



Demonstrators outside the home of War Minister Benny Gantz call on him to resign from the emergency government, in Rosh Haayin, May 3, 2024.

# Bibi in Self-Made swamp

Israeli PM fails in the Gaza battlefield, faces immense domestic pressure

## U.S., NATO provided 240 fighter jets to Israel during Iran retaliation

TEHRAN - An Iranian general has revealed that the United States and NATO provided Israel with 240 fighter jets during Iran's retaliatory operation against Israeli military targets in April.

According to Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, Commander of Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters, only one division of the IRGC Aerospace Force was involved in the operation, utilizing just 20% of its offensive capabilities.

However, the U.S., NATO, and Israel had deployed a significant force to protect the Israeli regime, including anti-missile air defence systems from U.S. warships and the Israeli military.

General Rashid stated that the IRGC Aerospace Force was prepared to launch additional strikes with the remaining 80% of its offensive power. However, Iranian commanders determined that the initial operation was sufficient to punish Israel. ▶ Page 2

## Iran's steel production grows by 16% in Q1 2024

TEHRAN - The World Steel Association (WSA) announced in its latest report that steel production in Iran during the first quarter of 2024 has registered a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

The report added that the volume of steel production in the world in the 3-month period has risen by 0.5 percent.

More than 469 million tons of steel was produced across the world in January-March 2024, 161.2 million tons of which was produced in March 2024.

Iran has produced 7.6 million tons of steel from January to March 2024, showing a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year, according to Mehr news agency.

China, India, Japan, the US, Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, Brazil and Iran were the world's top 10 steel producers in the first quarter of 2024.

Production of steel in Iran increased by 5.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19), as compared to the preceding year, according to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

According to the latest data released by the ISPA, the country's steel production reached 29.334 million tons in the previous year.

Of the mentioned amount, 18,452,000 tons were billet and bloom and 10,882,000 tons were slabs; Billet and bloom production increased by 9.2 percent and slab production increased by 0.7 percent in the previous year. ▶ Page 4

## Jews dismayed by Christian Zionists over Gaza war

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN - Despite claims, Western countries, particularly the United States which considers itself the leader of the free world, don't care about human rights, public views, and freedom of speech.

The West's disregard for these values has been clearly proven as it has been backing Israel in its cruel war in the Gaza Strip.

According to polls conducted, the percentage of people who are opposing Israel's onslaught in Gaza is rapidly increasing.

A survey by the Harvard University Institute of Politics shows that a majority of young Americans express solidarity with the Palestinian people. Only 18% of young people find the Biden administration's performance regarding the Gaza conflict satisfactory.

Student protests and encampments against Israel's brutal war in Gaza have spread across the United States, extending from New York City's Columbia University to institutions such as George Washington University, Fordham University, the University of Alabama, Yale, Harvard, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Texas. ▶ Page 5

## Hamas refuses to yield in negotiations amid U.S. pressure

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - A Hamas delegation in the Egyptian capital Cairo is seeking written guarantees that stipulate a sustainable ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

A Palestinian official close to the mediation efforts told Reuters that the Hamas delegation had arrived in Cairo with a determination to reach a deal "but not at any price".

Experts familiar with the text being proposed by the United States, which the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken claims is "generous", argue that it allows the Israeli military to resume its indiscriminate strikes through air, land and sea against civilian targets.

Some experts have pointed out that the text presented to Hamas addresses key points but fails to provide any details about how the Israeli side will implement the terms. There are several examples that have been pointed out and criticized.

Among the most important points is a permanent ceasefire.

The Israeli side is insisting that a "sustainable ceasefire" should include Hamas laying down its arms, its leaders leaving Gaza, and Tel Aviv maintaining Israeli forces on Gaza's territory. This proposal will be implemented in three stages. ▶ Page 5

## A dialogue across continents

European, North American youth embrace Leader's call for reflection

TEHRAN - Back in 2015, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution penned two open letters, extending his hand to the youth of Europe and North America.

The letters came in the wake of a tragic act of violence in Paris, France, where ISIL sympathizers committed a heinous crime, killing and injuring more than 100 people. Ayatollah Khamenei's letter to the youth in the West called on them not to let the brutality of ISIL terrorists distort their understanding of Islam.

His aim was clear: to encourage deep reflection on the root causes of the global crises that gripped our world. His words, devoid of geographical constraints, pierced through the noise of government propaganda and media sensationalism, touching the hearts and minds of a generation.

"In my opinion, the first step in creating peace and security is reforming this violent mentality. As long as double standards dominate Western policies, as long as terrorism is divided into 'good' and 'bad' by its powerful backers, and as long as government interests take precedence over human values and ethics, the roots of violence should not be sought anywhere else," Ayatollah Khamenei noted. ▶ Page 3

## 60 foreign publishers to attend 35th Tehran International Book Fair

TEHRAN-Sixty foreign publishers will take part in the 35th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) that is slated to be held in the Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla from May 8 to 18, the fair director said at a press conference on Monday. "The foreign publishers will present about 50,000 titles in the fair while last year the figure stood at 45,000 titles," IRNA quoted Yasser Ahmadvand as saying.

"From May 13 to 15, we will host a program titled Iran's publication in the foreign sector". The event is planned to introduce Iranian publication to foreign publishers. About 20 publishers and literary agents (literary agencies) will be present at the event. During the three-day program, they will visit printing centers and bookstores. We hope that the event will be the beginning of getting to know more about Iran's publishing and books," he added. ▶ Page 8



Police with riot shields detain a pro-Palestinian demonstrator as a National Lawyers Guild representative holds up an emergency contact notebook, on the grounds of the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, Va., where tents are set up, Saturday, May 4, 2024.

## Dozens arrested in weekend of protests on US campuses

Police on Saturday arrested at least 25 pro-Palestinian protesters and cleared an encampment at the University of Virginia, the university said in a statement.

Tensions flared at UVA's campus in Charlottesville, where protests had been largely peaceful until Saturday morning, when police officers in riot gear were seen in a video moving on an encampment on the campus' lawn, cuffing some demonstrators with zip-ties and using what appeared to be chemical spray, Reuters reported.

Students across the US have rallied or set up tents at dozens of universities to protest the months-long war in Gaza and call on President Joe Biden, who has supported Israel, to do more to stop the bloodshed in Gaza. They also demand their schools divest from companies that support Israel, such as arms suppliers.

## U.S. defense system had 25% success rate during Iran retaliation: report

TEHRAN - Only two out of eight U.S. interceptors successfully intercepted Iranian projectiles during the drone and missile attack that targeted Israeli positions in the occupied territories last month, according to Israel's Army Radio.

The report also claimed that over 90% of Israeli interceptors hit their targets.

Iran fired dozens of drones and missiles at the occupied territories on April 14 to hit military targets involved in an earlier Israeli strike on the Iranian embassy in Damascus. Military officials in Tehran announced that they could successfully destroy their designated targets which were scattered between the Negev Desert and the Golan Heights. ▶ Page 2



## Iran embassy in Baghdad holds investigative meeting on Operation True Promise

TEHRAN- The Iranian embassy in Baghdad has held a meeting to investigate the dimensions of the True Promise operation as well as Iran's response to the aggressions of the Zionist regime. The gathering was held with the participation of certain Iraqi political groups and researchers.

The Al-Nujaba TV network reported that during the meeting the technical, scientific as well as other aspects of the operation were discussed and analyzed.

Iran's ambassador to Baghdad, Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadegh, stated that despite the fact that the retaliatory operation had been announced in advance and the Zionist regime and its allies were all prepared, it was completely unexpected and surprising.

He also emphasized that although Israel was fully prepared for this attack and was at the peak of readiness, it suffered significant losses as a result of the operation.

Asad Al-Tamimi, Iran's cultural attache in Baghdad, said that the program held under the name of Operation True Promise at the embassy was intended for the Iraqi brothers to become familiar with it and present their research on this operation.

He also stressed that discussions, research, and analysis of this historic event will continue.

Razi Al-Husseini, an Iraqi researcher who participated in this event, declared that the operation demonstrated the victory of the Islamic Republic.

He added that a new era has emerged that differs from the period before the operation, representing the electronic, armament, and ballistic missile capabilities of the Islamic Republic.

He concluded by saying that the operation also showed how accurately Iran's missiles hit their designated targets.

Al-Nujaba did not mention the number or names of the participants in this event.

The armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the aerospace of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps launched Operation True Promise on the evening of Sunday, April 13, with the launch of more than a

hundred cruise and ballistic missiles and the deployment of over two hundred Shahed-136 suicide drones in response to the recent aggressions and terrorist acts of the occupier regime in attacking the Iranian consulate in Damascus.

The Israeli airstrike, which took place in Damascus's Mezzeh district, resulted in the deaths of seven military advisors from the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). Iranian officials have vowed a decisive response to what they described as a violation of international obligations and conventions.

The assault drew sharp rebukes from governments and foreign ministries, citing violations of international law and diplomatic norms.

In Iran, the attack was interpreted as a declaration of war by Israel. It represented a radically different offensive compared to previous ones as it directly targeted Iranian soil, symbolized by its consulate in Syria.

From a political standpoint, it is important to highlight the numerous reactions that the attack on the consular headquarters was generating in Iran. Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian stated that Iran sent "a message to the United States making it clear that the country [the U.S.] was considered responsible" for the attack and the killings. In this regard, Ali Shamkhani, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, affirmed that "whether Washington was informed beforehand about Israel's intention to carry out the attack or not, does not absolve it of direct responsibility for this crime."

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Kanani, deemed the attack as a blatant violation of international regulations, especially the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Additionally, he added, "It is appropriate and necessary for this action to be condemned by the international community and the United Nations with the strongest expressions, and for necessary measures to be taken against the aggressor."

He also emphasized that "the Islamic Republic of Iran would determine the type of response and punishment for the aggression."

## Ex-FM reveals Opt. True Promise was fraction of Iran's military might

TEHRAN- Former Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki says Iran's retaliatory operation against Israel exhibited "a small part" of the country's capabilities to confront the occupying regime.

In an interview with Iran's Arabic-language television news network Al-Alam on Saturday, Mottaki said that the attack, dubbed Operation True Promise, was conducted based on a detailed and precise plan.

"The operation, which was carried out in response to a cowardly act of aggression by the Israeli regime against the Iranian embassy in Damascus and the martyrdom of several Iranians, demonstrated a small part of Iran's capabilities to confront the Zionist regime," he added.

According to Mottaki, this raid showed that any flying object that hits targets belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the site it was launched from, will be attacked.

Overnight on April 13-14, Iran fired more than

300 drones and missiles at military bases in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The large-scale operation came less than two weeks after Israeli warplanes bombed the consular annex of Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital.

The terrorist Israeli strike killed 13 people, including seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) who were on an advisory mission to Syria.

Mottaki, who is also an MP-elect, said that the Iranian operation was the first offensive military act by the country's Armed Forces after the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

"The night, when Iran attacked the occupied lands, was a nightmare for the enemy," he noted.

He also said that the Zionist regime, along with the United States, France, and Britain, tried to confront the Iranian operation, but the Armed Forces used various methods to engage the enemy and thus their missiles powerfully hit their intended targets.

powers refused to condemn the regime's unprecedented act in an emergency UN Security Council meeting.

