



U.S. Police Trained in Tel Aviv, Served in Iraq

GU Professor Elliott Colla tells the Tehran Times that U.S. police background fuels violence against anti-Zionist protesters

Palestinian journalists awarded World Press Freedom Prize

An international jury of media professionals singled out the journalists in Gaza who have documented Israel's relentless bombardment of their homeland.

Never before in recent history have so many journalists and media workers been killed so rapidly as in the past year, mostly in Gaza.

More than 140 were killed in just a few months as they tried to report on the war, according to Gaza's media office. Both the Committee to Protect Journalists and the International Federation of Journalists put that figure at more than 100.

On Thursday at a ceremony in Chile's capital Santiago, Nasser Abu Baker, President of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and Vice-President of the International Federation of Journalists, received the UNESCO prize on behalf of his colleagues in Gaza.

It came on the eve of World Press Freedom Day, observed on May 3rd.

US muzzle on free speech

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Pro-Palestinian student protests continue to grow in the United States amid police clampdowns and a House bill that is meant to penalize criticism of Zionism and Israel's actions in the wake of the regime's genocidal war on Gaza.

Police have arrested more than 2,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators on over 40 college campuses across at least 25 states since April 18.

Police have used large-scale violence against students who have set up encampments at college campuses.

Pro-Israeli mobs have also attacked university students and beaten them amid police inaction.

The protesters have demanded their educational institutions sever financial ties with Israel and divest from companies or institutions that profit from the regime's war on Gaza.

The demonstrators, among them Jewish students, call for a ceasefire and an end to Israel's brutal onslaught on Gaza.

US officials have condoned police violence accusing protesters of antisemitism.

Israeli army inflicts \$50bn worth of damage to Gaza

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Research by the United Nations has offered a shocking depiction of how little civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been spared from Israeli bombardments.

A joint assessment conducted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) says the scale of destruction caused by the Israeli occupation forces in Gaza is "unprecedented" and something not been seen since the Second World War.

Speaking via teleconference to reporters at the UN Headquarters in New York, Abdallah Al Dardari, Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States for the UNDP, explained how much development in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank as well as al-Quds (Jerusalem) has regressed as a result of Israeli military attacks over the past seven months.

"For Gaza alone, it has regressed by more than 40 years. We are back in the 80s almost for Gaza ... 40 years have been wiped out," Dardari underlined.

Iran-EU trade rises 30% in February

TEHRAN - The value of trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €847 million in February, registering a 30 percent growth year on year, according to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat.

Based on the Eurostat data, the trade between the two sides stood at €780 million in February 2023.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran in February 2024 stood at €392 million, registering a 32 percent increase compared to the same month in 2023 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to be €297 million.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €76 million in the mentioned month with a 24 percent increase compared to 2023. EU imported €61 million of goods from Iran in February 2023. ▶ Page 4

Another dashed hope of peace for the Middle East

By Gao Wencheng

BEIJING - Recent tensions in the Middle East, especially between Iran and Israel, have deeply concerned me. Not only because my job involves international news commentary, but also because I used to work in Iran for more than two years, where I have many friends.

After Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps launched missiles and drones at Israeli targets on the evening of April 13 in retaliation for an earlier strike on Iran's consulate in Syria, while waiting for Israel's response, I was chatting with my Iranian colleague on WeChat, a Chinese instant messaging app. He expressed his concern: "I am a bit worried. I think Israel will retaliate, but I don't think it would risk and take the trouble to enter a full-fledged war."

I told him that if the situation escalated, I would be willing to return to Iran to report. He replied, "I miss you, but hope that you do not come to Iran unless in a peaceful atmosphere."

His assessment turned out to be correct. I worked in Iran from March 2021 to April 2023. Not long before I returned to China, a wave of reconciliation swept across the Middle East, bringing hope and optimism to the region, which is known for its complex geopolitics.

During that time, fewer people in China asked me about the dangers of the Middle East, and more people inquired about traveling to Iran and other Middle Eastern countries.

The highlight of the regional reconciliation was on March 10 last year when Iran and Saudi Arabia, mediated by China, agreed to restore diplomatic relations. While I was still working in Iran that day, my phone buzzed with notifications reporting this significant breakthrough in Beijing. ▶ Page 2

Iran, Egypt highlight increased regional efforts to end Gaza conflict

TEHRAN - Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met and held talks with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry on Saturday afternoon.

The two Iranian and Egyptian top diplomats met on the sidelines of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in the capital of Gambia.

The discussion focused on recent developments both regionally and bilaterally, with particular attention to the situation unfolding in Palestine and Gaza, including efforts to curb the Zionist regime's violations against Palestinians. ▶ Page 2

Bulgarian analyst in an interview with Tehran Times: Iran reshaping influence around whole region ▶ Page 3



Interior minister affirms readiness for ‘fully electronic elections’

TEHRAN- Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi has announced the Interior Ministry's full readiness to conduct parliamentary run-off elections “electronically.”

Vahidi emphasized that in eight constituencies where multiple representatives are to be elected, the elections will be entirely electronic.

“In the first round of elections, all-electronic voting took place in four constituencies. However, this marks the first time such elections are being conducted on this scale, signifying a great advancement in the realm of voting,” Minister Vahidi stated. He further outlined that polling stations and voting systems have been meticulously designated for this purpose, ensuring a smooth electoral process.

Vahidi highlighted the efficiency of electronic voting, noting that vote counting is instantaneous, with results available on the spot.

“In the first round of parliamentary elections, where voting was entirely electronic in four constituencies, results were compiled and determined by midnight,” Vahidi explained.

In terms of public outreach and education on electronic voting procedures, Vahidi mentioned that training sessions will be conducted through IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting), with plans to intensify efforts in the forthcoming days.

On April 26, Minister Vahidi declared the readiness to proceed with the second phase of parliamentary elections.

Vahidi disclosed that all necessary arrangements have been completed for the upcoming electoral process. He highlighted the extensive preparations undertaken across all 22 constituencies for the second round of the 12th parliamentary elections.

Notably, Vahidi emphasized that eight constituencies will conduct the election entirely through electronic means.

The scheduled date for this phase of the parliamentary election is set for May 10.

Earlier on March 1, the country held parliamentary Assembly of Experts elections. The polls opened across Iran at 8 a.m. local time (0430) on Friday for parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

More than 61 million people were eligible to vote. About 15,000 parliamentary candidates were vying for 290 seats for a four-year term.

Simultaneously, people voted for 88 members of the Assembly of Experts, a body in charge of overseeing the performance of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Candidates for the assembly

are elected for an eight-year term.

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, cast his ballot at a polling station in Tehran in the first minutes of voting.

Ayatollah Khamenei called on the voters to turn in big numbers to please friends and disappoint enemies. “We ask the Almighty God to make today a happy day for the Iranian nation and that the results of the efforts of our dear people and those involved in the various issues of the elections may reach the desired results and benefit the Iranian nation,” the Leader said after voting.

“Our dear nation should know that today the eyes of many people in the world, both individuals and politicians and those who hold prestigious national and political positions, are on Iran and you.” “They want to see what you are doing in this election and what will be the result of your election. Both our friends and people who are interested in the Iranian nation, as well as ill-wishers from all sides, observe the issues of our country and our beloved nation. Pay attention to this; make friends happy and disappoint the ill-wishers.”

The Leader repeated his recommendation to the voters in the previous elections to head to the polls and vote as early as possible.

“The second recommendation is to vote for as many people as you need, not fewer, in any constituency. For example, in Tehran, vote for 30 people in the Islamic Consultative Assembly and for 16 people in the Assembly of Experts of the Leadership,” he added.

Later in March 5, Mohsen Eslami, the spokesperson for the election headquarters, provided details on the parliamentary and Assembly of Experts elections.

Eslami announced that as results showed, 45 seats in the 290-seat parliament would be decided in the run-off elections. He said candidates who have failed to win less than 20 percent of the votes would be competing again in the spring to determine who will win the vacant seats.

According to the election law, two candidates will compete for each remaining seat.

However, all 88 seats for the Assembly of Experts were filled in March 1 elections.

In terms of voter participation, 48% were women and 52% were men, with 85% using their national ID cards to vote. This year for the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran allowed voters to use various identification documents to vote. Before the latest round of elections, people were only allowed to cast votes by identification booklets (Shenasnameh).

IRGC’s indigenous Shahid Mahdavi warship ventures into Southern Hemisphere

TEHRAN – The Shahid Mahdavi, an Iranian warship equipped with both long-range ballistic and cruise missiles, has achieved a significant maritime milestone by crossing the Equator during its latest mission, officially entering the southern hemisphere.

The Iranian media confirmed this pivotal transition of the naval vessel on Saturday, highlighting its role as a prominent asset of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy.

Commissioned into the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy in March 2023, the Shahid Mahdavi boasts formidable dimensions, weighing over 2100 tonnes, with an impressive length of 240 meters and a width of 27 meters.

This multipurpose warship is designed for long-range operations and is outfitted with missiles, air defense systems, and advanced radar technology.

Equipped with a three-dimensional phased array radar, sea-to-sea and sea-to-air missiles, and sophisticated telecommunication systems for electronic warfare, the Shahid Mahdavi warship possesses a versatile capability, including the capacity to carry various types of attack helicopters, combat drones, and fast attack craft.

Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy, emphasized the vessel's armament, highlighting the inclusion of 2000-kilometer-range cruise missiles “Qadr 474.”

Reflecting on the evolution of responsibilities within the Iranian military establishment, Rear Admiral Tangsiri noted a pivot towards an augmented presence in oceanic waters. This strategic shift has seen vessels such as the Shahid Mahdavi, Rudaki, and Baqeri assuming pivotal roles alongside traditional responsibilities

in securing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Emphasizing the primary objective in oceans, Rear Admiral Tangsiri reiterated the IRGC Navy's steadfast commitment to safeguarding maritime sovereignty and ensuring the integrity of vital shipping lanes.

The vessel gained global attention in February 2024 when official reports confirmed the launch of ballistic missiles, meticulously fired from within containers, each boasting an approximate range of 1,700 kilometers (1,050 miles).

IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami had previously announced that the missile carrier warships extended the IRGC's range of influence and naval power up to any desired spot in the world. “Our oceangoing warships can be present in every location across the world, and when we can fire missiles from them, there is accordingly no safe spot for anyone intending to create insecurity for us,” the IRGC chief stated.

In recent years, Iranian military specialists and engineers have achieved notable advancements in producing a diverse array of domestically developed equipment, fostering self-reliance within the armed forces.

Officials from Iran affirm their commitment to enhancing the nation's military capabilities, particularly in missile technology, emphasizing their defensive nature.

Iran unequivocally states that negotiations will not affect its defense capabilities. Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, consistently emphasizes the importance of maintaining and enhancing Iran's defense capabilities.

Iran, Egypt highlight increased regional efforts to end Gaza conflict

From page 1 ► At the outset, both ministers recognized the cordial exchanges between their presidents and emphasized their leaders' shared commitment to strengthening bilateral ties. Updates on regional affairs, notably concerning Palestine and the Gaza conflict, were also exchanged.

During their meeting, Amir Abdollahian extended gratitude for Egypt's proactive measures in addressing the Gaza crisis and reiterated Iran's readiness to extend humanitarian assistance to the region, urging Cairo's collaboration in these humanitarian efforts.

Reflecting on an agreement between the two nations' presidents, Amir Abdollahian highlighted the importance of religious delegations' exchanges to foster interfaith dialogue, a notion endorsed by Egypt.

Addressing the recent terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus by the Israeli regime, the Iranian foreign minister expressed appreciation for Egypt's condemnation of the act and outlined Iran's defensive measures.

