoker's position as a transplanted Irish subject is taken into account.

"In Count Dracula, Victorian readers could recognize their culture's imperial ideology mirrored back as a kind of monstrosity. Dracula's journey from Transylvania to England could be read as a reversal of Britain's imperial exploitations of 'weaker' races, including the Irish."

Barrett highlighted that Sci-Fi emerged as a branch of literature that both exalts science and the power it brings to conquer and colonize, and also critiques the scientific worldview and accompanying imperial-colonial adventures.

To be continued.

Memorial installation honors Gaza's martyred children at Tehran museum

TEHRAN- A memorial installation honoring the children martyred in Gaza, titled "Ten Thousand Worlds," is currently on display at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA).

The sculpture installation features 10,000 child sculptures and 10,000 small paintings, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The installation was originally planned to be held on February 20 in the courtyard of Ferdows Garden, but was canceled by the municipality.

Designed by Hossein Vanaki and Abuzar Vanaki, this installation draws attention to the silence of human rights advocates regarding the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza and will remain on display until April 18.

Save the Children Organization revealed on April 4 that nearly 26,000 children, which amounts to just over two percent of Gaza's child population, have been killed or injured during the six-month-long war that has devastated the health system and disrupted access to education.

According to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Ministry of Health in Gaza, since the October 7 attacks, more than 13,800 children have lost their lives in Gaza, with 113 fatalities reported in the West Bank. Moreover, over 12,009 children have been wounded in Gaza, while at least 725 children in the West Bank have been injured. UNICEF reported that approximately 1,000 children have undergone amputations on one or both legs, and around 30 out of 36 hospitals have been bombed, leaving only 10 partially operational.

The attacks on ambulances, medical aid convoys, and access routes have severely impacted Gaza's health system and hindered healthcare access, particularly at a time when the 1.1 million children in Gaza are most in need of it.

Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest medical facility, was subjected to a two-week siege and assault, resulting in significant damage and restricting essential medical services for children requiring treatment. The Gaza Ministry of Health has reported numerous fatalities inside and outside the hospital.

On April 9, Human Rights Watch highlighted that children in Gaza are succumbing to starvation-related complications, as the Israeli government has weaponized starvation, deemed a war crime. Doctors and families in Gaza have witnessed children, along with pregnant and nursing mothers, suffering from severe malnutrition and dehydration. Unfortunately, hospitals in Gaza are ill-equipped to adequately address these critical health issues.

City Theater to host Jean-Claude Carrière's "An Ordinary Circuit"

TEHRAN-The play "An Ordinary Circuit" written by Jean-Claude Carrière will be staged at Tehran's City Theater Complex from April 18.

Directed by Kiarash Rost, the play will have Taha Mohammadi, Mohamadreza Heydari, Abouzar Mousavi, Shima Khosheghbal, Mehdi Mousavi, Atieh Shabani, and Sana Mirzaei in the cast, Mehr reported.

In the play, two men are together in an office. One is a police inspector, who has summoned the other who is an informer. A shady conversation ensues between the two men, and little by little, the secrets of a circuit are revealed. And it is not necessarily the man who one might think the best placed and better-informed who, in the end, will win over the other.

Jean-Claude Carrière (1931–2021) was a French novelist, screenwriter and actor. He was noted as a frequent collaborator with Luis Buñuel on the screenplays of the latter's late French films. He received an Academy Award for best short film for co-writing "Heureux Anniversaire" (1963), and was later conferred an Honorary Oscar in 2014. He was nominated for the Academy Award three other times for his work in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972), "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977), and "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (1988). He also won a César Award for Best Original Screenplay in "The Return of Martin Guerre" (1983).

Celebrated filmmaker Majid Majidi is the producer of the Persian adaptation of "An Ordinary Circuit," which will remain on stage until May 9 at the City Theater.