Reports suggest that the retaliation seriously damaged at least three military bases in different parts of the occupied territories. One of the destroyed targets is the Nevatim Air Base, which is believed to be among the world's most protected sites.

In a meeting with top Iranian military commanders last month, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei praised the Armed Forces for demonstrating Iran's power and determination through the retaliatory operation.

# Iran calls on Islamic countries to sever ties with Israeli regime

TEHRAN- The Iranian Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, has urged the OIC members to cut ties with the Israeli regime and put severe embargos on the commercial and arms dealings with the regime in order to stop its genocidal crimes against Gaza.

Delivering a speech at the 15th edition of the Islamic Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Gambia on Saturday, he said that "beyond doubt, this time period will also pass by, despite all its hardships and adversities for the Palestinian nation."

"However, the manner and quality of the role that is played by us, Muslim states, in the face of this crisis will go down in history," the top diplomat added.

"Undoubtedly, severance of diplomatic and economic ties and [imposition of] practical arms and trade embargo [on Israel] serves as an important means of cessation of its genocide in Gaza and atrocities in the West Bank and the Noble al-Quds."

Amir Abdollahian stressed that what the resistance did in the course of time proved that its elimination "was nothing but an illusion."

"Because the Israeli regime is not a legitimate government. It is only an occupying apartheid power," he said, adding, "Passage of time is not going to lend legitimacy to an occupying power."

"There is no doubt that severing diplomatic and economic relations and practical arms and trade embargo is an important tool in stopping



Israel's genocide in Gaza and its crimes in the West Bank and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We sincerely appreciate the Muslim and freedom-loving governments and countries that took action in this direction," he continued.

Iran's top diplomat also noted that "the realization of stable and just peace and security in the region is only feasible through the end of the occupation of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland and guaranteeing the reinstitution of their right to self-determination."

He pointed out that "the public opinion of the world and especially the Islamic world strongly expects us to come up with important recommendations and measures as the result of this Summit."

The foreign minister then proposed the following measures:

1. Emphasizing the establishment of an immediate, complete, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in all areas of Gaza, including in Rafah and even the West Bank;

2. The complete lifting of the human blockade of Gaza;

3. Exchange of prisoners;

4. Obligating the Israeli regime to conduct an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all military forces and their equipment from Gaza and securing an international guarantee for the safe return of the people to their areas and places;

5. Imposing an immediate arms and trade embargo against the Israeli regime;

6. Supporting the provisional binding order of the International Court of Justice and providing the ground for the trial and punishment of all the commanders and the perpetrators of Israeli crimes.

To ensure peace and security in the region and the Islamic world, the rogue and occupying Israeli regime must be stopped, brought to justice and punished.

He highlighted that Tehran believes that in line with the efforts to materialize the motto of "enhancing unity and solidarity through dialogue for sustainable development;"

## Tehran appreciates Turkey for suspension of trade with Israel



TEHRAN- The foreign minister of Iran praised Turkey's move to put a moratorium on the trade with the Israeli regime in protest of its brutal war on Gaza.

In a meeting with his Turkish counterpart on the sidelines of the OIC summit in the Gambia on Saturday, Hossein Amir Abdollahian praised the Ankara government's recent decision to halt economic and trade ties with the Zionist regime as a "significant measure."

The senior Iranian diplomat denounced the war crimes committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza and emphasized that the Islamic world— Iran and Turkey in particular— needs to play a bigger and more proactive role in assisting Palestine.

Hakan Fidan, the Foreign Minister of Turkey, put the Palestinian issue first among all the concerns facing the Muslim world.

He also concurred that OIC members have to fervently promote Palestinian rights.

Fidan praised increased collaboration between the two countries in regional and global institutions, highlighting the significance Turkey places on fostering relations with Iran.

The two high-ranking diplomats

deliberated on strategies to terminate the violent Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip.

**"Tehran keen on any deal in favor of Palestinians"**

In another meeting between Amir Abdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud on Sunday, the two sides discussed bilateral and regional issues, including the situation in Gaza.

Iran will back any agreement that protects the rights of the Palestinian people, according to Amir Abdollahian.

He said that Tehran "believes the Palestinians themselves should decide the fate of Palestine," and supports any agreement that ensures the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people.

He clarified Iran's principled position in punishing the Zionist regime for its terrorist attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus.

The Iranian armed forces responded forcefully, striking the Zionist regime's military and intelligence facilities that were utilized to launch the missile attack on the Iranian diplomatic site in Syria.

The top Iranian diplomat then discussed the U.S.'s recent actions in the region, stating, "Our experiences and historical records show that the U.S. does not abide by any deal or promise and it continues to renege on its promises."

Joint efforts should be made to stop the war in Gaza which serves the interests of the Palestinian people and the regional countries, he stressed.

"We believe that the restoration of stability and security to the region and the cessation of the war are in the interest

First, by focusing and investing in human resources, technology and infrastructure, Islamic nations may very well utilize their great capacity to achieve the goals of sustainable development of Muslim nations.

Second, in order to deepen the level of cooperation and spread sustainable and all-round development, the network of economic, technical, developmental, commercial and financial-monetary cooperation between Islamic countries should be further strengthened in the context of targeted and joint agreements and mechanisms.

Third, creating a dedicated platform within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to share knowledge, expertise and resources related to sustainable development is necessary for the realization of the development plans of Muslim nations.

Fourth, it is a necessity to promote the economic and commercial integration between the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development, based on our values.

Fifth, making use of technological initiatives and innovations and the expansion of scientific research in order to advance the agenda of achieving sustainable development goals within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation requires the devising an appropriate mechanism.

of all the countries in the region," Amir Abdollahian continued.

The Saudi foreign minister, for his part, advocated for ongoing communication and exchange of ideas on bilateral, regional, and global matters between the two nations.

"What matters is that the leaders of the two nations have the desire to strengthen and broaden their bilateral ties," he said of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi foreign minister also clarified Saudi Arabia's position on regional developments and underlined the kingdom's unique initiatives to support the restoration of Palestinian rights and the formation of an independent Palestinian state.

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, he expressed optimism that a truce would be reached in Gaza at this point and stated that ending the conflict is in the best interests of the Palestinian people as well as having the potential to pave the way for the delivery of humanitarian goods to Gaza.

"Such an attack is in no way acceptable or justified," the Saudi foreign minister said, reiterating Riyadh's condemnation of Israel's strikes on the Iranian embassy in Damascus as a diplomatic location.

The two foreign ministers also talked about how to create direct flights between the two nations and make it easier to issue business visas.

On the sidelines of the OIC summit, Abdollahian also held separate meetings with Gambia, Mali's foreign ministers, and the OIC's secretary general regarding the topics of shared interests and the ongoing Israeli incursion on the Gaza Strip.

## U.S., NATO provided 240 fighter jets to Israel during Iran retaliation

From page 1 ► The general also condemned the support provided to Israel by the U.S., the UK, France, and European governments, comparing it to the Crusades.

Iran launched a large-scale drone and missile attack against Israeli military positions in the occupied territories on April 14.

The offensive came in response to the regime's earlier striking of the Iranian embassy in Damascus, which resulted in the deaths 13 people including a high-ranking IRGC commander and his deputy.

Tehran seemed to make the decision to respond to the aggression after Western

powers refused to condemn the regime's unprecedented act in an emergency UN Security Council meeting.

Reports suggest that the retaliation seriously damaged at least three military bases in different parts of the occupied territories. One of the destroyed targets is the Nevatim Air Base, which is believed to be among the world's most protected sites.

In a meeting with top Iranian military commanders last month, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei praised the Armed Forces for demonstrating Iran's power and determination through the retaliatory operation.

## U.S. defense system had 25% success rate during Iran retaliation: report

From page 1 ► Military officials in Tehran announced that they could successfully destroy their designated targets which were scattered between the Negev Desert and the Golan Heights.

Israeli and American media and officials, however, have been releasing contradictory

information on the impact of Iran's retaliation.

Shortly after the attack, the regime's military spokesman said 99% of the projectiles fired by Iran had been intercepted.

That figure was then challenged by U.S. officials who told American media that no

more than 86% of the Iranian drones and missiles could be downed.

The latest report suggesting a low success rate of U.S. defense systems in comparison to Israeli defense systems is also in contrast with an April Intercept piece which revealed that the majority of the Iranian projectiles

were downed by the U.S., and not Israel.

Apart from contradictory remarks, a ban on the distribution of footage showing the targeted areas during or after Iran's attack has also cast doubt on Israeli and American authorities' transparency.



# A dialogue across continents

European, North American youth embrace Leader's call for reflection

TEHRAN – Back in 2015, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution penned two open letters, extending his hand to the youth of Europe and North America.

The letters came in the wake of a tragic act of violence in Paris, France, where ISIL sympathizers committed a heinous crime, killing and injuring more than 100 people. Ayatollah Khamenei's letter to the youth in the West called on them not to let the brutality of ISIL terrorists distort their understanding of Islam.

His aim was clear: to encourage deep reflection on the root causes of the global crises that gripped our world. His words, devoid of geographical constraints, pierced through the noise of government propaganda and media sensationalism, touching the hearts and minds of a generation.

“In my opinion, the first step in creating peace and security is reforming this violent mentality. As long as double standards dominate Western policies, as long as terrorism is divided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ by its powerful backers, and as long as government interests take precedence over human values and ethics, the roots of violence should not be sought anywhere else,” Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

Fast forward to May 1, 2024, and the echoes of those letters resound once more as the youth of Europe and North America craft a response, reflecting on the profound impact of the Leader's message.

In their letter, the youth recount how the Leader's call to introspection sparked a collective awakening—a stirring of



consciousness that compelled them to challenge the narratives spoon-fed by their governments and mainstream media outlets. They speak of a newfound sense of duty to seek truth and understanding, to peel back the layers of complexity surrounding global issues rather than settling for oversimplified explanations.

Central to their response is a poignant acknowledgment of the ongoing university protests across the United States. During these protests, which has extended into the universities in Europe as well, students are raising their voices against the entrenched principles guiding American foreign policy, particularly regarding Gaza and the unyielding support for Israel.

In the letter, the youth commend the bravery and conviction of their peers who, testifying to Leader's words, are challenging the status quo and demanding accountability from their government.

These protests serve as a microcosm of a broader awakening sweeping through the youth—a

recognition that blind allegiance to political ideologies and national interests often comes at the expense of human rights and dignity.

As Israel's genocidal campaign in the occupied territories continues to take more and more victims, these students are doing a lot more than just raising awareness about the violent situation in Palestine. Beyond the hope that this movement can mount into a proportionate response from international organizations to finally stop Israeli crimes, these students are voicing their opposition against the collective ignorance, as encouraged by the Leader in his letters. These students, nowadays, aren't just advocating for policy change; they're advocating for a fundamental shift in perspective, urging their fellow citizens to see beyond the veneer of power and privilege.

Furthermore, the youth's letter underscores the interconnectedness of global struggles. They emphasize that the oppression faced by the people of

Gaza isn't isolated but rather part of a larger tapestry of injustice and inequality perpetuated by systems of power and domination.