Sameh Shoukry expressed satisfaction with the meeting, reaffirming Egypt's commitment to dialogue with Iran and the advancement of bilateral relations. He expressed optimism that ongoing political and diplomatic endeavors would contribute to halting the Gaza conflict and



safeguarding Palestinian rights.

Shoukry condemned Israel's assaults on Palestinian civilians and reiterated Egypt's stance against further escalation in the region. Both ministers expressed hope that the Islamic Cooperation Summit in Gambia would serve as a platform to bolster unity among Islamic nations in advocating for Palestinians and tackling regional challenges.

After meeting with the Egyptian foreign minister, Amir Abdollahian took to his X account and shared insights from his trip to Gambia.

“During the OIC meeting in Gambia, I had fruitful discussions with Mr. Sameh Shoukry, Egypt's foreign minister, covering recent developments in bilateral relations and regional dynamics, with a significant focus on the situation in Gaza and ongoing efforts to halt the Zionist regime's atrocities against Palestinians,” he remarked.

This meeting held particular significance as Egypt is eager to maintain strong ties with Iran,

aiming to strengthen bilateral relations and collaborate in efforts to curb Israeli abuses in Palestine.

Egyptian, Qatari, and American officials are facilitating discussions for a ceasefire in Cairo.

A Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo on Saturday to participate in the negotiations.

As Israel threatens to launch a ground operation in Rafah, southern Gaza, mediators have intensified efforts to reach a ceasefire agreement.

During the meeting with Amir Abdollahian, Shoukry reiterated Egypt's opposition to any Israeli military intervention in Rafah during discussions with his Iranian counterpart.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Amir Abdollahian departed for Banjul on Friday to attend the event, which will be held on May 4-5.

The session will be held under the slogan “Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for

Another dashed hope of peace for the Middle East

From page 1 ► This major and unexpected news made headlines in major Iranian newspapers and excited taxi drivers on the streets of Tehran when they heard I was Chinese, eagerly sharing their joy with me.

In that period, Syria rejoined the Arab League, and countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE reconciled with Qatar, ending the blockade imposed on the latter since 2017.

The internal factors behind the wave of reconciliation included Middle Eastern countries focusing on domestic progress, and proactively improving development environments.

Externally, Middle East rapprochements were related to U.S. strategic pivot away from the Middle East to the Asia Pacific, giving Middle Eastern countries a chance to ease relations with regional adversaries.

Meanwhile, the contributions of peace advocates like China have played a crucial role in facilitating reconciliation in the region. As a Chinese journalist, I take pride in the fact that my country has played a significant role in advancing peace in the Middle East.

However, in October last year, Hamas attacked Israeli targets, and Israel then launched aerial bombardment and ground

operations in Gaza. A new round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict erupted, plunging the Middle East back into turmoil despite the overall peaceful atmosphere brought about by the reconciliation.

Israeli military actions in Gaza have so far resulted in over 34,000 deaths, with more Gazans grappling with starvation and teetering on the brink of death. This round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to spill over, causing tension in multiple directions in the region. Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthi rebels in Yemen have clashed with Israel to show support for the Palestinians. An airstrike on April 1 killed several senior Iranian commanders at Iran's embassy complex in Syria, drawing Iran directly into the tensions. Fortunately, as of now, this Iran-Israel clash has not escalated into a large-scale conflict.

On April 14, the Chinese Foreign Ministry urged restraint and calm. It also underscored the urgent need to swiftly quell the Gaza turmoil. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on April 15 held calls with counterparts from Iran and Saudi Arabia, vowing Beijing will work to avoid further escalation of confrontation.

Similar to other responsible members of the

international community, China's primary aim is to prevent the Middle Eastern countries from descending into a cycle of tit-for-tat retaliation. China's strong diplomatic ties with many Middle Eastern nations facilitate effective coordination among them.

While China is actively mediating for peace in the Middle East, the United States repeatedly demands China influence Iran and blames China for not influencing Iran according to Western wishes as one of the reasons for the tense situation in the Middle East.

These viewpoints have two inaccuracies. First, China does not view economic exchanges and other forms of inter-country relations as geopolitical tools, let alone using them to manipulate other countries. Second, the primary key to easing tensions in the Middle East is for the United States to restrain Israel.

Both Democratic and Republican parties in the United States struggle to break free from the influence of Jewish lobbying groups, which have impacted the core of U.S. Middle East policy. It's the United States' pro-Israel stance that consistently exacerbates tensions in the region.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

All right friends in all right places, so yeah we are going down

By Sepehr Saremi

TEHRAN- In the wake of Iran's recent military operation against the Zionist regime, which garnered global attention, reflections on the event have sparked contemplation on the balance of power in the region. Indubitably, what happened was huge and unprecedented.

This morning, as I listened to One Republic's song “All the Right Moves” in the subway after many years on my way to work, memories of Iran's recent attack on the Zionist regime and the subsequent defense efforts by the regime flooded my mind. While I was listening, the lyrics of

the song reminded me of what Iran did to the Zionist regime and how this regime and its allies all stood together to counter Iran's operation.

Indeed, when Iran launched the operation by sending about 300 drones, cruise, and ballistic missiles to the skies of the Zionist regime, many people were mesmerized. Believe it or not, ten or even 2 days before the operation, no one would have thought that the Iranian-made missiles and drones would navigate through those skies, but that night actually happened and it was not a mere threat or a dream. It happened when the whole world was watching.

Anyhow, Iran did it and the Zionist regime and its so-called allies did all they could to counter the attack. So in fact all the right friends were in the right places but still they went down. In my opinion, it does not matter how many drones or missiles were intercepted and this subject holds no relevance to the message that was sent by Iran to all countries across the globe. What showed the real power and significance of Iran's operation was the ridiculous response -which was just fireworks- carried out by the Zionist regime. The Zionist regime did not dare to do anything serious. The potency of Iran's message lies

not just in the spectacle of military might that Iran possesses, but also in the weakness of the Zionist regime that is always in need of its friends.

What they do, where they are, and what friends they have, don't matter. Iran exhibited that it could light up the skies of this rogue regime when needed. I believe the Zionist regime should learn that it can no longer attack Iran's interests anywhere in the world and just get away with it. The bottom line is that Iran will defend itself when it needs to and does not have to explain anything to anyone when it comes to its national security and interests.

Several terrorists arrested in southeastern Iran

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force has arrested individuals connected to two deadly terrorist attacks targeting Iranian security forces in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, according to a statement released on Saturday.

In a joint operation with provincial intelligence forces, IRGC Ground Force units captured suspects believed to have provided support and logistical assistance to the attacks carried out by the so-

called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group. The group claimed responsibility for an assault on the Rask County police headquarters on December 15, 2023, and an attack on an IRGC base in Rask on April 4.

The suspects were apprehended inside the Anwar al-Haramain religious school in the Pashamag village, near Rask.

Jaish Al-Adl (also known as Jaish Al-Zulm in Iran) was established in 2012 in Pakistan by the

remaining members of a dismantled terrorist group active in Sistan and Baluchestan. The group called Jundallah, which was responsible for the death of over 150 civilians, ended its activities after its leader Abdolmalek Rigi was arrested and executed in June 2010.

The so-called Jaish Al-Adl has so far killed over 100 individuals during its terrorist assaults in Southeastern Iran. Iran's intelligence previously linked the outfit to the Israeli regime.

IRGC commander tours southeastern borders, commends border guards’ efforts

TEHRAN- A senior commander from Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) paid a visit to the southeastern borders of the country on Friday, commending the efforts of border guards in ensuring the security of the nation's frontiers.

During the visit, IRGC Ground Force Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour expressed appreciation for the dedication of the border guards, highlighting their role in serving Islam and Muslims, which he emphasized as “crucial for gaining both people's satisfaction and divine approval.”

General Pakpour also undertook an evaluation of the combat and operational capabilities of the border guards, while inspecting the equipment and facilities in place to support their missions.



In late February, the general warned against foreign schemes aiming to harm regional security, saying Iran would not hesitate to make direct responses to such plots.

“Security is one of the most vital pillars, a red line, and the axis of

our unity.

Therefore, we are extremely sensitive about it and do not hesitate to take any action to protect and safeguard it.

We do not joke or play around with anyone or any power regarding this important matter,”

Bulgarian analyst in an interview with Tehran Times:

Iran reshaping influence around whole region

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, esteemed Bulgarian analyst Stanislav Bachev underscored Iran's pivotal role within the West Asia region and reiterated that Iran stands as a nation “already awakened,” emphasizing its significance on the geopolitical stage.

Following is the full text of the interview:

What impact has Operation True Promise had on the geopolitical dynamics of West Asia?

It changed the overall idea of who gets ahead. Who has the stronger hand as in playing cards or chess. As I said Iran is practically reshaping the Middle East in terms of influence.

But you have your own levels of confrontation with other states which share the same idea of getting influence here in the Middle East.

Here, what you did was to make faster the historical process.

You are making it run faster in your regional level.

What happened practically last month you showed that if it is not the United States, Israel can not just withstand.

This is why the U.S. does not desire getting deeper into this conflict. Because it is not in their national interest.

But they are too entangled with Israel because a huge part of the U.S. government is comprised of Jews. This is not something bad, I do not say it in a bad manner but it is something that influences the process.

The common Jewish people can not be blamed the same way that the Palestinian people can not be blamed but they suffer the same what proves this theory is that they (Israeli commoners) protest against their prime minister (Benjamin Netanyahu).

How do you assess Israel's response to Iran's direct attack on the occupied territories? Do you think it was a success or a failed attempt at trying to restore the regime's deterrence?

Well, it (Israel's response) was more like a commercial response, symbolic response, just to show face in front of its supporters internally.

It was surely discussed with the U.S. We can suspect that but it is obvious that the U.S. did not sanction a full-scale answer because it would lead to grave danger for everyone which is why they answered symbolically. It was a failure because Israel practically lost public opinion.

I do not mean the mass media opinion the big media opinion but the public opinion the opinion of the masses. They (the masses) side with Palestine because they see the genocide.

Do you anticipate Operation True Promise having any long-term consequences for relations between Arab nations and Israel?

Well, we were observing a process of warming the relations between the Arabs and Israel before October 2023, but since the Israeli actions in Palestine and more Israeli actions against Iran's consulate, against your military people, civilians, etc, this process of warming stopped which is a strategic loss for Israel because the Arabs to me they now in this conflict they need more time to understand the difference between money and history.

You (Iran) obviously remember and know the difference between gaining more money and preserving yourselves.

So finally, I think the Arabs, those of them who do not support Iran in a more obvious way, in time they will recognize their mistake because there are things more important than just money.

Yes, money drives the world but cultures and religions drive the world too.

When do you believe Israel will end its military offensive in the Gaza Strip?

This is what keeps their government alive. As long as there is a conflict, their politicians are safe. Otherwise, the Israelis themselves would throw them away.

This is maybe one of the hardest questions that when will this conflict (Israeli genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip) be solved? because it is a thousand-year conflict this is the kingdom of hell and heaven conflict.

We must remember the price of blood and this is the highest price normally someone who has spilled each other's blood knows the price and too much blood has been spilled. Its time to remember.

What are your observations on Operation Al-Aqsa Storm? Do you believe it has helped Palestinians get closer to the liberation of their Homeland or that it has worsened their situation?

Well, this matter should be reviewed on a broader scale in the frame of this global change in the world. We see that we live in a time where change of territories and the power over them is being legitimized. So, we have several precedents. First, Kosovo in 2008, then Crimea in 2014, then Donbas in 2022, and now we are about to see more territorial changes in Europe. I mean the former territory of Ukraine.

The Palestinian issue is a 100-years-old and the logic says that this operation, if we put it in this context, shows that the Palestinian cause will lead to overall legitimized state of Palestine as an equal country in the world, which is to me a long-term goal.

What are your thoughts on the recent political move by the United States to halt the recognition



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of Palestine as an independent nation?

The U.S. will have to learn things in the hard way because obviously, they are not mature enough for the moment to appreciate what is happening.

They are a fairly young nation they have their own internal problems. They are the first imperial crisis as an empire so they must first resolve their own problems inside which are huge and then if they learned how to grow as a country and as a nation, they would understand the Middle East, because now neither Democrats nor the Republicans do not understand the Middle East.

I share the opinion that if Donald Trump wins the election, which I consider unlikely, but if he wins, things will not get better because there are people and fairly famous people (experts) who say things will change if Trump comes to power but if you remember, it was the Trump administration that sanctioned the killing of General Soleimani.

It was the Trump administration that recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel which led to a huge crisis and these events are connected with each other.

They lead to all of these operations happening now.

You can not side that way, I mean for Jerusalem, you can not take a side like that ignoring all of the history behind it all of the blood that has been spilled.

So, things will happen but in the hard way.

What is your take on the backing extended by American presidents to Tel Aviv?

As I said earlier, there is nothing that the U.S. won't do for Israel. This is something that is huge in the picture. Israel has enormous influence inside the U.S. elite.

Just see which are their top figures in their big media, what is their ancestry, the treasury of the state, the internal department, the foreign department, national security advisors, etc... They have the same root, what can we expect?

Is it not a matter of concern that the White House is providing an excessive level of support to Israel, with demonstrations erupting within the U.S. over its backing for Israel?

he stated.

Pakpour explained that foreign forces have been recruiting individuals across West Asia to create a sprawling network of terrorists.

“The enemy is making every effort to challenge the security of the region and disrupt the peace and comfort of the people through some blind actions, which involve hiring and recruiting certain individuals and supporting terrorist groups indirectly within the framework of these actions,” he noted.

According to General Pakpour, security is the foundation of tranquility, development, progress, the infrastructure of life, and activity, and for this reason, the enemy has made significant investments to undermine and damage it.

Iran, Oman volleyball federations sign MoU

TEHRAN – Iran and Oman volleyball federations signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Friday.

The newly-elected president of the Iranian Volleyball Federation Milad Taghavi traveled to Muscat, capital of Oman to sign the MoU.

Taghavi discussed with his counterpart regarding the exchange of coaches, holding a joint camp in different divisions and age groups of beach and indoor volleyball.

The president of the federation also met ambassador of Iran to Muscat on the importance of supporting sports federations in its trips to the Persian Gulf country.

Iran learn fate at 2024 Asian Women’s Volleyball Challenge Cup

TEHRAN – Iran are drawn in Pool A of the 2024 Asian Women’s Volleyball Challenge Cup.

Team Melli will lock horns with the Philippines, India, Chinese Taipei and India in the pool.

Iran will start the campaign on May 22 with a match against India and also meet Chinese Taipei (May 24), the Philippines (May 25) and Australia (May 26), respectively.

Vietnam, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Singapore and Hong Kong are in Pool B. The 2024 Asian Women's Volleyball Challenge Cup will be the fifth edition of the Asian Women's Volleyball Challenge Cup, an annual international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Philippine National Volleyball Federation (PNVF).

The competition will be held in Manila, Philippines from May 22 to 29.

The champions will qualify for the 2024 FIVB Volleyball Women's Challenger Cup.

Sardar Azmoun doubtful ahead of Juventus match

TEHRAN – Iranian international forward Sardar Azmoun is doubtful for the match against Juventus. Roma will host Juventus on Sunday at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

The Giallorossi will look to bounce back in Serie A following its recent defeat to Bayer Leverkusen in the first leg of the Europa League semifinals.

According to Sky Sport, Gianluca Mancini and Sardar Azmoun are not 100% fit and remain questionable ahead of the match with Juventus.

Zahedi leads Avispa Fukuoka to 9th place

TEHRAN – Avispa Fukuoka moved up to 9th place with its third win in five games. Forward Shahab Zahedi scored the winning goal with a miracle goal against Gamba Osaka.

In the 22nd minute of the match, he found the back of the net with his left foot through a 70-meter strike.

Now, Avispa sit ninth with 15 points, seven points adrift of leaders Machida Zelvia. It was Zahedi's sixth goal since joining Avispa in January.

Sepahan fan banned for 10 years for disrespecting Iranian women

TEHRAN – Sepahan football team fan Nasrollah Gorgzan has been banned from attending all football for 10 years.

The fan disrespected the Persepolis women's fans during Sepahan and Persepolis match in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, where the lackluster match finished 0-0 on Wednesday.

The Disciplinary and Ethics Committee of Iran

Football Federation has banned the fan for 10 years from attending all football, beach football and futsal matches.

The Sepahan fan has previously apologized to the Persepolis fans for what he has said about the women but his comments have widely angered the fans.

Hosseinkhanzadeh reaches agreement with Italian Club Lube

TEHRAN – Iranian outside hitter Poorya Hosseinkhanzadeh has reportedly reached an agreement with Italian club Lube.

The Foolad Sirjan player helped his team win Iran Super League in April.

Lube are a professional volleyball team based in Treia, Italy. Since 1995 the club have been playing in the Serie A of the Italian Volleyball League.

They won the Italian Championship seven times, the Italian Cup five times, and the Italian SuperCup three-times.

Teammate lauds U.S. player Cherry’s performance

TEHRAN – Sina Vahedi, playing for Iranian basketball club Shahrdari Gorgan, admired his American teammate Will Cherry.

Shahrdari dragged Al Riyadi to a sudden death by way of a 95-85 Game 2 win in the FIBA WASL-West Asia League Season 2 Final on Wednesday night. The reigning three-time Iranian Basketball League champion showed that it can win games even with just one foreign reinforcement after dragging Al Riyadi to a do-or-die affair by way of a 95-85 Game 2 win in the FIBA WASL-West Asia Season 2 Final on Monday night.

“This game was very important. They spend much more money than us. They have, I think, five foreign players, and we have only one,” said a proud Vahedi.

Cherry starred in the victory with a game-high 25 points, 5 rebounds, and 5 assists, together with 4 steals and 1 block in yet another all-around performance that left their faithful that packed the Azadi Basketball Hall beaming with so much pride. The American floor general saw action for a total of 39 minutes and 33 seconds, playing with almost no rest once more as he's been carrying much of the load for Gorgan since naturalized Lebanese big man Norvel Pelle left the team prior to their Semi-Final clash versus Al Shorta.

Coach Mostafa Hashemi's men did sweep their Iraqi counterparts but their problem of missing extra pieces reared its ugly head in Game 1 of the sub-zone finale last week.

“We had a really tough loss in Lebanon and I'm really happy for my team and for this game. We played really well. I want to congratulate the coaching staff and my teammates,” Vahedi said.

Boxers win three bronzes at U22 Asian Championships

TEHRAN – Three Iranian boxers won bronze medals at the ASBC U22 and Youth Asian Boxing Championships.

Mohammad Mahshari in the 75kg, Seyed Ali Seyed Sadri in the 86kg and Reza Khalilzadeh in the +92kg failed to advance to the final match and took three bronze medals in the competition.

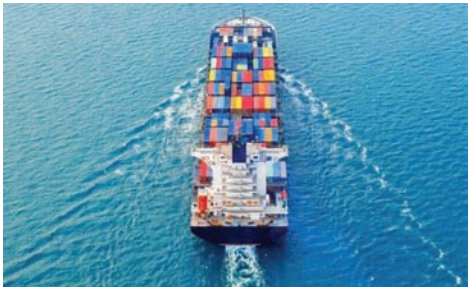
Amir Esmaeili Vandaei (+92kg) has previously qualified for the final match.

Iran competed in all of the recent editions of the ASBC Asian Youth & Junior Boxing Championships in 2021 and in 2022.

The ASBC Asian U22 & Youth Boxing Championships take place in Astana, Kazakhstan from April 25 until May 8.

The tournament has been witnessing high-voltage action with the presence of 390-plus boxers from more than 24 countries, including strong boxing nations such as China, India, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan fighting for the medals across 25 weight categories.

Iran-EU trade rises 30% in February



TEHRAN - The value of trade between Iran and the European Union (EU)'s member states reached €847 million in February, registering a 30 percent growth year on year, according to the data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat.

Based on the Eurostat data, the trade between the two sides stood at €780 million in February 2023.

As reported, the EU's exports to Iran in February 2024 stood at €392 million, registering a 32 percent increase compared to the same month in 2023 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to be €297 million.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €76 million in the mentioned month with a 24 percent increase compared to 2023. EU imported €61 million of goods from Iran in February 2023.

According to Eurostat, Germany was Iran's top trade partner in Europe in February.

Germany exported €141 million of goods to Iran and imported €19 million from Iran. German exports to Iran grew by 46 percent year on year, but imports didn't change much.

As previously announced by Eurostat, trade between Iran and the EU stood at €380 million in January.

Based on the Eurostat data, the trade between the two sides fell 10 percent in the mentioned month compared to the same month in the preceding year when the figure stood at €424 million.

the EU's exports to Iran in January stood at €311 million, registering a decrease of nine percent compared to the same month in 2023 when the EU's exports to Iran were reported to be €344 million.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €69 million in the mentioned month with a 15 percent decrease compared to 2023. EU imported €80 million of goods from Iran in January 2023.

Germany was also Iran's top trade partner in Europe in January. The country accounted for 38 percent of the Iran-EU total trade in the said month. The total trade between Iran and Germany reached €119.7 million in the first month of 2024.

IOOC oil, gas condensate output rises 21%

TEHRAN - Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) has increased offshore oil and gas condensate production by 21 percent over the last Iranian calendar year, 1402 (ended on March 19), an official with the company announced.

According to IOOC Production Manager Amir Salari, the company achieved this additional volume of production despite the restrictions the company faces.

Rising the number of drilling rigs, drilling new wells and repairing some others, launching a marine power transmission cable at Soroush oil field, and repairing marine oil transfer pipelines were among the efforts the company made to boost production, Salari explained.

"By drilling new wells, launching new platforms, and setting up several marine

installations this year, IOOC will have a more accurate assessment of its developmental projects this year", the official added.

He further noted that over the last Iranian calendar year oil production from operational regions of Qeshm and Kish rose by 60 percent above the planned target.

According to him, oil production from offshore fields faces some complexities while logistical and weather conditions, the limitations offshore contractors are facing, cruel sanctions, and other things have made making up for the natural decline of production rate difficult.

The IOOC official further noted that by deploying new drilling rigs and repairing operations we are trying to improve the situation which takes time.

Monthly transit of goods via Iran rises 47%



TEHRAN - Transit of commodities through Iran increased by 47 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-April 19)), as compared to the preceding year, according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Based on the IRICA data, 1.6 million tons of goods were transited via the country in the mentioned month, IRNA reported.

As previously announced by IRICA, 17.79 million tons of commodities were transited through the country in the past Iranian calendar year 1402.

Transit of commodities through Iran increased by 36.52 percent during the previous year compared to the preceding year.

As stated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative offered by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

The policy of paying attention to neighbors and developing political and economic relations with neighboring countries in the

current government, increasing attention to road and rail routes in the world, and the efforts and cooperation of transportation and trade-related organizations in establishing or activating corridors through the country has led to significant growth in transit of goods through Iran.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

In early June 2023, Deputy Transport Minister Shahriar Afandizadeh announced that the Transport and Urban Development Ministry is preparing a five-year comprehensive plan for increasing transportation and transit relations with Central Asia, as well as the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman countries.