At its essence, this response letter is a testament to the transformative power of dialogue and empathy in bridging divides and fostering solidarity across borders. It signifies a shared commitment to constructing a more equitable world—one where the voices of the oppressed aren't just heard but acted upon, and where youth are empowered to shape the trajectory of history.

The letter concludes as the youth describe their resolve to “delve deeper into [their] understanding of Islam and to steadfastly repudiate the rhetoric of hatred and violence that sows discord and fosters ignorance,” a testament to the Leader's invite.

As the exchange of letters between continents continues to ignite conversations and action, it serves as a poignant reminder that despite the formidable challenges facing humanity, the collective will and resilience of the youth offer a glimmer of hope for a brighter tomorrow.

In the words of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, “Only the youth have the power to discover new means for building the future and who can be barriers in the misguided path that has brought the West to its current impasse.” Through their response, the youth of Europe and North America reaffirm their unwavering dedication to standing on the side of justice and humanity, united in their pursuit of a better future.

## Iran crowned champions of Asian U19 Beach Volleyball

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Lebanon 2-0 to win the title of the 5th Asian U19 Beach Volleyball Championships on Sunday.

In the match held at Ban Nong Ya Ma Community School Courts in Roi Et, Thailand, Iran's Amir Ali Ghalehnoei/ Habib Akbarzadeh beat Lebanese 17th seeds Hadi El Chabib/Jad Abi Karam 21-12, 21-12 in the final match.

Iran had defeated Australia's second seeds Killian Donovan/Jett Rocker-Graham in the semifinals.

Iran emerged victorious over Vietnam 1, Australia 2 and Thailand 3 in Group C and also defeated Hong Kong 2 and New Zealand 2 to book a place in the semifinals.

A total of 32 Asian teams competed in the event.

## Mehdi Taremi nets goal against Chaves

TEHRAN – Porto football team bounced back from last week's disappointment versus Sporting with a comfortable 3-0 victory away to relegation-threatened Chaves Saturday night.

Francisco Conceição opened the scoring for the visiting team and one minute later Chaves player Júnior Pius was shown a red card. Evanilson made it 2-0 before the halftime.

A 73rd minute penalty from Mehdi Taremi sealed a routine win against 17th-placed Chaves, leaving the host five points from escaping the drop zone while Porto put the pressure on Sporting de Braga in the battle for third place.

## Radio personality Oskouei laid to rest

TEHRAN – Masoud Oskouei, a longtime Iranian radio personality, was laid to rest in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery on Sunday.

He died at the age of 85 on Wednesday.

Oskouei was hospitalized for broken hip and leg in early April and passed away in a hospital in Tehran.

He was also suffering from cancer.

Oskouei started his career in 1966 and worked as Radio and TV personality for about six decades.

Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathy to Oskoue's family, loved ones, and friends over his demise.

## Iranian judoka Nouri focuses on 2024 Paris gold

TEHRAN – Iranian Judoka Vahid Nouri is looking forward to win his second gold medal in the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Nouri has been undefeated since Tokyo, winning gold at the 2022 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China, the 2023 IBSA World Games in Birmingham, England, and the 2024 IBSA World Grand Prix in Heidelberg, Germany.

“My goal is to achieve a gold medal at Paris 2024, making it my second consecutive gold in the Paralympics, and I am determined to achieve this goal.

I am meticulously planning and preparing for this opportunity,” Nouri said in an interview with Paralympic.org.

Yet, despite his laser focus, Nouri almost certainly wouldn't have made history as Iran's first-ever Paralympic judo gold medalist were it not for a sliding doors moment: the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games because of Covid-19.

“Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, it had a positive impact on my

sports career,” he explained. “The delay allowed me to undergo surgery on a torn cruciate ligament, which otherwise would have prevented me from participating in the Tokyo Games.

“This additional year of preparation enabled me to compete in the biggest sports event of my career and aim for the top position. I anticipate Paris to be even more challenging than Tokyo.”

Nouri knows all about overcoming challenges. Born with keratoconus, an eye disorder than leads to the progressive thinning of the cornea, he took up judo as a teenager and it quickly gave him a sense of purpose.

“My journey with judo has been significantly more successful than my life before it,” the Tehran native said. “Judo has brought me more joy in life than ever before. It has instilled in me a fighting spirit, motivation and improved my overall health.

“I began practicing judo in 2007 and for the last 13 years I have been dedicated to pursuing it professionally. I find it great satisfaction and enjoyment in being part of this sport discipline.

“I dedicate five days a week to training, with two days set aside for rest and recovery. Each day, I spend two hours in the morning at the gym and another two hours in the evening for specialized judo training.

“Both bodybuilding and fitness exercises are crucial, alongside technical practices in judo, as the sport requires endurance and speed. It's important to focus on these factors in training.

“Typically, blind judo teams in the Para division have a small number of athletes. Many successful countries, such as Great Britain, France, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, train alongside Olympians.

“Training with non-disabled athletes can be challenging but beneficial for improving technical skills, enabling better competition against Para athletes on the judo mat.

“Securing the first judo gold medal for Iran in Paralympic history was a source of immense pride. This achievement not only inspired other Paralympic judokas in Iran but also served as a source of inspiration for our Olympic athletes, demonstrating the potential for success in various international competitions.”

Nouri, too, is confident of gold in Paris, despite having to lose 5kgs to make the weight for his category in Tokyo. “I had made the decision to retire after the Tokyo Games but there was a change in the weight categories for judo, which led me to reconsider. Now, with my change to a higher category [+90kg], I no longer need to lose weight, which has made me happier. My results have improved.”

“I had previous experience of competing in front of large crowds and fans at various events. I am looking forward to the presence of many spectators at the arena in Paris, as I believe it will greatly boost my motivation.

“While personally my goal is to win a medal and raise my country's flag, on a national level, it is to showcase Iran's high level of Para judo for all to see.

“Our success in winning two gold medals in Tokyo led to a resurgence of interest in Para judo in Iran. This brought greater attention to our discipline and earned us respect within society, resulting in heightened expectations for us.”

## Ebrahimi to extend deal with Al-Shamal: report

TEHRAN – Qatari football club Al-Shamal have reportedly shown interest in extending contract with Iranian midfielder Omid Ebrahimi.

Ebrahimi had been reportedly linked with a move to Esteghlal but the media reports suggest that Al-Shamal want to continue with the 36-year-old player.

Ebrahimi joined Al-Shamal in 2023 from Al-Wakrah.

He was a member of Iran national football team in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

## Opt. True Promise elevated Iran's standing among global powers: Raisi

TEHRAN- Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has asserted that Iran's retaliatory operation in the occupied territories has elevated the nation's status among regional and global powers.

In remarks made on Sunday, Raisi emphasized that the operation has significantly bolstered Iran's authority, power, honor, and optimism on the world stage.

Describing the operation as a “turning point” in Iranian history, Raisi underscored its significance in demonstrating the nation's commitment to freedom and independence.

**Raisi calls for enthusiastic voter turnout in May 10 elections.**

Elsewhere in his speech, the Iranian President issued a call to citizens, urging them to actively participate in the upcoming elections.

He emphasized the crucial need for maintaining the same level of enthusiasm witnessed during the March 1st elections for the forthcoming runoff on May 10.

Raisi underscored the imperative of implementing directives set forth by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei during the second round of parliamentary elections.

Addressing high-ranking Iranian officials, he emphasized the necessity for officials to maintain regular communication with the populace.

On May 4, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi announced the Interior Ministry's full readiness to conduct parliamentary run-off elections “electronically.”

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

He further outlined that polling stations and voting systems have been meticulously designated for the run off elections, ensuring a smooth electoral process.

## Kurdistan President Barzani arrives in Tehran for talks

TEHRAN – Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani has travelled to Tehran for meetings with Iran's top leaders, marking his fifth visit to the country in the past decade.

Barzani landed in Tehran on Sunday afternoon, accompanied with a high-level delegation including Vice Presidents, the Minister of Interior, the head of the Presidential Office, and various officials from the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

During the visit, President Barzani will hold discussions with senior Iranian officials, focusing on bolstering

bilateral relations between Iran, Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region.

The agenda also includes deliberations on regional developments of mutual interest and significance.

In a statement, the Kurdistan Region Presidency emphasized that President Barzani's discussions in Tehran aim to strengthen ties with Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, exploring potential areas for cooperation while addressing current regional issues. Interior Minister Reber Ahmed will be among the senior Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials

accompanying Barzani.

Among the officials President Barzani is expected to meet in Tehran are Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, President Ebrahim Raisi, parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and foreign minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

This visit follows Barzani's recent trip to Baghdad for talks with Iraqi officials regarding the salaries of Kurdistan Region civil servants and the upcoming parliamentary elections.



## Iran-India trade up 5% in Jan-Feb y/y

TEHRAN - Trade between Iran and India increased by five percent in the first two months of 2024 compared to the same period last year, with the total trade reaching \$377 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India.

The value of trade between Iran and India was reported to be around \$358 million in the first two months of 2023, IRNA reported.

India's exports to Iran saw a 20 percent jump in January and February 2024 compared to the same period last year, reaching \$269 million. India exported \$224 million worth of commodities to Iran in the same period in 2023.

But India's imports from Iran saw a 19 percent decline in the mentioned two months compared to the same period in 2023, reaching \$108 million. India had imported \$134 million worth of goods from the Islamic Republic in the first two months of the last year.

Iran's main import items from India were rice, fruits, and oil seeds press cake in the first two months of the current year.

India mainly imported fruits, raw materials for paint production, and petroleum products from Iran in the first two months of 2024.

Iran exported \$2.217 billion worth of goods to India during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), according to an official with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Hadi Talebian Moghaddam, the director of TPO department for Indian Subcontinent Affairs, said on Sunday that the figure shows a two percent increase in comparison to the \$2.175 billion reported a year earlier.

Noting that Iran's balance of trade with India turned positive last year, he put Iran's last year's imports from India at \$1.916 billion.

India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently issued a report that put the country's

trade exchanges with Iran in January at over \$200 million.

The figure was up three percent in comparison to that of January 2023 when bilateral exchanges stood at \$197 million.

The value of trade between Iran and India reached \$1.836 billion in 2023, according to India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The trade exchange between the two countries declined by 26 percent in 2023 compared to the previous year, the figure was reported to be \$2.499 billion in 2022.

According to the Indian Ministry data, Iran exported commodities valued at \$699 million to India during the past year, registering no significant change from 2022.

Petroleum products were the top goods imported by India from Iran in 2023, and India imported \$221 million worth of such products from Iran this year. The import of Iranian oil products by India in 2023 increased by 26 percent compared to the previous year.

Raw materials for dye production and various fruits were also among the top exported goods to India in 2023.

India's exports to Iran in January-December 2023 experienced a 35 percent decrease and reached \$1.187 billion. In the previous year, India had exported \$1.847 billion worth of goods to Iran.

Rice was the top export product of India to Iran in 2023. India's rice exports to Iran decreased by 34 percent in 2023, falling from \$1.98 billion in 2022 to \$723 million.