The plan includes the basic strategies and executive roadmap in a step-by-step manner for the next five years and will mark the evolution of the bilateral transport and transit relations with the target countries, including the countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Afandizadeh explained.

This year, the issue of transit and playing a role in major programs such as those related to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the main priorities of the Transport Ministry in developing transport relations with regional and extra-regional target countries, the official noted.

Iran-EAEU FTA to go operational in 2 months



TEHRAN - A member of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce anticipated that more than 88 percent of commodities will be exchanged between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union's (EAEU) member states with zero tariffs within the next two months.

The free trade agreements between countries will facilitate the exporters' access to the target market, a member of the board of directors of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, Kambiz Mirkarimi said. He noted that a Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union's members, including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia, was one of the most

important deals signed by the country in recent years.

Iran's exports to the EAEU members stood at about \$260 million until 2018, but after the implementation of the FTA in 2019,

the country's exports to these countries immediately increased to above \$400 million, he said.

It is expected that the FTA will be ratified by the parliaments of all member states of the union within

Iran's monthly foreign trade rises about 48%

TEHRAN - The value of Iran's foreign trade (total imports and exports) registered a 47.63 percent hike in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19 to April 22, 2024), based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The country's foreign trade, including crude oil, gas condensates, technical engineering services, and electricity, reached \$10.420 billion between March 19 and April 22, 2024, showing a 47.63 percent growth compared to the same period last year. In this period, Iran exported

\$7.680 billion worth of products, while importing \$2.740 billion of goods into the country, the IRICA data indicated.

Iran's trade balance, with crude oil, gas condensates, technical engineering services, and electricity included, turned positive as much as \$4.940 billion in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year.

As reported, Iran exported \$4.180 billion worth of crude oil, gas condensates, and fuel oil from March 19 to April 22, 2024.

some 9.7 million tons of goods were exported from the country in the mentioned month.

China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Oman were of Iran's main export target markets in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year.

Regarding the foreign goods transited from the country, the report added that 1.6 million tons of foreign products were transited through the Iranian land and territory in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year.

Afghanistan's 2nd rail cargo to depart for Turkey via Iran

TEHRAN - The Afghanistan railway administration announced plans for the departure of the country's second rail shipment to Turkey passing through Iran.

The Head of Afghanistan's railway

administration Bakht Rahman

Sharafat posted a message on X about the second Afghan rail cargo being prepared to go to Turkey via Iran. He said Afghanistan is committed to the principles of a connected world and fast

transportation facilities.

"We not only transport goods, but also connect the hearts," he added.

Afghanistan's railway authority has not provided details of the shipment. Afghanistan's first export

We have to support each other, have development together: Burundi's ambassador

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING - I, as the representative of my country, and also my newspaper (the Tehran Times), along with over 100 journalists from more than 90 countries around the world, are participating in a training program, organized by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Beijing.

During our stay in China, we are taking part in different programs, including lectures and press conferences, as well as visiting different places, including industrial zones, cultural sites, and also exhibitions. In one of our visits, which was to a waste sorting and recycling exhibition here in Beijing, I got familiar with a wonderful lady. She was visiting the exhibition with her lovely children. As I love kids a lot, I went to them and asked the lady to hug her lovely little daughter, who was really like a beautiful doll in her nice dress. The kind lady gave me the permission to hug her daughter and play with her cute sons.

Then we spoke with each other and I found that she is the Second Counselor in Burundi Embassy in Beijing. Her name is Rebecca Sibomana, and now we are friends. I really admire her, as she is really a wonderful lady, she is an active diplomat and at the same time a mother of four children.

When I found that she is from Burundi, I told her, "Just a moment madam, my friend, Willy, who is a journalist from your country and is taking part in the same program with me, is today here, I will go to find him and come back to you."

Then I went to Willyfrid Vyamungu, my friend from Burundi who is a journalist and photographer working for Burundi News Agency, and we together came back to Mrs. Sibomana. Willy and the lady began to speak together and I left them to visit the exhibition. At the end of that event, when there was a ceremony on the issue of waste sorting and recycling, I and Mrs. Sibomana got each other's contact number, then I hugged her lovely daughter, and she said to her daughter, "Now you have a new auntie." Then we hugged each other and said goodbye.

After two days, Willyfrid, who we call Willy, sent me a message and said that there is ceremony at the place of Burundi Embassy in Beijing on May 1, and Mrs. Sibomana has invited us to participate.

So, in the afternoon of May 1, which is the International Worker's Day, I and Willy went to the place of his country's Embassy in Beijing, that took just five minutes on foot to get there from our place. When we arrived we were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Sibomana, that I like to call her my dear Rebecca.

Burundi, Heart of Africa, touched my heart deeply

There was a nice ceremony on the occasion of the Workers' Day at the Embassy. The whole staff of the embassy and the guests who were all from Burundi were so friendly and hospitable.

There were also some Burundian young people who were studying in China, whose presence in that event made the atmosphere of ceremony young. I really enjoyed the music of Burundi and also their wonderful foods in that ceremony. Everything was so good and intimate that I really felt like I was at home.

Mrs. Sibomana cared about us a lot and came to us moment by moment to hospitalize us, she was really kind to us.

After the dinner, His Excellency Ambassador Telesphore Irambona came to us and we had a very warm conversation. He was very friendly to us, and I really appreciate his kindness.

Although Mr. Ambassador was busy at that night, he made me favor and gave me time for an interview.

As I am an economic journalist, I asked him his opinion about economic cooperation between Iran and Burundi, and the following is his answer.

"We have to support each other and have development together. It's possible, because now the economy or the development is connected, the world is like a village, and then world is connected. And Iran, your country, and



His Excellency Ambassador Telesphore Irambona answers questions raised by the Tehran Times in a ceremony held at the place of Burundi Embassy in Beijing

Burundi, my country, can do something good in cooperation in all fields, including commercial, exchange, and also development. We can support each other and have development together; because now, you see situation is not good, we have many conflicts in the world, and we cannot solve the problems alone, we need support, we have to support each other, it's very important."

After the interview with Mr. Ambassador, Mrs. Sibomana introduced me to First Counselor in Burundi Embassy Dr. Alfred Burimaso, and also Patrick Mushitsi, the representative of Burundian Diaspora in China, and we had a very friendly and informative conversation.

They asked me about my country and wanted to know about Persia, the ancient Iran. I briefed them about Persia and they were very interested.

When the ceremony finished, Mrs. Sibomana accompanied me and Willy to the exit door, where I hugged her and thanked her for that amazing night. We said goodbye and parted, but I know that she will shine in my heart forever.

Thanks a lot to His Excellency Ambassador Telesphore Irambona, Dr. Alfred Burimaso, and staff of Burundi Embassy, thanks to my friend Willy, and special thanks to my dear Rebecca for creating a wonderful experience for me.

Iran, the world's 9th biggest thermal power producer: TPPH

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Thermal Power Plant Holding (TPPH) has said the country is the world's ninth-biggest producer of thermal electricity, IIRIB reported.

Mentioning an increase of 9,000 megawatts (MW) in the capacity of the country's thermal power plants over the past two years, Abdolrasoul Pishahang said thermal power plants currently

account for 92 percent of Iran's total power production capacity.

"Last year, 389 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity were produced in the country's power plants, and thermal power plants with the production of 360 billion kilowatt-hours supplied 92.5 percent of the country's electricity needs," Pishahang said.

Stating that last year more

than 2,000 MW were added to the capacity of thermal power plants in the country, the official added: "The readiness factor of thermal power plants reached 98 percent during the peak period of last year, and we are trying to record a very good performance this year as well."

Emphasizing that 50 percent of the country's power plants are domestically built, he said:

the next two months, he said, noting that trade tariffs on more than 88% of the goods exchanged among Iran, Russia, and EAEU members will be reduced to zero.

This development will increase the competitiveness of Iranian products against the goods made in China, India, and other rivals, Mirkarimi stated. The free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran was signed during the EAEU Summit in St. Petersburg on December 25, 2023, Mehr reported.

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.

U.S. police trained in Tel Aviv, served in Iraq

GU Professor Elliott Colla tells the Tehran Times that U.S. police background fuels violence against anti-Zionist protesters

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The scenes unfolding at American universities in the past two weeks have appalled people around the world who have been watching peaceful student protesters get violently arrested, beaten, and demonized by armed police.

Numerous U.S. professors have denounced administrators and law enforcement for treating anti-war college students as dangerous criminals, expressing shock and dismay at the unprecedented level of violence witnessed on campus.

To further understand the disproportionate police response to student protests, we spoke to Dr. Elliott Colla, associate professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, who suggested that the Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian sentiments prevalent within U.S. police ranks have contributed to their violent treatment of students advocating the Palestinian rights.

The full transcript of the interview is as follows:

What is your perspective on the student protests currently taking place in universities across the U.S.? Do you believe they are predominantly peaceful or driven by antisemitism?

I have been following the protests directly and I have also closely inspected the ones taking place on our



own campus. The protests are loud, the students stay up all night and they might even say some impolite things. But it is an absolute falsehood to assert that these protests are antisemitic.

Law enforcement agencies in the United States often exhibit Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian attitudes.

In fact, there are a lot of Jewish representatives who are taking part in the Gaza solidarity encampments because they don't want Israel to kill Palestinians under their name. These American students have three main demands: they want a ceasefire in Gaza, they want the U.S. to end support for the Israeli military and finally, they want their universities to divest from Zionist entities. Many universities in the U.S. have invested in companies that help manufacture the missiles and bombs that have been raining on Palestinians in Gaza. I support the students' call for universities to prioritize human rights over profit. These students are simply asking to center Palestinian humanity, and that seems to have been difficult for Zionists to take in. It also makes

perfect sense to cut ties with Israeli universities and halt student exchange programs, because the technologies developed by these schools are used to slaughter Palestinians.

I think in general, as Americans, we bear a bigger responsibility regarding the war in Gaza. Our tax dollars directly fund Israel's military campaign in the enclave. To uphold moral and ethical principles on the global stage, we must cease supporting these unjust actions financially.

How do you assess the authorities' response to the protests? Do you believe their use of force has been justified and proportionate?

What we are seeing right now is shocking and appalling to most people working in universities. Administrators have decided to bring in armed riot police on their campuses to deal with their students. I think what's been even more shocking is that universities were very swift to call in law enforcement. This quick resort to violence is thoroughly unjustifiable.

It is crucial to recognize that if students were to take legal action against these administrators in the future, they would likely win. The use of violence by universities against their

own students is a clear violation of their own principles and conventions.

Also, it is worth noting that law enforcement agencies in the United States often exhibit Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian attitudes. This can be attributed to the fact that many police officers are veterans who served in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that U.S. police forces receive training in Tel Aviv, leading to a similar hostile and racist approach towards Palestinians as seen in Israeli forces.

Moreover, we have witnessed something unprecedented in recent days. We saw that in some universities, large groups of trained thugs were allowed to enter campuses, attack the students, and rampage encampments while police stood by and did nothing. So, universities first got law enforcement to repress students, and then let local Zionist militia assault them.

In your opinion, does the U.S. government need to reassess its policies regarding the Palestinian issue? If so, what changes would you advocate for?

I agree with the students that our nation is failing in its pursuit of a multicultural democracy. It is paradoxical to strive for inclusiveness while simultaneously supporting an apartheid government that is committing genocide.

The truth of the matter is that Israel will only try to change its behaviors once it is being forced to pay its bills. Israelis will not change on their own. Israel is a century-old colonial project that has progressively drifted toward the extreme right. We must force them to change by pulling the plug on them or there will be none.

WORLD HEADLINES

WFP: Northern Gaza in ‘full-blown’ famine

The UN World Food Program (WFP) director has said the comprehensive famine in northern Gaza might spread south.

Northern Gaza is experiencing “full-blown” famine, according to the WFP Director Cindy McCain.

“Whenever you have conflicts like this, and emotions rage high, and things happen in a war, famine happens,” she said during an interview with NBC.

“What I can explain to you is - is that there is famine - full-blown famine - in the north.”

McCain warned mass starvation was “moving its way south”, where the vast majority of Gaza’s population has fled fighting.

Human Rights Watch recently reported that children were dying from starvation-related complications in Gaza, accusing Israel of using starvation as a “weapon of war” - a war crime under international law.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell also said in March that Israel was “provoking famine” as a weapon of war.

The WFP director pointed to severe food shortages and food insecurity in northern Gaza, saying the people needed “water, sanitation, medicine.”

House Democrats urge Biden to lean harder on Israel

Scores of Democrats in the United States House of Representatives urged President Joe Biden to consider halting arms sales to Israel if it does not alter the conduct of its war against Gaza, according to the Times of Israel.

A letter signed by 88 Democratic members of Congress and delivered to the White House ratchets up pressure on Biden to take a firmer stance toward Israel, a staunch ally.

The lawmakers voiced “serious concerns regarding the Israeli government’s conduct of the war in Gaza as it pertains to the deliberate withholding of humanitarian aid.”

Israel’s restrictions on US-backed humanitarian aid delivery in Gaza “have contributed to an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe,” the letter said, citing the US Agency for International Development.

The lawmakers urged Biden to make clear to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that any impediment to aid delivery to Gaza was “risking its eligibility for further offensive security assistance from the United States.”

Since the start of the war in Gaza, Biden has faced criticism for his unconditional support for Israel.

Turkey urges ICC action against Israel

Turkey’s Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc stressed Saturday the need for the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to expedite the conversion of a file against Israel into a case.“Israeli officials who have committed war crimes, aggression, murdered children, and committed genocide, including Netanyahu, must be brought before the court,” Tunc said during a speech at the Inter-Parliamentary Jerusalem Platform 5th Conference, according to Anadolu.

“Unfortunately, a crime against humanity, a human tragedy, continues to unfold before the eyes of the world. The recent attacks in Palestine are unquestionably crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes,” he added.

Tunc noted that the UN and the Security Council have issued more than 60 resolutions concerning Israel’s unjust attacks and human rights violations.

“It is impossible to call a state that disregards the decisions and laws of international organizations, violates human rights, and systematically commits these violations a state. Israel has been acting like a terrorist organization for almost a century,” he stated.

British-Palestinian surgeon barred from entering France

Professor Ghassan Abu-Sittah, the British-Palestinian rector of the University of Glasgow and a reconstructive surgeon, has said he has been denied entry to France, where he was due to make a speech at the Senate.

“I am at Charles De Gaulle airport. They are preventing me from entering France. I am supposed to speak at the French Senate today. They say the Germans put a 1-year ban on my entry to Europe,” Abu-Sittah wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

“Fortress Europe silencing the witnesses to the genocide while Israel kills them in prison,” he added.

In April, Abu-Sittah was prohibited from entering Germany, where he was due to talk of his experiences in Gazan hospitals.

The surgeon spent 43 days in Gaza to help treat injured people last year, and in October said that counter-terror police “harassed” his family at his home in London.

Zakharova: NATO preparing for potential conflict with Russia

NATO’s four-month-long military exercises near Russia’s borders, known as Steadfast Defender, are proof the alliance is preparing for a potential conflict with Russia, a spokeswoman for Russia’s Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, Reuters reported.

The spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, dismissed accusations by NATO this week that Russia is engaged in hybrid attacks on its member states, saying this was misleading “misinformation” aimed at distracting people from the alliance’s activities.

It was NATO that had waged a hybrid war with Russia by supporting Ukraine with arms, intelligence and finances, she said in a statement.

“Right now, NATO’s largest exercise since the Cold War, Steadfast Defender, is taking place near Russia’s borders. According to their scenario, the coalition’s actions against Russia are being practiced using all the instruments, including hybrid and conventional weapons,” she said in a statement.

“We have to admit that NATO is seriously preparing for a ‘potential conflict’ with us.”

Relations between Russia and the West have been at their most hostile in decades following the start of Russia’s military conflict in Ukraine in 2022.

Students in Ireland and Switzerland join Gaza protest wave

Students at Trinity College Dublin and Lausanne University in Switzerland have staged protests against Israel’s war in Gaza, joining a wave of demonstrations sweeping U.S. campuses.

In Dublin, students built an encampment on Friday that forced the university to restrict campus access on Saturday and close the Book of Kells exhibition, one of Ireland’s top tourist attractions, Reuters reported.

The camp was set up after the students union said it had been fined 214,000 euros (\$230,000) by the university for losses caused by protests in recent months, not exclusively over Gaza. The protesters were demanding that Trinity cut academic ties with Israel and divest from companies with ties to Israel.

Pro-Palestinian protests have also been held at universities in Australia and Canada.

In Lausanne, around 100 students occupied a building to back demands including an end to scientific cooperation with Israel.

«Palestinians have been dying for over 200 days, but we’re not being heard,» one protester told Swiss television on Saturday.

US muzzle on free speech

Congress is seeking to criminalize criticism of Israel amid growing campus protests

From page 1 ▶ But critics say such allegations are aimed at quelling the pro-Palestinian protests.

On Wednesday, the US House of Representatives passed a bill amid attempts to suppress demonstrations at universities. The legislation that would expand the federal definition of antisemitism was passed 320-91 with some bipartisan support.

Republicans voted 187-21 for the legislation. Democrats supported it 133-70. Eighteen members did not vote. The bipartisan bill went to the Senate for consideration.

This definition would include the “targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.”

House Speaker Mike Johnson has defended the bill as “a House-wide effort to crack down on antisemitism on college campuses.”But lawmakers who voted against the measure have opposing views.

Jerry Nadler, the most senior Jewish member of the House, said, “This legislation threatens freedom of speech, one of our most cherished values, while doing nothing to combat antisemitism.”

The Democratic lawmaker took a jab at GOP leaders. He dismissed “political theatrics” by Johnson and top Republicans in the House, who gained the support of many Democrats for the bill.

Israeli army inflicts \$50bn worth of damage to Gaza

UN assessment reveals scale of destruction in the enclave

From page 1 ▶ “When we say Human Development Index regressed by 40 years, we are talking about all the gains in schools, in years of schooling, in educational attainment, in health, in life expectancy at birth, and GNP per capita, having regressed to those levels of the 1980s.”

The estimate, he says, is that “an investment of \$50 billion” has been lost.

The Israeli military has been pounding the Gaza Strip relentlessly on a daily basis for the past seven months, killing around 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children. More than 75,000 others have been injured, many in critical condition.

The UN estimates that at least 10,000 Palestinians are also missing, presumably dead under the rubble of residential zones that have been flattened.

According to the UNDP, as of April 12, Israeli occupation forces

had killed or injured five percent of Gaza’s population.

The UN agency says no form of normalcy can be restored to Gaza without removing “37 million tons of debris” to allow space for temporary shelters and to establish other vital structures.

“72 percent of all housing in Gaza has been destroyed,” the research found.

Dardari also spoke of significant damage to “all other commercial and other buildings” that have been razed to the ground by Israeli forces.

“This is unprecedented. And we haven’t seen anything like this since 1945, since the Second World War, that intensity in such a short time. And the massive scale of destruction,” he lamented.

“You have 2 million people stranded without services. It’s unfair, it’s inhumane if we just abandon the people and wait,” the UNDP has warned.

Some of the other 70 Democrats, including Jewish members also raised the alarm about the measure.

Sara Jacobs, the youngest Jewish member of the House, said, “I do not believe that anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitism.”

Republican lawmaker Mike Lawler, however, railed against Democrats. He accused Democrats of “tripping over themselves because of electoral politics” in states with large Muslim populations which traditionally vote Democratic.

Arab American and Muslim voters, who helped Joe Biden beat Donald Trump in the 2020 election, can play a crucial role in the November presidential vote. They are, however, critical of the Biden administration for supporting Israel’s war on Gaza.

In the Democratic primaries, particularly on Super Tuesday, a significant number of people, including Arab and Muslim voters, marked their ballots “uncommitted.”

Meanwhile, Independent Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont warned Congress against accepting an argument made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “that equated criticism of his government’s illegal and immoral war against the Palestinian people with antisemitism.”

An initial joint assessment by the UNDP and ESCWA was released in November 2023 in which they estimated the impacts of the war on the State of Palestine, including the Gaza Strip.

The newly updated research estimates the impacts of the Israeli war at six months, with very bleak projections and scenarios inside Gaza over the next three months.

Despite grave concerns over the humanitarian toll, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to invade Rafah (the last refuge in the Strip where Israeli ground forces have not entered) regardless of whether a deal on prisoner exchange is reached or not.

More than one million Palestinians have sought shelter in Rafah with nowhere else to flee if Israeli forces raid the southernmost Gazan city.

Israel’s closest ally, the United States, has acknowledged it has

Kashan sites visited by over 30,000 tourists in day



TEHRAN – Kashan, a historical city within Iran’s Isfahan province, has shattered previous visitor records by attracting over 30,000 tourists to its historical sites in a single day.

Isfahan’s director-general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, on Saturday, reported that from the afternoon of Thursday to the end of Friday, May 3, more than 30,000 tourists visited the ancient attractions of Kashan alone.

Fin Garden, which is a UNESCO-listed site, was the most visited destination, ranking first among all tourist attractions in Isfahan province during the recent holidays, according to Amir Karamzadeh.

Karamzadeh further elaborated on the figures, highlighting that the combined visitor count for the historic sites of Kashan and Isfahan had surpassed 50,000 in a single day.

“Kashan secured the first rank, with Isfahan closely following,” the director-general explained. “Marking them as the top destinations during the recent public holidays.”

This unprecedented influx of tourists underscores the appeal of Kashan and Isfahan

as prime cultural and historical destinations across the country, according to provincial officials.

Kashan, nestled in the heart of Isfahan province, is a city steeped in cultural history and architectural grandeur, making it a magnet for both national and international tourists.

Known for its well-preserved traditional houses, lush gardens, and significant archaeological sites, Kashan offers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Persian history and architecture.

One of Kashan’s most famous historical sites is the Fin Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Fin Garden exemplifies classical Persian garden design, characterized by water channels, symmetrical layouts, and rich greenery, embodying the essence of aesthetic and architectural principles from the Safavid era.

The garden also houses the Fin Bath, where Amir Kabir, a notable Qajar chancellor, was tragically assassinated, adding historical depth to the site.

Other prominent attractions are the Boroujerdi House and the Tabatabaei House, known as masterpieces of traditional Persian residential architecture.

The Agha Bozorg Mosque is another key historical site. Known for its symmetrical design and grand dome, the mosque is a superb example of Islamic architecture in the 18th century.

Kashan’s commitment to preserving its historical integrity while embracing the needs of modern tourism makes it a unique travel destination, rich with cultural heritage that continues to fascinate and attract large numbers of visitors annually.

3,500-year-old ‘rest house’ used by ancient Egyptian army discovered in Sinai desert

Egyptologists have discovered the remains of a “rest house” in the northern Sinai desert. The structure may have temporarily housed ancient Egyptian forces, and possibly even royalty, during the reign of Thutmose III, or from about 1479 to 1425 BC.

Ancient Egyptian rulers often launched military campaigns into the eastern Mediterranean, and one route Egyptian troops frequently took to reach the region was through the Sinai desert.