India's tea export to Iran also declined by almost a third, from \$86 million in 2022 to \$30 million in 2023. The country's fruit exports to Iran however increased by 14 percent and reached \$55 million and spice exports decreased by 28 percent to \$15 million.

## ‘Iranian private sector ready to help Syria’s reconstruction’



ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh (R) and his Syrian counterpart Muhammad Abu Al-Hoda Al-Lahham meet in Tehran

TEHRAN - The Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh has said that the Iranian private sector is ready to help the reconstruction of Syrian infrastructure and industrial sector.

Hassanzadeh made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday with his Syrian counterpart Muhammad Abu Al-Hoda Al-Lahham, the ICCIMA portal reported.

The meeting took place as a Syrian delegation is on a visit to the Iranian capital to participate in Iran Expo 2024.

Addressing the meeting, the Iranian side said that the low level of exchange between Iran and

Syria is mainly due to the failure to implement a free trade agreement signed between the two countries 13 years ago, as well as, problems in the way of banking transactions.

Hassanzadeh said that Syria should give a list of its priorities and plans to Iran so that the Iranian investors can help with the reconstruction and renovation of the industries of the war-hit country.

He stressed that the expansion of economic cooperation between Iran and Syria would require the establishment of regular transportation lines and further money exchanges between the two countries.

The president of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce, in the meantime, said that the volume of trade exchanges between Iran and Syria does not match their political relations.

Al-Lahham noted that problems in the way of road transportation, trade tariffs, as well as monetary and financial exchanges are the main obstacles hindering bilateral trade between Iran and Syria.

He welcomed the presence of Iranian companies in construction projects in Syria, voicing the readiness of his country to provide the Iran Chamber of Commerce with a list of the Syrian priorities for development and reconstruction.

## Govt. plans to create over 1m jobs by Mar. 2025

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Labor Minister Mahmoud Karimi has said the government plans to create 1,044,000 jobs in the current Iranian calendar year (ends in late March 2025), Tasnim News Agency reported.

According to Karimi 25 percent of the mentioned figure is considered for university graduates.

## TEDPIX loses over 5,000 points on Sunday

TEHRAN - TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), lost 5,186 points to 2,259,731 on Sunday, which is the second day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock

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

# Iran’s steel production grows by 16% in Q1 2024

From page 1 ► According to the ISPA data, the production of sponge iron also increased by 8.5 percent in the previous year in comparison to the figure for the preceding year.

Iran improved its global standing in steel production, becoming the ninth-largest producer in January 2024, according to new data released by the WSA.

The Islamic Republic produced 31.1 million tons of crude steel in 2023 to account for 58.4 percent of West Asia's total production in the mentioned year, according to the WSA.

The West Asian nations reviewed in the WSA report, including Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, managed to produce 53.2 million tons of steel in 2023.

The country's steel production increased by 1.8 percent in 2023



as compared to the previous year, when the production stood at 30.6 million tons, based on the WSA data.

West Asia's total crude steel output increased by 1.3 percent in the mentioned year as compared to 2022.

Based on the WSA data, Iran was the world's 10th largest steel producer in 2023.

The world's steel producers managed to produce more than 1.888 billion tons of steel in 2023, which is a very slight decrease compared to 2022, and as a result, the World Steel Association has declared the percentage of change to be zero.

China with a production of 1.019 billion tons, India with a production of 140.2 million tons, and Japan with a production

of 87 million tons were the top three steel-producing countries in the world in 2023.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

The official noted that steel production in the country also increased by 10.5 percent in the first three months of the current calendar year (March 21-June 21) as compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

Yaghoubi estimated Iran's steel production to reach 32 million tons in the current year.

## Russia’s Astrakhan lauds presence in Iran Expo 2024



TEHRAN - The ministry of external relations of Russia's Astrakhan says the participation of officials from the region in Iran Expo 2024 was fruitful.

Government officials and business bodies from 70 countries attended Iran Expo 2024 in

Tehran, the ministry said in a statement, IRNA reported.

The participants showcased new technologies and equipment in the food industry, construction, agriculture, fisheries, medicine, telecommunications and other fields, it added.

According to the report, government officials, representatives of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Duma of Astrakhan Province and the Astrakhan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Union, heads of construction companies and agricultural companies formed Astrakhan delegation to Tehran.

The Astrakhan region is located in the southeast of the European part of Russia in

the Caspian Lowland

Iranian companies are interested in increasing the export of Russian agricultural products, including grains, through Astrakhan province to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the report said.

Iranian partners are interested in fruitful cooperation with Astrakhan province.

The implementation of joint economic projects will help increase interest in the "North-South" international corridor, which will ensure the full utilization of the capacity of Astrakhan's ports and its shipbuilding industry.

The 6th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Expo 2024) was held from April 27 to May 1.

## We are not happy to see sanctions against Iran, says OPEC secretary general



TEHRAN - OPEC Secretary General, Haitham Al Ghais, has said that sanctions against Iran distort the normal flow of oil in the global market.

Speaking with CNBC on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh, he said: "We are not happy to see sanctions on our member countries whether it is Iran or another member country Venezuela."

"Generally speaking, sanctions or any intervention in the normal market flows are a kind of distortion to the way that oil usually flows and get produced, transported and sold around the world." He said.

According to the Secretary-

General, the oil market is a normal market-oriented measure and distortion of this nature is not helpful.

Replying to the CNBC reporter's remarks on Iran's rising oil production and ineffectiveness of

sanctions as well as the question that "perhaps the sanctions we have seen being placed on Iran does not work", OPEC Secretary General said: there are a lot of people who say that sanctions do not work. There are always ways of getting the oil to move around. We don't get involved in these details and how that happens and why that happens. We look at overall global balances.

"We don't get involved in the mechanics of how sanctions are enforced", he said.

When the OPEC Secretary General was asked about the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and how OPEC closely monitors the escalation,

Haitham Al Ghais said that geopolitical tensions are global and do not just happen in West Asia.

"In September we are celebrating our 64th anniversary, so it is not uncommon for us to go through periods of heightened geopolitical tensions and turmoil." According to the OPEC Secretary General.

He continued: we always keep politics aside from our business and very focus on fundamental aspects of the global markets, we look at numbers, look at economic growth, look at supply and demand but there is not much we can do to control what happens geopolitically.

## Foreign journalists visit Pinggu District ‘Hometown of Peaches’ in China

By Mahnaz Abdi

BEIJING- Almost 100 journalists from more than 90 countries around the world visited Pinggu District, in the northeast of Beijing, in a one-day tour on Monday (April 29).

Pinggu District focuses on the development of agriculture, also referred to as the "Hometown of Peaches" in China, possessing the largest peach garden in the world.

It has been awarded as the Most Internationally Influential Tourism County, China's Major Eco-tourism County and the National Demonstrative County for Leisure Agriculture and Rural Tourism. The Jinhai Lake International Convention and Exhibition Center located in the district, is the main venue of the 2020 World Leisure Games.

Pinggu is of a temperate continental monsoon climate, with distinctive four seasons, winter the longest, summer the second and spring and autumn short.

Pinggu District enjoys a fairly long history. As early as the Paleolithic Age, which was tens of thousands of years or even 100,000 years ago, human beings already started to live on this land. Nearly 6,700 years away from today, Pinggu ancestors created a brilliant and splendid Shangzhai Culture. It is

the first national forest urban area of Beijing, and one of Beijing's ecological conservation areas, with the forest coverage rate of 67.94 percent, ranking the first in Beijing.

During their one-day tour to Pinggu District, foreign journalists got familiar with agricultural achievements in this district through visiting different sites such as a food processing factory, and a product selection center, where diverse products are offered as categorized into five main types: Scholar Farms' products, Agricultural ZGC Food and Nutrition Valley goods, Silk Road e-commerce imports, high-tech agriculture, large-flow logistics, and new-trend leisure specialties, and products from outside, featuring over 1000 products in total.

The last part of that visit was participating in a conference on Live Streaming E-commerce.

It should be mentioned that China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) arranged the visit to Pinggu District for the foreign journalists.

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



Conference on Live Streaming E-commerce in Pinggu District 'Hometown of Peaches' in China

study development in this country.

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

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

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



# Bibi in self-made swamp

*Israeli PM fails in the Gaza battlefield, faces immense domestic pressure*

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRA— Israel is sinking deeper into the quagmire of the Gaza war as calls grow for ending the seven-month-long onslaught and returning the remaining captives.

Tens of thousands of people staged rallies across Israel's major cities at the weekend demanding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sign a ceasefire agreement with the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement.

Protesters also called for Netanyahu's resignation and early elections.

They accused the premier of prolonging the war in Gaza to keep himself in power.

"Bibi (Netanyahu), we call you to reach a ceasefire deal which secures the release of all hostages," Danny Elgar, the brother of Israeli captive Yitzhak Elgar, said at a protest in Tel Aviv.

"You are taking more time so you and Ben Gvir can stay in power. You are taking more time so you will stay in power. You don't care about the 133 or 132 hostages. An operation in Rafah will cause the death of the hostages. You don't have mandate to kill 132 citizens of Israel."

Shulamit Ron, another protester in Tel Aviv, said, "We hope the world hears us and knows that the people of Israel are not the government of Israel. We don't agree with the policy, we don't agree with the way they behave, and we want to have a different future."

Roi Tzohar, who was also among



the demonstrators, said, "The Israeli people are hostages to the right-wing government."

Israeli media reported that protesters rallied in other cities such as al-Quds (Jerusalem), Haifa, Ra'anana, and Beersheba too.

The protests were the latest display of the mounting domestic pressure on Netanyahu to bring back the captives.

More than 1,100 people were killed and nearly 250 others were taken captive when Hamas launched a surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7.

Over 100 captives were released in a swap deal in late November.

Since then, ceasefire talks have continued without a breakthrough. There has been neither a pause in fighting nor a release of the remaining captives; dozens of whom have lost their lives in Israeli strikes on Gaza.

The Egyptian capital is hosting the latest round of talks. In the truce talks in Cairo with Egyptian and Qatari mediators, Hamas negotiators

have maintained their stance that any agreement must end the war.

The resistance group has also stressed that any ceasefire deal must guarantee Israel's complete withdrawal from the Gaz Strip.

The Israeli army declared war on Gaza after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. So far, more than 34,000 Palestinians have been killed over the past seven months. Many of them are women and children.

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until "total victory" over Hamas. However, his dream has remained elusive.

He has also threatened to launch a ground offensive in Rafah where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled the fighting in central and northern Gaza.

UN agencies and international aid groups have warned about the consequences of an imminent incursion into Gaza's southernmost city.

Far-right Israeli ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir have threatened to leave Netanyahu's coalition cabinet if he agrees

to a ceasefire and captive release deal that would end the war on Gaza.

They want the Israeli army to launch a ground assault into Rafah.

Netanyahu is walking a tightrope. On the one hand, he is facing growing domestic pressure to end the war, which shows rising cracks inside Israeli society. On the other hand, his coalition cabinet will collapse if he decides to put a halt to the Gaza onslaught.

Netanyahu was under the delusion that the Israeli army would be able to destroy Hamas. But after seven months, the regime not only has failed to achieve this goal but also support for the resistance group has grown across the Palestinian territories.