“It is likely that this building had been used as a royal respite due to the architectural planning of the building and the scarcity of pottery fractures [broken pottery] inside,” the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said in a translated statement.

The lack of broken pottery meant that pottery construction likely didn’t occur in the structure and that the building was kept clean. This suggests that it wasn’t a typical domestic structure.

The building contains two rectangular hallways and a number of rooms branching off of them, the statement said.

A hieroglyphic inscription found in the building indicates that the rest house dates to

the time of Thutmose III.

The rest house is located at the Tel Habwa (also spelled Tel Hebwa), a site that has a cemetery dating to between the 21st dynasty (circa 1070 to 945 B.C.) and the 26th dynasty (688 to 525 B.C.), or after the rule of Thutmose III.

It’s an interesting discovery, but more information is needed, said Anthony Spalinger, a professor emeritus of classics and ancient history at the University of Auckland in New Zealand.

Spalinger, who wasn’t involved with the finding, said he’s not certain if the rest house dates to the reign of Thutmose III.

He noted that the stratigraphy around the rest house is from later times and that a cartouche (an oval-shaped artifact bearing the name of a pharaoh) the team released also dates to later times.

More information is needed to understand when the building was in use, he said.

According to Spalinger, the pharaoh himself may not have used this rest house. “The armies brought tents whilst going north, and the royal tent is where I would expect the king to be,” he said in an email.

(Source: Live Science)

6 must-visit villages near Tehran during spring season

TEHRAN – In spring, the villages surrounding Tehran become exquisite destinations to explore. With longer days offering endless opportunities for adventure, vibrant flowers in full bloom, and the sun beaming down, it’s undoubtedly one of the finest seasons for a vacation.

Rural tourism around Tehran is a wonderful experience for people who love nature and peaceful surroundings. Tehran is surrounded by beautiful countryside with mountains, valleys, and traditional villages. Many people from the city escape to these rural areas to relax and enjoy the fresh air. In these rural areas, you can find charming villages with old houses made of clay and brick. The people are friendly and welcoming to visitors.

While the options for springtime getaways are plentiful, a select few truly stand out. Let’s delve into the top six destinations near the Iranian capital that are perfect for springtime travel!

Taleghan: a sanctuary in the mountains

Situated on the foothills of the Alborz mountain range, Taleghan offers an air of tranquility that is unmatched. From refreshing springs to sprawling orchards, Taleghan offers a glimpse into a world untouched by time.

The village is home to water-



falls, caves, springs, and orchards, which have made it an ideal area for sightseeing.

Arangeh: where history meets nature

Perched along the Karaj-Chalus road, the village of Arangeh beckons travelers with its rich tapestry of history and natural splendor.

Wander through orchards heavy with ripe fruits, or marvel at ancient sites that whisper tales of bygone eras. From the breathtaking Khor waterfall to the snow-covered slopes ideal for skiing in winter, Arangeh promises an unforgettable escape.

Afjeh: a haven of natural beauty

Nestled within the Lavasan-e Kuchak rural district, Afjeh emerges as a tranquil retreat from the

urban hustle.

Here, nature reigns supreme, with cascading waterfalls, ancient palaces, and historic bathhouses waiting to be explored.

While there are no hotels in Afjeh, renting local houses or camping under the stars offers a unique opportunity to commune with nature.

Ahar: a breath of fresh air

Situated near rivers and mountains, Ahar offers a welcome respite from Tehran’s bustling streets. As you traverse the Shahid Babaei Highway towards Lavasan-Lashkark road, the air grows fresher, and the pace slows to a leisurely stroll.

Follow the winding paths to discover hidden treasures, from bab-

bling brooks to scenic vistas that stretch as far as the eye can see.

Barghan: a gem of scenic beauty

Situated in Savojbolagh county, Barghan captivates visitors with its blend of natural wonders and cultural heritage.

Visitors may explore ancient temples and mosques, or wander across arch bridges that span crystal-clear streams.

Whether you’re seeking solitude in nature or a taste of local traditions, Barghan offers a myriad of experiences to delight the senses.

Kordan: where greenery meets history

In the green expanse of Savojbolagh county lies Kordan, a village steeped in history and surrounded by lush orchards.

Visitors may follow the meandering river as it winds through the village, or lose yourself amidst the fragrant blooms of cherry blossoms.

With its pleasant climate and abundant greenery, Kordan is a haven for nature lovers seeking refuge from the urban areas.

Overall, rural tourism around Tehran offers a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. It’s a chance to reconnect with nature, experience traditional Iranian culture, and relax in beautiful surroundings.

Kerman province to host loan exhibit of its local treasures

TEHRAN – A collection of relics discovered from Kerman and being kept at the National Museum of Iran, has been returned to the southern province for a loan exhibition during Cultural Heritage Week (May 17 to 23).

On Friday, the provincial director-general of cultural heritage announced the arrival of a valuable collection of ancient artifacts from the National Museum of Iran to Kerman.

“These items will be showcased in local museums,” Saeed Shahrokhi noted. “Coinciding with Cultural Heritage Week.”

The official further detailed that the artifacts, which include significant archaeological findings from various sites across the province, were welcomed into Kerman.

Regarding the arranged location for the exhibition, Shahrokhi stated that the relics will be displayed at the Harandi Garden Museum.

The collection features discoveries from key archaeological digs such as the Yahya Tappeh in

Arzuiyeh county and the ancient site of Shahdad in Kerman, the official highlighted.

Shahrokhi further explained that these excavations date back to the late 1960s.

He also outlined that many artifacts were recovered from illegal excavations in Jiroft’s archaeological sites in the early 2000s.

“These items had been smuggled out of the country,” Shahrokhi added. “But were returned to Iran through the combined efforts of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, preventing their sale at auctions in London.”

He further noted that some of the items, which date historical roots back to the Neolithic period, approximately 8800 years ago, were uncovered during scientific excavations at the Gavkosh hill in Esfandaqeh Jiroft.

Earlier this month, the deputy minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ali Darabi, disclosed that ten provincial exhibitions,

showcasing the lesser-known relics coming from Iran’s National Museum, are in progress to take place within the Cultural Heritage Week.

“The political capital [Tehran] somehow differs from the heritage capitals across the country,” Ali Darabi further explained. “We’re making every effort with an eye toward preserving and prospering the rich cultural heritage nationwide.”

In a bid to achieve the goals, ten exhibitions are arranged to take place in different provinces, showcasing the lesser-known relics originating from Iran’s National Museum.

“The Cultural Heritage Week works as a reminder to authorities and citizens,” Darabi added. “Which draws attention to the significance of recognition, preserving and introducing the historical and civilizational capacities as a national responsibility.”

As claimed by the official, organizing such events aiming to elevate the lesser-known historical objects, is considered as a strategic necessity in the cultural heritage field.

Emad ud-Duleh Mosque: a testament to cultural exchange and spiritual significance

TEHRAN – Emad ud-Duleh Mosque stands as a unique architectural gem, located in the heart of Kermanshah city within the bustling traditional bazaar.

Positioned at the epicenter of social gatherings, this mosque holds a special spatial significance. Kermanshah, situated in a border region, serves as a melting pot of diverse beliefs and cultures, with influences from neighboring countries enriching its tapestry of religious practices.

As mentioned by Visit Iran, the mosque serves as a focal point for people from various backgrounds, reflecting its role as a gathering place for different social classes. Its architectural design reflects its public utility, eschewing the grandiosity typical of royal mosques of its era in favor of simplicity akin to

future mosques and contemporary Iranian buildings. This simplicity is evident in its courtyard decorations, featuring a harmonious blend of unglazed narrow bricks and seven-color tiles.

The centuries-old mosque boasts a distinctive architectural style characterized by four iwans (vaulted halls), each housing different elements such as the façade, entrance, corridor (Hashti), central courtyard, prayer hall, watchtower, and chambers. The mosque’s layout, akin to a school or madrasa, provides accommodation for students of religious sciences within its surrounding chambers.

Emad ud-duleh’s patronage extended beyond architectural endeavors; he brought a door from Imam Ali Haram to Kermanshah and donated a silver door in return.

This wooden door, dating back to the Safavid period, now adorns the mosque’s entrance, known as the “Qapi of Shah-e Najaf.” Another intricately decorated wooden door graces the southwest side, leading to the intersection of jewelers’ and Hoori Abad bazaars.

Stepping through the corridor, visitors enter a spacious courtyard adorned with beautiful tiling and inscriptions commemorating the mosque’s construction. The southern iwan, serving as the entrance to the main prayer hall, stands out with its elaborate decoration. The prayer hall itself features a vaulted ceiling supported by fourteen brick columns, with light filtering in through ceiling apertures.

The courtyard’s central feature is a newly constructed pool, while a small wooden room overlooks the eastern

iwan.

The main entrance, accessed through the eastern iwan, connects to the jewelers’ bazaar via a grand wooden door. A striking addition to the mosque’s architecture is a large Swiss-made clock adorning the minaret, symbolizing cultural exchange.

Emad ud-Duleh Mosque’s rich heritage is further enhanced by its exquisite tiling, high-quality wooden doors, and intricate brick pulpits. Its dual entrances from opposite sides of the bazaar underscore the city’s reverence for spirituality, echoing a bygone era where commerce and religion intertwined seamlessly. As a spiritual oasis amidst the bustling bazaar, Emad ud-Duleh Mosque stands as a testament to the enduring significance of cultural exchange and communal worship.

Iran facilitates entry of foreign travelers with personal vehicles

TEHRAN – The efforts of the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran have significantly eased the entry process for travelers and tourists with personal vehicles into the ancient country.

“This significant facilitation in the temporary entry of private and commercial vehicles for passengers and tourists has been achieved through the timely efforts of the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the cooperation of the Iranian Traffic Police,” the TACI reported on Friday.

According to the club, tourism using personal vehicles not only increases the number of tour-

ists but also improves traffic flow and benefits all sectors along the tourist route.

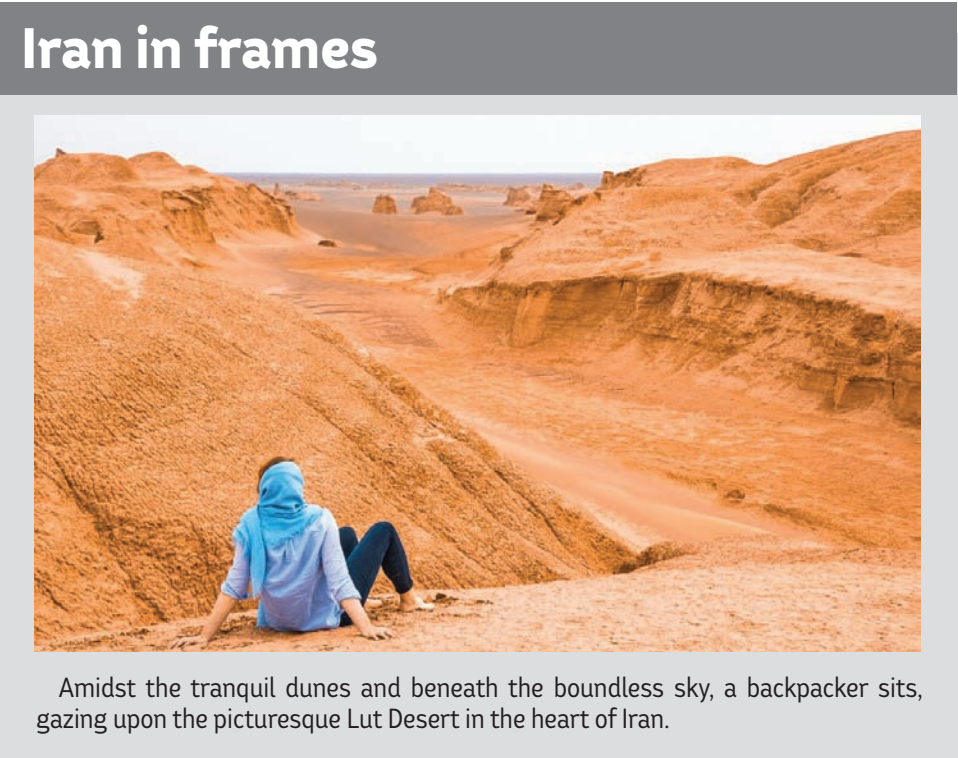
Furthermore, traveling by personal vehicle is a favorite mode of transportation for tourists worldwide, as explained by the club.

“Therefore, facilitating international traffic of vehicles for foreign travelers and tourists can significantly contribute to the growth of inbound tourism and boost employment and economic indicators, especially Gross Domestic Product (GDP) production in the country,” the club added.

Iran has been a contracting party to the Convention on Road Traffic (Vienna, 8 November 1968) since May 21, 1976. According to Article 36 of this

convention, every motor vehicle in international traffic must display its registration number at the front and rear; motorcycles, however, are only required to display this number at the rear.

Previously, due to technical issues, foreign motor vehicles were required to use Iranian Registration Number Plates composed of Persian numerals and letters at all Iranian land borders. However, as of March 2024, Registration Number Plates of motor vehicles are accepted for temporary entry and traffic of foreign vehicles with a Carnet de Passages Douane (CPD) or other means of guarantee in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



75 Iranian universities in THE Asia university rankings 2024

TEHRAN-The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2024 has placed 75 Iranian universities among the top Asian institutions compared to 65 universities in 2023.

The Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2024 use the same 18 performance indicators as THE World University Rankings, but they are recalibrated to reflect the attributes of Asia's institutions.

The universities are judged across all their core missions – teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook – to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons available.

The Sharif University of Technology is ranked first in the country and has risen from 64th to 56th in Asia, ISNA reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology (68th) and Iran University of Science and Technology(79th), University of Tehran(100th), Shiraz University of Technology(118th), University of Tabriz (121th), Tehran University of Medical Science (129th), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (131st), Isfahan University of Technology (133th), and Babol Noshirvani University of Technology (136th) are ranked second to tenth in the country.

The 2024 ranking includes 739 universities from 31 territories.

The performance indicators are still grouped into five areas, although the names of these have been tweaked: Teaching (the learning environment) with a weight of 24.5 percent; Research environment (volume, income, and reputation) with a weight of 28 percent; Research quality (citation impact, research strength, research excellence and research influence) with a weight of 30 percent; International outlook (staff, students and research) with a weight of 7.5 percent; and Industry (income and patents) with a weight of 10 percent.

Other world rankings

SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2024 placed 197 Iranian universities among the top institutions



in the world compared to 194 universities in 2023.

The SIR is a classification of academic and research-related institutions ranked by a composite indicator that combines three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact measured by their web visibility.

The research ranking refers to the volume, impact, and quality of the institution's research output.

The innovation ranking is calculated on the number of patent applications of the institution and the citations that its research output receives from patents.

The societal ranking is based on the number of pages on the institution's website and the number of backlinks and mentions from social networks.SCI Ranking analyzes institutions in five sectors including government, health, universities, companies, and non-profit.

In the latest ranking, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (5) and University of Tehran(10) were among the top ten institutions in West Asia. They were ranked 6th and 11th, respectively, in the 2023 ranking.

The Research rankings of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the University of Tehran were 175 and 290, respectively, in the world.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranking improved from 486, in 2023, to 452 in 2024 marking it the top university in Iran.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences held first position in Medicine, 2nd in Dentistry, 5th in pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics in West Asia. It was also ranked 34th in Dentistry globally.

The University of Tehran was ranked 2nd in the country and 827th worldwide.The University of Tehran was placed 1st in Business, Management, and Accounting (38th in the world), 3rd in Economics, Econometrics, and Finance, and 4th in Engineering in West Asia.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences; Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences; were placed third to fifth in the country respectively.These institutions' rankings in West Asia are as follows.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences ranked 3rd in Medicine, and 6th in Dentistry.

Mashhad University of Medical Sciences ranked 4th in pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranked 2nd in pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics (47th worldwide), and 5th in Energy.

The 14th edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2024 included 17 Iranian universities in 17 subject entries, compared with 16 universities in 2023.

University of Tehran (346), Sharif University of Technology (401- 450) in Engineering and Technology; Teh-

ran University of Medical Sciences (358), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (451- 500), University of Tehran (451- 500), and Shiraz university of medical sciences (501 – 550) in Life sciences and Medicine; and University of Tehran (401-450), and Sharif University of Technology (501-550) in Natural Science are the top universities.

A total of 435 Iranian institutions were among 11,989 institutions ranked in Webometrics world ranking 2024.Tehran University was the top among Iranian institutions. Its ranking had improved from 305 in 2023 to 285 in 2024, Mehr news agency reported.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (445), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (606), Sharif University of Technology (639), Amirkabir University of Technology (792), Iran Science and Technology (890), Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (920), Iran Medical Sciences University (940), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (940), and Shahid Beheshti University (967) were ranked second to tenth, respectively, in the country.

According to this year's ranking, 338 other institutions have been ranked between 4,000 to 31,000.

According to the results of the 2023-2024 edition of the University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), 71 Iranian institutions were included in the ranking compared to 64 institutions in the 2022-2023 edition.

URAP World Ranking is based on six academic performance indicators including number of articles, citations, total document, scientific productivity, research impact, and international collaboration.

In the academic performance ranking of 71 universities in Iran, Tehran University was ranked first nationally with a global rank of 231, IRNA reported.

Tehran University of Medical Science (277), and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science (436) were ranked second and third, respectively.

Uganda seeks to enhance ICT ties with Iran

TEHRAN – Uganda has shown interest in boosting cooperation with Iran in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), seeking Iranian experience to develop human resources.

The deputy prime minister of Uganda, Lukia Isanga Nakadama, asked for Iran's assistance to help train ICT graduates in Uganda and expand their practical skills, IRIB reported.

She made the remarks in a meeting with the Iranian ICT minister, Issa Zarepour, in Tehran on Thursday.

Zarepour, for his part, highlighted that Iranian technical and engineering companies have already carried out important infrastructure projects in African and non-African countries, adding that the country is willing to conduct similar projects in ICT in Uganda.

Also, Iranian companies are ready to transfer expertise to their Ugandan counterparts, invest in ICT, and meet their needs in ICT, he noted.

Stressing the significance of bolstering ICT cooperation between the two countries, he went on to introduce Iran's expertise in infrastructure development including post, space technology, and electronic government.

The official said that an Iranian delegation is scheduled to pay a visit to Uganda in the coming week.

Following up on the bilateral agreement reached during President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Uganda for the provision of technical and engineering services to expand the fourth and fifth generation of mobile phone technologies, and the introduction of capable Iranian companies to implement ICT projects were among the main topics discussed during the meeting.

Supporting the promotion of telecommunication and communication technologies, and conducting necessary investigations to create platforms for realizing the digital economy were among other points discussed.

Iran plans to strengthen African ties

On April 30, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian stated that Iran is determined to strengthen and expand its relations with African nations based on mutual interest and respect.

The top diplomat made the remarks during a meeting with the Central African Minister for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. During the meeting, Amir Abdollahian highlighted the importance of expanding relations with the African continent as a key priority of Iran's foreign policy.

The official expressed Iran's readiness to enhance bilateral cooperation with Central Africa,



especially in areas such as agriculture, science, technology, and education.

Ngate Robard, for his part, commended Iran for its hosting of the second Iran-Africa Summit and Expo Tehran 2024, emphasizing the significance of these events.

The Central African Minister also praised Iran's advancements in various scientific, technological, and industrial sectors, while acknowledging the warm hospitality extended during his visit.

Iran has been seeking to strengthen ties with African nations since President Raisi's administration took office. Raisi visited Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe last year, and signed various documents to up bilateral cooperation in different fields.

During a meeting held in Tehran on May 1, Zarepour, and the Minister of Trade and Industrial Development of Tanzania, Omar Said Shaaban, agreed on developing cooperation in areas related to information and communication technology, IRNA reported.

Lauding the expertise of Iranian companies in the field of information and communication technology, Said Shaaban expressed optimism that Tanzania would benefit from the capabilities of Iranian companies to develop ties between the two countries.

Zarepour, for his part, referred to Iran's strategy to enhance relations with African countries, especially Tanzania, announcing Iran's readiness to take steps in this regard.

Status of ICT in Iran

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is the highest authority in the field of ICT in the country. All activities related to the information and communication technology industry are directly related to the ministry.

According to Zarepour, the government pays special attention to plans and policies in this sector in order to maximize the use of ICT to facilitate people's lives.

The successful designing, building, and launching of a satellite show the growth of the national technology and scientific power of a country.

IRCS provides rescue services to 20 flood-hit provinces

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has provided relief to around 2,300 flood-hit individuals in 20 provinces over the past three days.

From May 1 to 4, 148 relief teams consisting of 518 rescuers conducted some 94 rescue operations to provide relief to affected people, IRNA quoted Babak Mahmoudi, an official with the IRCS, as saying.

Relief teams provided emergency shelter accommodation for 34 individuals, transported 117 others to safe places, and removed water from 71 residential houses.

They also distributed 22 tents, 575 blankets, 335 mats, 209 food packages, 280 canned foods, 100 loaves of bread, and 42 hygiene packs among flood-hit people.

Rainfall increases by 16%

According to the Metrological Organization, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20), the country has experienced an increase of 16 percent in precipitation compared to the same period a year before.

However, Tehran, Semnan, and Qazvin are among the provinces that have received severely low rainfall.

From March 20 till April 22, precipitations amounted to 43 mm which shows an increase of 16 percent compared to 37 mm long-term average rainfall.

Moreover, over the week, which ended on April 27, the country received a total of 11.9 mm

of rain, which shows an increase of 89.9 percent compared to 6.2 mm in the long term.

According to statistics, Sistan-Baluchestan (54.9 percent), Yazd (35.9 percent), South Khorasan (14.7 percent), Golestan (3.6 percent), Kermanshah (1.9 percent), and Hamedan (1.6 percent) are the only provinces that have received more rainfall than the long-term average.

IRCS's recent services

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) offered first-aid training services to more than four million people from March 14 to April 5.

Some 63,000 other people also received rescue services.

Among 4,370 operations and services carried out by the IRCS, 2,525 were rescue operations, ISNA quoted Mahmoudi as saying.

The IRCS provided emergency shelters for 3,931 individuals, treated 5,257 wounded people, and transferred 1,567 others to health centers.

Moreover, within the framework of a program initiated on March 14, more than four million individuals were trained in first aid by the IRCS trainers, and 400 others received on-line training.

Also, kids were made aware of natural hazards, such as floods and earthquakes, and other dangers using virtual reality or playing games.

Iranian universities ready to host expelled U.S. student protesters

TEHRAN – A number of Iranian universities have expressed readiness to grant scholarships to the students expelled for pro-Palestine demonstrations in the United States and Europe.

Shiraz University, Shahid Beheshti University, Razi University, Allameh Tabatabaei University, Ferdowsi University, and Elm-o Sanat-e Iran University (Iran University of Science and Technology) announced that they will provide scholarships for these students and fully cover the cost of education, dormitory, and accommodation.

What is taking place in Gaza reveals the nature of Western civilization and the truthfulness of the message of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, one of the great causes of which was supporting Palestine, Mohammad Moazzeni, the head of Shiraz

University, said.