Assessments by the Israeli military's intelligence and the US intelligence community have also poured cold water on Bibi's dream of victory over Hamas acknowledging that Israel won't be able to destroy the movement.

Earlier this month, former veteran US politician Dennis Ross implied in an article that a failure of talks in Egypt would work to Israel's detriment.

Ross said the administration of President Joe Biden should encourage Israel to announce a unilateral ceasefire in Gaza if talks in Egypt will not lead to a ceasefire deal.

His comments shed light on the fact that Israel is not capable of bringing the Palestinian resistance to its knees through military operations.

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## WORLD HEADLINES

### Iraqi students support pro-Palestinian protests in US



Iraqi students have held a demonstration in solidarity with American university students who are protesting in support of the Palestinians in Gaza.

The protest was held at the University of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq.

They called on students of universities across the world to voice support for Palestinian people in Gaza.

Since April 18, pro-Palestinian students at dozens of universities in the US have established encampments. They have called on their universities to end financial ties with Israel and divest from companies that benefit from Israel's war on Gaza.

However, police have launched a heavy-handed crackdown on the students.

### Family of Gaza doctor who died in Israeli prison demands justice

The family of a prominent doctor from Gaza, who was killed in an Israeli prison due to torture, has demanded justice.

Adnan al-Bursh, 50, the head of the orthopedic department at al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, was arrested by the Israeli army last December as he treated patients at al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza, Al Jazeera reported.

Israeli forces have repeatedly targeted hospitals in Gaza, destroying 26 of the besieged enclave's 36 hospitals. Israel has killed more than 350 healthcare professionals since launching its military offensive on October 7.

The physician's death was confirmed earlier in the week.

Yazan, al-Bursh's eldest son, expressed his shock at learning of his father's fate.

"I didn't know my father had been martyred, it was a shock," he said. "Thank God anyway. We belong to God and to Him we return."

Yazan explained that Adnan had been to the Israeli prisons of Negev, Ofer and Ashkelon before he was killed under torture.

### Protest in London as France denies entry to British-Palestinian doctor

A protest was held outside the French embassy in London on Saturday after Paris denied entry to a famed Palestinian British surgeon who served as a doctor in Gaza soon after Israel launched its offensive on the enclave.

The "hands off Ghassan Abu-Sitta" protest was held outside the embassy after the surgeon, who was supposed to speak at the French Senate, said he was denied entry to France due to a German ban on his entry to Europe, Anadolu reported.

During the protest, the crowd chanted pro-Palestinian slogans, expressing support for Palestinians in Gaza.

"Cease-fire now," "End the occupation," and "Decolonize Palestine" were among the signs they were holding up, criticizing support to Israel.

"I am at Charles de Gaulle airport. They are preventing me from entering France. I am supposed to speak at the French Senate today," Abu-Sitta had said on X.

Abu-Sitta added he was told that Germany put a "1-year ban" on his entry to Europe.

### Hezbollah responds to Israel's "horrific crime"

A local official and state media in Lebanon said an Israeli strike on a southern village on Sunday killed several people from the same family, with Hezbollah announcing rocket fire in retaliation.

Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement have exchanged regular cross-border fire since Israel declared war on Gaza on October 7.

Fighting has intensified in recent weeks, with Israel striking deeper into Lebanese territory, while Hezbollah has stepped up its missile and drone attacks on military positions in northern Israel.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the Israeli strike in Mais al-Jabal killed "four people from a single family".

It identified them as a man, a woman and their children aged 12 and 21, and said two other people were wounded.

Hezbollah said in a statement it had fired "dozens of Katyusha and Falaq rockets" at Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel "in response to the horrific crime that the Israeli enemy committed in Mais al-Jabal".

### Netanyahu cabinet votes to close Al Jazeera channel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet has voted unanimously to close Al Jazeera's operations in Israel.

The cabinet vote on Sunday came after Israel's parliament passed a law allowing the temporary closure in Israel of foreign broadcasters considered to be a threat to national security during the months-long war in Gaza, according to Al Jazeera.

Netanyahu announced the decision on X, formerly Twitter. "The government headed by me unanimously decided: the incitement channel Al Jazeera will be closed in Israel," he posted in Hebrew.

In another post, Israel's Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said he had signed the orders against Al Jazeera, which would be effective immediately.

Karhi also ordered the seizure of Al Jazeera's broadcasting equipment "used to deliver the channel's content", including editing and routing equipment, cameras, microphones, servers and laptops, as well as wireless transmission equipment and some mobile phones.

Israel has long had a rocky relationship with Al Jazeera, accusing it of bias against it and collaborating with Hamas. The Qatar-based network has repeatedly rejected the accusations.

### Chinese president visiting Europe

On his first visit to Europe in five years, the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, appears intent on seizing opportunities to loosen the continent's bonds with the United States and forge a world freed of American dominance, the New York Times reported.

The Chinese leader has chosen three countries to visit — France, Serbia and Hungary — that each, to a greater or lesser degree, look askance at America's postwar ordering of the world, see China as a necessary counterweight and are eager to bolster economic ties.

For Europe, the visit will test its delicate balancing act between China and the United States, and will no doubt be seen in Washington as a none-too-subtle effort by Xi to divide Western allies.

He has timed his arrival at his second stop, Serbia, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the deadly NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo war. That mistaken strike on May 7, 1999, for which the White House apologized, killed three Chinese journalists and ignited furious protests around the U.S. embassy in Beijing.

## Jews dismayed by Christian Zionists over Gaza war

*Gaza war proves the West doesn't value freedom of speech*

From page 1 ▶ Rutgers University, and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. However, after more than two weeks of anti-war protests, President Joe Biden on Thursday said the demonstrations had not prompted him to reconsider his approach to the Israeli military offensive in Gaza.

Even though police have arrested about 2,300 students for protesting the Gaza war, Biden claimed, "The U.S. is not authoritarian". Biden tried to justify the arrest by saying that "order must prevail".

Some figures and American lawmakers have gone further. For example, Mark Dubowitz, director of the pro-Zionist lobby Foundation for Defense of Democracies, has ridiculously linked the protesters to Hamas and insinuated that they were acting as "Iranian proxies." Shockingly enough,

the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill on Wednesday to expand their perceived definition of anti-Semitism.

These remarks and moves show that the United States has lost its direction and is gradually degenerating into the extreme right.

**"Anti-Zionism is not inherently anti-Semitism"**

The blind support for the bloodthirsty rulers in

Israel has even caused dismay among some Jewish members of Congress and politicians.

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

Jerry Nadler, the most senior Jewish member of the House, also said, "This legislation threatens freedom of speech, one of our most cherished values, while doing nothing to combat anti-Semitism."

The UN human rights chief said on Tuesday he was "troubled" by heavy-handed actions taken by U.S. security forces during attempts to break up protests on college campuses.

"I am concerned that some of law enforcement actions across a series of universities appear disproportionate in their impacts," Volker Turk said in a statement sent to journalists, Reuters reported.

While students' feelings over the genocide in Gaza were boiling, the House of Representatives and Senate overwhelmingly voted to grant 26 billion dollars in military aid to Israel.

This amount of military aid to a regime that is butchering Gazans coupled with the approval of the bill to suppress students under the pretext of "anti-Semitism" is a mockery of public opinion, the

muzzling of the freedom of speech, and a total disregard for the agonies of others, particularly the unthinkable sufferings and griefs of the Gazans.

While signing the military aid package on April 24, Biden, a self-declared Zionist, said, "My commitment to Israel, I want to make clear again, is ironclad."

A few days earlier, Biden had called protesting students "anti-Semite" though protestors are from different backgrounds and faiths, including Jews.

Speaker Johnson has also accused protesters of intimidating and threatening Jewish students. Johnson also scolded the protesters, demanding them "go back to class and stop the nonsense."

Democratic lawmaker Nadler has dismissed "political theatrics" by Johnson and top Republicans in the House.

Sherif Ibrahim, a Columbia University student and organizer of the Columbia University Apartheid Divest, has said politicians like Johnson "are getting it completely wrong because they want to get it wrong, and they want to label us as anti-Semitic when it couldn't be further from the truth."

(See full text at [www.tehrantimes.com](http://www.tehrantimes.com))

## Hamas refuses to yield in negotiations amid U.S. pressure

*Palestinians insisting on genuine guarantees for sustainable ceasefire*

From page 1 ▶ Hamas argues that a permanent ceasefire has a deeper meaning, which is a return to the status quo before October 7. Something resembling this Palestinian condition for a permanent truce is not seen in the proposal offered to Hamas.

The Israelis are widely believed to have offered a pause to the bombing campaign.

Sections related to key demands of Hamas, such as the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, are not clearly mentioned in the document.

The text stipulates that Israeli forces will leave areas across the Gaza Strip but falls short of providing a solid guarantee that also explains how Israeli forces will fully withdraw from the entire coastal enclave.

The entry of humanitarian aid is mentioned but through Israeli checkpoints that are already preventing vital aid from reaching those who desperately need it, particularly

northern Gaza where there is a "full-blown" famine.

Experts say the text allows a pause in fighting, in various stages, which would see the exchange of Israeli captives held in Gaza for Palestinian prisoners, but allows the Israeli military to resume its indiscriminate bombing campaign including in Rafah after the exchange of prisoners.

There is no solid guarantee for Hamas that the blockade of Gaza will end or its ports will operate freely without Israeli occupation and other punitive measures against the Palestinian population in Gaza, such as the freedom of movement that have all been in place since 2006.

Hamas is open to a united Palestinian government ruling over Gaza; the resistance movement has agreed to this as long as it is Palestinians who would rule over their land, yet this appears lost in the final text.

In essence, the result of reaching a deal in Cairo, as these things stand,

will see a temporary ceasefire for the duration of the agreement followed by renewed Israeli war on the women and children in Gaza.

Yet Blinken says there is a "generous" offer on the table for the Palestinians.

Hamas insists the final solution must see the end of the indiscriminate war on the enclave, an end to the blockade and a full Israeli withdrawal, which is why regional media is reporting that the resistance organization insists on a written form stipulating a ceasefire signed by the guarantors: the U.S., Egypt and Qatar.

At the same time, Hamas is willing to make concessions here and there to reach a final solution that brings a guaranteed sustainable ceasefire.

What Hamas appears unwilling to sign is something similar to the temporary truce, which took effect from November 24-30 in 2023 and saw a prisoner exchange deal but was followed by the Israeli military offensive that has killed and injured



## Germi set to host festivals to promote domestic tourism

TEHRAN - In an effort to encourage domestic tourism, Germi, a historical county nestled within Iran's Ardabil province, is gearing up to host a series of local festivals.

The initiative, spearheaded by the provincial tourism department, aims to promote the region's rich natural splendor, particularly focusing on the breathtaking attractions of Lake Gilarloo.

Hassan Mohammadi-Adib, the provincial tourism chief, unveiled the plan during a recent meeting with local government officials.

Proposing the creation of some festivals, Mohammadi-Adib emphasized the significance of Germi's unparalleled natural beauty and cultural heritage to attract visitors from across Iran.

The official pointed out that such festivals play a crucial role in promoting visibility and attracting investment to regions.

"It's essential that we introduce festivals to showcase the capacities of Germi," Mohammdi-Adib stated. "Such as Lake Gilarloo, which is a well-trodden destination within the region."

In addition to festival planning, Mohammadi-Adib underscored the need for local budget allocations for content production with an eye toward highlighting regional attractions and archaeological excavations at the Tappeh Digevar site.

Moreover, Germi's governor, Hossein Molaei, expressed strong support for the focus on cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, which he described as top priorities for the region.

"In recent years, we have allocated significant funding to these sectors," Molaei further noted. "This year's budget would continue to support various activities including archaeological work, festival or-



ganization, handicraft training, the Germi Museum, and the development of tourism-focused roadways."

As revealed by the provincial officials, this proposed festival and other initiatives aim to transform Lake Gilarloo into a significant cultural and tourist destination, promoting local heritage and boosting economic growth through increased tourist activity.

Lake Gilarloo, nestled within the picturesque landscapes of Germi in the Ardabil province, stands as a serene and somewhat underexploited attraction. The lake is situated in a region known for its rugged natural beauty, encompassing lush greenery and a climate that varies dramatically with the seasons, making it an ideal spot for nature lovers and tourists seeking tranquility away from the bustle of city life.

Geographically, Lake Gilarloo is part of the broader eco-region of northwestern Iran, an area characterized by its rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems.

Lake Gilarloo represents a blend of natural beauty, ecological significance, and cultural heritage. As claimed by the related officials, with planned developments and the proposed introduction of festivals and other tourist-friendly activities, the lake is on the brink of transforming into a key destination for those looking to explore the hidden gems of Iran's Ardabil province.

## Ancient artistry: the enduring legacy of Nazok-Kari in Urmia

TEHRAN - Nazok-Kari is an ancient craft being practiced in Urmia, in northwest Iran.

Passed down through generations for centuries, the craft It is about making very delicate objects from wood, both useful and artistic.

There are two main ways to do Nazok-Kari. In one way, small pieces of wood with different colors are cut and placed next to each other. They look like they're one piece of wood. Then, they're polished and painted.

This is similar to wood marquetry, as said by Visit Iran, an official travel guide.

The second way is to use one type of wood, often walnut. Objects like bowls, plates, and jewelry boxes are made by cutting and polishing pieces of this wood.

Different kinds of wood are used, like

bright cream and white wood from peat trees. These contrast with the dark knots in walnut wood. When polished, these woods create fascinating effects.

Other woods used in Nazok-Kari include Maple, Buckthorn, Plane, Pine, and Alder. Materials like cold or hot gum and lacquer are also used, along with tools like manual or electric grinders, saw chisels, clamps, and grinding machines.

Urmia, the capital of the province, is on a fertile plain near Lake Urmia. Here, grains, fruits, tobacco, and other crops grow well. Most people in Urmia are Azeri Turkish, with some Kurdish, Assyrian Christian, and Armenian minorities. The plain also has remains from ancient settlements and traces of the Urartu kingdom.

# Naqsh-e Rostam: efforts underway to safeguard treasured site

TEHRAN - Efforts have been initiated to monitor, protect, and restore Naqsh-e Rostam in response to a recent rainfall causing slight damage to the treasured site, announced a relevant official.

"Due to recent heavy rains, the ancient site of Naqsh-e Rostam experienced waterlogging, leading to multiple subsidence incidents in the area," Alireza Askari Chaverdi said.

"Currently, monitoring, protection, and restoration teams, along with archaeological groups from the Persepolis World Heritage site, are stationed at this ancient site."

Nestled near the UNESCO-listed Persepolis, this site holds a special place in Persian history and culture.

Following the preparation of a technical report, a project to restore Nagh-e Rostam will commence, the official said.

Regarding the subsidence issues, Askari Chaverdi mentioned that some of the subsidence incidents are linked to general subsidence in the Marvdasht Plain, while others are attributed to the



impact of these recent rains.

"Following immediate approval from the Cultural Heritage Research Institute, the experts affiliated with the Persepolis World Heritage site will begin work to protect and restore Naqsh-e Rostam."

Naqsh-e Rostam, an awe-inspiring testament to ancient craft skills, showcases a series of breathtaking Sassanid bas-relief carvings.

The necropolis houses four imposing tombs believed to be the final resting places of Persian Achaemenid kings—Darius II, Ar-

taxerxes I, Darius I, and Xerxes I, arranged left to right along the cliff face. However, scholarly discourse persists regarding their precise identities.

Above these majestic tombs, intricate bas-reliefs echo the grandeur of Persepolis, portraying kings seated on thrones, upheld by figures symbolizing the diverse nations under their rule. Additionally, within the vicinity of Persepolis, lie two similar graves, likely belonging to Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III.

Beneath the solemn funerary chambers, seven Sassanian-era bas-reliefs adorn the cliffside,

vividly depicting imperial conquests and regal ceremonies. Informative signboards accompany each scene, offering detailed descriptions in English.

At the base of Naqsh-e Rostam stands the enigmatic Ka'beh-ye Zardusht, or the Kaaba of Zoroaster. This square structure, approximately 12 meters tall and 7 meters wide, likely dates back to the early 6th century BC, featuring inscriptions from various periods thereafter.

While the linguistic significance of Ka'beh-ye Zardusht is evident, its original function remains shrouded in mystery. Some speculate it served as a tomb for Achaemenian royalty or perhaps as an altar, potentially dedicated to the goddess Anahiti, associated with royalty, war, and fertility.

The name Naqsh-e Rostam, translates to "Picture of Rostam," pays homage to the legendary Iranian hero celebrated in Shahnameh and Persian mythology. In ancient times, locals mistakenly believed the carvings beneath the tombs depicted scenes from Rostam's tales.

## Tehran, Riyadh consider re-establishing direct flights

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has held discussions with his Saudi Arabian counterpart, Faisal bin Farhan, regarding the facilitation of commercial visas and the resumption of direct flights between the two nations.

The ministers met on Saturday on the sidelines of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in the Gambian capital, underscoring a mutual desire to explore avenues for strengthening economic collaboration.

Their discussions on easing visa procedures and re-establishing direct commercial flights signal a willingness on both sides to explore practical measures aimed at enhancing people-to-people exchanges and facilitating economic activities.

Last year, the two Persian Gulf states signed a Chinese-brokered deal to restore their diplomatic ties after a seven-year hiatus. Over the past couple of months, Tehran and Riyadh have exchanged signals to widen tourism cooperation, such as easing visa pro-

cedures and re-establishing routine direct flights.

The OIC summit, held on Saturday and Sunday, is mainly themed "Promoting Unity and Solidarity Through Dialogue for Sustainable Development."

Various issues and challenges in the Muslim world, especially the issue of Palestine and the status quo in the Gaza Strip were discussed during the meeting.

## Iranian attaché in Armenia paints tourism as bridge beyond stereotypes

TEHRAN - In an effort to dispel outdated stereotypes and promote cultural understanding, the Iranian Cultural Attaché in Armenia, advocates for increased inbound tourism to Iran.

In a recent interview with Mehr, Mohammad Asadi-Movahedi highlighted the significant role of cultural diplomacy in transforming international perceptions of Iran.

Mentioning his experience in various countries, Asadi-Movahedi emphasized that both elites and ordinary people should visit Iran for any reason, as traveling is the best way to counteract negative propaganda against the country.

"We've recently facilitated a visit for seven of Armenian top

bloggers to prominent Iranian cities including Kish, Isfahan, Kashan and Tehran," the cultural attaché explained. "This move was part of our broader duty to engage in tourism advocacy."

Highlighting the significant impact of media and social networks in shaping perceptions, Asadi-Movahedi underscored the ongoing challenge of countering efforts by some countries to depict Iran as an unsafe destination.

He stressed the importance of cultural and academic exchanges, including student exchanges and art groups, as well as promoting Iranian films and cultural products as effective strategies against the spread of misinformation about Iran.

The attaché further outlined that with a shared cultural heritage on family values and lifestyle, Iran and Armenia have enjoyed increased interactions among their elites and academic institutions.

"A recent symposium on written heritage featuring several Iranian scholars exemplifies these closer ties," he added.

Asadi Mouhedi also mentioned Armenia's untapped potential for cultural and academic activities, despite its small population of less than three million.

He praised the country's capacity for cultural engagements, such as promoting Iranian handicrafts.

Looking ahead, the cultural attaché pointed to the arranged



plans to organize multiple cultural weeks in Armenia with an eye toward showcasing different Iranian provinces, following the success of last year's Hamadan cultural week.

"Upcoming events will feature Khorasan Razavi, East and West Azarbaijan, Kordestan and Mazandaran," Asadi-Movahedi winded up. "Aiming to deepen cultural exchanges and understanding between the two nations."

## What is the mystery Roman object found on hill in Norton Disney?

A mysterious Roman artefact dug up in Lincolnshire has left experts baffled as to what it is. Found during an amateur archaeological dig in Norton Disney , the 12-sided object has prompted fantastical suggestions as to its use.

It has been likened to a toy, a spaghetti measure and even a measuring gauge for slingshot.

Here, architectural historian and broadcaster Dr Jonathan Foyle offers his take on some of the suggestions put forward by BBC website users, and his own theory as to the object's purpose.

### Toy story

David Hawley thought it was probably some sort of game dice, with the different sized holes denoting a different number.

"There are other sizes of dodecahedron in existence which could be more portable to carry if the army was on the move," Dr Foyle countered.

Lee Hartfield suggested it was some form of puzzle where the player had to align the right-sized ball with the correct hole.

In response, Dr Foyle said: "What's real-

ly striking about them is they are beautifully crafted and none of them show any signs of wear.

"They don't have any numbers on them so you can roll them [as dice]," he said.

He said although the artefact resembled a puzzle you might find in a Christmas cracker, the metal was "quite fragile" and would break.

"These things were clearly looked after," he added.

### 'Romans loved spaghetti'

Others thought the dodecahedron might have been used as a measuring device.

Brian Turner, from Norfolk, suggested it was a gauge for measuring lead balls or slingshot.

Meanwhile, Paul Roberts, from Dorset said it was "obviously a spaghetti measure".

"The Romans loved spaghetti, but obviously it was just as difficult back then as it is nowadays to work out exactly how much spaghetti to cook.

"I have a modern version of this, it's a lot more convenient but probably not as valuable," he added.

Nigel Monk thought it could be some sort of teaching device used by Roman mathematicians.

"Also it may just have been an ornament," he added.

The Norton Disney artefact featured in a recent episode of Digging for Britain, with presenter Prof Alice Roberts saying: "It has to be one of the greatest, most mysterious, archaeological objects I've ever had the opportunity to look at up close."