Moazzeni criticized the harsh treatment of student protesters by the police in the US and Europe, saying, "They exert a lot of violence in order to contain this raging movement and have even threatened to expel the students from universities and hinder their employment in the future, and such autocratic methods show the decline of global arrogance."

Mohammad-Nabi Ahmadi, the head of Razi University, said: "Professors and scholars of American universities who have been expelled from the university for supporting the defenseless people of Palestine and expressing their disgust with the usurping Zionist regime, can teach at Razi University."

Davood Younesian, the head of Elm-o Sanat University, said: "We admit them under the same condi-

tions as they were studying. That is, we will provide them with the same facilities that were offered to them in European and American countries."

Numerous campuses in the U.S. and Europe are hosting protests by students against the Israeli assault on Gaza, which has resulted in over 34,000 fatalities since October of last year and is supported by Washington.

The students are demanding that academic institutions distance themselves from any companies supporting the war being waged by the Israeli authorities in the beleaguered Palestinian area.

Hundreds of students have been arrested, suspended, placed on probation, and in some cases, expelled from institutions in the last ten days.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

System to be set up for monitoring, forecasting agricultural drought

A system will be launched to monitor, forecast and report the agricultural lands being hit by drought, Amir Qaderi, an official with Disaster Management Organization has announced.Over a meeting of a special working group for addressing drought and risks threatening agricultural sector, a plan for establishing a system for monitoring and forecasting agricultural drought in the country was approved and submitted to the Disaster Management Organization for review, he explained."Following the study of other countries' experiences and existing global methods, the necessity of establishing a domestic system to recognize the lands prone to agricultural drought was emphasized," he noted.

سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران ایجاد می‌شود

معاون امور بازسازی و بازتوانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور از ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران خبر داد.

به گزارش پایگاه اطلاع‌رسانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور، امیر قادری روز یکشنبه با اعلام این خبر گفت: طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران طی جلسه‌ای با حضور مدیران و کارشناسان سازمان مدیریت بحران و وزارت جهاد کشاورزی بررسی شد.

وی ادامه داد: پس از بررسی تجارب داخلی و روش‌های موجود جهانی، ضرورت استقرار نمونه بومی پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی مورد تأکید قرار گرفت و با مشارکت مراکز پژوهشی سازمان هواشناسی کشور و پژوهشکده حفاظت خاک و آبخیزداری طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران پیشنهاد شد.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

If you overpower your enemy, then pardon him by way of thankfulness to Allah, for being able to subdue him.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:14 Dawn: 3:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:07 (tomorrow)

What’s in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* Mehdi Alainejad is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Negah Gallery.

The exhibit named “Bahamestan” will run until May 17 at the gallery located at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Maryam Namdar is on view in an exhibition at Naqsh-e Jahan Gallery.

The exhibit named “Thoughts” will be running until May 8 at the gallery located at 9 Ayatollah Mahmudi St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.



* Paintings by Sadra Baniasadi are currently on view in an exhibition at Dastan Basement Gallery.

The exhibit named “Escape from Reality, Fast” will be running until May 24 at the gallery located at 6 Bidar St., off Fereshteh St.

* A collection of paintings by Qasem Hajizadeh is on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Fear and Desire” will be running until May 13 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.



* Armin Tohidi is displaying his latest paintings in an exhibition at Idea Gallery.

Entitled “Beyond Earth and Time”, the exhibition will be running until May 16 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* Paintings by Hossein Esmaeili are currently on display in an exhibition at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery.

The exhibit titled “Tree of Soul” runs until May 8 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.



* Khak Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mostafa Dashti.

The exhibition entitled “Vein” will run until June 2 at the gallery located at 1 Jila St. off Basiri St., Qolhak crossing.



* A collection of paintings by Kamal Tabatabai is on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibition named “Horse Zone” will be running until May 14 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

Photo

* Saleess Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of photos by Ali Mojahedi.

The exhibit will be running until May 14 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



Iran, Azerbaijan to collaborate on film project about Hakim Nizami

TEHRAN-In a joint effort to celebrate their shared cultural heritage, Iran and Azerbaijan will collaborate on a new cinematic project about the great Persian poet of the 12th century Hakim Nizami, the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance said on May 1.

Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili was in Baku, Azerbaijan, to participate in the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, IRNA reported.

On the sidelines of his visit to the National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature in Baku, he emphasized the shared cultural figures as bridges of convergence. “These luminaries represent a collective cultural heritage that has bound Iran and Azerbaijan together for centuries. He stressed that these cultural capacities should foster brotherhood and mutual understanding.

Highlighting the significance of Persian poetry and its common legacy between Iran and Azerbaijan, Esmaeili expressed hope that the movie would be produced with the cooperation of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Jamal al-Din Abu Muhammad Ilyas ibn Yusuf ibn-Zakki, popularly known as Nizami Ganjavi and Hakim Nizami, was a Muslim poet and is considered the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature who brought a colloquial and realistic style to the Persian epic.

His heritage is widely appreciated in Iran as well as Republic of Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the Kurdistan region, and Tajikistan.

Nizami had an influence on Persian poets who came after him. He had a wide range of knowledge of the common sciences of his time (such as literary sciences, astronomy, Islamic sciences, jurisprudence, theology, and Arabic language) and this feature can be clearly witnessed in his poetry.

He was very particular in selecting appropriate words and phrases, creating new and innovative combinations, inventing new and pleasant meanings and themes, depicting details with the power of his imagination, describing landscapes and describing nature and people, and using pleasant and new similes and metaphors, which ranks him among those who

Nizami Ganjavi monument in Baku

were unparalleled in comparison to those poets who came after him.

The famous and unparalleled masterpiece left behind by Nizami is “Khamseh or Panj Ganj” (Five Treasures), a lofty work in the realm of lyrical stories. He had spent 30 years of his life arranging and compiling his poetry.

“Panj Ganj” comprises five Mathnavis (long narrative poems) of “Makhzan al-Asrar” (‘The Treasury or Storehouse of Mysteries’, one of the prominent examples of educational literature in the Persian language), “Khosrow and Shirin” (the love story of Khosrow Parviz, the great king of the Sassanid Empire and the Armenian princess, Shirin), “Leily and Majnun” (the most famous classic love story of Persian literature), “Haft Peykar” (‘The Seven Beauties’), and “Eskandarnamah” (‘The Book of Alexander’).

March 12 has been named as Nizami Ganjavi Commemoration Day in the official Iranian calendar. In addition to Iran, Nizami’s statues can be found in Azerbaijan, China, Italy, etc.

Furthermore, during his visit to the National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature,

the Iranian Culture Minister expressed interest in producing collaborative films with other neighboring countries, considering their shared historical heritage. Notably, “similar efforts are underway in Turkmenistan for the poet Magtymguly Pyragy and in Pakistan for the poet Iqbal Lahori.

Pyragy (1724–1807) was a Turkmen spiritual leader, philosophical poet, Sufi and traveler who is considered to be the most famous figure in Turkmen literary history.

He was born in a village near the city of Gonbad-e Qabus in the modern-day province of Golestan, Iran, the northern steppes of which are known as Turkmen Sahara. It was part of the extensive Safavid Empire in the first half of the 18th century.

He is the greatest representative of Turkmen literature, credited with the creation of Turkmen written literature, and whose literary form became a powerful symbol of the historical and the incipient national consciousness of the Turkmen people.

He is part of a unique period in the cultural history of Central Asia, with his exceptional

talent projecting his personal poetic synthesis onto the next generation of poets of the region.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal, known as Iqbal Lahori, (1877–1938) was a South Asian academic, poet, barrister, philosopher, and politician who is considered one of the most important figures in Urdu literature, with literary works in both Urdu and Persian languages.

Iqbal is admired as a prominent classical poet in Iran, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka and also by international scholars of literature.

He is widely known as the poet of Islam or the poet of the East. However, about 60 percent of the works of Iqbal is in the Persian language which makes him equally popular in Iran. His poetry has been translated into many languages.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he was named the national poet there. He is also known as the “Hakeem-ul-Ummat” (The Sage of the Ummah) and the “Mufakkir-e-Pakistan” (The Thinker of Pakistan).

The 6th edition of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, operating under the theme “Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity,” was convened from May 1 to 3 in Baku.

The forum, part of the “Baku Process” initiated by President Ilham Aliyev in 2008, was conducted in collaboration with prominent international entities such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), UNESCO, the UN Tourism, and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

The primary objective of the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue was to explore the critical intersections between dialogue facilitation, cooperative frameworks, leadership efficacy, and the complex dynamics of interconnectedness, all in the service of advancing global peace and security imperatives.

Over three days, a series of plenary sessions and panel discussions brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including government officials, representatives from international organizations, eminent cultural figures, journalists, civil society actors, and intellectuals from across the globe, to deliberate upon pressing global challenges.

Iran-France photography competition focuses on water

TEHRAN-A photography competition for photographers living in Iran will be held centered around the theme of water.

Titled “Water in Iran,” the photographic contest is part of the international conference held in Paris by videoconference with Iran (September 2024–March 2025) on the theme “Crossed perspectives on water cultures, France-Iran”.

Organized by the Franco-Iranian Center in Paris, Ithaque Gallery in Paris, and the Iranian National Photographer’s Society, the contest seeks to combine documentary photography with experimental photography in order to highlight the water situation in Iran through a collective exhibition, ISNA reported.

The expected approach is that of fresh and salt water, terrestrial and oceanic

environment, human activities linked to water, techniques, developments, in relation with the Iranian territory.

Based on the entries received, the jury will select a winner. The winner will receive a first prize of five hundred euros for the photograph selected by the jury as the best. A maximum of 40 other photographs by several other candidates will be included in a group exhibition at Ithaque Gallery located in the Marais district, in Paris, from September 12 to October 3, before moving to the headquarters of the Overseas Academies of Sciences in Paris on October 7 and running until October 18.

The Franco-Iranien Center is a French association created in 2016 and based in Paris. Its aim is to deepen and develop Franco-

Iranian relations in all areas (institutional, economic and commercial, cultural and artistic, sporting, academic, etc.) and to work to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the French and Iranian peoples and the two countries.

All these areas represent the pillars of the eternal bridge linking France and Iran, and it is essential to strengthen these links through associative activity.

The Franco-Iranian Center organizes a wide-ranging program of conferences, speeches and meetings in partnership with other organizations and partners. In 2023, this non-political association was considered to be the most active in Franco-Iranian relations, receiving extensive media coverage.

Second Iran Music Industry Exhibition to be held in June

TEHRAN- The second edition of the Iran Music Industry Exhibition is scheduled to take place at Tehran’s Milad Tower in June.

This edition of the exhibition, featuring exhibitors such as music instrument manufacturers and suppliers, music schools, music research centers, music publishers, recording studios, music start-ups, music book publishers, audio and recording equipment suppliers, and other related fields, aims to

establish itself as a key player in the industry’s activities, IRNA reported on Friday.

Jalal Zokai, the director of the exhibition, announced that planning for the second edition of the Iran Music Industry Exhibition began following the success of the first edition held last December.

According to Zokai, the timing for the exhibition was chosen based on surveys with music professionals, with the end of

the spring season and the start of the summer season aligning with the leisure time of students. The exhibition is scheduled to take place in Tehran from June 24 to 27 this year.

Zokai emphasized that this timing is expected to have a positive impact on the number of visitors attending the exhibition.

The first edition of Iran Music Industry Exhibition was held in Tehran last December with the

aim of introducing the latest achievements in music and fostering connections among professionals in this field.

The first-ever Music Industry Exhibition intended to become a significant reference point for industry activities throughout the year.

In addition to music professionals and critics, media outlets dedicated to music also attend the exhibition.