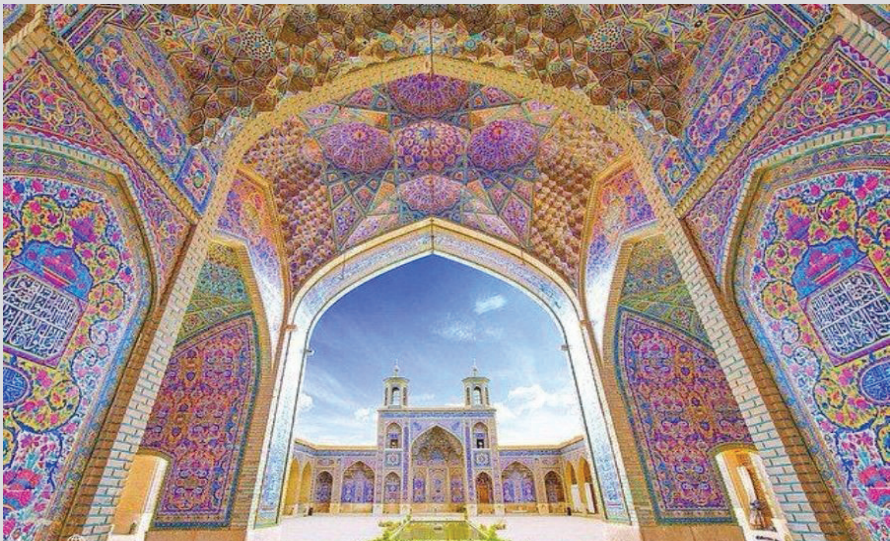
Commenting on the level of interest in the Norton Disney artefact, she added: "There are so many mysteries in archaeology that remain to be solved.

"The overwhelming range of responses to it from the audience shows just how these ancient riddles can capture the public imagination."

Newcastle student Lorena Hitchens, who goes by the name of Dodecahedra Girl on X (formerly Twitter), also featured in the show.

Ms Hitchens, who is studying the puzzling objects for her PhD, said: "For me, the challenge of solving the puzzle of what these items are is part of their appeal."

## Iran in frames



Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, aka the Pink Mosque, offers visitors a mesmerizing symphony of color and light. Located in downtown Shiraz, the mosque boasts stunning stained glass, intricate Persian rugs, vibrant tiles, and a serene courtyard with a central pool.



# UNICEF provides aid to flood-hit people in Sistan-Baluchestan

TEHRAN –Following the destructive floods that hit Sistan-Baluchestan province in February, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been actively engaged in providing essential aid to the affected communities mainly women and children.

Funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), UNICEF procured 2900 essential hygiene packs including 2000 household hygiene kits, 300 baby kits, 500 Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits, and 100 incontinence kits to prevent disease outbreaks and promote children's overall well-being, the UNICEF website reported on April 30.

The recent resumption of heavy rainfall in April has further exacerbated the situation, underscoring the urgency of humanitarian assistance.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Ministry of Energy, prioritized the provision of safe water and sanitation services to households and communities affected by the disaster to ensure that children and families stay safe and healthy.

UNICEF has also delivered ten water tankers and over 3 tons of perchlorine powder to the affected areas, ensuring access to safe drinking water. This has also been materialized through generous funding of ECHO.

As part of UNICEF's humani-



tarian response to the flood-affected communities in Sistan-Baluchestan, children and families in the affected villages of Dashtiari district will receive 2900 hygiene packs.

Looking ahead, UNICEF plans to mobilize more funds, towards the flood response in Iran, to provide specialized water disinfection and water quality testing equipment.

The focus will be on Dashtiari, Konarak, and Chabahar regions that lack access to safe drinking water.

## Recent services

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

The measure was adopted in support of the introduction of PCV in the national childhood im-

munization program in the country, the UNICEF website reported on March 17.

The consignment was the first shipment of PCV to the country, using Iran's financial resources left over from the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, through UNICEF procurement services.

The shipment arrived from India and landed at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on March 17.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education intends to introduce two new vaccines into the national childhood immunization program namely, PCV and Rotavirus vaccine.

UNICEF will support the Ministry of Health throughout the introduction and delivery phases of these two new vaccines tar-

geting pneumonia and diarrhea among children, the two infections that cause substantial childhood illness and deaths.

UNICEF Representative in Iran, Robin Nandy said, "This is an important first step in the introduction of two essential vaccines that were missing from the immunization schedule and will address childhood pneumonia and diarrhea, the two most important illnesses we see in children. UNICEF is pleased to play a role in the introduction of these vaccines along with key partners like WHO and the Gavi Secretariat".

On January 27, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, and the UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding to develop an innovation ecosystem for children and adolescents in the country.

The MOU was signed by Amir-Hossein Mirabadi, an official with the Vice Presidency, and Nandy, IRNA reported.

Moreover, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education has provided eight prefabricated health-care rooms to address health challenges in quake-hit villages in Khoy County.

The main objective is to provide uninterrupted primary medical care for the affected children and their families, according to a press release by the UNICEF website on January 23.

## Border wall to be built to stop unauthorized immigration

TEHRAN – A border wall is scheduled to be constructed along Iran-Afghanistan borders to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the country.

The proposed project is planned to be completed in Khorasan Razavi province within a three-year period with a budget of 1.8 trillion rials (about three million dollars).

The project includes the construction of a four-meter-wide concrete wall, equipped with barbed wire and fence, as well as a road, IRNA reported.

The initiative to secure borders started in the Iranian calendar year 1379 (March 1990 – March 1991), with the aim of intensifying the security of borders in eastern regions of the country. It has been implemented in parts of the Iran-Afghanistan border in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

The project was initially planned to be completed in the Iranian year 1399 (March 2020 – March 2021), but it was postponed due to inadequate funds. Now it is expected to be finished within the next two years.

## No permission to stay

In October 2023, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said unauthorized foreigners have no permission to stay in the country and receive services, IRIB reported.

Paying a visit to a center for organizing

immigrants in the city of Karaj, he added illegal foreign nationals would be identified and sent to specific camps and then returned to their homeland.

"Illegal foreign immigrants are treated with dignity even though they have entered Iran's borders illegally," Vahidi added.

In November 2023, Abdollah Mobini, the head of Iran's immigration organization said, "Iran has no longer the capacity to accept new immigrants, and if the international community does not bear the responsibility for supporting refugees in Iran, most of them will migrate to European countries."

The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees.

The country is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans. Today, more than 500,000 Afghan children – including undocumented Afghans and those who have newly arrived in Iran following the Taliban takeover – are benefitting from Iran's inclusive education policies, one of the most progressive in the world.

Many of the refugees living in Iran are second and third-generation, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refu-

gees (UNHCR).

## Services beyond expectations

Iran's generous and exceptional services for refugees despite unfair economic sanctions has exceeded expectations and international responsibilities, an official with the National Organization for Migration has said.

Behzad Moradipour made the remarks in the meeting of the Almaty Process Experts Group which was held on November 29, 2023, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Representatives from eight states were participating in the event.

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan are currently members of the Almaty process. Iran and Pakistan attended the meeting as observers.

Moradipour, who represented Iran in this meeting, highlighted that the country has been directly affected by the consequences of the massive influx of millions of refugees and foreigners for more than four decades.

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has made a very generous effort to provide services to millions of refugees and foreign nationals despite difficult living conditions and oppressive economic sanctions imposed on the country, he said.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 'Only 15% of Tehran's construction waste recycled'

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran's department of environment (DOE) has said.

"A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face," Bazgir said.

To eradicate the issue, construction waste trucks must be equipped with GPS to determine their route and not allow them to dispose the waste at any areas, he concluded.

## تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دپو می شود.

محمد حسین بازگیر اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود. وی در پایان با تأکید بر اینکه کامیون های مخصوص حمل نخاله های ساختمانی باید ساماندهی شوند گفت: کامیون های حمل نخاله باید مجهز به GPS شوند تا مسیر تردد آن ها مشخص شود و امکان تخلیه زباله را در هر نقطه ای نداشته باشند.

## World Asthma Day: education empowers

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN – The treatment of asthma, a chronic inflammatory lung disease, involves learning how to avoid risk factors as well as seeking medical help to manage the disease.

Asthma affects over 260 million people and is responsible for over 450,000 deaths each year worldwide which are preventable.

In this regard, World Asthma Day (WAD) is observed on the first Tuesday in May to raise awareness of Asthma worldwide.

Each year Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), a World Health Organization collaborative founded in 1993, chooses a theme to celebrate the day.

This year, the day falls on May 7, and is celebrated under the theme of 'Asthma Education Empowers'.

It highlights the need to empower people with asthma with the appropriate education to manage their disease and recognize when to seek medical help.

Asthma affects both children and adults, in children it is known to be mainly caused by allergies.

Unlike infectious diseases, asthma usually develops spontaneously, in other words, asthma is not caused by a disease.

While infections have no role in asthma development, they can trigger or exacerbate the disease or start an asthma attack.

In Iran, about 9 to 13 percent of people from different age groups are suffering from asthma with children being the majority. This means that the rate of asthma changes according to the age of people.

Also, the global prevalence of asthma is reported to be around 3-15 percent, reaching up to 20 percent in certain countries.

Patients with asthma should accept the fact that they have the disease and take effective measures to treat it.

Health facilities and academic centers are also responsible for educating patients that treatment involves more than medication; it also includes avoiding triggers that cause asthma attacks.

Asthma attacks begin with increased symptoms of coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath, and as it progresses, it can lead to a drop in blood oxygen level. In such a situation, the patient should be hospitalized. Most asthma-related deaths are caused by an acute asthma attack resulting in shortness of breath and reduced oxygen levels.

Efforts in asthma education are being made by the Iran Society of Asthma and Allergy in cooperation with the Immunology, Asthma and Allergy Research Institute.

Asthma scientific conference is held every year concurrently with Asthma World Day, where the latest cases related to asthma management are discussed.

In addition to the scientific conference, a "family education conference" is also held to provide patients and their families with practical tips about asthma and its effective management.

## Effective factors on Asthma development

"Genetics" and "environmental factors" play key roles in the occurrence of allergies manifesting in the form of "atopic eczema", "children's asthma" and "allergic rhinitis".

Environmental factors that contribute to aller-



gies are divided into 2 categories: "allergens" and "stimulating factors".

Allergens are divided into 2 categories "external" and "internal". External sources include pollen from trees, grasses, and weeds. Dust mites, cockroaches, fungi, and pets such as cats and dogs are considered internal allergens.

Stimulating factors include not only smoking but also inhalations with a strong smell like detergents that can trigger allergic reactions.

Air pollution is an important factor that can exacerbate asthma.

Harmful air pollutants enter the respiratory system; these pollutants, depending on their size (particles of about 4 to 5 microns), can enter the "lower airways".

Also, very small particles are capable of penetrating deep into the lung and even enter the blood.

Most of these pollutants are free radicals that cause inflammation of the lungs or other parts of the body and are considered among the most harmful ones.

So metropolitan areas being more polluted contribute to increased rates of asthma and allergies in big cities.

## Asthma diagnosis, treatment

Different breathing tests including bronchodilator challenge tests, exercise tests, methacholine, and exhaled nitric oxide tests, are performed in the country to identify the type of disease affecting the individuals.

After diagnosing the type of disease, new treatment methods such as administering biological drugs, and immunotherapy (injection of allergy vaccine) are offered.

People who have allergic asthma are subjected to "immunotherapy" and receive vaccine treatment.

One of the new methods for Asthma treatment involves utilizing biological agents such as Omalizumab (Xolair) which is an anti-IgE medicine. Xolair is made to be similar to natural antibodies and is designed specifically to capture most of the IgE and block the allergic response.

It has been two years since the medicine was domestically made in the country and used by the patients.

## Provinces with high prevalence of asthma

It seems like the rate of asthma is increasing in the country. As was said, pollution in big cities is one of the main reasons for the increase in asthma cases in the country.

The cities of Arak and Ahvaz and Sistan-Baluchistan province have experienced the highest prevalence of asthma.

By taking measures to control irritants and allergens, the prevalence of asthma can be reduced and managed.



## Teaching at one of world's smallest schools

A Conex box in a rural area in the southwestern province of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari has just two girl students. Nahid and Zeinab study in the third and fourth grades in one of the smallest schools in the world.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who remembers the length of the journey, prepares himself for it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:01    Evening: 19:15    Dawn: 3:31 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 5:06 (tomorrow)

## “A Life Worth Living” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN-A Persian translation of French author Robert Zaretsky’s “A Life Worth Living: Albert Camus and the Quest for Meaning” has recently been published by Qoqnu Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Mohammadreza Ashouri.

The book delves into the complex and profound philosophy of renowned writer and philosopher Albert Camus.

Drawing from Camus’ Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Zaretsky explores Camus’ dual commitment to truth and resistance against oppression.

Throughout the book, Zaretsky delves into the themes that fascinated Camus, such as absurdity, silence, revolt, fidelity, and moderation, depicting him as a moralist who challenged conventional perceptions and urged others to question societal norms.

As Zaretsky reflects on Camus’ works like “The Myth of Sisyphus” and “The Stranger,” he emphasizes the enduring relevance of Camus’ ideas in the modern world, acknowledging the different challenges we face today.

By embracing Camus’ belief in rebellion as a fundamental part of human existence, readers are encouraged to contemplate their own lives and the pursuit of meaning.

Zaretsky illuminates Camus’ philosophy that rebellion against injustice is a noble and vital pursuit, even amidst the inherent contradictions and limitations that come with such idealism.

Camus’ reflections on the balance between rebellion and acceptance, despair and hope, resonate throughout Zaretsky’s exploration of his life and work. By recognizing the beauty

in the world alongside its injustices, Camus urges readers to appreciate the enduring presence of joy and resilience in the face of adversity.

Zaretsky captures the essence of Camus’ philosophy, encapsulating the enduring message that within the darkest moments, the potential for hope and inner strength remains undiminished.

Albert Camus was born in Mondovi, Algeria, in 1913. He experienced a tumultuous childhood, marked by poverty and the death of his father during World War I.

Despite these challenges, Camus excelled academically and went on to study philosophy at the University of Algiers.

He became involved in leftist political movements, but his disillusionment with communism and the Soviet Union led him to embrace a more independent and humanistic philosophy.

Camus rose to prominence in the literary world with the publication of his first novel, “The Stranger,” in 1942, which explored themes of existentialism, absurdity, and alienation.

His subsequent works, such as “The Plague” and “The Myth of Sisyphus,” further solidified his reputation as a leading existentialist thinker.

Camus’ career was characterized by his commitment to social justice and his opposition to totalitarianism. He was a vocal critic of the French government’s actions during the Algerian War of Independence and advocated for peaceful coexistence between French colonizers and Algerian nationalists.

French colonizers and Algerian nationalists. Camus’s philosophical writings emphasized the importance of individual freedom, personal responsibility, and the rejection of nihilism. His ideas continue to resonate with readers around the world, inspiring discussions on the nature of existence, morality, and the human condition.

Albert Camus’ legacy as a philosopher and writer is defined by his unwavering dedication to truth, integrity, and the pursuit of a meaningful life in the face of absurdity and uncertainty.

# 60 foreign publishers to attend 35th Tehran International Book Fair

From Page 1 ► The event is planned to introduce Iranian publication to foreign publishers. About 20 publishers and literary agents (literary agencies) will be present at the event.

During the three-day program, they will visit printing centers and bookstores. We hope that the event will be the beginning of getting to know more about Iran’s publishing and books,” he added.

Referring to other cultural programs planned for this period of the book fair, Ahmadvand said: “In this edition, two special programs have been planned, one is related to the people of Gaza and the other one is centered around women and girls”.

With the slogan “Let’s Read and Create,” the 35th edition of the TIBF will also simultaneously be held virtually on ketab.ir.

Yemen is the special guest of this edition of the book fair.

Being Iran’s major trade fair for books, the TIBF has been turned into a landmark, momentous book

fair in West Asia after 34 editions in a row.

Millions of visitors inspect the fair every year, including thousands of university students, scholars, and their families.

The cultural event currently serves as the most significant cultural event in Iran.

On average 2,500 domestic publishers participate in the landmark event. The foreign

publishers substantially offer their materials in English or Arabic; however, titles in French, German, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese are also available.

## Yazd to host Children of Mosque theater festival after three-year hiatus

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN-The 15th edition of the Children of Mosque Popular Theater Festival, following a three-year hiatus, will be held in Bafq, an ancient town in central Yazd province, the organizers have announced.

Kourosh Zarei, the director of the Art Bureau’s Center for Dramatic Arts, mentioned during a press conference in Tehran on Sunday that the festival was suspended for three years to create the right infrastructure and perspectives.

He also noted that during this period, several theater groups in mosques across the country were producing plays and getting ready for this edition of the festival.

The plays have now reached maturity and are ready to enter serious arenas, with this year’s outputs scheduled to be performed and participate in the country’s theater events, he mentioned.

Furthermore, Zarei added that this year’s performing plays are the output of 800 theater groups, and efforts are being made to reach out to villages as well.

He emphasized that this theater festival should expand to all corners of Iran in order to discover and guide talents even in the remote areas of the country.

Highlighting the motto of the fifteenth festival as “My Mosque, My Artistic Home,”

Zarei stressed the intention to merge religious context with artistic themes and attract teenagers to mosques as cultural centers suitable for children to spend their time.

For his part, Seyyed Mostafa Motorchi, the secretary of the festival, mentioned that in addition to producing works, a series of workshops will be organized on the sidelines of the event.

He also stated that the festival’s focus is on teamwork, and awards will be presented to the best team works. The 15th edition of the Children of Mosque Popular Theater Festival, with the participation of 14 groups of artists in the field of theater in mosques across the country, will open in Bafq on Tuesday and run until May 10.

## Iranian films participating in International Short Film Festival Oberhausen after 60 years

TEHRAN-Three Iranian short films are competing in the International Competition section of the 70th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, which is underway in Oberhausen, Germany, from May 1 to May 6.

The Iranian films competing in the International Competition section of the festival are all productions of 2023, including “With Confidentiality” directed by Shervin Vahdat and Payam Azizi, “There is No Friend’s House” by Abbas Taheri, and “Rizoo” by Azadeh Navai, ISNA reported.

The 17-minute flick “With Confidentiality” is a short documentary about a group of women in a village in Iran, who

secretly come together despite the danger to their lives to write a complaint letter to the local authorities against their own men. Their clandestine unity and covert movement against widespread addiction among the men lead to a significant police crackdown.

“There is No Friend’s House,” running for 19 minutes, is a joint production of Iran and France about Sarah and Mehri, two friends, who set themselves a perilous challenge in high school. But not only are they very young women, they’re also from families with completely opposing views.

An Iran-U.S. joint film, the 15-minute “Rizoo” shows an

eight-year-old girl named Rizoo who lives with her mother and grandmother in Tehran. A lively, polite and smart girl, she has recently moved back from California. But when she must take a class portrait, her world suddenly becomes very complicated.

The world’s oldest short film competition, the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen is a forum for experiments, unusual content and formats, and the place for cinematic discoveries, regardless of genre and production country.

Every year, filmmakers from over 40 countries present themselves to the festival.

Only international festival premieres are admitted to the competition. A premiere shown in the competition is often a springboard for selection at other festivals - not least for the Oscar.

The last time an Iranian film participated in the festival was 60 years ago when “This House Is Black” by Forugh Farrokhzad took part in the 11th edition of the German festival.

In 1963, the 22-minute documentary short film was awarded the grand prize for the documentary category at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen in West Germany.

## Digital museum Collecteurs launches online exhibition “Falastin” dedicated to the Palestinian cause

Launched last month by the digital museum Collecteurs, “Falastin” is a new online exhibition showcasing a timeline of Palestine’s history, accompanied by visual artworks, essays, videos, photography, and poetry.

The first chapter of the exhibition, “Multiculturalism Before the West,” is dedicated to the cultural mosaic that existed before the arrival of the West into the region.

It features contributions by Claire Fontaine, and Rashid Khalidi, among many other individual artists and collectives, the New Arab reported.

During the coming months, the exhibition will unfold chapter by chapter on the Collecteur’s website and Instagram, documenting the history of Palestine from the late 19th century to the present, alongside artistic responses that relate to the themes explored.

Evrin Oralkan, founder of Collecteurs and co-curator of the first chapter of “Falastin,” explained that the project was born out of a disappointment towards the stance art institutions have taken since the war in Gaza broke out. “The majority of the art institutions have failed us. It’s a disaster,” he said.

According to Evrim, institutional silence has been a prevalent issue. From the cancellation of

exhibitions to outright firing individuals, such as in the case of ArtForum’s Chief Editor, David Velasco, the consequences for those who have taken a stance in support of Palestine, have been severe.

This has created an environment where artists and practitioners who want to express their support for Palestine feel unsafe to do so.

“Falastin was born to fill that void. We wanted to create a voice that people can follow,” Evrim revealed.

This is intrinsically connected to the true purpose of art, as Evrim explains, “Artists are those who speak up under any circumstance. It was very clear that if Collecteurs didn’t do this, there would be no art world left for any of us to inhabit.”

Over the past seven months, Israel’s brutal war on Gaza has dominated social media feeds, overwhelming users with the reality of what is going on through the distressing content.

This experience, particularly for those directly impacted by the genocidal war, has led to trauma and a desire for online spaces curated with sensitivity.

In many ways, “Falastin” strives to meet this need by blending historical context with beautiful and poignant pieces of art.

Even though the narrative follows a clear-cut structure, engagement with “Falastin” never feels repetitive, as each artwork creates stimulating breaks that invite the viewer to reflect and engage emotionally while learning about the history of Palestine.

Ultimately, through the awareness and knowledge, “Falastin” aims to touch on people’s emotions and inspire them to take action.

Resistance is weaved into every part of the project, including its means of production. The project was solely run by over 300 volunteers, who used digital spaces to share resources, to organize and build the exhibition in less than four months.

Curator, writer, and researcher Rana Anani’s contribution to Palestinian identity provides an unmatched depth to the exhibition’s overarching narrative, which was translated from Arabic by the people in the group.

The Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) and the international collective of worker-activists Working Class History were also involved in the making, providing Collecteurs with resources, including unrestricted access IPS archive.

“It was a collective effort, fueled by the realization that doing this would open many doors,” said Rana.

Cartoon of Day



Imperial Boomerang  
Cartoonist: Mohammad Sabaaneh from Palestine